

Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee

Agenda

Wednesday, September 14, 2022

The Dalles Transit Center, 802 Chenoweth Loop, The Dalles

Remote option via Zoom: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81747747475>

Or call 719-359-4580, Meeting ID: 817 4774 7475

10:00 – 11:00 AM

Topic	Time	Item
Call to Order and Introductions	10:00	
Minutes Approval <i>April 5, 2022</i>	10:05	Approval
Updates from The Link and MCEDD <ul style="list-style-type: none">• STIF Projects• The Link and Regional Transportation	10:10	Discussion
FY23-35 Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Formula Plan Preparation, Other Grant Opportunities	10:30	Discussion
New Business/ Good of the Order	10:55	
Set Next Meeting and Adjourn	11:00	

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. If you have a disability that requires any special materials, services or assistance, please contact us at 541-296-2266 (TTY 711) at least 48 hours before the meeting.

**+WASCO COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, Tuesday, April 5th, 2022
MCEDD CONFERENCE ROOM & ZOOM TELECONFERENCE**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Lee Bryant, Jim Holycross, Jesus Mendoza (The Link), Kris Boler (GOBI).

STAFF: Kate Drennan (Deputy Director Transportation), Sara Crook (Mobility Travel Trainer), Jill Brandt (Administrative Assistant)

GUESTS: Susie Wright, Krista Purser from Kittleson

CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS

Kate called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. A quorum was present. A short round of introductions took place. Kate gave overview of the agenda.

MINUTES

Jim Holycross motioned to approve the minutes of January 18, 2022, as presented. Lee Bryant seconded the motion. All voted in favor, and the motion carried unanimously

TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN UPDATES & PRESENTATION

Kittleson's consultant Krista Purser gave an overview of project process, then proceeded to present the draft plan and recommendations. The project's original purposes were to improve transit, reduce greenhouse gases, and give a plan for updating and funding public transit in Wasco County for the next 20 years. The consultants looked at existing conditions and transit needs, made their evaluation, and came up with transit goals and policies to guide the future's approach. The draft Transit Development Plan includes the projected needs for capital improvements and technology for marketing and coordination (Rider Apps). The project is now at the phase of Public Review, and on schedule to be adopted this May or June. The draft Plan contains visioning goals with a focus on customer-facing services, accessibility, and maintaining the overall health of the community (its sustainability and fiscal health). The recommendations provided in this Plan will work for many years.

Krista proceeded to detail the crafting of this draft Transit Development Plan. The consultants began with an existing conditions analysis to determine what the transit needs were in the community at present. This included a public survey and a series of outreach calls to local business and community groups. The consultants worked with an advisory committee throughout the process. The needs and desires expressed most were to increase the frequency of services and extend hours both later in the evenings and on weekends, including Sunday service. Other improvements that were identified as needed were increased efficiency of routes, increased marketing and education for the phone apps to pay fares and track buses in real-time to know when the bus will be at the stop. Updating vehicle fleets and looking for ways to reduce emissions and fuel savings were also considered.

Next in the presentation, Krista presented the future service opportunities split into short term, medium-term and long-term. Short-term planning stays within the Link's existing funding. Development of infrastructure is needed to support the eventual increase in demand that is

envisioned. Additional stops will be needed to enact short-term service improvements including spreading out the stops on the blue line to ensure that people are within a five-minute walk (quarter mile) of a stop. The Plan's recommends changing the red line's existing loop to an out-and-back route. Another improvement request is to extend the The Dalles to Hood River route to the college and/or downtown. Providing additional service to South County was also considered, and a few different routes and schedules were presented in the maps section. Driver input was considered for many of the proposed changes, such as the need for updated technology in the fleet, and changing the existing Blue Route to bring it closer to schools. The proposed red route changes include alternating the route's spurs in order to service the two high ridership areas: the Port area and the Chenoweth area. Making these changes to the routes will relieve the current dial a ride demand and can be done with the existing buses. Service can be improved by having two buses running the route to ensure frequency of every hour or less. The short-term plan does not project any immediate service changes to dial a ride service. The short-term focus is improved existing service as detailed above, and to add the infrastructure that will allow scheduled route service to eventually replace the demand for dial a ride.

The next slides presented summarized the recommended capital improvements and the changed stops on the routes. On extending the inter-city The Dalles to Hood River route, the proposal is for the line to run from one campus to another as a direct route. This is an extension of the existing services on both ends. These changes could add travel time and potentially affect connections. This proposal aligns with the blue route changes and could be timed to connect with the blue route.

Recommendations for short-term improvements to the South County route include adding some timed stops in The Dalles. Currently the South County shuttle converts to dial a ride once in town, taking riders to their destinations. Some timed stops in The Dalles will allow riders to jump on without dialing for service, greatly extending accessibility for this route while in town.

Recommendations for medium-term changes included providing additional services to the South County route, extending it down to Madras to provide some service for Maupin residents who go to Madras for services. The projected route could connect to other routes in service to the reservations, to Bend and the Breeze to Portland. These changes could be done in partnership with East Cascades Transit. Krista showed another map that illustrated another proposed South County route to Antelope, Shaniko and the Warm Springs Reservation. This route is proposed to run once a week, or maybe twice per month. A possible partnership connection to foster will be with Sherman County's Transit that runs once per week from Fossil up to The Dalles. Enhancements to service in The Dalles projected for the medium-term include updating information technology and the vehicle fleet.

Recommendations for the long-term provide for expected development at the Port. Krista showed the map detailing a new proposed route for out and back to downtown The Dalles. This plan shows the downtown stop as a transit center. Continued service enhancements include expanding hours for the inter-city service between Hood River and The Dalles with both the timing and the number of trips. The new downtown route in the long-term plan mimics today's red route with some added stops and connections to the Hood River service. Krista added that working towards alternative fuels for the fleet has been listed as a future long-term goal.

Capital improvements for the medium-term future include the replacement of two vehicles. Increasing the miles on the routes will affect how fast the vehicles will need to be turned over.

Overall considerations tried to project how many vehicles will be needed to implement the new services. Some of the short-term service improvement recommendations do not require new vehicles, such as adding new stops and decreasing stop spacing, whereas the medium- and long-term projected enhanced service to Madras and downtown will require new vehicles. Passenger-focused amenities such as covered stops, bike racks, mobile apps for ticketing and online trip planning resources that will show real-time vehicle arrival. Increased education and support for purchasing fares. Financial planning for The Link has focused on beginning to implement changes with the current and short-term funding available. Redistributing resources will allow for minor improvements such as adding one hour onto the evening availability of dial a ride. The recommendations include plans for increased funding in future. Krista asked for any questions or comments.

Discussion: Kris Boler stated that she was happy to see Wasco County's outlying towns included in the planning, because aging folks in these small communities need the services in town.

Jim Holycross asked about dial a ride service to the May 7th First Look event for the construction of Maupin Clinic's new building. Sara offered to connect with Jim to coordinate.

Jesus commented that the recommendations look great, and his concern was getting funding to expand services. The Link is currently looking at improving the route times for riders on the inter-city route to Hood River and back. Jesus also expressed his concern about expanding service in light of the lack of response to The Link's advertisement for part-time driver for the past six months.

Kate added that one big challenge to overcome with implementing new routes is the need for infrastructure. Stops will need to be scaled up so that people have a place to wait for the bus. She noted that some of the recommended changes to the routes will decrease frequency, which contradicts the requests for more frequency. Kate felt that educating riders will be key. The bus will come less often, but the ride will be shorter because it will be going directly where they need to go. Dial a ride is envisioned to be service that will be more reserved for elders and mobility challenged folks. Many things have to come together to enable the shifts.

Krista noted that the first changes will gain efficiency, at that point The Link can look at what demand for dial a ride looks like and adjust. Kittleson's is not recommending immediate changes to dial a ride service. Kate stated that implementing the addition of Sunday service will be a staffing issue, because a dispatcher and a driver will both be needed.

Kate wrapped up this topic with a reminder to the group that the open house was live online. The website is engaging and offers opportunity to provide feedback on each

separate proposal. The maps can be clicked on to type a comment. There is also a survey at the end to fill out. Kate invited the committee to share out the open house link after the meeting. Once the open house closes, Kate will continue with public outreach at the City of The Dalles on Monday 4/11, and to the County Commission on June 1st. The final plan is scheduled to be posted on June 15th.

POLICY UPDATES

Jesus presented this topic, stating that there was need for policy changes that have come out of concerns and questions from The Link's drivers. The first change was to clarify service areas based on roadway conditions. For example, if the road was unpaved and the driver was unable to turn around, the bus will not go into the driveway. This past winter, wheelchair lifts were unable to unload passengers due to snow or down branches in the driveways. Jesus will evaluate the driveways individually for regular riders and be in touch with residents to request that they meet the bus at the entrance of the driveway.

Another policy change that has been identified was around rider etiquette. Dial a ride is currently used to go shopping, but the number of bags exceeds what is appropriate for drivers to handle as part of regular dial a ride service. These riders will be better served by using the shopping bus.

A policy change was needed to clarify procedures regarding no shows. If a rider is marked as no show more than twice in one month, service will be suspended. The new policy provides direction regarding the penalties assessed for the number of no shows in a given time period.

A guidance policy has been developed for bodily fluids/bloodborne pathogens procedures. The policy clarifies who is responsible and what to do with the vehicle when this condition occurs.

Driver's personal use of the bus policy has been revoked. Drivers have been allowed to take the vehicle home for lunch when it saved time and miles, cutting out an extra cross-town trip that coming back to the transit center for lunch required. To equalize benefits for all drivers, it was decided that drivers cannot take the bus home for their lunch or breaks.

Discussion: Kris Boler questioned the driveway accessibility service for non-ambulatory riders. In these cases, she suggested taking a van rather than a bus. Kate replied that The Link's drivers can't be shoveling snow out of the way in order to operate the lift. Unimproved roadways have been causing damage to our vehicles. The Link's plan is to assess roads individually. There will always be some exceptions, but the policy is intended to protect the drivers and vehicles from the damages of getting stuck.

LINK REPORT

Jesus put the rider information for the past two quarters up on screen to compare. Overall numbers were very stable, despite the omicron resurgence over the December/January Holidays. Kate added that this long-range planning will increase ridership over the long term.

COMMITTEE REAPPOINTMENT

Kate has been contacted by county regarding the committee members' terms. Lee Bryant and Jim Holycross have terms that are due to end on June 30th of this year. The Bylaws state that a member can serve two terms in a row. Jim is in his first term and is eligible to continue for another term. Kate asked Lee if she wished to keep serving on the committee. Lee was agreeable to what was easiest for the committee, being both willing to continue serving and also willing to let new folks serve. As a population rep, Lee worked for Senior disabled services when she was originally appointed, and then she became the director of the senior center. When she retired, she continued to represent the elderly on the committee, and reported that she has been on it for 20 years. Kate explained that committee members were meant to serve as representatives for specific populations. For new representatives, Lee suggested looking at the Senior Center and Senior Disabled Services. Since Jim has moved from Maupin to The Dalles, Kate suggested that Jim take over representing the senior and disabled services. This will open up the seat on the committee that represents South County. Kris Boler suggested Colleen from the APD (Aging and People with Disabilities) who has expressed interest in this committee. She also suggested looking with the Community Action Program. Kate will follow up on with Kris on these contacts.

SCHEDULE INTERIM MEETING FOR TDP FINAL DRAFT

Because this committee makes recommendations to Wasco County, Kate suggested shifting the meeting to May, so that this committee can review the final version of the Plan and make its recommendation to Wasco County to accept the plan. Kate emphasized that this is the appropriate process for adoption of the plan, and she envisioned a short half-hour meeting for a final review to make the recommendation. Friday, May 20th at 9am was selected as the time for this short approval meeting. Kate can then taking the recommendation to the Wasco County Commission at their June 1st meeting.

ADJOURN

Kate adjourned the meeting at 10:17 am.

Respectfully submitted by Jill Brandt, Administrative Assistant

Memorandum

To: Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director, and Jesus Mendoza, LINK Operations Manager

Date: September 8, 2022

Re: Wasco County STIF Plan Project Updates

Project: Planning & Mobility Management - Increased outreach in Wasco County to encourage familiarity and ridership on transit, especially to low-income populations and minority communities. Outreach will include development of online travel training materials to improve community knowledge of public transit connections and build confidence in using transit.

Update: Travel Trainer Sara Crook completed her Travel Training Certification course and has been developing program structure and content to create a regional program. Recent projects have included outreach to the North Wasco County School District, and Gorge Pass Marketing outreach. Sara leads the Go Vets Columbia Gorge project funded by ODOT's Rural Veterans Transportation grant program that serves Veterans living in our bi-state region and is currently organizing outreach events for Veterans and their representatives. Sara also provides travel training education and organizes travel training events for the members of the Gorge Transit Connect program, comprised of community-based organizations and human service agencies of the five-county region.

The Gorge Pass Marketing project has shifted some of the outreach focus to educating local residents about how to use the regional bus system with a series of Travel Training videos. Each video will focus on some of the most common challenges that riders encounter: how to make a bus transfer, how to use the Google Trip Planner, how to read a bus schedule, how to put your bike on the bus bike rack. These videos will be shared on the Gorgepass.com and will also live on the Gorgetranslink.com's new Travel Training page (not yet launched). Sara is working to shape these videos and to develop the Travel Training page.

Project: Routes & Connections - Support for bus routes and bus services to communities with a high percentage of Low-Income Households, to include:

- ongoing support of the deviated fixed routes in The Dalles,
- service to smaller communities in Wasco County,
- and maintaining dial-a-ride hours on weekends, early mornings and evenings

Update: We continued to operate our Blue and Red deviated fixed routes and are making plans to improve the routes as outlined in the Transit Development Plan. Jesus has reached out to The Dalles' city engineer to discuss feasibility to implement proposed stops and move forward Transit Development Plan recommendations. We continue to operate Dial-A-Ride on earlier hours for medical appointments and other needs, as well as provide service on Saturdays.

Our South Shuttle operates weekly and is partnering with Canyon Rim in Maupin to serve resident shopping needs from smaller communities. We held a meeting with Wasco County Commissioner Steve Kramer and reps from the Tygh School Community Center transportation to discuss how we can support public transportation in South Wasco County. We are planning to increase our South

County Shuttle to twice per week and to expand its route to Pine Grove/ Wamic as a result, starting October 1. Additionally, The Link provided a free transportation for The Dalles Senior Center to and from Wasco County Fair as part of our South County service.

Project: Marketing - Actions to boost ridership on The Link, including marketing, fare subsidies, and Spanish-language outreach.

Update: We have continued marketing through the Gorge Pass marketing contract. This includes creating YouTube videos, Facebook and Instagram ads, and information included in newsletters of outdoors-, climate-, recreation focused organizations. The Link has also posted to social media and newsletters. We also have been active in presenting to organizations in the community about our offerings.

In August, The Link replenished Transit Connect Program with 2,000 Dial-a-Ride Tickets and through the Equity Program received 50 GOrge Passes. An additional 910 Dial-a-Ride tickets were purchased through a Veterans Grant. These are free transit passes given to low-income residents through various community-based organizations.

This project also provides free rides for high school students. The Link attended registration at The Dalles High School to inform students of the free service, participated in Celilo Village back-to-school event hosted by One Community Health, and is coordinating with Kelly Ave alternative school to join and present information about travel training options and services.

Additionally, this project included a shuttle twice per week to The Dalles Aquatic Center when school was out for the summer. We also offered the shuttle to the Farmer's Market on Saturdays during the summer. Unfortunately, due to driver shortages, we had to reduce service to The Dalles Aquatic Center.

Project: Facilities & Bus Shelters - Purchase and install two bus shelters for service on The Link.

Update: We continue to pursue a shelter investment at MCMC. We have received competitive grant funds for a significant investment in bus stop signs and seats – using STIF funds as 'local match' dollars. We have sought quotes to purchase the shelters and will be contracting soon. One Community Health and Mid-Columbia Center for Living have also agreed to install a bus shelter in between both facilities. We have funds for a third shelter and are considering Waters Edge or The Dalles High School.

Project: Fleet - This project uses STIF funds to match a grant to replace buses at the end of their lifecycle, and supports vehicle spill protection at the Transit Center.

Update: Completed.

Project: Administrative Support -Administrative support for MCEDD-LINK operations to successfully administer the complex STIF Plan, including financial tracking and reporting, outcome measure tracking and reporting, development and implementation of STIF projects.

Update: This task is ongoing and includes regular quarterly reporting, PTAC staffing, and so on.

Memorandum

To: Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director, and Jesus Mendoza, LINK Operations Manager

Date: September 8, 2022

Re: Quarterly LINK Operations and Regional Transportation Report

Operations

- **Vehicles:** The Link has been cycling each bus through a shop in Portland for our annual vehicle inspections. The facility we are using is also able to do repair work on the vehicles if issues are flagged during the inspection. Adams Auto installed catalytic convertor shields on the newer vehicles, 30-37, to deter catalytic convertor theft.
- **Field Supervisor:** The MCEDD Executive Committee approved a new Field Supervisor position at their August meeting to take on more of the day-to-day oversight of The Link. We advertised the position, interviewed and selected Laura Reed for the new role. Laura is currently employed as a bus driver and has worked with The Link since December 2020. The hiring panel agreed that Laura's combined experience and positive professional relationship with MCEDD and The Link staff made her the right fit for the job. Unfortunately, we need to fill her driver position before she can fully assume the role. *We are currently hiring for two full-time and one part-time driver position and could use Board support in sending us candidates!*
- **Emergency Management Services:** Breezy winds and hot temperatures brought high risk of fires in Wasco County. The Link supported Wasco County Emergency Management by having drivers on standby during afterhours if evacuation was required for Canyon Rim Assisted Living in Maupin. The Link dispatched drivers to Riverfront Park and Trail during a second fire that occurred in the eastside of The Dalles. Neither of the fires required use of our vehicles. However, it did prompt Gorge Native American Collaboration to gain interest in partnering with The Link as they adopt their own Emergency Preparedness Plan.
- **Grants:** The Link received competitive grants to fund the purchase of two electric buses and bus stop infrastructure including three shelters, signs, and twenty Simme seats. We will be applying for a Google Community Grant in support of our grant match needed to purchase an electric bus.
- **Intercity Shuttle:** Columbia Area Transit gave The Link a 30-day notice expressing interest in early contract termination for our service between Hood River and The Dalles. Beginning October 1st, The Link will no longer be operating the intercity shuttle and CAT will resume full responsibility. This will result in a deficit of roughly \$50,000 in The Link budget, reducing our positions by one part-time driver.
- **Transit Development Plan:** The MCEDD Board adopted the Transit Development Plan at their June Board meeting. We are coordinating with Wasco County Planning Department on a grant they received from the Department of Land Conservation and Development for additional outreach that could lead to them adopting the Transit Development Plan. Our intention is to ensure the outreach coordinates with what has already been done and does not lead to reopening the entire plan.

Regional Transit Updates

- **Gorge Regional Transit Strategy, Phase II:** MCEDD hosted a successful first Stakeholder Advisory Committee (STAG) meeting on August 3rd. There was good bistate representation, with a

diversity of organizations attending, including state and federal agencies and representatives, county and city staff and electeds, human service organizations, and nonprofits. The stakeholder group was enthusiastic and had valuable input to give to the consultants and MCEDD on the work to date, which included Draft Memo 2: Existing Framework Memo, Operations, and the Planning Context memo and Draft Memo 3: Regional Travel Patterns, Transit Gaps, and Opportunities Analysis. The next STAG meeting will be October 5th. For more information, please visit: <https://gorgetranslink.com/gorge-transit-strategy/>

- Diversifying Mobility:** Transportation solutions for a rural region should include a menu of transportation options that can meet all residents’ needs. Mobility Manager Kathy Fitzpatrick is working with Commute Options and our local transportation providers to identify funding and management capacity for establishing vanpool programs. Vanpool programs expand the local bus services by providing transportation services to employees whose work shifts are well outside of the local transit operations. Kathy is organizing a Vanpool Information Session in October for local employers who are interested in establishing a vanpool program for their employees. ODOT has developed a statewide program of \$4M from the flexible Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act funds that will come available next year. WSDOT is also exploring an expansion of the Commute Trip Reduction rules which would fund commute options in rural regions. Please contact Kathy if you know of any employers that might be interested!

Ride Information for The Link

ALL DEMAND RESPONSE	Jan-March 2022	April-June 2022
Total Passenger One-Way Trips	3,084	3,111
Elderly/Disabled One-Way Trips	1,680	1,768
Revenue Service Hours	1,478	1,453
Revenue Service Miles	16,021	16,796
TOTAL DAR + DFR* includes South County and Shopping Shuttle		
DEVIATED FIXED ROUTE		
Total Passenger One-Way Trips	2,363	2,125
Elderly/Disabled One-Way Trips	141	128
Revenue Service Hours	1,807	1,934
Revenue Service Miles	28,235	29,796
Total Passenger One-Way Trips	5,447	5,236
Elderly/Disabled One-Way Trips	1,821	1,896
Revenue Service Hours	3,285	3,387
Revenue Service Miles	44,256	46,350

Memorandum

To: Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director

Date: September 8, 2022

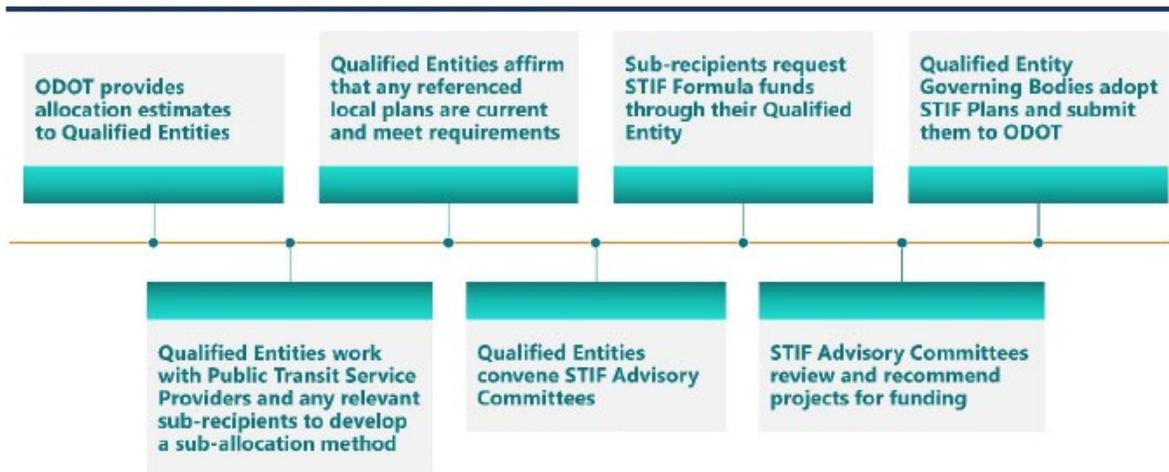
Re: 2023-2025 Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Formula Plan Preparation, Other Grant Opportunities

STIF Formula Fund Overview

We are coming up on the biennial process to develop a plan for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Formula fund dollars received by Wasco County (the “Qualified Entity”). The STIF Formula fund receives 90 percent of all STIF revenues (payroll tax) and is intended to expand and improve public transportation services for current and future transit users. STIF Formula funds may be used for public transportation purposes that support the effective planning, operation, and administration of public transportation programs.

ODOT has released information for developing the 2023-2025 STIF Plans, which must be submitted by January 16, 2023. Wasco County’s estimate for these funds as of September 2022 is \$500,277 in FY24 and \$525,350 in FY25, with no match requirement. The PTAC will be developing a draft plan over the next few months and submitting it to the Board of Commissioners for approval and adoption. Please see the timeline below copied from ODOT’s STIF Program Guidebook.

Figure 2-1. STIF Plan Application Timeline



Some ODOT requirements to note:

- On an annual basis, each Qualified Entity must allocate at least one percent of its estimated STIF Formula fund disbursement to a program(s) supporting student transportation (student transit services for students in grades 9 through 12), if practicable.
- A STIF Plan must address the transportation needs of people residing in or traveling into and out of the Qualified Entity’s area of responsibility.

It is the Advisory Committee's responsibility to approve or reject project proposals and to recommend project prioritization. The ORS for the Advisory Committee state that it should consider the following criteria when reviewing project proposals:

- Whether the project would:
 - Increase the frequency of bus service to communities with a high percentage of low-income households
 - Expand bus routes and bus services to serve communities with a high percentage of low-income households
 - Reduce fares for public transportation in communities with a high percentage of low-income households
 - Result in procurement of buses that are powered by natural gas or electricity for use in areas with a population of 200,000 or more
 - Improve the frequency and reliability of service connections between communities inside and outside of the Qualified Entity's service area
 - Increase the coordination between Public Transportation Service Providers to reduce fragmentation in the provision of public transportation service
 - Expand student transit services for students in grades 9 through 12
 - Enhance services for older adults and people with disabilities

- Whether the project would maintain an existing service
- The extent to which the project goals meet public transportation needs and are a responsible use of public funds
- The extent to which the project might benefit or burden historically- or currently-marginalized communities both now and in the long term
- Other factors to be determined by the Qualified Entity or Advisory Committee (e.g., geographic equity)

Proposed Next Steps

We suggest meeting in October to review a draft of proposed projects, and then in November to prioritize and finalize a plan to send to the Board of Commissioners. Projects would largely continue existing services or match other federal grants already received for The Link. We could bring more information about a sub-allocation method in October.

Questions

- Is there any feedback on next steps?
- Besides The Link, are there others we should reach out to for project proposals?
- Are there other criteria you would want to use for prioritizing projects?

STIF Discretionary Fund Overview

Five percent of the STIF payroll tax collected is used to create the STIF Discretionary Fund. This is a flexible fund source that aims to expand or improve public transportation services by supporting projects that create new service routes, adopt enhanced forms of technology and data collection, maintain transit fleets in a state of good repair, and advance the equity and sustainability of transportation in the state. STIF Discretionary funds are not a source of ongoing operations funding.

Goals of the STIF Discretionary fund are to:

- Improve transit for low-income and transportation-disadvantaged communities
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Increase transit accessibility and efficiency
- Improve roadway and community safety and livability

MCEDD itself is an eligible entity to apply for this biennial funding. MCEDD currently has STIF Discretionary funds that support the Mobility Management and Travel Training programs and fund marketing for the GORge Pass. The Hood River- The Dalles route that The Link had sub-contracted with Columbia Area Transit (CAT) to operate on weekdays was funded by a STIF Discretionary grant received by CAT. We are having discussions with CAT about opportunities to partner on 2023-2025 STIF Discretionary Grants, including a request to again fund Mobility Management, Travel Training, marketing for the GORge Pass, and the Hood River- The Dalles route.

These funds typically have a 20% match requirement. The PTAC will be asked to prioritize any STIF Discretionary grants submitted to ODOT that affect Wasco County.

Other Grants

There are other grant opportunities for The Link with deadlines over the next 6 months:

- The Statewide Transit Network Program, which currently utilizes both the STIF Intercommunity (4% of the payroll tax) and the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311(f) Intercity funds. This could be a competitive grant source for the Hood River- The Dalles route, or perhaps routes to South County.
- FTA 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities. This historically has been used to fund The Link's Dial-a-Ride services. MCEDD is the applicant.
- FTA 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas. This historically has been used to fund The Link's Dial-a-Ride services. Wasco County is the applicant.
- The Special Transportation Fund is another biennial fund source that The Link regularly receives to support Dial-a-Ride services. A few years ago, the state legislature combined this with the STIF funds, going into effect in 2023. When we discuss Wasco County's STIF allocation, it will be broken out by Payroll (what we have known as the STIF Formula funds historically) and Population basis (what we have known as the Special Transportation Fund historically). The Population dollars are dedicated to providing services to older adults and individuals with disabilities. Wasco County's estimate for these funds as of September 2022 is \$70,086 in FY24 and \$73,224 in FY25, with no match requirement.

Conclusion

Besides the STIF Formula fund, information about these other grant sources is provided to let the PTAC know what will be coming in the next few months. We could use the Transit Development Plan to determine if any of the identified projects could be funded through these sources if there is an opportunity to grow service. We welcome any input on where the PTAC would prioritize areas of focus.