



# **Public Transit Advisory Group (P-TAG) Charter and Bylaws**

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**Connecting the valley by providing safe, efficient, and courteous transportation.**

*\*This document’s first draft was created with Perplexity prompts that included inputs from a Jefferson Transit Authority Transit Advisory Group bylaws, Intercity Transit Citizens Work Group Operating Procedures, Spokane Transit Authority Citizen Advisory Committee Charter, and Valley Transit Board of Directors Bylaws, and then augmented with Valley Transit parameters, with the final product edited by Valley Transit staff.*

## Definitions

- **Valley Transit** – The name used herein to represent the Walla Walla County Public Transportation Benefit Area.
- **P-TAG** – Public Transit Advisory Group
- **Advisory Member/Member** – The term used herein to describe a non-employee volunteer who is participating as a part of the P-TAG.
- **Board/Board of Directors** – The term used herein to describe the Board of Directors of Valley Transit or the governing body for Valley Transit.
- **Service Area** – The term used herein to describe the area contained within Walla Walla County School District #140 and #250, excluding those portions of Eureka and Frenchtown falling within District #140.
- **RCW** – Revised Code of Washington, the compilation of Washington State laws governing public agencies and public transportation benefit areas.

## Purpose and Legal Basis

This document serves to establish the Valley Transit Public Transit Advisory Group (P-TAG) as an official advisory body to the Valley Transit Board of Directors. The P-TAG operates pursuant to Resolution 2025-28, RCW 36.57A.080, relevant components of the Open Public Meetings Act (RCW 42.30), and the Public Records Act (RCW 42.56).

## Article 1: Name

The name of this body shall be the “Valley Transit Public Transit Advisory Group” (P-TAG).

## Article 2: Purpose and Function

The P-TAG serves as a structured forum for community engagement, public feedback, and informed recommendations to the Board of Directors regarding policies, service delivery, and universal mobility across the Valley Transit Service area. It is understood that member actions or recommendations are strictly advisory and non-binding.

1. Represent varied community interests from across the Valley Transit Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA).
2. Provide recommendations to enhance services, accessibility, and outreach.
3. Strengthen public confidence in Valley Transit’s transparency and responsiveness.
4. Serve as an education and outreach partner.
5. Explore and advise Valley Transit of emerging public transportation issues.

The P-TAG, at the direction of the General Manager, may be authorized and empowered to act as a research and fact-finding agency of the Board of Directors and shall maintain appropriate

confidentiality in regard to sharing by the Board of Directors or by Valley Transit staff. The P-TAG may undertake such surveys, analyses, research, and reports as may be generally authorized or requested by the Board.

The P-TAG is an advisory group that makes recommendations to the governing body of the Valley Transit Board of Directors and does not make decisions on their behalf. As such, the majority of their meetings are regular meetings subject to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). However, for applicable meetings, such as when a P-TAG meeting includes a public hearing or public comment for Valley Transit, all OPMA rules must be observed.

### **Article 3: Membership Categories and Composition**

The P-TAG shall consist of up to ten (10) members, appointed by the Valley Transit Board of Directors. Members should collectively reflect the full range of backgrounds and perspectives within the PTBA and include, as available, representatives from the following categories:

- Fixed Route Rider
- Dial-a-Ride (ADA Paratransit) Rider
- Job Access Rider
- Flex Services Rider
- Youth Representative (ages 14-19)
- Pedestrian/ Bicyclist Representative
- Educational Community Representative (K-12 or higher education)
- Community-Based Organization Representative
- Business Community Representative
- Senior Advocate
- Disability Advocate
- Medical Community Representative
- Neighborhood Association Representative
- General Public or At-Large Member

Rider categories receive priority during the application process. Members shall reside or work within the Valley Transit PTBA or make regular use of Valley Transit services. The Board of Directors aims to include members who bring a broad range of regional perspectives, experiences, and areas of expertise. Members may each represent more than one of the listed categories.

The following are not eligible to serve on the P-TAG:

- Current Valley Transit staff or Board members
- Relatives and cohabitants of Valley Transit staff or Board members

- Anyone with an actual, direct financial conflict of interest in decisions or recommendations likely to come from the P-TAG
- Anyone convicted of an offense related to public corruption, fraud, or dishonesty in a capacity involving public service
- Anyone under active suspension or exclusion from using Valley Transit facilities or services due to code of conduct violations

Prior to being recommended to the Board of Directors, all nominees shall be subject to a criminal background check.

## **Article 4: Qualifications and Expectations**

P-TAG members serve voluntarily and without compensation but may receive reimbursement for authorized travel in accordance with Valley Transit policies. By accepting an appointment, members affirm that they have no actual or perceived conflicts of interest or appearance of fairness issues and will also attest to this in writing annually.

Members are expected to:

- Attend scheduled meetings and participate in consensus-building discussions.
- Review Valley Transit materials provided in advance of meetings.
- Serve as community liaisons, sharing information about Valley Transit in their networks.

## **Article 5: Appointment and Terms**

- Members shall be appointed by the Valley Transit Board of Directors following an open application process.
- Staff may screen and interview applicants, with recommendations submitted to the Board of Directors for formal action.
  - After the initial P-TAG membership is established, membership applications will be reviewed by the P-TAG group prior to being forwarded on to the Board of Directors.
- Terms shall be two (2) years in duration, with a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.
- Members completing partial terms to fill a vacancy may serve two additional full terms.
- After a full term (two-year) absence, former members may reapply for appointment.

## **Article 6: Officers**

The P-TAG shall annually elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, and Secretary at its first regular meeting of the calendar year. Officers serve a one-year term, with eligibility for re-election for one consecutive term. Should a member be appointed to an unexpired office term, they will remain eligible to serve two consecutive terms if elected by the P-TAG.

## **6.1 Chair**

The Chair shall preside over all P-TAG meetings, maintaining order and ensuring discussions stay focused and productive. The Chair will guide the agenda, facilitate decision-making, and represent the P-TAG in communications with external parties and the Valley Transit Board of Directors. As the primary spokesperson, the Chair conveys the P-TAG's positions and recommendations clearly and accurately, and coordinates with the Secretary and agency staff to ensure meeting materials and reports are prepared and distributed promptly. The Chair may create a quarterly report to be forwarded to the Board of Directors.

## **6.2 Vice-Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall assist the Chair in performing their duties and act on their behalf in the Chair's absence. This includes presiding over meetings, maintaining leadership continuity, and ensuring P-TAG activities align with established goals. The Vice-Chair also collaborates with the Chair, Secretary, and agency staff to support planning and coordination of P-TAG initiatives.

## **6.3 Secretary**

Supported by agency staff, the Secretary shall be responsible for recording and maintaining accurate minutes of all P-TAG meetings, tracking attendance, and ensuring that official records and documents are organized and accessible. The Secretary will assist with meeting logistics, material distribution in advance of the meeting, and follow up on action items as directed by the Chair or Vice-Chair.

## **Article 7: Meetings**

- The P-TAG shall meet at least quarterly. Additional meetings may be called by the Chair, the Vice-Chair, or the Valley Transit General Manager.
- Meetings may be held in person or via hybrid/remote format.
  - In-person meetings will take place at the Valley Transit administrative building at 1401 W. Rose Street, Walla Walla.
- A meeting quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members. For example, if the P-TAG has 10 voting members, a quorum is six. No action may be taken unless a quorum is present. Actions of the P-TAG Board shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members present at a duly convened meeting at which a quorum is present.

- Regular meetings shall be open to the public and comply with RCW 42.30. Each regular meeting shall include an opportunity for public comment.
- The time and place of P-TAG meetings shall be documented on a yearly, published calendar.

Remote attendance expectations:

- Members will have satisfactory equipment to participate in the meeting. The device in use must allow the member to pose and answer questions in such a way that can be heard by all attendees.
- Members attending remotely may participate and vote during the meeting as if they were physically present. The Chair may require rollcall voting if remote attendees' votes cannot be easily discerned.

## **Article 8: Attendance, Vacancies, and Removal**

Members are expected to attend and participate in all scheduled meetings. If a member misses two (2) meetings in a row without a valid excuse, the Chair or Valley Transit staff may reach out to check whether that person still wishes to continue serving. The P-TAG has the authority to recommend removing a member if there are ongoing attendance issues, repeated misconduct, or any violation of ethical standards. Formal removal of any P-TAG member must be approved by the Board of Directors. Any member whose absence was considered unexcused may ask for reconsideration at the next P-TAG meeting. Such requests shall not be unreasonably denied. When a position becomes vacant, it may be filled for the remainder of the original term using the standard appointment process.

## **Article 9: Staff Support and Communication**

The General Manager or their designee shall serve as a staff liaison to coordinate P-TAG activities, prepare meeting materials, and ensure administrative compliance. The staff liaison shall forward the Chair's report, meeting minutes, and P-TAG recommendations to the Valley Transit Board of Directors. The Chair or a designated representative may present P-TAG recommendations to the Board of Directors when requested.

## **Article 10: Operating Principles**

Meetings of the committee shall be conducted in a manner that ensures fairness, efficiency, and respect for all participants. Robert's Rules of Order (latest edition) may be used as a guide to maintain decorum and structure when appropriate, except where those procedures are inconsistent with these

bylaws. Members are expected to conduct themselves professionally and in accordance with the Appearance of Fairness and Conflict of Interest provisions described herein.

All meetings and related communications shall comply with all applicable components of the Open Public Meetings Act. However, the governing body can choose to subject any advisory committee to the OPMA regardless of its authority. Consequently, all meetings and communications of committees that are subject to the OPMA will be open and comply fully with the Act, as well as the Public Disclosure Law, ensuring transparency and public access.

To support compliance and ethical standards, training in ethics, public meeting laws, and Valley Transit's mission will be provided to all members as part of their orientation. This training ensures that all members understand their responsibilities and the importance of maintaining transparent and fair governance practices.

### **Self-Assessment**

At least biannually, the P-TAG will assess its accomplishments. Primary assessment criteria may include:

- **Purpose:** Did the P-TAG stick to the purposes set forth herein, or did it stray into areas beyond its scope of the mission of Valley Transit?
- **Usefulness:** Did the P-TAG transmit relevant and meaningful recommendations to the Board of Directors?
- **Scope of Work:** Did the P-TAG achieve the various tasks and/or consider Valley Transit Board of Directors recommendations addressed during the previous evaluation and/or those requested throughout the year? If not, why? How did Valley Transit and the community benefit from the results of the P-TAG achievements?
- **Other:** Other criteria suggested by the P-TAG members may be used if agreed upon by a quorum prior to the beginning of the assessment.

## **Article 11: Review and Amendment**

1. P-TAG shall review these Charter and Bylaws at least once every three years, or as requested by the Valley Transit Board of Directors.
  - a. Amendments approved by the P-TAG must be ratified by the Valley Transit Board of Directors.
2. Proposed amendments require a super majority (two-thirds) vote of all current members in order to be forwarded to the Board of Directors for ratification.