

Date:

April 30, 2019

Case:

TxDOT PTAC MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING 4-30-2019

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TRANSCRIPTION OF
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, APRIL 30, 2019
10:00 A.M.
200 EAST RIVERSIDE DRIVE, ROOM 2B.1
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78704

25 REPORTED BY: PAIGE S. WATTS, TEXAS CSR NO. 8311
PUBLIC MEETING 4-30-2019

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APPEARANCES

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT AND PARTICIPATING:

- John McBeth, Chair
- Ken Fickes
- Marc Whyte
- Dietrich Von Biedenfeld

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PARTICIPATING TELEPHONICALLY:

- Jim Cline, Vice-Chair

TxDOT PRESENT AND PARTICIPATING:

- Eric Gleason, PTN Director
- Josh Ribakove, PTN Communications Manager
- Kelly Kirkland, PTN Business Operations Manager

OTHER SPEAKERS:

- Elizabeth Bruchez, Brazos Transit District
- Kelly Blume, Texas A&M Transportation Institute
- Greg Wright, Community Liaison - Intercity Bus Program
WSDOT (by telephone)

PUBLIC MEETING 4-30-2019

MEETING AGENDA

ITEM

- 1 Call to Order.
- 2 Safety Briefing.
- 3 Approval of minutes from January 24, 2019, meeting.
(Action)
- 4 TxDOT's Public Transportation Division Director's
report to the Public Transportation Advisory
Committee regarding public transportation matters.
- 5 Presentation and discussion of state-funded
intercity bus service in the United States, and
potential implications for program approach in
Texas. (Action)
- 6 Presentation and discussion on state-funded
intercity bus service in the state of Washington,
and potential implications for program approach in
Texas. (Action)
- 7 Public Comment - Public comment will only be
accepted in person. The public is invited to
attend the meeting in person or listen by phone at
a listen-in toll-free number: 1-415-655-0003 [US]
with attendee access code: 598 304 40. The meeting
transcript will be placed on the Internet following
the meeting.
- 8 Propose and discuss agenda items for next meeting;
confirm date of next meeting. (Action)
- 9 Adjourn. (Action)

1 MR. MCBETH: Good morning, all. This is
2 John McBeth. I'm Chairman of PTAC. The clock on the
3 wall at TxDOT Riverside Campus says 10:00 o'clock.
4 We're set to meet at 10:00 o'clock, so I will call the
5 meeting to order.

6 And, Eric, who's going to do the safety
7 briefing this time?

8 MR. GLEASON: That's going to be Josh.

9 MR. MCBETH: Josh, you're in charge of
10 the safety briefing.

11 MR. RIBAKOVE: Welcome to 200 East
12 Riverside Drive. If we should need to evacuate the
13 building, we will go out this door, down the stairs,
14 don't use the elevator, and straight out to the parking
15 lot. Once you get outside, turn left and walk down to
16 Riverside Drive and we'll meet over there. Should we
17 need to shelter in place, that is done in the auditorium
18 that is downstairs. Go down that same set of stairs
19 right here. When you get to the bottom, turn to your
20 left. You'll see the double doors there and that is a
21 windowless safe room and that's the best place to
22 shelter in place.

23 Should there be an active shooter
24 situation, we will stick around here, listen for
25 announcements and follow those instructions. Restrooms

1 are located around by the elevator. And in front of the
2 door here, we do have a sign-in sheet. If you're here,
3 we would sure appreciate it if you would sign in. We
4 also have speaker cards. If you would like to address
5 the meeting, then please just pick one of those up, fill
6 it out -- it's very short -- and have somebody pass it
7 to me and we'll make sure that you get a chance to speak
8 in the meeting. Thanks.

9 MR. MCBETH: Thank you, Josh.

10 For those that are listening in on the
11 phone, let's introduce the PTAC starting with Dietrich.

12 MR. BIEDENFELD: I'm Dietrich Von
13 Biedenfeld out of West Columbia, Texas.

14 MR. WHYTE: Marc Whyte and I'm here from
15 San Antonio.

16 MR. FICKES: Ken Fickes from Harris
17 County.

18 MR. MCBETH: John McBeth from the Brazos
19 Valley.

20 Jim Cline, you there?

21 MR. CLINE: Yeah. Jim Cline on the
22 phone.

23 MR. MCBETH: Okay. We have a quorum, so
24 we will begin the meeting. We've had the safety
25 briefing. I'll call for approval of the minutes from

1 the January 24th meeting.

2 MR. FICKES: This is Ken. I'll make a
3 motion.

4 MR. CLINE: This is Jim. I'll second.

5 MR. MCBETH: We have a motion and a
6 second. Are there any additions or deletions from
7 anybody?

8 There being none, we'll call the
9 question: All in favor, signify by saying aye?

10 (Chorus of ayes)

11 MR. MCBETH: All opposed by nay? Being
12 all ayes, no nays, the minutes are approved.

13 The next item, No. 4, is the TxDOT Public
14 Transportation Division Director's report on Public
15 Transportation Advisory Committee regarding public
16 transportation matters. Mr. Gleason.

17 MR. GLEASON: Good morning, everyone.
18 This is Eric Gleason, Division Director for Public
19 Transportation at TxDOT. I have a handful of items to
20 brief the committee on this morning, starting with the
21 committee membership. So this a nine-member committee.
22 Christina Melton Crane, since the last time y'all have
23 met, she has submitted her resignation and so we are
24 down to six and we need five for a quorum and we have
25 five today. J.R. would be here except that his truck

1 got broken into, and he's having to deal with that.

2 So in terms of the vacancies, as you-all
3 know, this is a committee that is appointed by the
4 Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker and each of
5 those three officials have three places to appoint on
6 the committee. Each appoint a general public
7 representative, a transit provider representative, and a
8 transportation user representative. And right now, all
9 of the Governor's appointments are full. The Lieutenant
10 Governor has two vacancies: A general public
11 representative vacancy and a transportation user
12 representative vacancy. And then the Speaker has one.
13 Transportation user is vacant.

14 So we are in contact with those offices,
15 reminding them of these openings. I don't know how
16 realistic it is to expect anything much to happen until
17 after session, but we will put on a full-court press to
18 try and get the committee up to full strength here
19 between now and hopefully the next meeting; but probably
20 two meetings from now is a more realistic assumption.
21 So any questions on committee membership?

22 All right, legislative update. So a
23 relatively quiet session for public transportation, as
24 far as I know anyways.

25 Mr. Chair, you might differ with that.

1 MR. MCBETH: It's been very, very quiet.

2 MR. GLEASON: There is one piece of
3 legislation which has cleared the House, and I'm
4 actually going to defer to the Chair to describe the
5 fuel tax.

6 MR. MCBETH: The fuel tax exemption that
7 we proposed -- this will be the second time we proposed
8 it. The first time we proposed it or the first time we
9 thought about it was several years back when TxDOT got a
10 brand new Executive Director and we met with him and
11 Eric and we discussed money, which always seems to be on
12 our mind. And his question was: "Well, do you guys pay
13 the fuel tax? Because the metros don't."

14 And we went, "Actually, we do."

15 And he went, "Hmm. So we give you money
16 out of the non-dedicated portion of the dedicated fuel
17 tax and then you use that money to pay your fuel tax, so
18 it comes back to us and it becomes dedicated money. So
19 you're on a death spiral. Would that be correct?"

20 And we all went, "Yes, sir, that would be
21 correct."

22 And he looked at Eric and said, "Eric, we
23 need to do something about that."

24 So that's where the idea came up. Last
25 session we introduced this bill and it got killed

1 immediately because of the fiscal note because we
2 included the small urban systems and that's a big fiscal
3 note, \$22 million. This time around, we introduced it
4 with only the rural programs. LBB came back with a
5 very, very friendly fiscal note.

6 How much was it, Liz?

7 MS. BRUCHEZ: I don't remember.

8 MR. MCBETH: 2.7 million, something like
9 that. De minimis. It's so de minimis it's below de
10 minimis among the State's trillion-dollar budget. So it
11 breezed through the House. Liz calls this the little
12 bill that could after the little engine that could
13 because we have not really worked it that hard. It's
14 just everybody thinks it's such a good idea not to make
15 rural people use their state money to pay the state back
16 fuel tax.

17 So it breezed through the House. It's
18 over in the Senate and --

19 MR. GLEASON: Senate Finance.

20 MR. MCBETH: Senate Finance. It's being
21 carried -- sponsored by Senator Perry. We hope to have
22 Senator Hall sign on as a co-sponsor. I've talked with
23 Omega Hawkins last week and according to Liz, Omega has
24 a little red phone on her desk that she calls Senator
25 Hall on. So I think that's going to happen. Hopefully,

1 it will breeze through Senate Finance.

2 We do have Senator Nichols, who at one
3 time was on the commission, and is everything transit
4 over in the Senate. He is against the bill, but he's
5 made it known that he's not going to be forcefully
6 against it. It's a principle with him that he doesn't
7 want to see any money diverted from TxDOT's fuel tax,
8 period. And so it's -- and I understand that. We've
9 worked with Senator Nichols on so many projects. I
10 understand his objection. So I think it's going to
11 breeze through both.

12 We've been assured that the signature
13 will be affixed to it when it does. So rural transit
14 will end up not paying the state fuel tax and it will
15 save -- in the case of Brazos Transit, it saves us
16 \$186,000 a year. That's two bus routes. Two bus
17 routes. That's putting a lot more service on the
18 street. The smaller systems, it runs anywhere from
19 38,000 up to a hundred. But any money that we can save
20 is money we can save. So it's a good bill, the little
21 bill that could. Right now, it has no enemies. So we
22 think it's going to do all right.

23 MR. GLEASON: Okay. And I'm not sure
24 there's much else of anything to discuss.

25 MR. MCBETH: The only other bill that we

1 have been tracking is the Uber bill.

2 MR. FICKES: Yeah. We have, too.

3 MR. MCBETH: We have been tracking that
4 bill since before it was introduced. We've really not
5 taken a forceful stand on it, other than we did bury our
6 feet in the fact that they could not establish a
7 separate set of Medicaid standards for Uber and Lyft
8 that are set for all the rest of us that do Medicaid
9 transportation. Legally they're courting a lawsuit if
10 they do that, which is what we've explained and we would
11 be the very first ones to sue them; but, quite frankly,
12 I think they've already been told by CMS and Washington,
13 D.C., "You do that and we're not going to give you any
14 Medicaid money for transportation. You can't do it."

15 MR. GLEASON: So for members of the
16 committee, there was legislation introduced where the
17 transportation network companies would be treated
18 differently under the Medicaid Medical Transportation
19 Program contracting effort, where they would not have to
20 comply with all of the regulations that, say, transit
21 providers have to comply with under the program. They'd
22 be given a pass, if you will, on much of the -- many of
23 the onerous provisions that come along with that.

24 MR. MCBETH: Like random drug screening.

25 MR. FICKES: So we dug into it. We have

1 a legislative person in Austin that's been sending us
2 all this stuff, and we didn't dig into it too much; but
3 as a transit provider in an urban area, they said --
4 well, the only criteria that I saw for a vehicle, it had
5 to have four doors. That was it.

6 MR. GLEASON: Wheels.

7 MR. FICKES: Wheels and four doors and
8 brakes.

9 MR. MCBETH: There wasn't even any
10 thought given to how they would even certify their
11 vehicles. Our vehicles have to be certified annually
12 and then if we add a new vehicle, we can't add it for
13 Medicaid until we have brought it to Austin and
14 LogistiCare has gone through it with a fine-tooth comb
15 and made sure it meets two pages' worth of rules and
16 regulations.

17 MR. GLEASON: All right. So that's it on
18 the legislative side of things.

19 Commission activity, in March at their
20 last meeting -- well, meeting before the April
21 meeting -- the commission did push through this year's
22 rural program formula award. So we are in the process
23 of getting project grant agreements put together and
24 executed for that.

25 And then coming up in June, June every

1 year is a relatively large event for us at the
2 commission. We do state funds. So assuming there's an
3 appropriation -- assuming that our budget passes out of
4 the legislature this session, we will at the June
5 commission meeting award the FY 2020 state funds for
6 public transportation to large and small urban and rural
7 transit districts in the State of Texas.

8 We will also in the same minute order --
9 we do a combined minute order now -- we will also make
10 recommendations for award for the 5310 Program. The
11 5304 Program is a relatively small amount of funding
12 associated with continuing the coordination/planning
13 effort in each of the regions, the planning regions of
14 the state. And then we will also do the 5311 vehicle
15 miles travel award.

16 So in total, we'll be up somewhere just
17 above 50 million for the commission in June. About 34
18 of that, I believe, is state funding. I'm guessing our
19 vehicle mile award is going to come in around
20 10 million, more or less. And then 5310 is 7.6, is what
21 we have available for that; and then a relatively small
22 amount for coordination and planning. So June is a big
23 event for us at the commission.

24 Just briefly, a little more detail on the
25 5310 Program. We've got 45 applications submitted for

1 us to look at. Total of just over \$10 million in
2 requests, and we have about 7.6 available to assign to
3 that 10 million. Not an unusual situation for us with
4 this program. We typically -- that's about right. We
5 normally entertain through the call about two and a half
6 to \$3 million more than we have funds available and we
7 are working through the evaluation process right now and
8 I have a number of meetings scheduled over the next
9 couple of weeks to go through the results of that. So
10 everything should be on schedule for that award in June.

11 Another topic that is of interest to the
12 committee, not necessarily for action at any time, but
13 we are continuing to pursue implementation of the
14 agencies' safety plans as required by FTA rule. We are
15 working with 39 different transit agencies in the State
16 of Texas to create agency safety plans. We need to have
17 that done by July of 2020. There are two agencies that
18 have opted out of that process. One is Fort Bend, and
19 the other is Amarillo.

20 Amarillo feels like they have completed
21 it already, and so they're just going to ask us to
22 certify. And then Fort Bend, we've double-checked since
23 Paulette's departure and they're still planning on doing
24 their own. And then we have not yet made contact with
25 Corpus Christi. So we're still attempting to make

1 contact down in the Corpus Christi area. So that's
2 where that stands. We kick that off. We're collecting
3 agency level data and over the next year, we'll be
4 pulling together those plans with those folks.

5 And then finally in your packet today, I
6 did want to point out -- if you haven't seen -- we did
7 have some corrections to the information we presented to
8 you last time on the Intercity Bus Program. And as you
9 look through your packet, those corrections are
10 highlighted in yellow. So if you notice that, that's
11 what that was and I apologize for the inaccuracies in
12 that presentation.

13 And with that, Mr. Chair, I'll take any
14 questions from anyone on the committee and that
15 concludes my report.

16 MR. MCBETH: Are there any questions of
17 Eric?

18 MR. CLINE: No questions from me.

19 MR. MCBETH: Okay. Thank you for the
20 briefing on PTAC.

21 I would urge members, if you were
22 appointed by the Lieutenant Governor or the Speaker, to
23 contact them and let them know we really do need these
24 appointees made. It would be great to have all nine of
25 our member positions filled.

1 So with that, we'll move on to Item
2 No. 5, discussion on intercity bus. One of my favorite
3 topics in the world.

4 MR. GLEASON: All right. So we have TTI
5 is here today to present to us. Let me just real
6 briefly for the committee, this came up in some
7 conversations. You'll note that for both five and six
8 on your agenda today, we indicate "action" in
9 parentheses. We are not asking for action from the
10 committee for either one of these. It is listed as
11 action in the event that the committee chooses to take
12 some action -- to provide us some direction, if you
13 will -- from the committee on something you've heard.

14 If we did not include that, you wouldn't
15 be able to do that. So it's just there to allow you to
16 do that; but just in terms of what you should expect
17 from us, we're not looking for action on either five or
18 six today.

19 So with that, introduce yourself and
20 let's tackle Agenda Item 5.

21 MS. BLUME: Where would you like me to
22 stand?

23 MR. RIBAKOVE: We would like you to take
24 that seat right next to Mark.

25 MS. BLUME: I'm Kelly Blume with

1 Kittelson -- or excuse me, TTI. I've only been there
2 for a few months. So I'm not in the habit of
3 introducing myself correctly.

4 MR. GLEASON: Kelly, I'm going to ask you
5 speak up and slow down a little bit for the folks on the
6 phone so they can follow.

7 MS. BLUME: All right. Thank you.

8 So at the last PTAC meeting, there was
9 discussion of intercity bus service in Texas and as a
10 follow-up to that meeting, we were tasked with pulling
11 together some information for you to inform your
12 discussion of intercity bus service in Texas. We
13 prepared a short report. This presentation is really
14 summarizing what's in that report for you. So --

15 MR. GLEASON: And, Kelly, if I could?

16 Excuse me, Mr. Chair. I meant to
17 introduce both five and six with a little context for
18 the committee.

19 So this is, I believe, our third
20 conversation on intercity bus over the last several
21 meetings and we are asking the committee to help staff
22 assess whether or not the current approach in Texas to
23 administering this program, whether or not there are any
24 opportunities to make improvements to it or changes to
25 it that would make it more effective. And really the

1 outcome of these conversations have the potential to
2 help inform and perhaps add to or modify an upcoming
3 call for projects that we have scheduled for next fall,
4 of which the Intercity Bus Program funding is a part of.

5 So depending on what comes out of these
6 conversations, we may be in a position to modify that
7 call for projects in a fashion that is still consistent
8 with our Administrative rules on how to administer the
9 program. It's also possible that at the end of these
10 conversations, that the committee may advise that the
11 program go in a direction which could trigger a need to
12 change the Administrative Code, which is a much
13 lengthier and more involved process. And both of those
14 outcomes are possible, and both of those are fine as far
15 as we're concerned.

16 We're just looking for the committee to
17 weigh in and help provide advice to us on where we might
18 make some changes to this program, if any at all; and
19 it's also all right to just simply leave it alone.
20 That's another option. So with that, we've had a
21 discussion on the current program, how we administer,
22 and its performance.

23 Kelly is going to walk the committee
24 through a discussion on the market in general for
25 intercity bus, some of the changes that are happening in

1 it, and how you go about estimating demand. And I think
2 as you listen to this description, I think you need to
3 be listening for, you know, what are the elements of the
4 market that apply to the rural program funding that
5 drive this program here at TxDOT and there may be a lot
6 going on in the market that may not; but it's part of
7 what the intercity carriers are trying to respond to at
8 the moment.

9 And then we have in Item 6, we have a
10 representative from the Washington State DOT, which was
11 a request of the committee the last time we met, that
12 will walk the committee through how Washington state
13 approaches their program. And the reason that's
14 important is that last time, one of the pieces of
15 information we gave you was a spreadsheet that kind of
16 summarized a range of approaches nationwide to the
17 program. And we put Texas on the left-hand side as
18 being the least prescriptive or a low prescriptive
19 model, if you will, and then at the other end of the
20 spectrum, we had Washington state, which has really
21 taken a very aggressive role over the years in
22 strategically and deliberately focusing its program in
23 ways that it thinks makes sense.

24 So we wanted to allow the committee to
25 hear that and that would possibly give us the two

1 bookmarks, if you will, on a conversation that might
2 have us making changes to the program as we manage it
3 today. So that's the background for it.

4 Now, Kelly, go ahead and let's talk about
5 market and demand and then we'll shift into Washington
6 state.

7 MS. BLUME: Okay. You've got the slides,
8 all right.

9 Well, we've already been through the
10 introduction of what we're talking about today. So we
11 can skip this slide. So the first part of this
12 presentation is just really giving you a snapshot of
13 what intercity bus service looks like in Texas right now
14 and this is just focused on public, scheduled intercity
15 bus services. We didn't look at private charters. So
16 there are many companies that are available to provide
17 that service.

18 The second part of the presentation is
19 really going to focus on the market discussion. What
20 does the market look like now? How has it changed over
21 time? And how can we estimate demand in Texas?

22 So this map is an update of a map that
23 was prepared in 2010 in a 2010 report to illustrate the
24 different sorts of intercity bus service connections
25 that are available in Texas right now. The map -- the

1 green lines are connections that have received 5311(f)
2 funds from TxDOT in the past. The purple ones are
3 connections that have not recently received those sorts
4 of funds. What's -- the map, really you should
5 interpret it as connections rather than routings. There
6 are several intercity bus services in Texas that don't
7 necessarily follow a particular prescribed route for
8 connecting different cities.

9 So, for example, if you were to connect
10 Austin to Houston, would you take 290 or would you take
11 71 and I-10? Many of the bus operators leave that
12 decision up to drivers -- based on traffic conditions,
13 congestion, the availability of a toll connection -- to
14 help improve travel time. So that sort of
15 decision-making.

16 And something else that's in this map --
17 or that's rather not in this map, is that it doesn't
18 tell you how much intercity bus service is provided in a
19 given corridor and it varies a lot. There's only one
20 bus route that operates to connect Presidio and Fort
21 Stockton, for example, in West Texas. Whereas, there
22 are many different possible intercity bus service
23 connections that could take you from, say, San Antonio
24 to Dallas.

25 In part of the report, we did a little

1 bit of digging into that to kind of illustrate it and I
2 think for that particular example, there were 24
3 different bus routes that you could -- or scheduling
4 options that you could take across four different
5 providers throughout the day to get between San Antonio
6 and Dallas. So there's a lot of intercity bus service
7 supply that's available in Texas in many corridors. So
8 that's about the map.

9 MR. FICKES: Can we go back to the map
10 for a minute?

11 MS. BLUME: Yes.

12 MR. FICKES: I have a question about it.

13 MS. BLUME: Yes.

14 MR. FICKES: Ark-Tex is missing up near
15 Texarkana. Is it -- Ark-Tex, that's one of the --

16 MS. BLUME: Yes, it's one of the
17 providers.

18 MR. FICKES: That we looked at in the
19 packet. So I'm just trying to figure out why it's not
20 on the map.

21 MS. BLUME: It's not -- it's part of --
22 it's a conceptional map, for the most part. We didn't
23 get into a specific --

24 MR. FICKES: But see, I'm not familiar
25 with the route up there and I'm kind of interested in

1 where does it go and where does it connect at and --

2 MR. GLEASON: So the routing up in the
3 Texarkana area is mostly a feeder service, intercity bus
4 feeder service concept, and isn't really captured on
5 this map.

6 MR. FICKES: Similar to CARTS? Similar
7 process they're doing?

8 MR. GLEASON: Exactly. So I think the
9 main takeaway from this map is that the most significant
10 focus for program investment has been attempting to
11 capture connections that aren't made or wouldn't be made
12 on their own by the private sector industry. And to
13 that extent, the green lines appear to be unique. You
14 don't see purple lines running under them, and so that's
15 the concept.

16 MR. FICKES: Okay, I'm good.

17 MS. BLUME: It's definitely more of a
18 statewide connectivity.

19 So these are a list of the intercity bus
20 services that are currently operating in Texas sort of
21 under their own umbrella. It's actually a pretty
22 complicated arrangement when you start thinking about
23 who's contracting with whom to operate different
24 services. Like Greyhound, for example, does contract
25 with other providers, including All Aboard America!, to

1 provide service in specific corridors. And Greyhound,
2 in return, is actually one of the contractors that helps
3 provide Amtrak's Thruway bus service.

4 So All Aboard America! operates the
5 service in West Texas that runs from Presidio north.
6 Amtrak Thruway bus is a supplemental service to help
7 extend the reach of the Amtrak rail network. Arrow
8 Trailways is based in the Killeen area and partners with
9 Greyhound and others to provide intercity bus service
10 connections. Greyhound has about 150 stops in Texas
11 right now. Jefferson Lines, it only connects in Wichita
12 Falls. So it's a very small part of the intercity bus
13 picture in Texas. Megabus is a provider that connects
14 major metropolitan areas, as is Vonlane. OurBus is a
15 coordinator and marketer of intercity bus service.
16 They're not an actual operator. They provide -- they
17 contract out services, and they make them available
18 through their particular brand. And Tornado Bus and
19 Turimex Internacional are Mexico-based intercity bus
20 companies that operate under different names within the
21 state. Tornado operates as El Expreso, for example.
22 And they cover both many different stops in Texas, many
23 metro areas, many small areas, and they also extend out
24 into other parts of the U.S.

25 MR. GLEASON: Little known fact, the

1 current Secretary or Executive Director of the Minnesota
2 Department of Transportation is the former President of
3 Jefferson Lines. So he remembers us giving him a bus a
4 long time ago.

5 MR. MCBETH: Where does CARTS fit on this
6 list?

7 MS. BLUME: We weren't looking
8 necessarily at the rural bus definition, but at the
9 intercity bus definition. So, obviously, there's an
10 overlap.

11 MR. MCBETH: Okay.

12 MR. GLEASON: So I think -- but that
13 question, I think, is there are important policy
14 implications for that relatively simplistic question
15 because we have traditionally thought of and there is a
16 dynamic within the program, an assumption almost, that
17 this is largely an effort, a cooperative effort and
18 partnership with the private carriers. And that is a --
19 there's a strong tradition of that in Texas.

20 In the last ten years or so, other
21 carriers -- such as CARTS, which is a rural transit
22 district in Texas; Texarkana, Ark-Tex up in the
23 northeast sector -- have begun to get into and have
24 received I would say more regionally focused, but yet
25 still intercity bus services. And so, you know, that

1 is -- there's nothing that says these funds have to go
2 to private sector providers. There is an extremely
3 lengthy history and a very strong tradition here in
4 Texas of that and I will tell the committee that if the
5 committee has an interest in approaching that topic,
6 that it will generate a tremendous amount of interest
7 from the private sector carriers.

8 MR. MCBETH: I'm sure it will.

9 MR. GLEASON: And you'll have a very
10 exciting meeting with them.

11 MR. MCBETH: I like exciting meetings.

12 MR. GLEASON: Nevertheless, it is an
13 issue. It is a potential policy issue about, you know,
14 whether we, you know, take a more -- if the notion is
15 intercity service, independent of who provides it, then
16 that might lead us down one road. If the notion is it's
17 intercity bus service with a continued emphasis on a
18 partnership within private sector, then that will lead
19 us down a different road. So CARTS is not up there
20 because they're not a private sector intercity provider.

21 MR. MCBETH: Okay.

22 MR. GLEASON: Even though Amtrak is up
23 there.

24 MR. FICKES: But they are in the original
25 packaging --

1 MR. GLEASON: Yes, we do provide funding
2 for them.

3 MR. FICKES: Because one of my
4 concerns -- and I think I shared this with you
5 earlier -- was you've only got one route in that initial
6 information we got, but they've got like nine.

7 MR. GLEASON: We gave one as an example.
8 We didn't attempt to provide you with all nine. We just
9 wanted --

10 MR. FICKES: I just don't -- I mean, I
11 don't know if that's -- are the others just as relevant
12 as it is or do they cost more or do they cost less?

13 MR. GLEASON: So one of the things at the
14 end of today's presentations, I think it would be
15 helpful if the committee wanted to just throw out those
16 kinds of questions for us. I do see your July meeting
17 as a fairly important meeting for closing this
18 conversation.

19 MR. FICKES: Uh-huh. I do too.

20 MR. GLEASON: And we will be trying to
21 assemble information for the July meeting that will help
22 us bring this conversation to a close. Mostly because
23 if we're going to have any changes to the coordinated
24 call that's coming up, we need to know by then.

25 So come back to us with that question,

1 Ken, at the end and make a list.

2 MR. FICKES: Yeah, and I've got a few
3 more; but I'll wait.

4 MS. BLUME: So, markets. Over the past
5 20 years, intercity bus markets have been changing. The
6 traditional picture of intercity bus service is, you
7 know, Greyhound. If you ask people "What's an intercity
8 bus route," Greyhound is usually the answer that you
9 get.

10 For the purposes of our report in the
11 presentation, I'm referring to this as the traditional
12 market. The market served by the established operators
13 who've been doing this for a long time in the U.S. But
14 we also have this new market that really started coming
15 about in the 2000s or so, originating in a couple of
16 different ways. For one, in the northeastern U.S., you
17 know, services started to emerge. These curbside type
18 services or these express services that were intended to
19 provide more direct connections and to provide more
20 amenities and to serve particular demographic markets
21 and particular types of travel demand. And as these
22 sorts of companies emerged -- like the Megabuses, for
23 example -- then you started seeing companies like
24 Greyhound, like the traditional operators, starting to
25 evolve their own services so that they could compete

1 with some of the things that these new providers were
2 offering with respect to amenities. Like, for example,
3 being able to reserve a seat on the bus or to be able to
4 buy your ticket online or to have Wi-Fi on board the
5 bus.

6 So the traditional markets, the typical
7 passenger in the traditional market was your
8 lower-income traveler who doesn't own a car and travels
9 primarily to see family and friends and they might
10 typically travel up to 450 miles on a trip. Other
11 typical trip purposes within the traditional market
12 setup were connections to other transportation modes.
13 So like traveling to airports or passenger rail
14 stations; traveling to health care; to government
15 offices; to colleges and universities; to jobs,
16 including seasonal jobs; traveling to military bases;
17 tribal lands; correctional facilities; and also just
18 traveling for vacation and recreational opportunities.

19 The new markets, as I said, they started
20 to come out and really take -- you know, to really be
21 significant starting in the mid 2000s and that's what
22 this particular chart shows. It shows how the changing
23 level of intercity bus service has been on an upward
24 trend since about that time in the U.S. And what's
25 influencing the market for these curbside or express

1 services of this choice-rider market really is the
2 increase in the number of options that are available for
3 intercity travel: Different changes to station
4 environments, the new amenities that are offered, the
5 increasing amount of information that's available now,
6 and that's very significant.

7 Starting in about 2012-2013, you started
8 seeing ticket aggregators specifically focused on bus
9 and train travel. So you have your -- basically, it's
10 your train and bus equivalent of Expedia and Orbitz and
11 Travelocity. So as a traveler, you could go to this one
12 place -- this ticket aggregate or website -- and see all
13 of these options that maybe you didn't even know were
14 available before. So it's more information for the
15 traveler about what their options are, but it's also
16 information that helps the smaller providers market
17 themselves to get their name out so that they can become
18 part of the intercity bus supply.

19 And this is one of the paragraphs that
20 really kind of shows how that -- how the growth in
21 intercity passenger bus transportation within the U.S.
22 has grown over time. So the maroon section of the
23 columns are really your traditional providers: Your
24 Greyhounds, your Arrow Trailways. Whereas, the green
25 and the yellow are these providers that have either

1 emerged in the sense of being the curbside/express
2 services -- the Megabuses, the Vonlanes, all of these
3 new providers -- and also the providers that have
4 traditionally been really focused on specific target
5 markets that are now, you know, increasing the services
6 that they're offering within the U.S. and the services
7 are more visible and more accessible to more people than
8 they were before. And this is a similar trend for bus
9 miles as opposed to bus trips.

10 So the intercity bus demand picture is we
11 really don't have comprehensive ridership data available
12 to us, partly because a lot of these providers are
13 private companies that don't want to share that
14 information; but also because intercity bus services
15 aren't traditionally reported to FTA in quite the same
16 way that other types of transit services are tracked and
17 reported. So researchers have estimated usage and
18 demand using different data sources that are available
19 to us and those two graphs that I showed previously are
20 estimates of ridership based on many different sources
21 of information, including the Census and the National
22 Household Travel Survey.

23 So these methodologies have traditionally
24 been developed in the context of the traditional
25 intercity bus service market. So there's a question

1 about how applicable they are as things change. There's
2 a question about whether we need to develop new
3 methodologies. But we do have a lot of things to choose
4 from.

5 Some of the techniques that have been
6 used to date, one of which relates intercity bus
7 ridership to the populations of the cities that are
8 served by the particular route -- so the distance
9 between those routes, whether they serve a
10 transportation hub like an airport, are they coordinated
11 and marketed as part of a national network. Another
12 approach that's been used has been to look at the actual
13 transportation capacity of a corridor to look at issues
14 like congestion, for example. Another approach is to
15 simply talk to riders, talk to agencies, talk to
16 intercity bus providers and ask them what they think the
17 needs are, what have they been hearing from their riders
18 or their potential riders and in their own sorts of
19 studies of their market.

20 Another technique that's been used is
21 just to look at the intercity bus transportation network
22 and all of the services that feed it, as well, from a
23 geographic and schedule standpoint. So where are the
24 gaps in geography? Where are the gaps in time? And can
25 we fill those gaps?

1 Another approach used has been to develop
2 trip generation rates based on the National Household
3 Travel Survey and relate them to things like population.
4 So if the population of a given metro area is X, then
5 how many trips per capita might you expect from a city
6 in that sort of particular environment based on, say,
7 what we know about them from the Census and the National
8 Household Travel Survey. And another approach that's
9 been used is just to look at environments where
10 intercity bus service is provided and seems to be well
11 used, figure out what are the characteristics of that
12 environment, and can we find other environments where we
13 can maybe hope to see the same sort of successes.

14 MR. GLEASON: So I think for the
15 committee, generally speaking, our traditional approach
16 has really emphasized No. 4 and it's been kind of just
17 looking at connectivity and timing and sort of the
18 geographic approach. And then you have the services
19 that CARTS and Ark-Tex are applying and those are
20 somewhat spatial; but perhaps a little more related to
21 No. 1, where we're getting into regional intercity
22 services that are, you know, more easily understood to
23 be related to population and travel distance and things
24 like that.

25 So, you know, certainly not so much

1 No. 5. And so just so you know, a lot of it has been
2 based on No. 4. And that map that Kelly showed you at
3 the very beginning captures that.

4 MS. BLUME: So in summary, the messages I
5 would want to most make sure that come through with this
6 presentation is, first of all, intercity bus ridership
7 is increasing. It's up 36 percent since 2008, based on
8 the estimates that have been prepared and it's up
9 because we have more providers who -- you could look at
10 that as a surrogate for demand and look at supply from
11 that standpoint. We have more providers that are more
12 visible. We have more services to choose from.
13 Services that are tailored to specific markets. Like,
14 say, Vonlane. I don't know if you've taken Vonlane, but
15 it markets itself as a first-class bus experience. And
16 there's a service in California, I believe, that
17 offers -- it markets itself as a hotel basically for
18 overnight trips. It's like "Stay in one our cabins on
19 board our bus instead of staying at a hotel." So
20 there's a lot of different options, very targeted
21 options that are available and that are continuing to be
22 developed.

23 We have more amenities. We have the
24 Wi-Fi. We have the onboard amenities, the snacks and
25 everything. Sometimes it seems minor, but sometimes

1 maybe that's the difference for a choice rider. And we
2 have more information and we have more visibility of
3 services through both the ticket aggregator websites and
4 the different levels of interlining and coordinated
5 ticking that's happening at the individual rider level.

6 Markets are changing. We're moving from
7 a market where the focus was on captive riders to a
8 market where choice riders are starting to be a part of
9 the marketing effort. Trying to actually tailor these
10 services to people who maybe could choose to fly or
11 could choose to drive; but, you know, why we would want
12 them to take intercity bus service instead. And demand
13 estimation is challenging because we don't have really
14 good concrete specific data; but there are multiple
15 approaches that we can take to estimate that demand or
16 that level of potential usage if we choose to go that
17 route for this. That's it. I'm happy to take
18 questions.

19 MR. GLEASON: So one observation I would
20 make at this point is that a lot of the change in
21 competitive energy in the industry, is in the choice
22 market arena. And I think one of the challenges for our
23 program is that, you know, are we in that market? Or is
24 this program focused? Is the objective of this program
25 the choice rider, or is the objective of this program

1 the more traditional captive rider?

2 And if the latter, then I think the
3 recognition that there's so much energy being put into
4 competing for the choice market because that's where the
5 growth is, what does that mean for the long-term
6 viability of a program which is largely focused on a
7 captive rider.

8 MR. FICKES: This is Ken. I spent a
9 little time before we came today talking to a couple of
10 consultants that do intercity bus consulting. And I
11 think the original data we got at the last meeting was
12 kind of interesting because there's one provider that's
13 like 600 bucks a trip and I looked at the cost on that
14 and I'm, like, you could buy them a vehicle and maybe
15 hire a driver for them. I mean, I don't understand
16 what's going on with that.

17 MR. GLEASON: Right.

18 MR. FICKES: It seems like that would be
19 kind of like what we call a first mile/last mile
20 situation. Except in the rural area, it's probably the
21 first 20 miles and the last 20 miles. But that just
22 seems kind of high compared to some of the others where
23 you had like the Greyhound route where their cost is
24 being -- part of it is subsidized, part of it's market
25 of people paying and the cost is down around \$25, which

1 is more reasonable I think based on what I'm hearing.

2 So it seems like we're kind of all over
3 the place with the cost structure. Obviously, there's
4 more benefit, more bang for your buck going with a
5 larger privately owned company as opposed to, you know,
6 another outfit running a -- what I call first mile/last
7 mile, first 20/last 20. But I'm not that familiar with
8 some of the other operations.

9 There's just limited data in here. I
10 mean, like it shows one passenger. Is that the same
11 person every day? Is it a different person every day?
12 My guess is it's probably the same person, but I don't
13 know. But it looks like what you've got is that you're
14 kind of leaning towards the Washington state model; is
15 that --

16 MR. GLEASON: (Shakes head negatively).

17 MR. FICKES: No?

18 MR. GLEASON: No. I think it's -- let's
19 listen to Washington state. And I am leaning toward
20 making the program more effective.

21 MR. FICKES: Okay.

22 MR. GLEASON: That's my only objective in
23 this conversation.

24 MR. FICKES: All right.

25 MR. GLEASON: And beyond that, I'm open

1 to suggestions. I think we have to do a better job --

2 MR. FICKES: Oh, yeah.

3 MR. GLEASON: -- of getting people on
4 these services than we have. It's easy to connect the
5 dots. It's not so easy to get people to use those
6 connections when you provide them. So, anyway.

7 MS. BLUME: And I would say another
8 discussion point you might want to have is whether you
9 want to look at investing and supporting services or in
10 supporting facilities. I did come across some research
11 that indicated that as intercity bus stations are moved
12 out of like central areas that are well connected to
13 other transit services, that that has an impact on
14 ridership, these more isolated type stations. So if
15 funding was available to focus on station development,
16 you might see ridership increase.

17 MR. FICKES: Well, capital expenditure is
18 much more sustainable than paying operating expenses.

19 MR. GLEASON: Yes. We have a history of
20 helping to sustain existing intercity terminals in the
21 large metropolitan areas, rehab and what have you. And
22 then we've also -- we routinely provide funding support
23 for multimodal facilities, of which intercity service is
24 a part. And so particularly in the rural areas when a
25 rural operator is constructing a facility, if it is

1 envisioned to also be a terminal to be used by intercity
2 services, we can fund a portional share of that from the
3 intercity program. So we do have that history.

4 But the operating side of the equation is
5 a huge part of the program. And, you know, with only
6 just over \$6 million a year to begin with, I think we're
7 compelled to try and leverage that as best we can with
8 other operating investments that are out there.

9 So, okay. Are we ready to --

10 MR. MCBETH: Good work.

11 MR. GLEASON: -- move into the next --

12 MR. MCBETH: Yeah.

13 MR. GLEASON: And, Kelly, you can stay,
14 correct, for the meeting?

15 MS. BLUME: Oh, yeah.

16 MR. GLEASON: Yeah, that would be great.

17 MR. MCBETH: Let's move to Washington.

18 MR. GLEASON: All right. We have Greg
19 White [sic]. Are you with us, Greg?

20 MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I am.

21 MR. GLEASON: All right. Well, I
22 appreciate your patience; but I'm hoping that having
23 heard some of this conversation that -- Greg Wright, I'm
24 sorry -- that you can help appreciate some of the
25 challenges we have down here.

1 Now, Greg, I don't know how much you know
2 about the committee. You've heard some of the
3 conversation if you've been with us the entire meeting
4 on membership and things; but this is a committee of
5 nine. Five of the members are with us today. And the
6 fundamental purpose of the committee is to advise the
7 Transportation Commission here in Texas on matters of
8 importance to public transportation, of which the
9 Intercity Bus Program is one.

10 So we've identified Washington state as
11 an innovative model that is very different from how we
12 do it here in Texas, and the committee was interested in
13 hearing directly from you on how that works up there.
14 So, take it away.

15 MR. WRIGHT: Very good.

16 Josh, I believe you have the slide
17 presentation that you tweaked?

18 MR. RIBAKOVE: Yeah, or you can just show
19 it. You know, we're looking at your screen right now
20 here in our room and the slide presentation is also
21 included in the handout package. But you can just go
22 ahead and go right through the slides on your own and
23 we'll see them.

24 MR. WRIGHT: Okay. Let me see here. I'm
25 having a little difficulty here. Those were exactly

1 where, Josh?

2 MR. RIBAKOVE: You have those. Those
3 are, you know, the slide -- the presentation that you
4 sent to us.

5 MR. WRIGHT: Right. What I'm thinking is
6 you made some changes there?

7 MR. RIBAKOVE: Well, I can certainly put
8 the slide presentation up on the screen here. I don't
9 know if you'll see it; but if you want to say "next
10 slide" and "next slide," we can go that way.

11 MR. GLEASON: Josh, I just talked to
12 John.

13 Do you want to do a recess?

14 MR. MCBETH: Yeah, let's do a five- to
15 ten-minute recess while we prepare for the Washington
16 presentation.

17 MR. RIBAKOVE: Okay.

18 MR. GLEASON: Why don't you let us know
19 when you've got it?

20 We'll take a short recess.

21 (Recess taken)

22 MR. MCBETH: Okay. The recess will be
23 recessed, and we're back in regular business for the
24 Travel Washington presentation on intercity bus.

25 MR. GLEASON: Thank you, Greg. Sorry

1 about that.

2 MR. WRIGHT: Hey, no problem.

3 Good morning, everyone. Well, probably
4 afternoon over your way.

5 MR. RIBAKOVE: No. It's still morning.

6 MR. GLEASON: It's still morning.

7 MR. RIBAKOVE: It's a little before
8 11:00.

9 MR. WRIGHT: You've got another hour
10 left. Well, I appreciate the opportunity to share with
11 you-all what's going on with the Travel Washington
12 Intercity Bus Program and there's been quite a bit
13 happening here over the last year.

14 The Travel Washington is a brand that's
15 applied to four rural intercity bus routes funded under
16 the FTA 5311(f) program. The four routes are operated
17 in different corners of the state, which you will see
18 here in a little bit, connecting small towns and rural
19 areas to the national intercity bus network. The
20 presentation that you see here is what I presented in
21 Breckenridge last fall. Just a little caution, if you
22 will, when we get down to some of the number parts, the
23 study was not completed at that time and so some of
24 those numbers have changed.

25 Oh, let me see here. So what is the

1 Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program? As I
2 mentioned, the Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program,
3 it connects rural communities in Washington state with
4 larger urban centers, providing connections to the
5 national intercity transportation network. That
6 includes bus, rail, air, and Washington state ferries.

7 The goal for WSDOT's program is to
8 provide mobility and access for rural residents with
9 unmet transportation needs. And I heard some discussion
10 earlier about the cost per rider. We grapple with those
11 same types of issues; but if we go back to what our goal
12 is, it's to provide access for rural residents and it
13 can be costly. And, of course, as you-all know the FTA
14 objectives are to support the connection between
15 non-urbanized areas and the larger regional or national
16 system of intercity bus service and to support these
17 services through capital assistance.

18 Okay. I'm kind of froze up here. I'm
19 froze here. I can't -- Josh, are you able to do
20 anything on your end?

21 MR. RIBAKOVE: Well, I mean I can't help
22 you change them there; but I can -- if you want to, you
23 know, just go through it from a printout or whatever you
24 have, I can run the presentation on our screen here and
25 if you just say "next slide," I'll flip the slides.

1 MR. GLEASON: Let's do it.

2 MR. RIBAKOVE: Can we go that way?

3 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. I don't have the full
4 printout of this presentation here. I don't understand
5 why I can't change slides here.

6 MR. RIBAKOVE: Do you want to try
7 shutting it down and opening it again?

8 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, I'll do that.

9 MR. RIBAKOVE: Don't back out of the
10 meeting. Just do the slide show.

11 MR. WRIGHT: As I mentioned, we're having
12 some issues here. So, okay.

13 MR. RIBAKOVE: I can see your cursor
14 moving.

15 MR. GLEASON: There we go.

16 MR. WRIGHT: Okay. I apologize for that.

17 There are four intercity bus routes. The
18 Grape Line, it was launched in '07. That was the first
19 of our four routes, and it averages about 5,000
20 passenger trips annually. There's three round-trips
21 daily from Walla Walla to Pasco, and our contractor is
22 Central Washington Airporter. The Grape Line, its route
23 is 54 miles one way.

24 The Dungeness Line launched in '08. It
25 averages about 16 -- 15.5 to 16,000 passenger trips

1 annually and there's two round-trips daily from Port
2 Angeles to SeaTac Airport. This line at that time was
3 operated by Olympic Bus Lines. We went out to bid last
4 year, and Greyhound is our current contractor for the
5 Dungeness Line. The Dungeness Line is 110 miles one
6 way.

7 The Apple Line launched in '08. It
8 averages 5,000 passenger trips annually, with one
9 round-trip from Omak to Ellensburg, and that is
10 currently operated by Northwest Stage Lines. The Apple
11 Line is 183 miles one way.

12 And the Gold Line launched in 2010. It
13 averages 5,000 passenger trips annually. Two
14 round-trips from Kettle Falls, which is close to the
15 Canadian border, to Spokane Intermodal Center and that's
16 also operated by Central Washington Airporter. The Gold
17 Line is 90 miles one way.

18 Here's a picture of WSDOT's statewide
19 intercity bus network, and this is fairly current. We
20 don't have Amtrak on there; but if everybody can take a
21 look on the left there, you can see where Port Angeles
22 is. It goes to Port Townsend, it catches a ferry, goes
23 over to Seattle, down to SeaTac. So that's the
24 Dungeness Line. That's our highest ridership there.
25 That's about 16,000 trips a year. It acts like an

1 airporter for the most part. The majority of folks are
2 going to SeaTac Airport.

3 If you take a look in the center of the
4 state, Omak, the Apple Line which is green, that line
5 originates in Omak and travels down through Wenatchee
6 where you can connect with Amtrak or Northwest Trailways
7 that has an east/west route on a daily basis and it ends
8 up in Ellensburg right there on I-90. Kettle Falls up
9 in the corner there, originates in Kettle Falls, goes
10 down do Spokane to Spokane Intermodal where you can
11 connect with Greyhound; Northwest Trailways; Jefferson
12 Lines that now comes out of Missoula, Montana; and
13 Amtrak.

14 And then lastly on the very bottom there
15 in Washington is a big wine country and Walla Walla,
16 also home of the state penitentiary. That's Walla Walla
17 to Pasco. So that just gives you an idea of the
18 coverage that we have of the state. If you look at the
19 map and split it right down the middle, the Cascade
20 Range, the east part of Washington state -- for those of
21 you that haven't been here -- is high steppe desert to
22 the east of the Spokane area. So three of our four
23 lines are in eastern Washington.

24 Connections, just talk about some of the
25 major connections that our lines make. If you look on

1 the very bottom there, the COHO Ferry, the Dungeness
2 Line in Port Angeles is just a stone's throw across the
3 Strait of Juan de Fuca. There's a lot of Canadian
4 riders that come down and hop on the Dungeness Line in
5 Port Angeles and go elsewhere, sometimes to SeaTac
6 Airport, Seattle area.

7 In 2018, we were contacted -- this was
8 this last year -- by Canadian Broadcast Corporation
9 Radio 1 in Vancouver, Prince George, and Kelowna, B.C.
10 They were inquiring about the success of our program as
11 Greyhound was in the process of discontinuing services
12 in the western Canadian provinces, which they have done.
13 Don Chartock is the Grants and Community Partnerships
14 manager with the public transportation here. He went on
15 air a number of times, talked about the success of the
16 program, how it's operated, and how it's funded under
17 5311(f). And, of course, we welcome further discussion
18 with our neighbors up north, depending on where they go
19 with this.

20 Prior to this happening, the Gold Line,
21 there was some interest with Greyhound Canada connecting
22 with us there in Oroville on the Canadian border and on
23 the Gold Line Canadian border, as well. Kind of
24 disappointing. We have a number of Canadians that use
25 the Gold Line and the Apple Line on a weekly basis.

1 The coverage of the Travel Washington
2 intercity bus network. The population in Washington is
3 a little over 7 million folks. This gives you an idea
4 of the population within 10 miles, within 25 miles of
5 intercity stops. And once again, if you slice the state
6 in half, three of the lines are on the east side of the
7 state; however, there's 1 million people roughly that
8 live in eastern Washington versus 6 million on the west
9 side of the mountains and 4 million of that is in the
10 greater King County area of Seattle/Everett.

11 This just gives you an idea. This is the
12 corner of Washington, the northeast corner of Washington
13 state. This just shows some of the providers that
14 connect up to our intercity bus networks. If you look
15 at the Colville Confederated Tribes, the reservation
16 there, Inchelium/Nespelem, those folks often are taken to
17 Omak where the line originates for the Apple Line. We
18 have the Spokane Tribe of Indians. They have a service
19 called the Moccasin Express. Then they connect up with
20 the Gold Line, as well. Kaltran is the Kalispel Tribe
21 transportation service that they have, and they also
22 connect up with the Gold Line. We also have some
23 nonprofit providers up there. Rural Resources Community
24 Action, RRCA. SMS, Special Mobility Services, is also a
25 nonprofit. So we have quite a few providers in a very

1 rural area there that connect with the Gold Line.

2 System ridership performance. The
3 program began in '07 and this shows you from beginning
4 to 2016 what ridership looked like. We do about 30,000
5 trips annually, and it's been stagnate. That's what it
6 has been for about six years in a row. Once again, the
7 Dungeness Line in the more populous area has about 15 or
8 16,000 trips a year. The other three lines, 5,000
9 apiece. So it peaked at one time, and it's just been
10 right about 30,000 trips annually.

11 Annual program costs. When the program
12 began, it was about three-quarters of a million dollars.
13 You can see where it spiked in about 2010. The program
14 was kicked off in '07 and WSDOT received -- we received
15 2.2 million in ARRA stimulus funds and we used these
16 funds to purchase nine coaches, three buses for each
17 line; bus signs; and passenger sale service outlets were
18 installed throughout the statewide bus network. So
19 that's why that spike is there. We're going to talk in
20 a minute about a backlog of 5311(f) right now that we're
21 experiencing.

22 Technical memorandum: Consultation,
23 outreach. We are in the process of we've wrapped up an
24 intercity bus study from January of last year, and this
25 was just part of the consultation process that we have

1 used: Public stakeholder meetings; there were on-board
2 surveys of Travel Washington riders; there was an online
3 community survey; we surveyed public transit systems,
4 RPPOs, MPOs; telephone consultations; and review of
5 Washington State -- our HST Plan. So there was a heavy
6 focus on that. And I'm going to go -- let me see, based
7 on time where we're at.

8 With the intercity bus network, with the
9 study, once again we were looking at our program. These
10 are -- constantly for the last five or six years,
11 ridership was about 30,000 a year. We were wondering
12 why it plateaued. Ridership hasn't done anything. And
13 so part of the plan, the study with KFH Group, was to
14 identify not only a new route alternative; but what's
15 going on with our current service? What does that look
16 like?

17 So that was flushed out in the executive
18 summary process. And let me see. I'll skip through
19 that. If anyone has any questions, don't hesitate to
20 ask. Let me see. On the analysis over the last year,
21 it was to conduct -- it was a three-pronged approach to
22 conduct a system performance review for the four Travel
23 Washington intercity bus lines that addressed existing
24 conditions, the ridership demand, a fare structure,
25 scheduling, and continued funding probability; review,

1 prioritize, and recommend future network expansion
2 alternatives; and identify and prioritize the highest
3 potential of non-surveyed rural areas with unmet
4 transportation needs and gaps. And that's what the
5 consultant KFH Group focused on throughout the year.

6 Looking ahead, policy questions and
7 funding. We're sitting on a backlog right now of over
8 \$2 million in 5311(f). We've been underspending for
9 some time. Our allocation for last year was just a
10 little over \$2 million, and the program costs have been
11 averaging about 1.5 a year. So those costs, with the
12 excess, we were able to just kind of sit on it for a
13 while until we found a need for that.

14 One of the questions was the ability of
15 in-kind match from Greyhound. At this point, we're
16 pretty much maxed out with match from Greyhound in
17 Washington state. And we had a discussion with BoltBus,
18 if we would be able to use any match from BoltBus; but
19 that's not an option through Greyhound at this time.

20 So looking ahead, next steps. We did
21 review the route, the coverage concepts to eliminate the
22 ineligible services and refine the remaining concepts;
23 estimated the demand for revenue and costs; and then
24 prioritize on a multifactor analysis the likely
25 performance of a route, the presence/absence of

1 alternative existing services, the ability to serve
2 these areas of high density, the ability to make
3 meaningful intercity bus connections, and operating
4 feasibility.

5 The goals. Once we started this process
6 a little over a year ago, we didn't have really a
7 mission statement for our program. We didn't have goals
8 that were outlined, and that's something that we're just
9 working through now. We're trying to strengthen and
10 beef up what we do. And so a big discussion was the
11 goals. Is it coverage to make sure that as many
12 citizens as possible have access to an intercity link
13 within a defined distance, or is it ridership within
14 defined performance parameters? Is it farebox recovery?
15 Is it cost per rider? Riders per trip?

16 So we're still kind of going back and
17 forth with that, but I think coverage is going to win
18 out because that's the intent of the program. Let me go
19 back up here -- let me see. So in a nutshell, the
20 intercity bus flushed out a number of things that was,
21 with our backlog, if we added an additional route to the
22 network, we would be able to fund that at about
23 \$400,000 -- that's with our 5311 allotment -- up until
24 2029. So we have been looking at that.

25 There's three route alternatives. You're

1 looking at the map of the intercity bus network. The
2 first priority was if you look at Walla Walla on the
3 southeast corner there, Walla Walla over to Pullman
4 ranked the highest. If that's the case, that could be a
5 continuation of the Grape Line. Then Pasco due north to
6 Connell/Washtucna due east of Pullman was the second
7 alternative.

8 And the last one, which a lot of us like
9 because we've been working with our partners in Oregon
10 with their intercity bus program, Yakima -- you can see
11 Yakima there. Basically go due south to the Columbia
12 River. Initially, it was Yakima to the Columbia River
13 and a straight shot to Vancouver, Washington, and then
14 across the river to Portland; but as we started talking
15 with our folks over across the river in Oregon at ODOT,
16 they're interested in partnering with us. They want to
17 do something. They've got some intercity bus service
18 that goes along I-82 there on their side of the river.

19 So there's some exciting things
20 happening. We've got money to fund another route, and
21 we can sustain that until 2029 at our current allotment
22 of 5311(f) funds. Let me see here. And that's where
23 we're at with our program.

24 I'd like to open that up for any
25 questions about the program, what we do, why we do it.

1 MR. MCBETH: Greg, this is John McBeth.
2 I'm the Chairman of the PTAC. I knew this presentation
3 was going to be fabulous. Your numbers are just
4 incredible from a transit operator.

5 I operate a huge transit system. It
6 serves 16 counties, about 37,000 square miles. This is
7 absolute -- when you get -- when you can say 77 percent
8 of your state's population is within 10 miles of one of
9 these stops, I don't think you understand how big of a
10 deal that is. You're good at herding cats, man.
11 That's -- to be able to coordinate -- I deal with one
12 tribe, and it's hard. To be able to deal with a number
13 that you've dealt with and put together these types of
14 linkages, are you an honorary member of these tribes or
15 something?

16 MR. WRIGHT: I am not.

17 MR. MCBETH: I knew this was going to be
18 a stupendous presentation. What you do with the two and
19 a half million dollars you have is just truly, truly
20 incredible. I had no idea. I have ridden with Scott
21 from CTA, I have ridden the Dungeness Line.

22 MR. WRIGHT: Oh, you have?

23 MR. MCBETH: And I was pretty, pretty,
24 pretty amazed at that. This was years back. This is
25 just incredible. We could do this in Texas. We have

1 the resources. We've got a lot of rural -- we have 39
2 rural transit systems in this state.

3 MR. GLEASON: Thirty-six.

4 MR. MCBETH: Thirty-six rural transit
5 systems. We've got a lot of small urban transit
6 systems. We could do this in our state with the
7 resources we have if we prioritized our money in this
8 direction. This is just -- 77 percent of 7 million
9 people live within 10 miles of a stop. That -- you need
10 a Nobel Prize, dude.

11 MR. GLEASON: What's important about
12 that, that's the coverage goal as I understand it.
13 That's the truest definition of the coverage goal. And
14 the debate at the moment is coverage versus ridership,
15 and so I think that's an important -- you know, I
16 have -- in my years in the industry, the bottom line for
17 any board I've worked with has always been that safety
18 net of coverage.

19 MR. MCBETH: Yeah.

20 MR. GLEASON: And the direction has
21 always been to maximize ridership within that coverage.

22 MR. MCBETH: Coverage, yes.

23 MR. GLEASON: It's never been an
24 either/or. Because the ridership goal, if you maximize
25 that, you end up with dramatically different looking

1 investments. And I don't think you'd have 77 percent of
2 the state's population within 10 miles if you had a
3 ridership goal.

4 MR. MCBETH: I agree with that
5 100 percent. I agree with that 100 percent. You
6 wouldn't.

7 MR. GLEASON: And so I think that's an
8 important statement for the committee to help us with as
9 we look at our numbers and we try and work with them.

10 MR. WRIGHT: Well, that's good to hear.
11 You know, we're proud of our coverage. We -- as you
12 look at the map, we tossed back and forth for total
13 state coverage since three of four lines are in eastern
14 Washington, do we look down there by Kelso/Vancouver,
15 Washington; however, the way it flushed out with KFH
16 Group were those three routes that I had mentioned. And
17 not only WSDOT, but I believe ODOT is also very
18 interested in partnering with us.

19 On the Idaho side there, if you look at
20 Spokane there where it borders Idaho, we're also talking
21 with Idaho to see if there can be any type of connection
22 made around the Pullman area and that would be if, you
23 know, the Grape Line is extended from Walla Walla to
24 Pullman.

25 But, yeah. Well, Texas is a big state.

1 I thought Washington was, but Texas is huge. So, yeah,
2 just imagine what it would take to get coverage in the
3 state throughout your state.

4 MR. MCBETH: This is a good model. This
5 is a good model. This is a great starting point. I'm
6 amazed.

7 MR. GLEASON: Greg, this is Eric. Now,
8 you showed for the Gold Line a pretty extensive set of
9 connections that have been developed with numerous other
10 providers.

11 MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

12 MR. GLEASON: And I'm assuming that that
13 same picture would emerge for each of the other lines,
14 as well?

15 MR. WRIGHT: Absolutely. Absolutely.

16 MR. GLEASON: So to what extent have your
17 efforts really been focused on putting together that
18 coordination and connectivity to the intercity bus
19 route? I mean, I'm assuming it didn't just happen. But
20 to what extent has the state been deliberate and
21 strategic about developing that connectivity network?

22 MR. WRIGHT: Well, right. When the
23 Travel Washington Program started, right out of the gate
24 it was to basically focus on, of course, those rural
25 areas; but to make sure that we worked with tribes, with

1 the other transit systems. That was the focal point
2 right out of the gate, and I think it's paid off.

3 You know, I look at -- we look at the
4 ridership that we have, a little over 30,000 trips per
5 year; and it's been that way for five or six years. To
6 me, it looks stagnant. We require our contractors to
7 have an aggressive marketing plan.

8 MR. GLEASON: Okay.

9 MR. WRIGHT: The Dungeness Line have done
10 the best. They produced some commercials on television
11 and did some things. So I think some of that is
12 definitely chalked up to the marketing plans that are
13 required by our contractors.

14 MR. GLEASON: So do you -- does the state
15 go out with soliciting bids? How often does the state
16 go out?

17 MR. WRIGHT: Good question. Our program
18 started in '07. We've gone out once before, and we're
19 looking at every four years now. We just went out a
20 year ago.

21 MR. GLEASON: Okay.

22 MR. WRIGHT: Two of the four lines went
23 out to bid, and we give them a four-and-four contract.
24 So the contract is for four years with a possible
25 four-year renewal and we try to base that timing with

1 our biennial consolidating grant program. So four years
2 is what it looks like, and we're going to stick with
3 that.

4 One issue that we ran into, I had
5 mentioned the stimulus funding, the 2.2 million that we
6 received for the fleet. We are just now very happy to
7 be out of the bus business. We now require our
8 contractors to have their own equipment. If we would
9 have kept pace with this -- I mean, this was the
10 original fleet we are just now surplusung. It's
11 amazing. You know, they've got 400,000 miles on them
12 and it's huge. But one thing, as I mentioned, we are so
13 happy to be out of the bus business.

14 MR. GLEASON: Have you done any sort of
15 onboard surveys of users? What information do you have
16 about the people who use the services?

17 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah. In fact, a lot of
18 that was flushed out. If you send me an e-mail, I can
19 get you what that looks like.

20 MR. GLEASON: Okay.

21 MR. WRIGHT: During the study last year,
22 all four lines, there were onboard surveys and it
23 painted a pretty interesting picture. People were, for
24 the most part, happy with the service that they got. Of
25 course, they always want the frequency to be a little

1 more. But truly one of the big issues -- if you look up
2 there in Stevens County, Stevens and Ferry toward the
3 north, there's no internet service and our ridership was
4 asking for that. And we really don't have that on the
5 Gold Line, as well as the Apple Line, just service is
6 not there.

7 But if you want me to send you the
8 results of those surveys, I can certainly do that for
9 one or all of the four routes.

10 MR. GLEASON: That would be great.

11 MR. WRIGHT: Yep.

12 MR. RIBAKOVE: I'll send you an e-mail
13 just to remind you and request that, Greg.

14 MR. WRIGHT: Okay, very good. In fact --
15 well, you're not looking at this. But my e-mail on the
16 top there, it's wrightg -- it should be
17 wrightg@wsdot.wa.gov.

18 MR. RIBAKOVE: Yeah, and this is Josh.
19 We've been e-mailing back and forth. I've got your
20 correct address.

21 MR. WRIGHT: Right. Very good. Very
22 good.

23 So once again, there's the coverage.
24 That's pretty much where we're coming from. Any other
25 questions?

1 MR. MCBETH: Outstanding work.

2 MR. WRIGHT: This is kind of a unique
3 little sign here. This is down in Walla Walla where our
4 line originates. It kind of gives you an idea of where
5 you can go. You can go to Dallas on an intercity bus,
6 one-ticket travel.

7 MR. MCBETH: Nice, nice. Thank you so
8 much, Greg. Thank you so much. Outstanding.

9 MR. WRIGHT: Yeah, you bet. Feel free to
10 e-mail me. And just before I go, just to share with
11 you, we started last year. We do a line celebration
12 when they hit ten years, basically to recognize our
13 passengers, our contractors, and to expose the program a
14 little more.

15 We're just gearing up for the Apple Line
16 celebration in Omak. We found that with the Grape Line,
17 it was a success. We had the FTA there, Region 10
18 folks, Greyhound; but it's a real good way to get
19 exposure for the program.

20 It amazes me at WSDOT, the people that
21 don't even know we have this program. So we need to do
22 a better job in getting the word out.

23 MR. MCBETH: Amazing.

24 MR. GLEASON: All right. Thank you,
25 Greg. Appreciate your time. Say hi to Don for us.

1 MR. WRIGHT: Absolutely. Absolutely.
2 Don't hesitate. E-mail me for information. I'd be
3 happy to provide it, pass it on.

4 MR. GLEASON: All right, thank you.

5 MR. WRIGHT: You bet. Have a good day,
6 y'all.

7 MR. MCBETH: Thank you.

8 MR. GLEASON: You too.

9 MR. MCBETH: Moving on to Item No. 7,
10 public comments.

11 Josh, do we have any information for
12 public comments?

13 MR. RIBAKOVE: We did not receive any
14 comment sheets from anybody. But would anybody like to
15 do one right now? Any comment?

16 MR. GREG GOODMAN: Does that include
17 questions?

18 MR. RIBAKOVE: Yeah, sure. Do give us
19 the form when you're done.

20 MR. GREG GOODMAN: Okay. One question
21 that I would have --

22 MR. GLEASON: If you could identify
23 yourself.

24 MR. GREG GOODMAN: My name is Greg
25 Goodman with the Goodman Corporation. I'm a consultant

1 here in Austin.

2 One question that I -- that kind of came
3 up through this conversation with Washington was since
4 they require their contractors to have an aggressive
5 marketing program, I was thinking why wouldn't TxDOT --
6 and this is shifting to the ICB funding -- why wouldn't
7 TxDOT require folks like Greyhound to submit ridership
8 data with the -- tied to the use of the ICB funds?
9 Because it seems to be difficult for you guys to have
10 that data and you go through other methodology to try to
11 figure out what the actual ridership is. Is that
12 something that's ever been considered?

13 MR. GLEASON: We do.

14 MR. KIRKLAND: We do collect ridership
15 data from the agencies, the companies that we have
16 intercity bus contracts with.

17 MR. GREG GOODMAN: So they give you
18 ridership on the --

19 MR. KIRKLAND: Data on the routes that we
20 support with the intercity bus funds.

21 MR. FICKES: It's in the package today.

22 MR. GLEASON: The financial side is a
23 little different than that; but ridership for sure,
24 yeah.

25 MR. MCBETH: Well, that being the only

1 public comment, we will move to propose and discuss
2 agenda items for our next meeting and confirm the date
3 of the next meeting.

4 Josh, when's the next meeting?

5 MR. RIBAKOVE: The next meeting, we would
6 love for the next meeting to be on Thursday, July 25th.
7 That is the day after our semiannual transit operators
8 meeting.

9 MR. MCBETH: July 25th?

10 MR. RIBAKOVE: Yes, and that's a Thursday
11 as opposed to our usual Tuesday.

12 MR. MCBETH: Okay. 10:00 o'clock?

13 MR. RIBAKOVE: Well, you-all are going to
14 be in town. Generally, we often have an earlier start
15 on those mornings.

16 MR. MCBETH: 9:00 o'clock is fine with
17 me. If you want to start at 6:45, I'm up by 6:00.

18 MR. RIBAKOVE: I've got to walk my dog.

19 MR. FICKES: If you do it at 7:00, you
20 have to have breakfast.

21 MR. MCBETH: 9:00?

22 MR. RIBAKOVE: You're asking me, but I'm
23 looking for you to tell me.

24 MR. MCBETH: 9:00 is fine with me. Can
25 everybody be here at 9:00?

1 MR. GLEASON: We will poll people for a
2 9:00 o'clock start.

3 MR. FICKES: Hold on a minute because
4 these gentlemen are not operators.

5 MR. MCBETH: Yeah, they have to drive
6 here.

7 MR. FICKES: They have to drive here.

8 MR. MCBETH: Right.

9 MR. WHYTE: 9:00 is fine with me.

10 MR. FICKES: You sure 9:00 is good with
11 y'all?

12 MR. WHYTE: Yeah.

13 MR. CLINE: Hey, Eric, this is Jim. I'm
14 in for the 25th.

15 MR. FICKES: Are you okay with 9:00
16 o'clock? This is Ken.

17 MR. CLINE: Yeah, that's fine. Whatever
18 you guys want to do.

19 MR. FICKES: All right.

20 MR. MCBETH: And what were you saying,
21 Eric?

22 MR. GLEASON: So early on, Mr. Chair,
23 earlier in the meeting, I had volunteered for members at
24 the end if they had a list of questions for us following
25 today's intercity bus conversation that they wanted us

1 to pursue between now and the next meeting, that we
2 could have a -- we can talk about that now. So one
3 option would be simply to have members e-mail those
4 questions to us --

5 MR. FICKES: Okay.

6 MR. GLEASON: -- after they've had a
7 chance to think about it a bit, which is probably a
8 little more productive than trying to do it now. But
9 just, again, to volunteer that opportunity for folks.

10 Let's try and have that happen in the
11 next week if you can, so that we have as much time as
12 possible to get answers to what those questions might
13 be.

14 MR. MCBETH: I have one question right
15 now that came to me.

16 MR. GLEASON: Right now, okay.

17 MR. MCBETH: I just remembered it. Okay,
18 you said that the call for ICB is a separate call?

19 MR. GLEASON: No.

20 MR. MCBETH: It's not?

21 MR. GLEASON: No. It is part of our
22 every-other-year coordinated call for projects.

23 MR. MCBETH: So it's a part of the
24 coordinated call?

25 MR. GLEASON: It is. Yes, sir.

1 MR. MCBETH: Which looking at the
2 Washington state model makes a hundred million percent
3 sense.

4 MR. GLEASON: So they have a four-year
5 contract, but --

6 MR. MCBETH: Right. But every two years
7 would be fine as long as it's part of the coordinated
8 call and they're showing that they're coordinating it
9 with all these other people. That's --

10 MR. GLEASON: Yes.

11 MR. MCBETH: Okay, great. That was my
12 only question, and you've answered it.

13 MR. GLEASON: And so the schedule for the
14 next one would have us putting the call for projects out
15 probably in the November timeframe. So November of '19.
16 And then with proposals due back probably in February.

17 MR. MCBETH: Great.

18 Okay, I will entertain a motion to
19 adjourn; otherwise, we sleep here.

20 MR. FICKES: This is Ken. I so move.

21 MR. WHYTE: Second.

22 MR. MCBETH: We have a motion and a
23 second. All in favor signify by saying aye.

24 (Chorus of ayes)

25 MR. MCBETH: All opposed by nay. There

1 being all ayes, no nays, we are adjourned. Great
2 meeting. Great, great, great meeting.

3 (Meeting adjourns 11:34 a.m.)
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1 COUNTY OF TRAVIS)

2 STATE OF TEXAS)

3 I, Paige S. Watts, Certified Shorthand
4 Reporter in and for the State of Texas, do hereby
5 certify that the above-mentioned matter occurred as
6 hereinbefore set out.

7 I further certify that the proceedings of such
8 were reported by me or under my supervision, later
9 reduced to typewritten form under my supervision and
10 control and that the foregoing pages are a full, true,
11 and correct transcription of the original notes

12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
13 and seal this Turn in date 15th of May, 2019.

14

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20

Paige S. Watts, CSR, RPR
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