



Salem Area Mass Transit District
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT FUND
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
VIRTUAL MEETING

June 2, 2020
Courthouse Square – Senator Hearing Room
555 Court Street NE, Salem, Oregon 97301

MINUTES

PRESENT:	Vice-Chair, Becky Gilliam, Jim Row, Ron Harding, Kathy Martin-Willis
ABSENT:	Director Charles Richards, Sandra Hernandez- Lomeli, J.D. Wolfe, Glen Morrison, Chris Havel
STAFF:	Steve Dickey, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Program Management; Chris French, Service Planning Manager; Ted Stonecliffe, Planner II; Jeremy Jorstad, Planner II; Jolynn Franke, Planner I; Melissa Kidd, Operations Programs Administrator
GUESTS:	Director Colleen Busch
RECORDER:	Jolene White, Administrative Assistant, Finance and Technology, Strategic Initiatives and Program Management

A. CALL TO ORDER, WELCOME, AND INTRODUCTIONS

5:30 PM

Vice-Chair Becky Gilliam called the meeting to order. Attendance was noted, and a quorum was not present. The members informally decided to continue with an informational meeting and to reschedule an additional meeting for next week to vote on action items.

Mr. Dickey shared a *Safety Moment* about ways that the District continues in safety mode and is utilizing protective measures to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. He said it was important for everyone to continue to practice safety measures.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments submitted and no public present.



C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Dickey informed the committee that until the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic lessened, all public meetings at Cherriots will meet electronically. The current platform the District uses is Google Meet.

Mr. French gave an update on the service impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. On March 6th, the District started additional cleaning in the facilities and on the buses to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. On March 31st, all service was suspended due to several operators contracting the virus. Local service resumed at approximately 25% capacity levels on April 6th for essential trips only. Regional service was reduced by a few morning and evening trips only. On April 26th, local service levels were able to be increased to approximately 30%, backdoor boarding was initiated and the service started operating fare free. On May 10th, Saturday service was added back and that increased service levels to 66%. The District will be adding plastic barriers separating the operators from the riders and should be completely installed by the end of July. Once the barriers are in place on the bus, the District will be looking at expanding service. Other measures that have been taken are masks are required to be worn by riders and social distancing seating required. Service changes have been announced on the Cherriots website and social media sites to alert the public of any changes.

Mr. Dickey went over the schedule and timeline for the upcoming STIF funding cycle for the next biennium. There will need to be at least three more meetings of the STIFAC this year.

D. DISCUSSION

Mr. French shared a report on the positive results of the STIF funding used in the first round of funding. Ridership increased resulting from the implementation of the youth fare. Ridership increases were up by 5.5 % for local service and up 11% for the regional service for the year. Dial-a-ride services are down due to lack of funding requiring reductions and Cherriots LIFT service is an on-demand service. There was a significant increase in boarding's using the reduced youth monthly fare use in both the regional and local system.

The committee discussed which areas they would like to focus on for the next biennium. Mr. Row shared that because of the loss of revenue from the payroll tax due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the funding for the STIF will most likely be significantly lower in the next biennium. Due to the lack of funding, Mr. Row doesn't think there will



be room in the budget for additional areas of focus. Mr. Dickey shared that there is a possibility that the legislation, for a fixed period of time, may relax some of the limitations of how the STIF funds can be used. The reasoning behind the relaxed rules is because agencies that are already funded through a payroll tax have been hit extremely hard and they want to allow those agencies to have flexibility in order to maintain service at a cohesive level.

Ms. Gilliam shared her thoughts on future investments in transit and our current situation and coming back from the pandemic, and longer-term priorities. One of the highest priorities is to make sure that all transit workers and users are able to be kept safe and healthy as much as possible. Ms. Gilliam's recommendation is that if there is leeway in how the STIF funds can be used, to keep those recommendations in mind as a number one priority. The significant increase in youth ridership shows how important it is to have this program. It is important to Ms. Gilliam that this committee preserves and continues this investment in the youth fare program. She would also like to see what other areas can be utilized for youth programs. The third item she would like the committee to look at is the methodology that is used to determine which routes are reopening and what frequency rate to prioritize service for our essential workers in the community.

Mr. Harding has been thinking along the lines of exploring and embracing technology in the use of our transit such as real-time location software. There will be many additional software platforms that we may be able to use in ways that we haven't thought of before. This group should keep an eye on these things and embrace it to make it more convenient and efficient for customers to ride the bus. Mr. Dickey updated the group informing them that Cherrriots is in the process of installing equipment for real-time passenger information on both the local and regional service. The District is also in the process of initiating a contactless fare system to minimize contact and to improve the safety and health of our employees and customers. The committee discussed different contact free fare systems that may be utilized.

Ms. Martin- Willis reminded the group that they had done extensive polling previously in order to see what the community needs were. She is curious to know where the committee left off were rider input was concerned. This seems like the logical place to pick up where they left off. Mr. French informed the group that the District's rider survey showed that the priority requests from customers was to have weekend and holiday service. Mr. French will send out the latest poll for members to review.



Mr. Row summarized the committee's interests in the next biennium as follows:

- Preservation of services
- Increasing access (reduced fares etc.)
- Rider safety (sanitation, security measures, contactless fare system)
- Focusing on technology for transit

Vice-Chair Gilliam would also like to look at if they will be increasing any investments in routes and services especially for essential workers that depend on transit, low income areas and communities of color. Ms. Gilliam also pointed out that going to contactless fare system can present some challenges for riders that do not have smart phones. Mr. Row also expressed interest in how to make a contactless fare system meet the needs of these groups. Mr. Dickey shared that another component of this is to address the capabilities of these systems to include everyone, including those that do not have access to a bank account.

E. ACTION ITEMS

Due to a quorum not being present, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Advisory Committee will meet again on June 10, 2020 in order to vote on action items.

F. ADJOURN

Vice-Chair Gilliam adjourned the meeting at 7:12 PM.