METRO MOBILITY, headed by Gary Olson, is using small vans to help take up slack left after Tri-Met dropped some of its mid-day service in the Sandy area. (Post photo)

Metro Mobility picks up Tri-Met slack

by Bernadette Bischke
staff reporter

Metro Mobility is a free-wheeling affair.

The urban transportation system, which began operation in Sandy Jan. 23, was initiated to "help take up slack since Tri-Met dropped Route 74 services in the Sandy area," according to Metro Mobility director Gary Olson.

Metro's insurance currently does not allow charging of fares. Service is provided through subsidies from Tri-Met and the federal highway administration. Donated fares of 40 cents are accepted, he said.

A 15-passenger van leaves Gresham at 9:30 a.m. for its morning route and arrives in Sandy at 9:24. The service then leaves Sandy at 9:35 for its 9:56 arrival back in Gresham. The afternoon route begins with the van's 1:36 departure from Gresham, arriving in Sandy at 1:57. At 2:18 the van is back in Gresham.

"We're carrying 12 to 14 persons or more per day—that's not too bad for just beginning the service," said Olson.

Olson said expansion of Metro Mobility's service is basically dependent on citizen input.

"Metro would like to get input from people who want service. They can write us or call in and state how often in a month's time they would use the service to the area they want."

He acknowledged that the rural transportation system's fledgling runs in the Sandy area were designed "as a demonstration project" but his face breaks into a wide grin when he talks about his passengers.

"They pretty much like us. They start riding and then they just stay and stay."

Although not strictly limited to handicapped persons, Metro Mobility's Route 2 (Sandy-Gresham) van is equipped with a hydraulic lift and has room to seat two wheelchairs. The 1978 model van also has a radio dispatch system.

"That way the dispatcher is able to let a driver know to watch for a passenger. It just helps everybody."

Metro's drivers are required to meet certain qualifications, Olson said. A defensive driving course, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and a class in body mechanics are included in the training.

"The body mechanics class shows the proper way to help any passenger in and out of the vehicle," he noted.

Drivers also have four hours of training each month. "At these meetings we discuss any operational changes and problems and solutions," Olson added.

Olson said his current fleet is limited. "There are morning and afternoon routes in the Boring-Damascus area." He added that the Boring area is where a large share of the ridership comes from.

Metro's passengers are varied. "They're people who don't have access to a car, young people without driver's licenses and older people who would rather not drive."

Olson expects a new vehicle in February and believes frequency of service will increase. A feature of the service is a transfer policy with Tri-Met.

"All people have to do is request a transfer for Tri-Met service which we give and is accepted by Tri-Met. Tri-Met in turn can issue transfers to Metro Mobility." Donated fares also may be transferred.

The service is available for evening and weekend charters. Olson said charters should be scheduled a week in advance to insure availability. Metro's number is 665-1106. Damascus residents should call 658-5588.

"We'll listen to any citizen input," Olson stressed. "The key is citizen input and utilization."

His face mirrors enthusiasm when he talks about Metro Mobility.

"I've been with them since May of '75—gee, has it been that long? I wrote the grant that got it started!"

Timber tax explanation due at public meeting

Sandy area timber owners will be able to learn the ins and outs of the new Western Oregon severance tax at a public meeting scheduled at Sandy Union High School on March 9.

The meeting is one of 31 scheduled in the state next month. Timber district managers for the Oregon Department of Revenue will conduct the meetings and explain how to file the quarterly severance tax return. The first quarterly return is due by April 30.

The 1977 Oregon Legislature passed a law (House Bill 3274) changing the method of timber taxation from an ad valorem tax to a severance, or harvest tax.

Individuals and businesses harvesting timber from privately owned land in western Oregon must pay the severance tax after the timber is harvested, according to the Department of Revenue.

County approves Campbell requests

Dale Campbell received approval for minor partition of two lots on 18.65 acres located on the south side of Haley Road ¼ mile west of 282nd in the Boring area.

The Clackamas County Planning Commission also approved Campbell's request for waiver of a provision of the subdivision ordinance at the Feb. 13 hearing.

Citizen involvement topic of session

Quality and quantity of citizen involvement opportunities will be discussed when Clackamas County's Citizen Involvement Advisory Committee meets at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 28, in the Clackamas College Community Center.

The committee will evaluate the county's official citizen involvement program, based on citizen views expressed at the January public hearing and statistical information provided by OSU Extension Agent Ardis Stevenson.

Community Planning Organizations exist in 29 geographic areas and cover 88 percent of the areas that are affected by county land use decisions. As of Feb. 1, 17 of these are officially recognized, up from 12 a year ago, according to Stevenson.

Citizens commenting to CIAC have noted some positive improvements in the citizen's program over the past several years, Stevenson said.

"More people are involved, greater efforts are made by the county to provide information, mailing assistance is available to CPOs and the CPO Newsletter is a valuable communication aid," she added.

Suggestions for improvements included better efforts to announce meetings, guidelines from planners on the range of applicant's opportunities and more on-site observation by planning commissioners and county commissioners.

CIAC is a committee required by state law and appointed by the board of county commissioners to assist in developing, implementing and evaluating the county citizen involvement program for land use. "Their recommendations will be presented to the board following decisions at the upcoming meeting," said Stevenson.

All meetings are open to the public.

Water quality control discussion scheduled

A public meeting to discuss progress on 208 planning for water quality control is scheduled for 7 p.m. Monday, Feb. 27, in the Federal Building, Oregon City, according to extension agent Clayton Wills.

The Department of Enviornmental Quality is charged with administration of a program to identify and recommend corrections for non-point sources of water pollution.

For several years most of agriculture has been aware of point sources of pollution and corrective measures have been incorporated into most farming programs, Wills said.

"However, there remains a problem of non-point pollution from many sources, including agriculture."

This meeting on Feb. 27 will provide a platform to hear progress made by the DEQ on approaching this problem and it will also call for citizen input on possible sources of non-point pollution and suggestions by the public as to how these problems may be corrected.

"The meeting is particularly important to farmers in Clackamas County but other citizens are also invited," Wills said.

Ares heads commission

A Redland area nursery operator, Rich Ares, has been appointed chairman of the Clackamas County Planning Commission.

Euna Schmidt, a West Linn resident, has been named vice chairman by the nine member commission.

Design board to meet

An application by Ashram Builders for approval of six duplexes, parking and landscaping in the High View subdivision will be considered by the Sandy Design Review Board tonight at 7:30 in the city library.

Also on the agenda is consideration of sign requests by Brad Pickings, the Double Dragon restaurant, Landa Sales and Grockett Jewelry.

Ray Kolberg is applicant for approval of a duplex, landscaping and parking.

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