

Tualatin Planning Commission

MINUTES OF May 15, 2024 (NOT ADOPTED)

TPC MEMBERS PRESENT:

William Beers, Chair
Zach Wimer, Commissioner
Janelle Thompson, Vice Chair
Brittany Valli, Commissioner
Randall Hledik, Commissioner

STAFF PRESENT:

Steve Koper, Assistant Community Director
Lindsey Hagerman, Office Coordinator

TPC MEMBERS ABSENT:

Ursula Kuhn, Commissioner

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. and roll call was taken.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioners unanimously voted to approve the March 27, 2024 minutes.

ACTION ITEMS

1. TriMet will provide an informational presentation on its Forward Together ridership and equity-focused system redesign

Grant O'Connell from TriMet started his presentation and shared background of the project. He explained there are two different phases of Forward Together. He shared this is part of TriMet's post-pandemic service concept to guide restoration and growth with community engagement. He noted the pandemic really changed and shaped these goals. He showed a graph of how the bus system has changed during and after the pandemic.

Mr. O'Connell illustrated the profound shifts brought about by the pandemic. He highlighted how certain bus lines maintained their ridership, catering to areas with in-person work and low-income communities. Conversely, he noted that other lines experienced a decline in ridership, particularly those service areas where hybrid and remote work have become prevalent, such as higher-income communities.

Mr. O'Connell discussed the public outreach initiatives undertaken to inform their service recovery plan. He highlighted a survey aimed at determining TriMet's priorities for restoring service, which had 5,400 individuals participating. Among the top responses were calls to prioritize the restoration of ridership, alleviate congestion, and enhance services for lower-income individuals.

Mr. O'Connell presented a changed model for accessing communities. He emphasized that the median number of jobs reachable by residents within a 45-minute service area would increase by 45%, indicating significant overall improvements in job accessibility.

Commissioner Hledik asked clarification on the color of the map and how they pick points. Mr. O'Connell answered they run different models through the data base and it comes down to professional judgement. He explained the software they use is the basis for decision-making. He noted they did this project with all 26 jurisdictions for transportation service input.

Commissioner Hledik asked who in Tualatin helps identify transportation service needs. Mr. O'Connell answered Mike McCarthy and Cody Field.

Mr. O'Connell shared where the ideas came from, including TriMet's Service Enhancement Plans, the Forward Together plan, and municipal staff workshops. He shared they plan on expansion of frequent network, more local services, expand weekend service and hybrid/return to work schedules.

Mr. O'Connell explained how they do long-range planning. He explained their plan overall to get back the 22% level lost during the pandemic. He shared they would like to not only restore but also grow back, in a conservative way. He shared their plan to expand their frequent service network. He shared specific lines that run through Tualatin.

Commissioner Hledik asked clarification on the chart if it was growth over the last year. Mr. O'Connell answered it was total of percent growth.

Mr. O'Connell shared specific Tualatin Service Lines and how TriMet is extending these lines and adding different weekend services.

Chair Beers asked where in Lake Oswego Line 97 would go. Mr. O'Connell answered that it would go downtown.

Commissioner Hledik asked how often the lines runs. Mr. O'Connell answered Line 94 runs every 20 minutes, Line 76 runs every 15 minutes, and Line 96 and Line 97 run every 30 minutes.

Mr. O'Connell explained the implementation steps including outreach and operator hiring. The latter being TriMet's biggest challenge due to labor shortages. He noted that system growth of 38% would require 500 more operators to be employed. He shared a graph of weekly vehicle hour growth.

Commissioner Hledik asked clarification on the graph if it was growth since last year. Mr. O'Connell explained the percentage is different year to year.

Mr. O'Connell switched gears to speak about Forward Together 2.0. He shared this is an aspirational vision for TriMet service growth in response to community desires and support.

Vice Chair Thompson asked how they advertise the new lines. Mr. O'Connell shared planning process people are engaged and mailings near the route. He also shared they might do a community event in celebration of a new line.

Mr. O'Connell noted that revisions for long range goals included a 12.2% transit mode share of total trips.

Commissioner Hledik asked why 12.2%. Mr. O'Connell answered that the goals were set to reduce greenhouse gas reductions and Metro was ultimately responsible for the specifics of the goals.

Mr. O'Connell shared the next steps TriMet plans on doing with Forward Together 1.0 and 2.0.

Vice Chair Thompson asked if TriMet is able to capture the new developments for their planning. Mr. O'Connell answered yes, and shared they met with City of Tualatin. He spoke about ridership modeling technology and how they work together with different modeling projections.

Assistant Community Development Director, Steve Koper, asked where people can find information on upcoming events. Mr. O'Connell answered people can sign up on their website for updates.

Commissioner Hledik asked if the City can rely on TriMet to work on lines in the new development. Mr. Koper answered yes, we are working with them.

2. Ride Connection will provide an informational presentation on its service and operations

Tangerine Behere and her colleagues from Ride Connection introduced themselves. She shared an overview and brief history of Ride Connections. Ms. Behere elaborated on the various connections the organization facilitates, providing insights into each: community connectors, demand response, volunteer driver program, ride together, shared vehicle agreements, ride wise, travel options counseling, and mobility for health.

Commissioner Hledik said it sounded like they are Uber/Lfyt and asked how one could use their services to go to a doctor's appointment. Ms. Behere answered they need to call the service center and give three to five business days' notice before an appointment. Debbie Waalkes noted they determine if they can do a ride based on staff or volunteer availability.

Commissioner Hledik asked if the service is free. Ms. Waalkes and Ms. Behere answered it is free to the user and funded by donations.

Commissioner Hledik asked what the qualifications are for a ride. Miranda Seekins answered that the recipient must be 60 or older and/or have a disability. Ms. Waalkes noted this includes temporary disabilities such as cancer treatment or broken leg.

Vice Chair Thompson asked if Ride Connection was the same thing as the Tualatin Shuttle. Ms. Behere responded, stating that the name is tailored to the location of the connecting ride; in this case, Tualatin.

Commissioner Hledik asked if the shuttle makes regular runs to the high school. Ms. Seekins shared they have a map of the shuttle on the slides to share.

Ms. Behere shared a map of the shuttle's green, blue and red lines.

Commissioner Hledik asked how someone would use the shuttle from park and ride. Ms. Waalkes explained they are considered first mile and last mile service for many.

Commissioner Wimer shared he uses the shuttle.

Commissioner Valli asked if the shuttle is free. Ms. Behere answered that yes, it is.

Ms. Seekins shared the bus route schedule and times. She noted live stops are option and schedule deviation half a mile off the route.

Ms. Behere discussed the impact, value, and benefits of Ride Connection. She emphasized how the routes foster community connections, improve livability, stimulate economic vitality, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. She emphasized that these initiatives receive support through regional transit plans, serving as a model for the wider region.

Ms. Behere shared rider survey for the Tualatin Shuttle and dip in services. Ms. Waalkes spoke about increase services to Rolling Hills Church Monday and Wednesday.

Ms. Seekins talked about a new route they will be launching late summer early fall 2024.

Vice Chair Thompson asked the frequency of the new bus route. Ms. Seekins answered it depends on the time of day and driver breaks but it's roughly once an hour.

Vice Chair Thompson asked if all the routes typically have one driver. Ms. Waalkes answered there is one driver in the morning and one in the afternoon.

COMMUNICATION FROM STAFF

Mr. Koper spoke about the upcoming agenda items for future meetings.

COMMUNICATION WITH COMMISSIONERS

Susan Noack from the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce shared her opinions on the significance of the bus system for Tualatin and shared some history on importance for the community. She also spoke about the Aging Task Force and the need and desire for long-range planning for the aging community.

Chair Beers invited Ms. Noack to come to a future planning commission meeting to share her knowledge from the Tualatin Chamber of Commerce on the ageing community.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Valli. The motion was seconded by Chair Beers. The Commissioners voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.