

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Thursday, March 21**  
**9 am to 11 am**



**Deschutes Services Building (DeArmond Conference Room), 1300 NW Wall Street Bend, OR**

**STIF Advisory Committee Attendees**

Andrew Davis  
Susan Altman  
Matthew Schmitz  
Sintha Townsend  
Kelsey Rook  
Andrea Breault  
Katie Bauer  
Ryan Couch  
Iman Simmons  
Jon Bullock (phone)

**COIC Staff**

Derek Hofbauer  
Ashley Hooper  
Michelle Rhoads

**Deschutes County Staff**

Judith Ure

**Welcome and Introductions**

- Attendees were asked to sign in and make introductions to the group. A quorum was present.

**Public Comment Period**

- No public comment.

**Overview of STIF program**

- The STIF program resulted from the passage of House Bill 2017. STIF is funded through a payroll tax (one-tenth of 1%), which totals about \$110M annually across Oregon to improve and enhance public transportation services. The cost for the taxpayer is roughly \$1.00 per week per employee in each county; funds are intended to be used in specific areas of the county from which the tax is collected (e.g. larger cities and employment centers/areas). The STIF rules were approved by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in 2018. A new dedicated and permanent source of funding for public transportation will help transit agencies better plan for near-and long-term services and operations.
- Mr. Hofbauer explained that STIF transportation projects have a special focus on low-income households. There are not many restrictions on the types of projects that can be funded, but there are specific expectations that need to be met, which includes an advisory committee that has representation for low-income households, seniors or people with disabilities, and a public transportation service provider.

- Ms. Rhoads added that she is a part of the statewide body (Public Transportation Advisory Committee) that reviews statewide applications for STIF. She explained that some applications were rejected by the committee because of failing to follow the STIF rules and were given 30 days to correct any issues. She reinforced that the STIF process is important and this advisory committee will help guide the process.
- The Deschutes County STIF advisory committee is tasked with reviewing and prioritizing STIF projects. The STIF advisory committee will then recommend a list of prioritized projects for the Deschutes County Board of Commissioners to include in their STIF Plan. The county is considered a “Qualified Entity (QE)” and COIC is facilitating the STIF process (via an Intergovernmental Agreement) for the QE (Deschutes County).
- Three main categories of STIF funding include:
  - Formula funding (90%) is the portion that automatically comes to the QEs. These numbers are based on population and employment figures. The advisory committee will help decide how best to prioritize and allocate these funds. Funded projects need to focus on low-income households per legislative intent.
  - STIF Projects need to be referenced in a local plan such as a Transportation System Plan (TSP). If possible, 1% of the formula funding needs to serve students grades 9-12, which includes shuttles for student activities (e.g. not yellow school bus transportation).
  - Discretionary Funds (5%) are one time expenditures, with grant applications being accepted by ODOT.
  - Intercommunity Funds (4%) help connect transit services to and from areas outside of Central Oregon.
- Mr. Hofbauer expressed the deadline for the STIF application is quickly approaching; therefore, the STIF Plan needs to be submitted by the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) by mid-April to provide time for any necessary revisions before the May 1 hard deadline.
- Ms. Ure added that the members of this advisory committee were chosen by the BOCC because many are not involved in government and that the main goal of the committee is to help spend substantial funds on public transportation.

#### **Review adopted STIF bylaws**

- Ms. Breault explained that there are seven requirements for STIF projects:
  1. Increased frequency of bus service to areas with a high percentage of Low-Income Households.
  2. Expansion of bus routes and bus services to serve areas with a high percentage of Low-Income Households.
  3. Fund the implementation of programs to reduce fares for public transportation in communities with a high percentage of Low-Income Households.
  4. Procurement of low or no emission buses for use in areas with 200,000 or more.
  5. The improvement in the frequency and reliability of service between communities inside and outside of the Qualified Entity’s service area.
  6. Coordination between public transportation service providers to reduce fragmentation in the provision of transportation services.
  7. Implementation of programs to provide student transit service for students in grades 9-12.
- Deschutes County has 31% of low-income households, which means the definition of high percentage of low-income households will be defined by census tracts. Specific areas that do not meet the low-income criteria are Black Butte, Eagle Crest, and Tumalo.

- Mr. Hofbauer explained that there will be staggered terms for the STIF advisory committee members. Re-appointments are possible, but some members of this body will serve one year, while others will serve for two years. Staggered terms were randomly determined by Deschutes County Administrative Staff and presented to the committee members
- Mr. Hofbauer discussed the conflicts of interest section of the bylaws and noted that committee members need to declare any potential conflicts of interests during meetings. Advisory committees by their very nature make recommendations and not final decisions. If an advisory committee member has a potential conflict of interest, they must publicly disclose the nature of their conflict.
- The STIF funding cycle is every two years and during the off years there will be less frequent meetings.

#### **Roles and responsibilities of committee members**

- Committee Chair and Co-chair appointments:
  - Mr. Hofbauer explained that it is important to designate a Chair and Co-Chair at this meeting. The Chair keeps the business of the meeting on track, oversees Roberts Rules of Order (e.g. voting procedures), and takes responsibility for sending out the project list to the committee.
  - All committee members were asked about their potential interest to volunteer to become the Chair and Co-Chair.
  - Ms. Rook volunteered to be Chair with administrative assistance from COIC.
  - Ms. Simmons made a motion to select Ms. Rooks as the Chair. A discussion opportunity was offered (no discussion was had). The committee members unanimously voted Ms. Rook as Chair.
  - Mr. Hofbauer asked the group for volunteers for Co-Chair of the committee, but there were no volunteers. Ms. Rook confirmed that she will be at the next meeting and the Co-Chair conversation will be tabled until the next meeting to give any committee members that did not attend today the opportunity to volunteer.
- The timeframe between the sending of the project list and the subsequent committee meeting is stated as at least 14 days in advance in the bylaws. Due to the tight timeline with the May 1 STIF Plan application deadline, Mr. Hofbauer asked committee members if a seven-day notice would suffice to review the list of projects for this current round of STIF funding.
  - The group agreed to accept materials seven days in advance for this round of funding.
- Mr. Hofbauer expressed that it is important to have a quorum at these meeting, which includes a majority of members either attending by person or by phone.
- In the next meeting, a list of required criteria will be provided to help prioritize projects. This group will also look at more qualitative criteria to determine the viability of projects.
- It was advised that QEs provide a public notice to ask if other Public Transportation Service Providers want to submit projects, which would come to this committee first to be reviewed and prioritized.
- Cascades East Transit is currently the only public transportation service provider in the Central Oregon region.
- Mr. Couch asked to be removed from the committee because he does not feel that it is a good fit and asked for Mr. Davis (currently an alternate) to replace him as a full member.

### Discussion of local funding priorities

- CET operates services within the tri-county area and Warm Springs. As such, there needs to be an adequate level of coordination among the counties and tribes regarding these services. Up to two members from the Deschutes County STIF Advisory Committee will serve on the Regional Public Transit Advisory Committee (RPTAC), which advises the COIC board, to learn about proposed STIF-funded projects from other counties and to also report out on proposed Deschutes County STIF-funded projects. Committee members can learn more about the Transit Master Plan process, such as the planning and implementation of transit projects and any potential changes in service.
- Mr. Hofbauer explained that RPTAC will explore regional services and projects and shared costs during the next meeting on April 3 from 1:30-3:30 at COIC offices located at 334 NE Hawthorne Ave in Bend. A call-in number will be available and agendas are posted on the Cascades East Transit [RTPAC page](#).
  - Ms. Townsend and Ms. Rook volunteered to serve on the RPTAC and report back to the Deschutes STIF Advisory Committee. Ms. Bauer expressed her interest in attending to understand transportation from a regional perspective, but not as an official STIF representative.
    - The committee unanimously approved Ms. Townsend and Ms. Rook's appointments to the Regional TAC.

### Review STIF Discretionary Grants

- The STIF Discretionary Grants are just over 5% of the overall funding, while 90% of the funding goes toward Formula Funds, which has more stringent requirements to meet. The Discretionary Grants are typically one-off funding opportunities. Prior to STIF, these types of projects would have been funded through Connect Oregon. Mr. Hofbauer mentioned that the Discretionary Grant projects have been submitted, but there is an opportunity for this committee to weigh in.
- Ms. Rhoads mentioned that it is important for this body to note that Ms. Breault should recuse herself from voting on projects that were submitted by CET/COIC.
- Ms. Ure presented the Discretionary Grants submitted and explained that it is important for the committee to rank the projects.
- Ms. Simmons asked if it was possible to ascertain which communities have recently received funds to transportation, to which Ms. Ure mentioned that all of the bodies receive state dollars.
- Ms. Simmons asked if the committee is restricted by the cost of projects because there is a wide spectrum of project costs—from \$20,000 to \$750,000.
- Ms. Ure responded that ODOT will determine what funding is possible for each project. Additionally, Ms. Ure explained to the committee that this group needs to rank the projects 1-7 to determine which projects they want to see in chronological order.
- Ms. Altman asked if CAC Transportation, which operates the Breeze is a for-profit organization, which Mr. Hofbauer confirmed yes.

### Discretionary Grant Project Rankings

- Votes from the committee were provided by a show of hands.
- Ms. Breault recused herself from voting because of conflict of interest as a representative of CET.
- For the first priority, committee members were split between two projects, the La Pine Station and CET Community Connector Service. La Pine Station received five votes from the

committee members and earned the first ranking among the discretionary grant projects, while CET Community Connector Service received four votes and ranked second.

1. La Pine Station:
  - a. Ms. Simmons advocated for the La Pine Station project to be ranked first for equity purposes because La Pine has not received as much funding as other communities in the region.
  - b. Ms. Townsend supported the La Pine Station because of a lack of connections.
2. CET Community Connector Service:
  - a. Mr. Schmitz advocated for community connector service because it supports connecting communities outside of Bend. He also noted many people that work in Bend cannot afford to work in Bend, so he supports the CET Community Connector Service as the top priority.
  - b. Mr. Bullock seconded that the Community Connector Service is his top priority.
3. Hawthorne Station Renovation:
  - a. Ms. Rhoads provided further explanation of the Hawthorne Renovation project to the committee, but she stated that as a CET/COIC employee she is not advocating for any particular project.
  - b. Ms. Rook advocated for the Hawthorne Station Renovation project to allow more amenities for riders.
  - c. Eight out of nine committee members ranked this project as third priority.
4. Intercity Weekly Trips between Bend and Burns:
  - a. Ms. Altman advocated for the Intercity Weekly Trips between Bend and Burns. She said that Harney County is more of an underserved community with people that need services and access.
  - b. Mr. Couch added that he found the Harney County project to represent a Deschutes County priority the least and has an issue with government funding for private companies like the Breeze.
  - c. Ms. Simmons advocated for Harney County as priority #4 because she would like them to feel more connected to Deschutes County and not pivot toward Boise, ID.
  - d. There was consensus among all committee members (nine out of nine) to rank this project as the fourth priority.
5. Planning Feasibility Study from Klamath Falls, OR to Redmond, OR:
  - a. Ms. Townsend advocated for the Planning Feasibility Study as the fifth priority.
  - b. There was consensus among all committee members (nine out of nine) to rank this project as the fifth priority.
6. Central Oregon Breeze Bus:
  - a. Mr. Couch expressed concern about private, for-profit companies receiving government dollars and does not support the Central Oregon Breeze Bus or Coos Bay-Eugene-Bend Vehicle Purchase and Preventative Maintenance projects as part of the Discretionary grants.
  - b. Ms. Breault added that companies like the Breeze receive government subsidies to fill gaps in transportation needs while larger companies (like Greyhound) do not find the area viable for profit.
  - c. Eight out of nine committee members ranked this project as sixth priority.
7. Coos Bay-Eugene-Bend Vehicle Purchase and Preventative Maintenance: 8 out of 9 committee members ranked this project as the seventh priority.

- a. Mr. Schmitz recused himself from voting on the preventative maintenance project because parts are purchased from the company for which he works.
- b. Eight out of nine committee members ranked this project as third priority.

**Review of CET Transit Master Plan near and short term draft projects**

- In terms of cost sharing, it is important for this committee to think about shared costs for projects that span two or more jurisdictions.
- Tonight (March 21) is the final CET open house in Bend from 3:30 – 7 pm at the Trinity Episcopal Church (469 NW Wall St) for the 2040 Regional Transit Master Plan. Mr. Hofbauer explained that CET is asking for public input to prioritize STIF projects. The Deschutes STIF committee will see these prioritized projects in the next meeting and will have the opportunity to decide if the projects are ranked appropriately.
- Ms. Altman and Ms. Bauer requested any materials for the ranking exercise to be sent prior to the next meeting because they will be calling in to the second meeting and would like to fully participate.

**Establish 2019 meeting schedule**

- The meeting schedule will be established during a future meeting.

**Adjourn**