

## TRANSIT EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING NOTES 8-18-16

### Committee members in attendance

Dr. T. Allen Bethel  
Scotty Ellis  
Roberta Hunte  
Anneliese Koehler  
Nicole Phillips  
Holly Sullins  
Tiffany Thompson

### Staff in attendance

Mary Fetsch, Chief Media Relations Officer  
John Gardner, Diversity & Transit Equity  
Jake Warr, Diversity & Transit Equity

### Guests in attendance

David Bouchard, OPAL/BRU

### **Title VI Program Update**

Jake showed committee the presentation given to the board on August 10<sup>th</sup> reviewing Title VI update process and proposed policy changes (see PowerPoint).

Committee members had several questions:

- Why keep low-income definition at 150%, when that is lower than eligibility for SNAP and other programs?
  - JW response: For Title VI analysis to ensure differences in low-income and higher income populations remain. The more inclusive the definition of low-income, the less it may differ from higher income. Does not require TriMet to use this definition for program eligibility (e.g. low-income fare).
- Languages the fare survey was available in
  - JW response: Full survey in English and Spanish, and LEP questions in 15 other languages
- Survey data by mode (bus, MAX, WES)
  - JW response: Some info provided in presentation on race and income for each mode, except WES which had a very small sample size
- Why the Major Service Change threshold of 15%
  - JW response: Based on review of past changes and peer review. Also TM wanted to be cautious in changing the threshold.
  - Scotty Ellis recommended evaluation of this threshold to assess whether it is appropriate.
- Why the Disparate Impact/Disproportionate Burden threshold of 3%
  - JW response: Based on margins of error in data. 1% differences (current standard) are not always real differences. Also did not want to increase from 1% to 5% or higher.

- Consideration of “wealthy income” for analysis/comparison?
  - JW response: have only used binary low/higher income for analysis.

#### Other comments:

- Add food access to considerations in equity analysis? Recognize that it’s not ideal to have laundry list, but it’s important.
- Issue with many places (esp. East County) is where the bus actually goes, and not just that it’s there.
- Connecting lines are important. Lines aren’t independent, i.e. changes to one line affect others.
- Seem like practical changes
- When fares were raised last we knew there would be hardships, and now we are seeing that play out as we recognize need for low-income fare etc.

### Fare Equity Update

#### YouthPass

- OPAL research of costs, within \$5-\$10 of TriMet’s estimates (per pass)
- John met w/ Jennifer Phung, TM willing to work with OPAL
- TM would rather do it by district than school (more systematic approach)
- TM willing to replicate PPS model with others (1/3)
- Question: Why not redirect yellow bus \$ to passes?
  - JG response: PPS only district in region able to get waiver at this point due to service levels.
  - It was noted that a work group @ state level looking into issue, including union reps.

#### Low-income Fare

- Four Nines (consultant) work: estimated completion by end Sept. Still researching cost models based on various subsidy levels and eligibility criteria.
- Plan to convene two tables: 1. Local elected/agency officials (funding). Series of 3-4 meetings. Ideally in time for legislative ask. 2. Community-based org level. Those who are serving low-income riders. Need dozens of signatures and support of stakeholders.
- Goal: report and recommendations completed by end of year.
- **TM will send list of invitees to TEAC to get feedback/additional ideas.**
- Question: will there be transit riders at the table?
  - JG: TEAC involvement, can engage groups of riders.
- Sam Chase at the table? Yes.
- Metro and DEI team willing to assist/support effort.
- Suggestion to include various DEI teams in this work.

#### Public Comment

Question: How responsive are Riders’ Club members to communications from TriMet?

TM response: Don’t the information, but can find out, and probably a good idea to anyway.

#### Fare Enforcement

NP sent out link to video of rider being arrested. In light of FE conversation, this event showcases why this matters.

NP described experience seeing riders being left at stops, usually people of color, low-income, transit dependent. Spoke with arrested rider, wasn't willing to say much.

TM staff and RH recounted what occurred in the event.

Committee discussion/comments:

- Two focuses: 1. Need to keep system moving, and 2. What does de-escalation look like? Does \$2.50 in lost revenue need to result in all of this?
- Don't understand the big deal with letting riders ride for free b/c others overpay and fares a small portion of budget. Bus/train will go on route anyway.
- Rider had opportunity to end situation. Not just in the interest of collecting fares b/c the ride is subsidized. Allowing free rides will deplete budget. Purpose of fare enforcement is to ensure people pay their own way. Open system lends itself to people riding w/out paying. Needs to be intermediate step of enforcement prior to exclusion, which leads to more problems. Can we educate and deter but can we be less heavy-handed?
- Where are we in FE process? Wrong to go from not paying fare to being in the back of a police car. Moments make sense to be arrested, but not just fare evasion. There are better ways to address it.
  - JG response: PSU is analyzing data and producing report (by end Sept). Legal, operations looking into actions. TEAC can come up with ideas separate from TriMet staff process.
- Agree that action (arrest) too extreme for missing one fare. Important not to contribute to problems of other systems (criminal justice).
- Agree w/ what's been said. Wasn't a space for person to be OK for not paying fare.
- Agree. Great spot to use TEAC subcommittee to work on. What is the purpose of FE? More enforcement, or deterrent for people to try and pay?
- Big problem that's messy. Not all in agency are on the same page. TEAC should continue to press TriMet to be accountable.
- Acknowledge that fare payment is necessary. Is it really in TM's best interest for this to blow up over \$2.50? IPT needs to go away. Exclusions are ridiculous. They should be used for hurting someone/causing damage, but not for minor offenses like smoking. Modifying exclusions takes time out of your life. Situation was emblematic that we need to make multiple serious changes. Should have community service option, even though it wasn't perfect in the past.

**Other note:**

No meeting next July and August?