

HB 2017 Transit Advisory Committee

Meeting Minutes. 01-28-2021

Members Present:

Commissioner Savas, Commisioner Rogers, Jan Campbell, Mariana Valenzuela, Jodi Guetzloe Parker

Webex Tutorial

Short tutorial.

Meeting is being recorded.

Public Comment

No advance public comment submitted.

No call-in public comment.

STIF Formula Funds Application Submittal

Application is due on Monday, Feb. 1st,

Aiming to submit by end of Friday, Jan., 29th

STIF Discretionary Funds

Tom Mills: So next we'll let's talk about the STIF discretionary funds. There are two parts of funding here. There's the STIF formula funds, which is all the work we've been doing for the last year to develop a plan for that and that is 90% of the revenue that gets generated in this region goes towards that. That final 10% gets broken up between a couple different pots. One is the STIF discretionary funds. The other is a statewide transit network program, which is broken up into two smaller parts. And then a small sliver goes to ODOT to administer the program.

STIF Discretionary Application Presentations

Tom Mills: I'd like to go ahead and have our guests come today and present on their applications. And then at the end of all the presentations we'll make the fund or don't fund decisions and staff does have a recommendation on that. Okay, so the first go to present will be Clackamas County and I want to invite Christina Babcock to speak.

Christina Babcock, Clackamas County: Good morning, everyone. I'm Christina Babcock from Clackamas County, Transit Coordinator. (See presentation one and two.)

Tom Mills: And the next presentation will be Elli Work, SMART.

Elli Work: Good morning, everyone my name is Ellie Work, I'm the Grants and Programs Manager for SMART and the City of Wilsonville. I am joined by my colleague, operations manager, Eric Loomis, we're going to be presenting our two applications. (See presentation one and two.)

Tom Mills: Questions?

Jan Campbell: Thank you, and thank you for your presentation. I was wondering on your E-readers apps at individual stops, if those are ADA compliant, and what is the font size?

Elli Work: That's a good question. I'd have to get back to you on the font size, I can tell you that we have the option of pressing a button that makes it verbal, that provides for the visually impaired.

Eric Loomis: And I might be able to add to that, by working with our current system at the transit center on the back end, the software side, we're able to edit much of that information. So including font size, we can make them larger and scroll if it if need be. You can make it smaller, include everything, and then it'll switch screens back and forth.

Jodi Guetzloe Parker: I can only will imagine the durability built into the side, the readers but I just want to confirm that they are of a class that will be difficult to vandalize.

Elli Work: Yes, that was our concern in getting the 32 inch console that's out at the transit site. We had a specialty sign made for that one that says it's under video surveillance and nothing has happened. We do have cases of some small vandalism and different shelters, but again, the 14 that were picked are our busiest, so that's a plus. If you ever have the occasion to stop by SMART in Wilsonville, I can actually show you one, there like a small version of a Bradley tank. They are built very, very well. I just don't foresee that as a as a problem.

Tom Mills: I do want to mention that this committee has allocated formula funds to try to do the exact same thing that Elli is talking about putting out the paper readers, to date we've put out over 60 of them. Next year we intend to put out over 90 of them. What SMART has in their application is the exact same thing that this committee has approved TriMet to do with the formula funding. Moving on to the next presentation from Washington Count:

Dyami Valentine: Good morning, committee members I'm Dyami Valentine a Senior Transportation Planner with Washington County. And happy to present this presentation. (See presentation)

Tom Mills: I don't see any hands raised or hear any questions, I do want to point out that one of the great things about this application is I think it can at least partially be funded by both the STIF Discretionary as well as possibly it may be eligible for that 5311 Rural Funding. You might be able to be eligible for two different pots of funding, which would be to your advantage. ODOT will be the ones who make that decision.

Tom Mills: The next application is a TriMet application that we are submitting on behalf of the organization Friends of Frog Ferry. I've invited Susan Bladholm the Director of Friends of Frogs Ferry to come and speak about this application.

Susan Bladholm: Good morning everyone and thank you so much for this opportunity. (See Friends of Frog Ferry presentation.)

Commissioner Rogers: A couple or three comments or points. One, I'm a little bit confused. I've heard from other folks in your administrative staff that this isn't a TriMet project that you simply forward a project that you had felt that a good possibility. So are you representing that this is a TriMet ask and a TriMet project?

Tom Mills: As a nonprofit Friends of Frog Ferry is not eligible to apply for the funds, so just like last time, we are applying for the funds and then we will subcontract with Friends of Frog Ferry to do the work. So TriMet will not be doing the work but we will be subcontract with the Friends of Frog Ferry.

Tom Mills: Jan, do you have a question?

Jan Campbell: Yes. Thank you, Susan. And I'm really excited about this project and they have been involved in other projects we are regarding ferry access. I am a person with a disability who uses a wheelchair and I was wondering and you don't need to go into detail, if thoughts have been talked about of access onto the ferry for individuals using mobility devices, as well as a stops that the ferry would be making.

Susan Bladholm: Thank you so much for the question and absolutely we have noted in our operational feasibility study, and we've also we have nine different teams comprised of our supporters, and one of them is customer experience. Todd Kimball is on our committee so he's going to be advising us. So go beyond that ADA compliance and look out for providing really great access for everyone. I was part of Portland National Airport passenger experience committee as well so that's something that's really of great importance to us.

Dwight Brashear: Thank you, Susan, for the presentation. I think this is a project and full disclosure I have I represent SMART and we have a couple of projects that were presented today. So I want that out there. But I struggle with this, because I'm an old transit guy, I've been doing this for a number of years, starting to see cities, bring ferries, some of them bringing them back that have them before, it's kind of like street cars and things like that, that have seen a real resurgence lately. That being said, I think this is more in the category of nice to have, I think all the other presentations that were made were things that will actually help the transit dependent population. I don't necessarily see this as one of those projects. I think I see conflicts between this being a tourist attraction, and competing with commuters. So which is it? Is it a tourist attraction, if it is then maybe we should seek tourist dollars to help pay for it. It's not considered traditional transit by any stretch and I'm going back to what Tom said in the opening, that this time this round, there are limited funding, we're going to have more requests than we have funding last biennium was a gift this biennium and not so lucky. So I would say that I wouldn't want to see this funded ahead of anything that I've seen thus far. If there are dollars left over, which there won't likely be, then, you know, I wouldn't stand in the way of it, but to fund this type of project ahead of some of the others that I have heard and then I know that other agencies across the state are, are putting forth, I could not in good conscience support a ferry, when people you know, are struggling to get to transit and pay \$3 or \$5 to ride a ferry. So that's what I have to thank you for the opportunity, appreciate it.

Susan Bladholm: I just want to say I also was kind of suspicious about this when I got started on it. I was just curious, I'm a fiscal conservative, I'm strategist and if this didn't make good sense, and wasn't a viable transit mode, and that's the one area where I have to push back a little bit, I would just love to have the opportunity, just one on one to share some of our findings with you. Because actually, yes, this isn't a transit mode and it would also be a boon for tourists. And there is a reason why river cities are bringing ferries back, particularly when it comes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. When you look at the research coming out of the San Francisco ferry system, the number one mode of transit that is most likely to get people out of their cars and onto transit our ferries, and I'm happy to share that research with you as well. So this is really about re envisioning our community for the future and activating our river away. So it's new, but rather than just continuing to invest in all of these really worthy transit modes, we just think this is a really good time for us to innovate a little bit for a low cost additional mode.

Commissioner Savas: Thank you Susan, for your presentation. I'm intrigued with the project and I have used ferries before down in Southern California. So I'm intrigued because it really did result in a net savings. However, you know, my challenge always is trying to make sure that we kind of spread the love and early on in this committee, I made a plea for a level of service study for the region with regards to transit. I kind of mentioned earlier with our projects that Clackamas County is pretty big transit desert where there's nothing. I mean, we have in the areas in which our one of our projects we submitted here, there's just absolutely nothing out there. And in this particular area that you're serving, there's quite a bit I mean, there's a plethora of transit options or streetcar in the area, there's the tram, there's light rail, there's bus service, If I was a Portland resident, I just be proud of the level of transit that's available out there. However, limited dollars, and if this somehow impacts, or it's funded at the detriment of areas where there is no transit, I think there's an equity issue there that needs to be spoken to. So that's where I struggle. But however, I'm optimistic, I really like to see this move forward. And I don't know if it's scalable or not. So it doesn't really that it doesn't, again, compromise the other projects that are out there. Is it scalable, and also, there's also other funding opportunities, you know, there's MTIP, there's a number of things, I think that could this could fall under to get to get some traction. I'm also encouraged the fact that your map, you show that it could serve all the way down to Oregon City. So you the topography and some of the stops and how that that last mile connection from where the passengers would load and unload the dock, if you will, how they get uphill, is making challenging in some areas. So you have to be coupled with some kind of a local circulator shuttle. But I'm intrigued. I'm just not sure this is probably, again, of a scale of great, but I've just got an equity issue with the rest of the region where people just don't have nothing. Thank you.

Tom Mills: I'm going to introduce Luke Norman from TriMet to get started on the next presentation.

Luke Norman: Thanks to the committee for taking the time to listen to our presentation today. I'm here to speak on behalf of Transit Priority Spot Improvement applications. (See presentation)

Tom Mills: We are down to the point where we have to make a fund don't fund recommendation. We are down to the point where we have to make a fund, don't fund recommendation. The staff recommends that you do rate all of these as fund and the reason for that is because we're very early in the process here. If we make a don't fund recommendation, we can pretty much guarantee it's not going to get funded. There are a lot of projects around the state, a lot of those projects are eligible for

both this STIF discretionary and the state wide Transportation Network Funds, whereas these projects are mostly just available to can be applied to the STIF Discretionary. Staff feels like we're kind of taking ourselves out of the game early if you do say don't fund, that said, recognizing what was said before, there are some big asks, and some of you may feel that some are more important than others, we do have the advantage of ranking the projects. But again, I also feel like a low ranking of one of these projects, you might like it, maybe it's not as light as everything else. A low ranking hurts us in the in the early in the process. And so I think our best opportunity for having all of these funded is for you, to give all of them a fund rating. But I will leave it up to you. I will say we don't have our chairs with us today. So what I will do is using our motion process, I will ask for a motion. And maybe someone could make a motion. Maybe someone can ask for a motion that asking whether anyone would vote to not to fund any of this. And then we can second that and then we can have a discussion. So is there a motion?

Commissioner Rogers: I would move to fund all projects and then rank them.

Commissioner Savas: Second.

Tom Mills: is anyone opposed to that motion? (No one opposed) We have not. Okay, so we are saying we're going to go ahead and find all of them and now we need to rank them. What I would like to do, it looks like a couple people have to leave, what I would like to do maybe is ask you to email me your rankings. And maybe what I'll do is email to you. What I'll do right now is create a spreadsheet, I will email you the spreadsheet, and you can just put 1234567 in that spreadsheet, and I will use those to determine our rankings. And then, but I would ask you to submit that today. And then I will send you the results once I have them, then tomorrow I will submit to ODOT. How does that sound to everybody?

Adjourn.

