



Rogue Valley Transportation District

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RVTD STIF Advisory Committee Minutes

Monday, May 19, 2025 4:00pm-5:30pm

Attendance :

STIFAC: Sandra Padilla, Jim Norris, Natalie Mettler, Emile Amarotico, Jennie Christopherson, Cara Carter

RVTD: Edem Gomez, Paige West, Debbie Wilbur, Kelly Madding

Time	Lead	Topic	Materials
4:00	Committee Members	Meeting start-up - Chair Sandra Padilla begins meeting at 4:03pm. - Roll Call and introductions. - New STIFAC Member Jim Norris introduced himself to the group. <u>Motion:</u> <i>Emile moved to approve the October 2, 2024 STIFAC Meeting Minutes, Cara seconded the motion. STIFAC approved the October 2nd meeting minutes.</i>	10/2/2024 Minutes Approved
4:11	Committee Members	Action Item: Selection of STIF Advisory Committee Vice Chair Natalie Mettler was recommended to serve as STIFAC Vice Chair alongside STIFAC Chair Sandra Padilla. <u>Motion:</u> <i>Emile moved to appoint Natalie Mettler as STIFAC Vice Chair, Cara seconded the motion. STIFAC approved the appointment of Natalie Mattler as STIFAC Vice Chair.</i>	Appointment of Natalie Mettler as STIFAC Vice Chair.
5:20	Paige West, RVTD	RVTD Service Update and Budget Forecast <i>Paige West</i> provided STIFAC with an overview of RVTD's current budget status, highlighting concerns over stagnant or low-growth revenues and rising service and operating costs, challenges shared by many transit agencies. <i>Paige</i> outlined RVTD's service growth since the launch of STIF funding in 2019, noting the addition of several new routes (1X, 26, 27, 63, 17, and 41), all supported by STIF dollars. Ridership has increased on most routes over the past two years, excluding Route 61 due to service changes. <i>Emile</i> commented on the speed advantage of Route 1X compared to Route 10, emphasizing its attractiveness due to direct I-5 travel between Medford and Ashland. <i>Natalie</i> asked for clarification on whether all routes were shown in the ridership slides; <i>Paige</i>	Presentation

		confirmed that trunk routes (10, 40, and 60) were not on screen but are significant ridership contributors. In response to <i>Emile's</i> follow-up on trends among these trunk routes, <i>Paige</i> noted ridership has also increased on these lines and is nearing pre-COVID levels. RVTD Budget Presentation Highlights: <i>Paige</i> presented a breakdown of RVTD revenues: • Federal Grants (47.29%) as the largest funding source. • STIF (23.42%), as well as base property tax levy, and special levy among key General Fund sources. She noted risks associated with future federal funding due to potential shifts in federal administration priorities and the pending expiration of the current bipartisan infrastructure bill. A long-term revenue and expense forecast chart (2015–2032) showed that starting in FY 2024–25, expenses are projected to exceed revenues. Rising costs include: • 59% increase in cost per mile to operate a bus. • 95% increase in fixed-route service costs (2019–2025). • 119% increase in healthcare/benefit costs (2017–2024). • 78% increase in cost per service hour (2017–2025). <i>Paige</i> noted RVTD is actively working to manage these cost increases. At the state level, the Oregon Legislature is discussing a potential increase in the STIF payroll tax rate (up to 0.4%) to help agencies meet rising expenses. A special levy renewal is also approaching in 2026, and RVTD will need to evaluate whether an increase is warranted. During Q&A, <i>Jennie Christopherson</i> asked about a sharp decline in operating expenses shown in FY 2026. <i>Debbie Wilbur</i>, RVTD Finance Manager, explained the drop reflects the end of major capital expenditures, particularly the Transportation Building Project, with future budgets returning to normal operating levels. <i>Natalie Mettler</i> inquired whether tariffs are affecting RVTD costs. <i>Paige</i> responded that while costs are rising, Federal funds operate under "Buy America" provisions tied to federal grants, the broader trade market does contribute to future cost uncertainty.	
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		<i>Paige</i> concluded with an update on her involvement in the STIF Rule Advisory Committee, which is working to streamline and improve equity in the funding and reporting process for Qualified Entities and Public Transportation Service Providers.	
4:51	Edem Gomez, RVTD	Action Items: Award STIF Low Income Bus Passes for 2025-27 Biennium <i>Edem Gomez</i> presented an overview of the STIF Low Income Bus Pass Program. The STIFAC has allocated \$100,000 per biennium to provide free transit passes to qualifying nonprofit organizations that distribute them to low-income individuals in the Rogue Valley. Since the program’s inception, a total of 209,510 free trips have been provided. The solicitation for the 2025–27 biennium took place in February and March 2025. RVTD received 25 applications, with total funds requested exceeding the available \$100,000. In response, RVTD staff developed an equitable distribution strategy to allocate the limited funds fairly among eligible applicants. Key elements of the proposed distribution process: ○ Removal of ineligible applicants. ○ Distribution of remaining current biennium balance to existing applicants and deduction from their 2025–27 award requests. ○ A cap of \$10,000 per agency to prevent any one applicant from receiving more than 10% of available funds. ○ A flat 12% reduction applied to all requests above \$2,000. ○ RVTD evaluated demographics and determined this capped-and-reduced method to be the most equitable and administratively simple approach. <i>Edem Gomez</i> shared a draft award table using this strategy, showing how each qualifying applicant’s request would be adjusted. <i>Jennie Christopherson</i> inquired whether recipient organizations are required to report on pass usage. <i>Edem Gomez</i> confirmed that all agencies must submit quarterly reports detailing distribution and general trip purposes. While RVTD does not track individual fare product usage (due to	• 2025-27 STIF Low Income Bus Pass Program Requests and Proposed Award

		non-uniqueness of the passes), the agencies are responsible for providing distribution summaries. Motion: <i>Jennie Christopherson moved to approve the 2025–27 STIF Low Income Bus Pass Program Awards. Emile seconded the motion. The STIFAC unanimously approved the awards for the 2025–27 biennium.</i>	
5:18		Next Steps and Meeting Close-out <i>Edem:</i> RVTD will reach out to STIFAC to schedule a meeting after the legislative session concludes and determine if there are any changes needed to service and provide any updates to the STIFAC. <i>Sandra adjourned the meeting at 5:18pm.</i>	• None