



Benton County
Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund
Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
September 23, 2024

Hybrid Meeting, 10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Committee Members Present

Chair Heidi Henry, Environmental Advocate
Vice-Chair Janece Cook, Representative of Low-Income Persons (Virtual)
Kate Hunter-Zaworski, Representative of People with Disabilities
Greg Gescher, Public Transportation Service Provider
Sarah Bronstein, Representative of Educational Institutions
David Rabinowitz, Bicycle and Pedestrian Advocate
Kristen Jocums, User of Transportation
Gary Stockhoff, Ex-Officio

Staff

Lisa Scherf, Public Transportation Services Supervisor
Charlene Pech, Special and Rural Transportation Coordinator
Tiffany Plemmons, Transit Program Assistant

Guests

Tim Bates, City of Corvallis
Corum Ketchum, Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments
Jeff Babbitt, City of Albany
Kristin Preston, City of Albany
Ashley – Assistant to Kristen Jocums

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Chair Henry called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. and attendees introduced themselves.

2. Public Comments

No public comments were received.

3. Approval of August 5, 2024 Minutes

Rabinowitz moved to accept August 5, 2024, meeting minutes. Hunter-Zaworski seconded the motion and minutes were approved. Jocums requested a correction to have the work group/stakeholder group name reflect that it's proposed as a stakeholder group, not a work group. Henry takes another vote on accepting the corrected minutes; motion passes.

In response to a question, Scherf stated that minutes and recordings of the meetings are not currently on the website but will be posted once Benton County has completed the revamp of its website.

4. Update on STIF Funding Estimates and Timeline

Scherf provided the Committee with an overview of the process and timeline for developing the STIF Plan. Staff will also be reviewing its suballocation methodology this cycle and providing a definition of "high percentage of low-income households" for the Committee to review. Other key discussion points:

- One percent of STIF Formula Payroll funding must be allocated to projects that serve the grade 9-12 school population.
- A small amount of STIF Formula Population funds will be made available to small local organizations such as Janus House and the Grace Center for Adult Day Services.
- It was emphasized that providers are monitored to ensure funds are used effectively.
- Staff confirmed that there is another source of funding for Safe Routes to Schools projects.
- In response to a question about merging the Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, Stockhoff explained that while funding opportunities might combine in that scenario, it wouldn't affect the Committee's work.

5. Update on 5310/5311 Grant Funding and Timeline

Pech provided the Committee with an overview of the process and timeline for the 5310 and 5311 federal grants. There is \$668,248 in 5310 funds available for the FY25-27 biennium, and it must be used to serve older adults and people with disabilities. These services are provided in the form of paratransit for Corvallis Transit System and Philomath Connection, and demand response services throughout Benton County. These funds require a recommendation from the Committee to the Benton County Board of Commissioners (BOC).

There is \$450,881 in 5311 funds available for the FY25-27 biennium, which is a 16% reduction from the prior cycle. These funds are used to fund the County's commuter/rural fixed route services known as the 99 Express and the Coast to Valley Express. There is a requirement for opportunity for public comment on the use of these funds, not a formal recommendation to the BOC is not required.

There was a discussion about driver recruitment challenges and the use of volunteers to provide contracted operations for Benton County.

6. Update on Operational Work Group

This was a continued discussion from prior meetings about how to best address operational issues with the service. The Committee, on staff's recommendation, decided to form an ad hoc stakeholder group to address these issues, which are not within the charge of the STIF Committee. Key details:

- The purpose is to provide a forum to discuss operational issues related to the service.
- Membership would include CTS and BAT staff, representatives from contractor Dial-a-Bus, and ADA/BAT Lift users.
- Meetings would take place quarterly or semi-annually. Public noticing and formal minutes are not required.
- Rabinowitz and Hunter-Zaworski volunteered to participate in the group.

7. Information Sharing

Stockhoff provided updates on planned discretionary grant projects. The County plans to apply through the STIF Discretionary program to replace four vehicles and install fencing and security cameras at the Sunset Building BAT parking area. They were previously awarded six battery electric vehicles, which are expected to arrive within six to eight months.

There was a discussion about Oregon State University's new scooter share program, with vendor VEO. In response to comments about improperly parking scooters blocking sidewalks and pathways, Bronstein stated that there are ongoing efforts to improve geofencing and placement of docking areas.

7. Adjournment

Chair Henry adjourned the meeting at 11:10 a.m.