

Malheur County
Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF)

February 11, 2026

Location: MCOA&CS Conference Room & Zoom

Members in Attendance:

Lorinda Dubois, Malheur County
Administrative Officer – Chairperson
Brittany White, MCOACS
Rachel Hernandez, MCOACS
Jane Padgett, DHS
Sue Robinett, MCCDC

Not Present:

Judge Dan Joyce, Malheur County Judge
Michelle Villreal, EOCIL
Aravela Sanchez, WorkSource

Guest:

Sandy Shelton, MCOACS

Lorinda called the meeting to order. After roll call, a quorum was established with five (5) members present. Sandy Shelton participated as a guest and did not count toward quorum.

Next, Lorinda announced the agenda for the meeting. The agenda was reviewed. Brittany made a motion to approve the agenda, Jane seconded. Sue abstained from voting as she was not present at the last meeting. All remaining were in favor. The motion passed.

Moving forward with old business, the minutes from the meeting on December 18, 2025 were reviewed. No changes were requested. Jane made a motion to approve the minutes, Brittany seconded, Sue abstained due to being absent in the last meeting. All remaining were in favor. The motion passed.

STIF FUNDING UPDATE:

Brittany White delivered a presentation outlining the potential impacts to transit services based on various legislative scenarios currently under consideration regarding Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) revenue. The presentation focused on how different funding decisions—particularly the potential reduction or redirection of the 0.1% STIF payroll tax—could affect local transit operations.

As part of the presentation, Brittany explained that transit currently relies heavily on STIF funding (approximately 25% of total expenses) and provided a detailed breakdown of funding sources and how they support various transit services.

A significant portion of the presentation focused on the potential consequences if STIF funding were reduced or eliminated. Brittany outlined that such changes would have major impacts, including:

- Elimination of programs serving seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income riders
- Loss of voucher programs and student transit initiatives
- Severe reductions to demand response and veteran transportation services
- Inability to implement planned service expansions or capital projects
- Reduction in staffing, particularly drivers and STIF-funded positions

She emphasized that while core services such as fixed and commuter routes may continue under reduced funding scenarios, overall service levels would be drastically diminished.

Brittany also discussed challenges with other funding sources, including limited and stagnant funding for the veteran transportation grant and the requirement to use local and contract funds to meet federal match obligations.

Following the presentation, the group discussed ongoing uncertainty at the state level and the range of possible outcomes depending on legislative decisions. Brittany highlighted broader factors contributing to the current funding challenges, including inflation, rising project costs, and incomplete projects from prior legislation.

Committee members asked questions regarding contingency planning and the long-term sustainability of transit services. Brittany clarified that while the program would likely not be fully eliminated under most scenarios, it would operate at a significantly reduced level with limited service capacity.

The presentation and discussion concluded with an emphasis on the importance of public education and advocacy, including informing community members and stakeholders about how transit funding works and the potential impacts of different legislative outcomes.

2025-2027 STIF PLAN AMENDMENT

Brittany White reviewed a proposed amendment to the STIF (Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund) plan for the 2025–2027 biennium that will be presented to the County for approval. She explained that during the original application process, adjustments made to remain within ODOT’s funding limits resulted in certain prior biennium reserve (carryover) funds being unintentionally excluded from the plan.

As a result, approximately \$444,547 in reserve funding (both operational and capital) is currently not included in the approved STIF plan and cannot be used until a formal amendment is completed. Brittany clarified that this was due to a misstep in how reserve and carryover funds were categorized and reallocated when the application was revised.

She noted that ODOT has since restricted the use of these funds and directed that they be addressed through a plan amendment, which requires County Court approval. The amendment will formally reintroduce these funds into the plan and designate how they will be used.

Brittany also discussed anticipated state-level rule changes that may impact future STIF planning, including:

- Caps on carryover (rollover) funding
- Updated definitions of reserve vs. carryover funds
- Allowances for limited “rainy day” operational reserves
- Potential limits on how much funding can be carried into the next biennium

Given these changes, she emphasized the importance of strategically allocating the currently excluded funds to avoid exceeding future caps or risking redistribution.

As part of the proposed amendment, Brittany outlined recommended uses for the funds, focusing on projects with demonstrated need and likelihood of full utilization:

- Increasing funding for staffing and operational contracts
- Expanding the Veterans Transportation Program
- Supporting senior and disabled transportation services
- Funding capital vehicle purchases, including replacement minivans

She explained that prioritizing active or high-demand programs would help ensure funds are fully utilized and reduce the risk of future funding limitations.

During discussion, Brittany clarified that some discrepancies in projected versus actual funding were due to the challenges of estimating costs—particularly staffing—well in advance of the biennium.

Additional discussion included:

- The STIF approval and amendment process (ODOT review, advisory committee involvement, and Transportation Commission oversight)
- Uncertainty around how new rules will be implemented and enforced
- The need to present the amendment clearly to the County as a necessary step to access previously unallocated funds

Toward the end of the meeting:

- A partner agency representative expressed support for the amendment and noted concerns about potential funding reductions statewide
- There was discussion about outstanding invoicing issues from the prior biennium and ongoing coordination with DHS to resolve them
- Brittany provided an expense update, noting approximately \$183,000–\$193,000 spent to date, with some reporting delays due to ODOT system requirements

In closing:

- Attendees discussed outreach efforts, including developing flyers to share transit information with the public and partner agencies
- Brittany noted she may delay implementation of additional projects until there is more clarity on legislative actions and funding stability
- The group acknowledged ongoing progress but expressed caution given current uncertainties

The meeting concluded with general appreciation for the work completed and adjournment.