Date:
April 30, 2019

Case:
TxDOT PTAC MEETING
PUBLIC MEETING 4-30-2019

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

REPORTED BY: PAIGE S. WATTS, TEXAS CSR NO. 8311
PUBLIC MEETING 4-30-2019
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)
MR. MCBETH: Good morning, all. This is John McBeth. I'm Chairman of PTAC. The clock on the wall at TxDOT Riverside Campus says 10:00 o'clock. We're set to meet at 10:00 o'clock, so I will call the meeting to order.

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

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

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

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

Should there be an active shooter situation, we will stick around here, listen for announcements and follow those instructions. Restrooms
are located around by the elevator. And in front of the door here, we do have a sign-in sheet. If you're here, we would sure appreciate it if you would sign in. We also have speaker cards. If you would like to address the meeting, then please just pick one of those up, fill it out -- it's very short -- and have somebody pass it to me and we'll make sure that you get a chance to speak in the meeting. Thanks.

MR. MCBETH: Thank you, Josh.

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

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

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

MR. FICKES: Ken Fickes from Harris County.

MR. MCBETH: John McBeth from the Brazos Valley.

Jim Cline, you there?


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

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

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

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

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

(Chorus of ayes)

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Good morning, everyone. This is Eric Gleason, Division Director for Public Transportation at TxDOT. I have a handful of items to brief the committee on this morning, starting with the committee membership. So this a nine-member committee. Christina Melton Crane, since the last time y'all have met, she has submitted her resignation and so we are down to six and we need five for a quorum and we have five today. J.R. would be here except that his truck
got broken into, and he's having to deal with that. So in terms of the vacancies, as you—all know, this is a committee that is appointed by the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker and each of those three officials have three places to appoint on the committee. Each appoint a general public representative, a transit provider representative, and a transportation user representative. And right now, all of the Governor's appointments are full. The Lieutenant Governor has two vacancies: A general public representative vacancy and a transportation user representative vacancy. And then the Speaker has one. Transportation user is vacant.

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

So any questions on committee membership?

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

Mr. Chair, you might differ with that.
MR. MCBETH: It's been very, very quiet.

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

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

And we went, "Actually, we do."

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

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

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

So that's where the idea came up. Last session we introduced this bill and it got killed
immediately because of the fiscal note because we
included the small urban systems and that's a big fiscal
note, $22 million. This time around, we introduced it
with only the rural programs. LBB came back with a
very, very friendly fiscal note.

How much was it, Liz?

MS. BRUCHEZ: I don't remember.

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Senate Finance.

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

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

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

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

    MR. MCBETH: The only other bill that we
have been tracking is the Uber bill.

    MR. FICKES: Yeah. We have, too.

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

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

    MR. MCBETH: Like random drug screening.

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

MR. GLEASON: Wheels.

MR. FICKES: Wheels and four doors and brakes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Just briefly, a little more detail on the
5310 Program. We've got 45 applications submitted for
us to look at. Total of just over $10 million in requests, and we have about 7.6 available to assign to that 10 million. Not an unusual situation for us with this program. We typically -- that's about right. We normally entertain through the call about two and a half to $3 million more than we have funds available and we are working through the evaluation process right now and I have a number of meetings scheduled over the next couple of weeks to go through the results of that. So everything should be on schedule for that award in June.

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

Amarillo feels like they have completed it already, and so they're just going to ask us to certify. And then Fort Bend, we've double-checked since Paulette's departure and they're still planning on doing their own. And then we have not yet made contact with Corpus Christi. So we're still attempting to make
contact down in the Corpus Christi area. So that's where that stands. We kick that off. We're collecting agency level data and over the next year, we'll be pulling together those plans with those folks.

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

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

MR. MCBETH: Are there any questions of Eric?

MR. CLINE: No questions from me.

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

I would urge members, if you were appointed by the Lieutenant Governor or the Speaker, to contact them and let them know we really do need these appointees made. It would be great to have all nine of our member positions filled.
So with that, we'll move on to Item No. 5, discussion on intercity bus. One of my favorite topics in the world.

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

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

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

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

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

MS. BLUME: I'm Kelly Blume with
Kittelson -- or excuse me, TTI. I've only been there for a few months. So I'm not in the habit of introducing myself correctly.

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

MS. BLUME: All right. Thank you.

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

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

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

So this is, I believe, our third conversation on intercity bus over the last several meetings and we are asking the committee to help staff assess whether or not the current approach in Texas to administering this program, whether or not there are any opportunities to make improvements to it or changes to it that would make it more effective. And really the
outcome of these conversations have the potential to help inform and perhaps add to or modify an upcoming call for projects that we have scheduled for next fall, of which the Intercity Bus Program funding is a part of.

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

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

Kelly is going to walk the committee through a discussion on the market in general for intercity bus, some of the changes that are happening in
it, and how you go about estimating demand. And I think as you listen to this description, I think you need to be listening for, you know, what are the elements of the market that apply to the rural program funding that drive this program here at TxDOT and there may be a lot going on in the market that may not; but it's part of what the intercity carriers are trying to respond to at the moment.

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

So we wanted to allow the committee to hear that and that would possibly give us the two
bookmarks, if you will, on a conversation that might
have us making changes to the program as we manage it
today. So that's the background for it.

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

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

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

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

So this map is an update of a map that
was prepared in 2010 in a 2010 report to illustrate the
different sorts of intercity bus service connections
that are available in Texas right now. The map -- the
green lines are connections that have received 5311(f) funds from TxDOT in the past. The purple ones are connections that have not recently received those sorts of funds. What's -- the map, really you should interpret it as connections rather than routings. There are several intercity bus services in Texas that don't necessarily follow a particular prescribed route for connecting different cities.

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

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

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

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

MS. BLUME: Yes.

MR. FICKES: I have a question about it.

MS. BLUME: Yes.

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

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

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

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

MR. FICKES: But see, I'm not familiar
with the route up there and I'm kind of interested in
where does it go and where does it connect at and --

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

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

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

MR. FICKES: Okay, I'm good.

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

So these are a list of the intercity bus services that are currently operating in Texas sort of under their own umbrella. It's actually a pretty complicated arrangement when you start thinking about who's contracting with whom to operate different services. Like Greyhound, for example, does contract with other providers, including All Aboard America!, to
provide service in specific corridors. And Greyhound, in return, is actually one of the contractors that helps provide Amtrak's Thruway bus service.

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

MR. GLEASON: Little known fact, the
current Secretary or Executive Director of the Minnesota Department of Transportation is the former President of Jefferson Lines. So he remembers us giving him a bus a long time ago.

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

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

MR. MCBETH: Okay.

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

In the last ten years or so, other carriers -- such as CARTS, which is a rural transit district in Texas; Texarkana, Ark-Tex up in the northeast sector -- have begun to get into and have received I would say more regionally focused, but yet still intercity bus services. And so, you know, that
is -- there's nothing that says these funds have to go
to private sector providers. There is an extremely
lengthy history and a very strong tradition here in
Texas of that and I will tell the committee that if the
committee has an interest in approaching that topic,
that it will generate a tremendous amount of interest
from the private sector carriers.

MR. MCBETH: I'm sure it will.
MR. GLEASON: And you'll have a very
exciting meeting with them.

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

MR. MCBETH: Okay.
MR. GLEASON: Even though Amtrak is up
there.

MR. FICKES: But they are in the original
packaging --
MR. GLEASON: Yes, we do provide funding for them.

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

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

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

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

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

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

So come back to us with that question,
Ken, at the end and make a list.

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

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

For the purposes of our report in the presentation, I'm referring to this as the traditional market. The market served by the established operators who've been doing this for a long time in the U.S. But we also have this new market that really started coming about in the 2000s or so, originating in a couple of different ways. For one, in the northeastern U.S., you know, services started to emerge. These curbside type services or these express services that were intended to provide more direct connections and to provide more amenities and to serve particular demographic markets and particular types of travel demand. And as these sorts of companies emerged -- like the Megabuses, for example -- then you started seeing companies like Greyhound, like the traditional operators, starting to evolve their own services so that they could compete...
with some of the things that these new providers were offering with respect to amenities. Like, for example, being able to reserve a seat on the bus or to be able to buy your ticket online or to have Wi-Fi on board the bus.

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

The new markets, as I said, they started to come out and really take -- you know, to really be significant starting in the mid 2000s and that's what this particular chart shows. It shows how the changing level of intercity bus service has been on an upward trend since about that time in the U.S. And what's influencing the market for these curbside or express
services of this choice-rider market really is the increase in the number of options that are available for intercity travel: Different changes to station environments, the new amenities that are offered, the increasing amount of information that's available now, and that's very significant.

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

And this is one of the paragraphs that really kind of shows how that -- how the growth in intercity passenger bus transportation within the U.S. has grown over time. So the maroon section of the columns are really your traditional providers: Your Greyhounds, your Arrow Trailways. Whereas, the green and the yellow are these providers that have either
emerged in the sense of being the curbside/express services -- the Megabuses, the Vonlanes, all of these new providers -- and also the providers that have traditionally been really focused on specific target markets that are now, you know, increasing the services that they're offering within the U.S. and the services are more visible and more accessible to more people than they were before. And this is a similar trend for bus miles as opposed to bus trips.

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

So these methodologies have traditionally been developed in the context of the traditional intercity bus service market. So there's a question
about how applicable they are as things change. There's
a question about whether we need to develop new
methodologies. But we do have a lot of things to choose
from.

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

Another technique that's been used is
just to look at the intercity bus transportation network
and all of the services that feed it, as well, from a
geographic and schedule standpoint. So where are the
gaps in geography? Where are the gaps in time? And can
we fill those gaps?
Another approach used has been to develop trip generation rates based on the National Household Travel Survey and relate them to things like population. So if the population of a given metro area is X, then how many trips per capita might you expect from a city in that sort of particular environment based on, say, what we know about them from the Census and the National Household Travel Survey. And another approach that's been used is just to look at environments where intercity bus service is provided and seems to be well used, figure out what are the characteristics of that environment, and can we find other environments where we can maybe hope to see the same sort of successes.

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

So, you know, certainly not so much
No. 5. And so just so you know, a lot of it has been based on No. 4. And that map that Kelly showed you at the very beginning captures that.

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

We have more amenities. We have the Wi-Fi. We have the onboard amenities, the snacks and everything. Sometimes it seems minor, but sometimes
maybe that's the difference for a choice rider. And we have more information and we have more visibility of services through both the ticket aggregator websites and the different levels of interlining and coordinated ticking that's happening at the individual rider level.

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

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

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Right.

MR. FICKES: It seems like that would be kind of like what we call a first mile/last mile situation. Except in the rural area, it's probably the first 20 miles and the last 20 miles. But that just seems kind of high compared to some of the others where you had like the Greyhound route where their cost is being -- part of it is subsidized, part of it's market of people paying and the cost is down around $25, which
is more reasonable I think based on what I'm hearing. So it seems like we're kind of all over the place with the cost structure. Obviously, there's more benefit, more bang for your buck going with a larger privately owned company as opposed to, you know, another outfit running a -- what I call first mile/last mile, first 20/last 20. But I'm not that familiar with some of the other operations.

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

MR. GLEASON: (Shakes head negatively).

MR. FICKES: No?

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

MR. FICKES: Okay.

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

MR. FICKES: All right.

MR. GLEASON: And beyond that, I'm open
to suggestions. I think we have to do a better job --

MR. FICKES: Oh, yeah.

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

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Yes. We have a history of helping to sustain existing intercity terminals in the large metropolitan areas, rehab and what have you. And then we've also -- we routinely provide funding support for multimodal facilities, of which intercity service is a part. And so particularly in the rural areas when a rural operator is constructing a facility, if it is
envisioned to also be a terminal to be used by intercity services, we can fund a portional share of that from the intercity program. So we do have that history.

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

So, okay. Are we ready to --

MR. MCBETH: Good work.

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

MR. MCBETH: Yeah.

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

MS. BLUME: Oh, yeah.

MR. GLEASON: Yeah, that would be great.

MR. MCBETH: Let's move to Washington.

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

MR. WRIGHT: Yes, I am.

MR. GLEASON: All right. Well, I appreciate your patience; but I'm hoping that having heard some of this conversation that -- Greg Wright, I'm sorry -- that you can help appreciate some of the challenges we have down here.
Now, Greg, I don't know how much you know about the committee. You've heard some of the conversation if you've been with us the entire meeting on membership and things; but this is a committee of nine. Five of the members are with us today. And the fundamental purpose of the committee is to advise the Transportation Commission here in Texas on matters of importance to public transportation, of which the Intercity Bus Program is one.

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

MR. WRIGHT: Very good.

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

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

MR. WRIGHT: Okay. Let me see here. I'm having a little difficulty here. Those were exactly
where, Josh?

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

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

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

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

Do you want to do a recess?

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

MR. RIBAKOVE: Okay.

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

We'll take a short recess.

(Recess taken)

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

MR. GLEASON: Thank you, Greg. Sorry
about that.

MR. WRIGHT: Hey, no problem.

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

MR. RIBAKOYE: No. It's still morning.

MR. GLEASON: It's still morning.

MR. RIBAKOYE: It's a little before 11:00.

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

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

Oh, let me see here. So what is the
Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program? As I mentioned, the Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program, it connects rural communities in Washington state with larger urban centers, providing connections to the national intercity transportation network. That includes bus, rail, air, and Washington state ferries.

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

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

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

MR. RIBAKOVE: Can we go that way?

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

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

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

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

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

MR. RIBAKOVE: I can see your cursor moving.

MR. GLEASON: There we go.

MR. WRIGHT: Okay. I apologize for that.

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

The Dungeness Line launched in '08. It averages about 16 -- 15.5 to 16,000 passenger trips
annually and there's two round-trips daily from Port Angeles to SeaTac Airport. This line at that time was operated by Olympic Bus Lines. We went out to bid last year, and Greyhound is our current contractor for the Dungeness Line. The Dungeness Line is 110 miles one way.

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

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

Here's a picture of WSDOT's statewide intercity bus network, and this is fairly current. We don't have Amtrak on there; but if everybody can take a look on the left there, you can see where Port Angeles is. It goes to Port Townsend, it catches a ferry, goes over to Seattle, down to SeaTac. So that's the Dungeness Line. That's our highest ridership there. That's about 16,000 trips a year. It acts like an
airporter for the most part. The majority of folks are
going to SeaTac Airport.

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

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

Connections, just talk about some of the
major connections that our lines make. If you look on
the very bottom there, the COHO Ferry, the Dungeness Line in Port Angeles is just a stone's throw across the Strait of Juan de Fuca. There's a lot of Canadian riders that come down and hop on the Dungeness Line in Port Angeles and go elsewhere, sometimes to SeaTac Airport, Seattle area.

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

Prior to this happening, the Gold Line, there was some interest with Greyhound Canada connecting with us there in Oroville on the Canadian border and on the Gold Line Canadian border, as well. Kind of disappointing. We have a number of Canadians that use the Gold Line and the Apple Line on a weekly basis.
The coverage of the Travel Washington intercity bus network. The population in Washington is a little over 7 million folks. This gives you an idea of the population within 10 miles, within 25 miles of intercity stops. And once again, if you slice the state in half, three of the lines are on the east side of the state; however, there's 1 million people roughly that live in eastern Washington versus 6 million on the west side of the mountains and 4 million of that is in the greater King County area of Seattle/Everett.

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

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

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

Technical memorandum: Consultation, outreach. We are in the process of we've wrapped up an intercity bus study from January of last year, and this was just part of the consultation process that we have
used: Public stakeholder meetings; there were on-board surveys of Travel Washington riders; there was an online community survey; we surveyed public transit systems, RPPOs, MPOs; telephone consultations; and review of Washington State -- our HST Plan. So there was a heavy focus on that. And I'm going to go -- let me see, based on time where we're at.

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

So that was flushed out in the executive summary process. And let me see. I'll skip through that. If anyone has any questions, don't hesitate to ask. Let me see. On the analysis over the last year, it was to conduct -- it was a three-pronged approach to conduct a system performance review for the four Travel Washington intercity bus lines that addressed existing conditions, the ridership demand, a fare structure, scheduling, and continued funding probability; review,
prioritize, and recommend future network expansion
alternatives; and identify and prioritize the highest
potential of non-surveyed rural areas with unmet
transportation needs and gaps. And that's what the
consultant KFH Group focused on throughout the year.

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

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

So looking ahead, next steps. We did
review the route, the coverage concepts to eliminate the
ineligible services and refine the remaining concepts;
estimated the demand for revenue and costs; and then
prioritize on a multifactor analysis the likely
performance of a route, the presence/absence of
alternative existing services, the ability to serve
these areas of high density, the ability to make
meaningful intercity bus connections, and operating
feasibility.

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

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

There's three route alternatives. You're
looking at the map of the intercity bus network. The first priority was if you look at Walla Walla on the southeast corner there, Walla Walla over to Pullman ranked the highest. If that's the case, that could be a continuation of the Grape Line. Then Pasco due north to Connell/Washtucna due east of Pullman was the second alternative.

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

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

I'd like to open that up for any questions about the program, what we do, why we do it.
MR. MCBETH: Greg, this is John McBeth. I'm the Chairman of the PTAC. I knew this presentation was going to be fabulous. Your numbers are just incredible from a transit operator.

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

MR. WRIGHT: I am not.

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

MR. WRIGHT: Oh, you have?

MR. MCBETH: And I was pretty, pretty, pretty amazed at that. This was years back. This is just incredible. We could do this in Texas. We have
the resources. We've got a lot of rural -- we have 39
rural transit systems in this state.

MR. GLEASON: Thirty-six.

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

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

MR. MCBETH: Yeah.

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

MR. MCBETH: Coverage, yes.

MR. GLEASON: It's never been an
either/or. Because the ridership goal, if you maximize
that, you end up with dramatically different looking
investments. And I don't think you'd have 77 percent of the state's population within 10 miles if you had a ridership goal.

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

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

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

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

But, yeah. Well, Texas is a big state.
I thought Washington was, but Texas is huge. So, yeah, just imagine what it would take to get coverage in the state throughout your state.

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

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

MR. WRIGHT: Yes.

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

MR. WRIGHT: Absolutely. Absolutely.

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

MR. WRIGHT: Well, right. When the Travel Washington Program started, right out of the gate it was to basically focus on, of course, those rural areas; but to make sure that we worked with tribes, with
the other transit systems. That was the focal point
right out of the gate, and I think it's paid off.

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

MR. GLEASON: Okay.

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

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Okay.

MR. WRIGHT: Two of the four lines went
out to bid, and we give them a four-and-four contract.
So the contract is for four years with a possible
four-year renewal and we try to base that timing with
our biennial consolidating grant program. So four years
is what it looks like, and we're going to stick with
that.

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

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Okay.

MR. WRIGHT: During the study last year,
all four lines, there were onboard surveys and it
painted a pretty interesting picture. People were, for
the most part, happy with the service that they got. Of
course, they always want the frequency to be a little
more. But truly one of the big issues -- if you look up there in Stevens County, Stevens and Ferry toward the north, there's no internet service and our ridership was asking for that. And we really don't have that on the Gold Line, as well as the Apple Line, just service is not there.

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

MR. GLEASON: That would be great.

MR. WRIGHT: Yep.

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

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

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


So once again, there's the coverage. That's pretty much where we're coming from. Any other questions?
MR. MCBETH: Outstanding work.

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

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

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

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

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

MR. MCBETH: Amazing.

MR. GLEASON: All right. Thank you, 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  
5  MR. GLEASON: All right, thank you.
6  
7  MR. WRIGHT: You bet. Have a good day,
y'all.
8  
9  MR. MCBETH: Thank you.
10  
11  MR. GLEASON: You too.
12  
13  MR. MCBETH: Moving on to Item No. 7,
14  public comments.
15  Josh, do we have any information for
16  public comments?
17  
18  MR. RIBAKOVE: We did not receive any
19  comment sheets from anybody. But would anybody like to
20  do one right now? Any comment?
21  
22  MR. GREG GOODMAN: Does that include
23  questions?
24  
25  MR. RIBAKOVE: Yeah, sure. Do give us
26  the form when you're done.
27  
28  MR. GREG GOODMAN: Okay. One question
29  that I would have --
30  
31  MR. GLEASON: If you could identify
32  yourself.
33  
34  MR. GREG GOODMAN: My name is Greg
35  Goodman with the Goodman Corporation. I'm a consultant
One question that I -- that kind of came up through this conversation with Washington was since they require their contractors to have an aggressive marketing program, I was thinking why wouldn't TxDOT -- and this is shifting to the ICB funding -- why wouldn't TxDOT require folks like Greyhound to submit ridership data with the -- tied to the use of the ICB funds? Because it seems to be difficult for you guys to have that data and you go through other methodology to try to figure out what the actual ridership is. Is that something that's ever been considered?

MR. GLEASON: We do.

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

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

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

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

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

MR. MCBETH: Well, that being the only
public comment, we will move to propose and discuss
agenda items for our next meeting and confirm the date
of the next meeting.

    Josh, when's the next meeting?

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

MR. MCBETH: July 25th?

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. MCBETH: 9:00?

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

MR. MCBETH: 9:00 is fine with me. Can
everybody be here at 9:00?
MR. GLEASON: We will poll people for a 9:00 o'clock start.

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

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

MR. FICKES: They have to drive here.

MR. MCBETH: Right.

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

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

MR. WHYTE: Yeah.

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

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

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

MR. FICKES: All right.

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

MR. GLEASON: So early on, Mr. Chair, earlier in the meeting, I had volunteered for members at the end if they had a list of questions for us following today's intercity bus conversation that they wanted us
to pursue between now and the next meeting, that we
could have a -- we can talk about that now. So one
option would be simply to have members e-mail those
questions to us --

MR. FICKES: Okay.

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

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Right now, okay.

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

MR. GLEASON: No.

MR. MCBETH: It's not?

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

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

MR. GLEASON: It is. Yes, sir.
MR. MCBETH: Which looking at the Washington state model makes a hundred million percent sense.

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

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

MR. GLEASON: Yes.

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

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

MR. MCBETH: Great.

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

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

MR. WHYTE: Second.

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

(Chorus of ayes)

MR. MCBETH: All opposed by nay. There
being all ayes, no nays, we are adjourned. Great
meeting. Great, great, great meeting.

(Meeting adjourns 11:34 a.m.)
COUNTY OF TRAVIS )
STATE OF TEXAS )

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

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

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

[Signature]

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Expiration: December 31, 2020
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