



**TO:** Yamhill County Board of Commissioners

**FROM:** Cynthia Thompson, Transit Manager

**Cc:** Ken Huffer, Carolina Rook, Keri Hinton, Sue Halliday

**DATE:** 1-22-21

**Re:** Board Action Items for Board of Commissioners  
Qualified Entity for STIF Funds.

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**Action Items for  
Board of Commissioners**

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**Date: January 28, 2021 Board of Commissioners Meeting**

**#1 Project Description:**

Vote fund or don't fund on the attached form for the 2021-23 Statewide Transportation Improvement Discretionary Funds. BOC approved the recommendation to submit the STIF Discretionary application on November 5, 2020. BOC reviews and votes on both the YCT and the Benton County applications for STIF Discretionary funding for the 2021-23 biennium. The pilot project is for transit service between McMinnville and Junction City as outcome of the Hwy 99 Feasibility Study.

**# 1 Board Action Requested**

Board of Commissioners in their role as the Qualified Entity for STIF funding is required to review and vote to fund or not to fund the 2021-23 STIF Discretionary applications for transit proposals within the Yamhill County geographic area.

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**# 1 Background Info:**

On November 5, 2020, the Yamhill County Board of Commissioners voted to authorize staff to submit an STIF Discretionary application for 2021-23 funding for a pilot project for public transit along the 99W corridor from McMinnville to Junction City that has been assessed as part of an ongoing Hwy 99W Transit Corridor Study managed by Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments with funding from the STIF Discretionary program. The consensus among participants in the study, which includes representatives from Lane Transit District, Lane Council of Governments,



Benton Area Transit, Salem Area Mass Transit and Yamhill County, thought that sufficient demand for transit exists on the corridor to launch pilot transit service. Two of the participants in the study, Yamhill County and Benton County, have agreed to a partnership to operate the pilot transit service.

ODOT requires the STIF Discretionary applications to be approved by numerous boards and committees. These applications have been reviewed and approved by YCTAC, Mid-Willamette Council of Governments, and the Benton County proposal has also been approved by their Board and appropriate committees. A copy of the YCT application and the Benton County application are also attached. The attached ODOT form with the option for BOC to vote to fund or not to fund or to rank the applications is also attached. Considering there are only two applications and they are a partnership application; it seems ranking is not necessary and voting to fund or not to fund is the best option.

### **Project Background**

The City of Monroe is completely unserved by transit, and many areas along Hwy 99W are only accessible by private automobile. Overview maps are included in the attachments to the grant. Also, the project scope and schedule are included in the grant attachments.

Currently, Lane Transit District operates service from Eugene to Junction City; Benton County serves the segment between Corvallis and Adair Village; Cherriots serves from Monmouth to Salem; and, Yamhill County Transit serves from Salem to McMinnville, and north to the Tigard Transit Center.

The project has been broken into three phases; Demand Analysis, Implementation Plan, and Operations.

The Demand Analysis phase is nearly complete, with transit provider interviews, stakeholder surveys of existing and potential riders, and input from connecting transit service providers informing the decision to proceed with the next phases of the project. The second phase will refine route details, determine vehicle type, and create a brand and marketing strategy. The final phase will involve operating the service for up to two years from the initial start date.

It's estimate that vehicle acquisition would take 9-12 months. This would allow the service to start in the summer 2022 while Yamhill County and Benton County assess and implement a sustainable funding strategy, which likely would initially have to rely on STIF Formula funding from the respective Qualified Entities. Traditional metrics for



evaluating transit, including per revenue hour of operation, passenger boarding's, and route on time percentage.

Yamhill County Transit and Benton Area Transit are well positioned to implement and manage the proposed transit service on Hwy 99W. Benton County extends south to the City of Monroe, which is approximately seven miles from Junction City and McMinnville is where Yamhill County Transit is located. The geographic location of the project partners will allow them to either split the service into northern and southern segments or run the entire 70 plus mile route length while keeping dead heads to a minimum via scheduling.

The initial pilot transit service will involve four round trips per day (two by each partner), five days a week. The project partners would each have to acquire a primary and a backup bus (four total) to implement the pilot transit service. The scope of the proposal covers almost all the rural communities on Hwy 99W, including the communities of Monroe, Corvallis, and Adair Village, Monmouth, Rickreal and Amity. The proposed pilot transit service would connect with Lane Transit District in Junction City, with four transit services in Corvallis, with Cherriots in Monmouth, with Tillamook County Transportation Service District in Rickreal and with Yamhill County Transit in Amity and McMinnville.

If the pilot project is not successful Yamhill County Transit is not required to continue the operation and YCT will be able to keep the buses purchased through this grant. The actual service will not begin until the summer of 2021 and hopefully COVID will be on the downward cycle. There is also an opportunity to expand the length of the pilot project should it need more time for analysis due to COVID-19.

The Feasibility Study group were concerned if they waited until after COVID-19 or until the next funding cycle 2023-25 the project will lose its momentum and could become another study that sits on a shelf.

The Transit Manager met with First Transit staff and First Transit has recognized and been aware of this gap in service and the need. Customers have asked about service on Hwy 99 and First Transit indicated they can provide the staff and the service if this grant is funded.

YCTAC met on October 22, 2020 and voted to recommend approval of the grant applications for YCTAC and Benton County and for applications to be submitted to ODOT for STIF and Network Discretionary Funding and staff recommends approval of this project.

Accepted by Yamhill County  
Board of Commissioners on  
1/28/2021 by Board Order  
# 21-46