Union County Public Transit
Advisory Council
Minutes for
February 17, 2015

**Voting Members in Attendance:** Nora Croucher, Roy Gomez, Jeannine Hunt, Brenda Fiscus and Yvonne Hill via phone conference

**Voting Members Absent:**

Daniel Bullock, Joe Kresse, Terry De Spain, Thomas Taylor, Crystal Voyles

**Non Voting Staff Members in Attendance:**

Frank Thomas, Manny Elguera, Jodi Tool, Peggy Smith

**Non Voting Members Absent:**

None

**Non Voting Guests Present:**

None

**Introductions and Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 3:00 PM in the Elgin City Hall Conference Room Located at 108 N 8th Ave in Elgin, Oregon.

**Consent Agenda:**

There being no corrections to the items in the Consent Agenda, Roy moved to approve it was seconded by Yvonne. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Board/Council Report and Council Bits:**

Frank brought cupcakes to celebrate the 2nd anniversary of the Council. He thanked the Council for 24 months of ground breaking achievements.
Grant Update

Frank reported the Special Transportation Fund Discretionary Grant in support of the Rides to Wellness program has been submitted to the STF Committee.

The Section 5310 Capital Grant was submitted to the STF Committee on February 4, 2016 in placeholder format. The formal application has not been released by ODOT. We've prepared an application based on the last round of Section 5310 and a support narrative for the Committee's consideration. Since the project derives from the STF Agency's Coordinated Plan it makes sense to ask for a resolution of support while we have an audience with the Committee.

Much like Section 5310, the OTN Applications have not yet been released by ODOT. This project will probably roll in around mid February.

Frank stated we will be wrapping up the procurement part of the STIP Grant for a new vehicle this week.

Disposition

When the Board of Directors met on January 26, they approved the Council's resolution to dispose of Vehicle 2013 pursuant to the process recommended by staff. We're hoping to have this completed by the end of February.

Consider Comments from Elgin Stakeholders:

No Stakeholders present

Consider Council Composition:

- Member Retention

Frank stated Article VIII of our By Laws as of the May 2015 revision provides for council to reach a decision about the continued membership of a chronically absent member. He stated it is a concern and would like to minimize the likelihood of making a quorum at any given meeting. He also stated staff will compile a list of councilors who have missed 3 or more consecutive meetings for consideration.
Roy stated he thought members should be contacted and asked about continued interest. He also stated those members may have suggestions of who to recommend if they are unable to continue. Council members agreed; this was tabled until the next meeting in March.

**Consider Application for Membership-Winnie Andrews:**

Frank presented an application from Winnie Andrews for Membership at Large for council to consider. He entertained a motion to accept Winnie’s application. Roy made the motion it was seconded by Jeannine. The motion was carried unanimously.

**Consider Shelter Ad Expansion:**

Frank stated an idea generated by a Councilor to wrap the bus shelter at Walton Road has been stalled by our placement in a public right of way. Both the City of La Grande and City of Island City have applicable ordinances that probably rule out the sort of marketing common on shelters in urban environments. However, both communities have adopted exclusions for the materials that we publish for our shelter insert panels.

He told councilors we are being approached by Farmer's Market to collaborate on signage or other visual acknowledgement of their signature events at Max Square. While we've got commitments against our existing inserts, we think we could pretty easily put new insert modules into our existing shelters. These units cost $475 each - probably safe to estimate $700 shipped and installed. Before we explore this project, we need to have a conversation with the Council about the long term implications.

- Would we like to own additional panels
  - If so, would we like to lease the space
  - If so, what is a reasonable fee

- Are there things we DON'T want to advertise
  - Tobacco, firearms, alcohol, marijuana, politics, etc

- If we don't want to lease, are we willing to let partners in
  - If so, are all Union County Nonprofits partners

- Would we like to own additional panels
  - If so, would we like to lease the space
  - If so, what is a reasonable fee
Roy suggested we by-pass advertising completely and sponsor kids from local schools to work with La Grande Framers Market. He suggested their work could be blown up to fit a panel.

Manny suggested the theme should be consistent with our local economy for example it could read “Gateway to the Wallowa”.

Frank stated we could start with a panel at the Max Square shelter it is worth exploring. Council agreed to try a panel. Council decided to further discuss at the March meeting before making a formal motion.

**Vanpool Update**

Jodi passed out copies of the Regional Vanpool Development Proposal that was presented to the Union County commissioners this morning; it is as follows:

**Brief Project History:**

In the summer of 2015, Northeast Oregon Public Transit (NEOPT) was approached by Worksource Oregon in Baker County and a Union County manufacturer about developing a mobility solution, connecting light industry to labor pools between neighboring counties. The employer obstacles of unpredictable schedules and often asymmetric staffing needs (e.g., some people work overtime, some don't).

Our first task was to explore existing alternatives.

Existing public intercity connections between Baker and Union counties were immediately ruled out as a poor fit. The routes and schedules are largely subject to the mandates of the federal funding that underwrites the service.

Oregon's DriveLess Connect program is generating promising results. It’s an online service that facilitates private carpools, including tools for networking within and between employer, school, church, fraternal or other natural access groups. We concluded however, that DriveLess Connect lacked the critical mass of regional participants to reliably meet the need.

A Public Transit based solution was also immediately ruled out as a matter of pragmatics. Several months of development and public process would be necessary just to get such a project into an adopted plan. From there it would be in competition with other identified projects for operations resources. Even if it was the top priority of the served jurisdiction, it may sit unselected unless (and until) a stable source of funding for which it is an eligible use is identified. Aligning these planets could easily take several years.
Ultimately, we began exploring how other communities meet similar needs. The most flexible and cost effective solution we found was Vanpooling.

What is Vanpooling?

Vanpools are a large element of a mobility system that allow groups of five people or more to share the ride (similar to a carpool but, on a larger scale). Vanpooling couples a reliable vehicle or fleet of vehicles - with big savings in fuel, insurance, maintenance and other operating costs.

As a model, we've selected Enterprise Ride Share (a division of Enterprise Car Rental). With years of experience developing Employee Vanpools, Enterprise offers eight turn-key solutions for our market:

1. Reliable, well equipped, safe and comfortable vehicles

2. Scheduled service and maintenance

3. 24-hour roadside assistance

4. Primary Auto Liability Insurance and no deductible for Comprehensive and Collision coverage

5. Administrative support services are built in - not an additional expense

6. Month-to-month payment flexibility (employees can subscribe according to their commute needs)

7. An optional Guaranteed Ride Home Program
   a. Public Transit is willing to act as an additional safety net to help overcome the initial resistance we've found is typical when introducing new mobility solutions to rural constituents

8. Free ride matching program to find co-workers with similar hours and commute routes

As you'll see in the next two sections, these benefits result in a significant cost savings to subscribers. Working with a company like Enterprise also answers the common objections to private carpooling (e.g., your co worker's car isn't necessarily more reliable or better insured than yours, and how do you get home in the event of a sudden illness or family emergency).
Cost Method and Estimates

To test Vanpool based rideshare, we came up with some basic numbers. A work month is 22 days (5 days x 52 weeks / 12 months, rounded up to the nearest day).

Each day, an assumed roundtrip is 92 miles. The gathering point is Community Connection in Baker City, and Outdoors RV as the employer in La Grande. We chose Outdoors RV as a model firm relative to the origin of the labor pool. While individual subscription costs to other employers may be overstated by a few points, Outdoors RV provides a very reliable figure to budget.

Estimates were based on the most direct route on Interstate 84 to Exit 261 in La Grande, but this should not be interpreted as a limit on the system. An employee residing in Haines or North Powder (perhaps even Union) could easily be accommodated with small modifications to the model. With these factors in mind, we're rounded the fuel estimate off at $2.30 per gallon.

Fuel efficiency in our model is based on Ford Econoline estimates at CarFax.com. We used the E-350 Super Duty which gives up a couple of miles per gallon relative the E-150 and E-250 models. We've used 14 mpg which is the highway estimate, discounted by 2 mpg to account for the small portion of the daily trips that will occur inside communities.

Finally, Vanpools can be operated with as few as five people. However, we've elected to begin our model with seven, because this is the threshold that allows employers to participate in associated federal tax incentives.

Exhibit A - 7 Subscribers / 8 passenger van

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Fuel Cost</td>
<td>$333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly Rental to Enterprise RideShare</td>
<td>+ $900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>$1,233</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$1,233 / 7 Subscribers = $176.14 / 22 days per month = $8.01 per day
**Exhibit B - 8 Subscribers / 8 passenger van**

- Monthly Fuel Cost: $333
- Monthly Rental to Enterprise RideShare: + $900
- Subtotal: $1,233

$1,233 / 8 Subscribers = $154.16 / 22 days per month = **$7.01 per day**

- *Per day cost drops rapidly with each additional rider as buses near capacity.*

**Exhibit C - 12 Subscribers / 14 passenger van**

- Monthly Fuel Cost: $333
- Monthly Rental to Enterprise RideShare: + $1,300
- Subtotal: $1,233

$1,633 / 12 Subscribers = $136.08 / 22 days per month = **$6.19 per day**

**Exhibit D - 14 Subscribers / 14 passenger van**

- Monthly Fuel Cost: $333
- Monthly Rental to Enterprise RideShare: + $1,300
- Subtotal: $1,233

$1,633 / 14 Subscribers = $116.64 / 22 days per month = **$5.30 per day**

**Cost / Benefit**

Costs relative to benefits for workers are self evident from the pricing in the previous section. Vanpools address the most expensive access barriers in the form of capital equipment and insurance coverage at a subscription cost approximating fuel alone in a private vehicle. One tacit benefit is the ability of the participating employee to leave the family vehicle at home, where spouses and children can make use of them.
Jodi stated she hopes to have a Van operating between Baker and La Grande Counties by next week on a weekly basis.

Frank said this is a market solution to a market problem. He also praised Jodi for her work on this project.

**Staff Reports**

- **Managers Report**

Frank stated that at the last meeting Roy asked for an update on the Data Connection for Tribes:

- The Tribes in Harney County are connected to the Adept Scheduling system
- Awaiting feedback from the Umatilla Tribe
- Morrow County not tribal however they have received a 5310 Grant to purchase software

- **Alternative Modes Report**

Jodi had no report at this meeting she stated her main focus has been on the Vanpool.

**Old Business**

Nora brought up a discussion from a previous meeting about placing information in the hands of clergy at different churches to promote intercity rides. It was suggested by a council member that we should also contact Senior Meals Programs and Rotary. Frank will follow up and report at the next meeting in March.

- **RTAP Opportunity**

Frank shared with Council at the meeting in January his nomination for the National RTAP Review Board; he is following up at this meeting as promised. He had a phone interview today with a representative from Washington D.C. for the position. He said the interview went well and will inform Council when a decision is made hopefully by the March meeting.
New Business

None

Adjournment:

There being no further business to bring before the Council, Roy made a motion to adjourn. It was seconded by Yvonne. The meeting at was adjourned at 4:00 PM.

The next meeting will be held in La Grande on March 16, 2016.
Minutes Respectfully Prepared By,

_________________________________________________  February 17, 2015

Peggy Smith, Office Assistant

Minutes Accepted by:

_________________________________________________  

Daniel Bullock, Chairman