

The Loop – Morrow County Public Transit Joint Meeting

Special Transportation Fund (STF) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Advisory Committees

May 18th, 2022 • 2 pm - 4 pm

Irrigon Government Center • 215 NE Main St. • Irrigon, OR 97844

1. Call to order by both Advisory Committees STF and STIF

Aaron: I call this meeting to order. It's about 230.

2. Public Comment

Any public comment?

No Comments

3. Welcome and Introductions

Aaron Palmquist: Chair and City Manager of Irrigon

George Nairns: Office Manager for Planning Department

Katie Imes: Transportation Coordinator for The Loop

Karen Pettigrew: City Manager of Boardman

Debbie Khaljani: Transportation User

Stephanie Case: Online, Planning Department

Debbie Radie: Not here, Boardman Foods

4. Review Draft Annual Operating Plan for 2021/2022

Aaron: Just from a linear standpoint, you give an operating plan that you have and then later change the dialog?

Katie: The operating plan is a living document, I have made notes that we are in the process of consolidating committees, and the information will be updated with the new bylaws and membership roster.

Updated the front page to our new name "Morrow County Public Transit"

Katie: Purpose and goals have not changed, but I did change the dates.

Aaron: Question in regards to the square miles, do you have put that there for the accessibility? We have the square mileage, how about adding population and the rate of growth for Morrow County?

Katie: Those are great recommendations.

George: We have that data in the planning department that has been broken down by community, all of that is in there.

Aaron: We might want to add all of that data as an addendum, so we have ethnicity, gender, etc. The addendums can be 1 page at the end of the document that would be easy to change as we grow.

Karen: We just have to make sure we archive the old addendums so we can look back and see the old data.

Debbie Radie is online

Karen: I want to talk about page 5. What is a Flag Stop?

Katie: It is part of the transit world; it is not something The Loop will do. We don't have to have it in here.

We do have the deviated routes but you have to call in to schedule that.

For our demand response, you have to set up your ride ahead of time.

George: We have to be careful about stopping before a bus stop, so we don't create an accident.

Katie: No changes made to Section One: Existing Services page 9

Katie: We did make a change to page 10, I added the weekly shopper to our services.

Aaron: Is there a way to differentiate section 1 and section 2?

Katie: Section 2 are opportunities

Aaron: But they are demand response driven?

Katie: I can add that to section 2.

Debbie: Are you going to do the Cinco de mayo event in Hermiston? When I listen to Boardman talk they think we are only supporting Hermiston.

Katie: Yes, we can do that, once we get the fixed-route setup we can do posters so you know you can take The Loop to get to Hermiston events.

Debbie: I think we need to add more cultural events to the event-driven opportunities to make sure we get all of the demographic.

We could add the 4th of July Events.

Katie: I expanded section 3, because of Infrastructure changes, we have several FTE that is to support our fixed route.

Debbie: Katie you talked about challenges with maintenance in previous meetings.

Katie: Thank you for bringing that up, we are transitioning to Public Works in Lexington until we can build our maintenance building.

Aaron: One of the challenged I would add is Materials and Products,

Katie: Like preventative maintenance supplies? Yes

Debbie: What if we go through another pandemic-type event again? That could dampen our public transportation again, right?

Katie: Yes, but we are better prepared now, also we never shut down. We have sanitization equipment, we could put the barriers back up, plus we have masks and gloves, etc.

Aaron: Staffing, I think a big challenge is to secure staff, also the county has limited resources for employees, we have talked about it multiple times, and we have to talk about turnover, people can't afford to stay.

Katie: I have talked about this for over a year, the county uses a program to measure job wages and I think it is outdated because I can't get the driver's wage to increase the scale. We aren't competitive with other companies.

Debbie. Is there any way to do a workforce incentive program? Hiring incentive, work performance, etc.?

Katie: So I so in our last advisory meeting, I had filled out an application for COVID relief dollars to the state and inside that grant, I had several different projects. And two of those projects are for a workforce incentive program. So we offer some incentives, right, like a hiring incentive. And then there are incentives depending on work performance and all these other things.

I am working with HR to look at options at the county level and see if there is something we can do, there are some Oregon state laws, Equity Pay Act.

You see in the EO all the time, these huge color ads to hire drivers for school buses, truck drivers, etc. and they have huge hiring bonuses and starting wage at \$20/hour, we can't compete with that.

There are other opportunities out there, may not be a popular subject, but having an inmate transitioning program for drivers. There are sidebars to that, but other transit agencies have these programs to transition people back into the workforce.

Debbie: I think it's wonderful, we have a program here at Boardman Foods and these workers are stellar. Have to do screening, but in the end, they are human, and we all make mistakes. They have done their time and they want to be back in the workforce.

Katie: There is an Astoria Transit company spearheading the whole project. And it has become a national thing, so I have information on it. He could come and talk to our committee about the program.

I will add these challenges we have talked about and I can send it out to the BOC to have them look through it.

Review Draft Consolidated STF/STIF By-Laws

Katie: Anything that is highlighted has been changed. And the changes I have made are things we have discussed in previous meetings.

The name clearly defines what we are doing.

Aaron: I like the name.

Aaron: The OAR's, do we have to call that out?

Katie: They are in article 2.

Aaron: What about the ones in article 3?

Katie: Those are the ones that have been added by the consolidated STF/STIF. Those are the highlighted, these are new definitions that have been placed.

Aaron: My question is what are we doing to call them out?

Katie: That is how they divvy up the money and payroll-based formula, the STIF money is divvied up by the population formula.

Aaron: What if someone picked this up and they didn't understand these OAR's is there a way we can add a definition or something?

Katie: So you want the definition of them?

Aaron: Yes, so anyone can understand.

Debbie: I was struggling with the Index; it is confusing because I don't know all those terms.

Katie: This is supposed to be the actual definition list that they have provided and I can't change them.

Katie: indexed minimum is \$100,000. So any entity in the state of Oregon that doesn't qualify, basically they don't have a population base to support the dollars. They don't have a payroll population to support the dollars. They get a fixed indexed minimum, which is \$100,000. So for instance, the tribe they do not receive, they get an indexed minimum because they are a sovereign nation.

They get \$100,000 from the state formula, but they don't get any more.

Now they go to Umatilla County because that's within their jurisdiction.

They go to Umatilla County and ask for dollars through their step program because they are a qualified entity. OK, so yes, it is not a very easy thing. it's not a cut-and-dry definition, having someone to explain it helps.

Debbie: Did they have something like a shared-service? What is the background on that?

Katie: When the groups merged they need that special language to meet the federal rules.

Debbie: definition of the shared ride service, like did it have some meeting? And it says where neither the operator nor any passenger may refuse to permit additional passengers that are otherwise complying with the operator's rules and policies, why even say shared ride? Why not say public transportation?

Katie: I agree it should be called public transportation, but the state is calling it something different, even though it is public and has the same meaning.

Debbie: Do we have to advertise that?

Katie: On the brochures, website, etc.

Debbie: What is the difference between grade 9 to 12, couldn't you have grade 8?

Katie: It is just focused on this age group because of high school students.

Aaron: We have the school bus service not everyone has that. So this is a blanket statement.

Katie: You will notice on the next page we have other definitions, it is not a STIF requirement, but I went ahead and added this. If we don't like it we can always remove it, just handy to have it available.

Aaron: I like it.

Aaron: Article 5, did you cut and paste?

Katie: I did, from the committee's representation and these are the categories that fall under our membership.

Aaron: Can we do some wordsmithing? "within traveling to and from the accounting in and a person who is I would say to be a person who may be a member" so we don't exclude anyone?

Karen: What about local governments including land-use planners? Why did they put that in there?

Katie: Land use planners can help in planning. Bus stops, transit hubs, etc.

Aaron: So these are the qualifications of select members? Can we use wording that doesn't include gender?

Katie: Under article 5 with the new STIF rule, and the consolidation, qualified entities with a county population under 50,000, are required to have 3 of the following representations on the committee.

The categories are:

Low Income

Over 65 and senior population

People with Disabilities

Public Transportation Providers.

We meet the criteria as of now.

There are some new items on this list: black, indigenous, people of color; and people with limited English proficiency.

Debbie: There is a newspaper called Tu Decides in Hermiston, do you advertise in that?

Katie: No, what is it?

Debbie: It's a Hispanic newspaper for the area.

Section 2, we have added a spot for alternate members, I have heard the committee express that is something for you to consider.

George: I am an alternate; I am not expected to attend the meetings unless my person is gone?

Katie: I would advise you to stay on top of any information we send out in case you need to attend.

George: Also, I wouldn't have voting rights if my person is present?

Katie: Correct.

Aaron: Do our alternates need to be approved by the Board, correct?

Katie: Yes, the commissioners will appoint members who represent the interest perspectives.

Katie: I can add language that states that alternates would be allowed to be a vote so many times per year.

Aaron: I think we could get ourselves in trouble with that kind of language. Could we add some language that you can only have three consecutive excuses then we appoint your alternative?

Katie: That is covered in the termination of a member.

Debbie: I can go with that since we already have a policy for attendance.

Katie: Declaring a spot vacant after 3 absences, I do make sure to get ahold of the person after the 2nd absence to make sure they still want to be part of the committee. We can put language in there for this purpose.

It does state under member responsibilities that attendance is required unless arranged with the Transportation Coordinator and alternatives are permitted to vote.

I do try to send out reminders the day before the meeting.

Karen: If the zoom link could be easier to find I think people would show up.

Katie: The zoom link is on the meeting invite I send out. When you accept it should show up on your calendar.

Debbie: I couldn't find it today; do you have my email address? Its debbie@boardmanfoods.com

Katie: I have your email in the invite, I will change it to your work email.

Debbie: I agree with Karen, if it's an outlook calendar invite with the link embedded, it makes my life much easier.

Katie: This is great feedback; I want to make it easy to get into the meeting.

Anything to add to member absences?

Katie: How about this? Staff will contact members in the event of an unexcused absence?

Karen: Yes

Attendance may be achieved by being in person, by phone, or by other electronic means.

5. Review Draft Consolidated STF/STIF Membership Roster

Katie: With the new roster we will have 3 vacancies, but we will have alternatives.

Aaron: For the top one could we put some potentially other people on the board? Commissioners know that At-Large positions could be from anywhere.

Aaron: What if I am gone or Debbie? There would be no chair or vice-chair.

Katie: Your alternatives would be the chair or vice-chair.

Katie: We can add labels to the membership roster.

Katie: We can meet more times, that is up to you guys

Debbie: I think 4 times a year is enough

Katie: This is a good time to change things we currently meet on the 3rd Tuesday of every quarter and it's always Tuesday and always 3 pm.

Debbie: When is the next meeting: July 19th

Katie: July 19th @ 2, we are starting early because we are going over the Human Services Coordinated Plan, but usually, we start at 3.

Katie: You as members need to advocate for the position and find an alternative that you want as your alternative.

Aaron: No changes to the meeting schedule.

Katie: Everyone has been pulled over to the consolidated roster, other than one member, and will be unable to attend meetings. The one absent member, I have no way to contact them.

Katie: The carry-over from the recent officer election was also added to the new roster, and will remain the same until next election next year.

Katie: We do need a motion to set these items in front of the commissioners.

Aaron: I will entertain a motion to put these three items in front of the commissioners.

Stephanie: seconds

Aaron: any further discussion?

Motions carries: 3:33

Good of the Order

Adjourn