

HB 2017 Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes. May 7, 2020

Members Present:

Gabby Abou-Zeid
Adam Argo
Dan Bower
Dwight Brashear
Aron Carleson
Jillian Detweiler
Mercedes Elizalde
Reza Farhoodi
Javez Hall
Huy Ong
Art Pearce
Sushmita Poddar
Mary Lou Ritter
Walter Robinson II
Commissioner Rogers
Commissioner Savas
Councilor Stacey
Mariana Valenzuela
Coi Vu
Julie Wilcke
Sara Wright

Public Comment

No advance public comment submitted.

No call-in public comment.

Webex Tutorial

Short tutorial.

Meeting is being recorded.

Committee Business

HB 2017 Capital Projects

Tom Mills: COVID-19 is having an impact on our economy, we are expecting a shortfall in revenues. In the last meeting the committee voted to prioritize the operating projects and defer capital expenses. There was a question of which projects we should move funds from first and I wanted to check in with this group to see if you wanted to continue with that conversation.

Jarvez Hall: I would say that is a conversation we should probably have at a later meeting, we don't have any clearer picture today of how the finances are then we had two weeks ago, I think at this time we should work on the other agenda items.

Jarvez Hall: Let's get through all the items that we haven't gotten to because we don't have to prioritize those things right now, anyway.

Councilor Stacy: Metro is nearing the final phases as a council putting together the Transportation 2020 Measure for referral to the voters in November. Two of the programs very likely to be funded are bus electrification and youth pass, so I wanted to lay that on the table and ask general question that doesn't have to be answered today, but we should at least consider. If TriMet has available to it beginning next year resources not only for capital improvements to help buses move faster, but for youth pass and electrification programs that effects these wedge funds and ongoing expenses and I want to know how the reconciliation will occur. This doesn't have to be answered at this meeting today, but if it was to pay for the same service twice, I would want to make sure that we think about that prospect but don't obviously make decisions now that can't be unwound if more resources come in. Tom, do you have any to say about communication and discussions between Metro staff and TriMet about how to anticipate new resources from the November measure?

Bernie Bottomly: We have been in very close communication with Andy, Margi and Tyler. For both the battery electric bus and the student pass programs in the T2020 proposal we have assumed that the current allocations in the STIF plan are additive to the T2020 resources. In both cases you need both the resources of STIF and T2020 in order to reach the goal, so in the battery electric bus program you need both the triangle funds and the Metro program funds to reach the goal of getting full electrification in 2040 and on the student pass side you need the 1% of STIF funds that are set aside for student transportation per the law, you need that plus the resources in the T2020 measure, also footnote that you need the 2 million dollars that Portland Public Schools currently puts into that program. It's all additive.

Chat Question – Sushmita: The community is suffering now, what can we as a committee do now to support the community.

Tom Mills: Right now our funds are coming in as well now as they were before, but we're expecting come summer time a reduction in funds which is why we're talking about moving the capital funds from the triangle fund to maintain service and other operating programs.

Tom Mills: Does anyone disagree with the idea of tabling the prioritization of capital funds now and we can then deal with it when we have more information about what the revenue reduction may be?

Mercedes Elizalde: My question is about timing on that, I want to make sure that the additional information on that is going to be available for this group to consider before TriMet has to make a decision?

Tom Mills: I think we're going to have some projections probably next month and then we'll have even a more accurate idea come July. Our plan has to be submitted in November, so that will give us plenty of time to make that final decision.

Roy Rogers: What is the TriMet Staff recommendation?

Tom Mills: The TriMet staff recommendation would be to table this until we have more information.

Walter Robinson II: What are your current projections again?

Tom Mills: We are still working on that, but our finance department is trying to figure it out.

Bernie Bottomly: The state's revenue forecast come out on the 20th of this month so we should have some clues at that time as to what the state economists are expecting.

Tom Mills: Tabling until we have more information.

HB 2017 & Special Transportation Funds (STF)

Tom Mills: One of two possibilities we see happening right now;

- 1) There maybe one or more emergency legislative sessions, likely to deal with CORONA virus, but they may be able slip in there this issue with merging of HB 2017 and the SFT programs, and then we'll get some direction.
- 2) They wait until next January when they start the long session.

One of the two will likely occur and that's where the decision will be made. If they don't have an emergency session we will likely have to go ahead and approve a plan that reserves us some funding for SFT but we won't know exactly which rules to apply. Do we apply the HB 2017 rules or the STF rules? That will get settled when they have the long session.

Bernie Bottomly: I think the two main takeaways on this issue are;

- 1) Going forward the STIF the HB 2017 program is going to have to carry the financial burden that used to be carried by the state general fund. The legislature used to appropriate \$10 million biennium for the SFT program, and they are not going to do that anymore, they are moving that responsibility to the STIF program because it's a dedicated transportation resource and traditional funding for STF has been the state general fund which is obviously very scarce.
- 2) It's likely that this committee will ultimately be the responsible body for forwarding the STF funding through the state, in the same way the committee forward the rural non TriMet areas and so forth, the committee will have same role. That's just to keep in mind that the committee in the future is likely to have both the responsibility of the STIF plan and the STF plan.

Walter Robinson II: Do we have a projection of how much the special transportation would cost?

Tom Mills: In the last biennium the cost was \$10 million state wide, but for our region it was approximately \$5 million.

Chat- Arron Deas: The STF and STIF funds will grow and shrink together if the programs are merged, so remember its \$5 million per biennium then \$2.5 million per year.

Equity Areas Update

Tom Mills: The state allows us to decide what low income population is, how we define that and our committee had said 200% of the federal poverty level. (Displays Equity areas Update Maps)

Tom Mills: Is there a map or two that you want to take off the table and not consider?

Mary Lou Ritter: Because of our current political and financial situation I'm thinking we don't make any changes in this equity decision, I kind of support what you were saying as a staff of about 25% for right now, I think we'll have opportunities in future to revise that if we want, is that correct?

Tom Mills: If you choose a map you can always change your map before November, but it might muddy the waters a little bit, so once you choose your map it would be best to stay with it I would say.

Art Pearce: I agree with Mary Lou, given the fluctuation these areas are changing constantly that staying with the 25% is the most consistent approach this group could pick., so that would be my suggestion.

Chat - Jillian Detweiler: I think we should adopt the map that reflects the most recent data, same criteria from the last round.

Commissioner Savas: In the context of how this impacts any other decisions or the limited resources we have, I just want to totally make sure we understand if there is a result, what's the tradeoff here? Pro & cons.

Tom Mills: The committee can choose to do whatever they want, but we as a committee have chosen what bus lines to invest in, what improvements to make to those bus lines, we've already put service out on those bus lines. I'm going to assume that the committee would not choose to change that and no longer assist bus lines because of a change in the map and to be honest the map changes while there seem to be a lot generally speaking we're showing the same areas as before. As staff we would not recommend any changes to the plan based on the map. I wouldn't recommend any changes to the plan.

Walter Robinson II: How much would the budget projections change with the addition of the equity area map to 30%?

Tom Mills: The budget projections wouldn't change at all.

Art Pearce: I think that going to 30% actually make you less focused on where you're going.

Tom Mills: Suggestion for the next meeting, it looks like to me that folks don't want to go any lower than 25% which would mean fewer census block would be part of the equity areas. Maybe you want to

choose to go a little higher or stay at 25%. For the next meeting I propose that we just show the 25% block and 30%, then we can narrow the decision down to that. Next meeting we can vote.

Adjourn