

Transportation Fee Roundtable #3

Meeting Minutes

October 11, 2023

Meeting called to order at 9:35am on Wednesday, October 11, 2023 at City of Bend Municipal Court at 555 NE 15th Street and online. Present were Mayor Melanie Kebler, Mayor Pro Tem Megan Perkins, Councilor Anthony Broadman, Councilor Ariel Mendez, Councilor Barb Campbell, Councilor Megan Norris, and Councilor Mike Riley.

1. Welcome and Introductions

- Mayor Melanie Kebler reviewed the purpose of the roundtables and ground rules for participation. She recapped feedback from the September roundtable.

2. Equity Policy and Approach

- Senior Management Analyst Sarah Hutson reviewed the inputs informing the City's approach to transportation equity, including Council Goals, the Transportation System Plan, and policies that support complete communities.
- Equity and Inclusion Director Andrés Portela reviewed the concepts of equity and equality and how they differ from one another, discussed an equity framework and its components (i.e., procedural, distributional, structural, and transgenerational equity), and highlighted several citywide equity strategies and actions taking place this biennium.
- Transportation Planner Susanna Julber discussed the equity policies developed during the Transportation System Plan, including the public process that took place to develop the policy and associated actions. She also discussed how General Obligation Bond project mapping and the Climate Friendly Area Study utilize equity demographics and mapping tools.
- Using the equity framework Andrés Portela shared, Mayor Melanie Kebler summarized Transportation Fee equity considerations and examples, including reduced fees for community members facing financial hardship, data-driven decision-making for how to distribute and prioritize projects funded by the Transportation Fee, and increasing transportation safety and options for all users to lessen the transportation burden for future generations.
- Mayor Melanie Kebler asked roundtable participants their thoughts about the City's approach, feedback on the Transportation System Plan equity policies participants were asked to review ahead of the meeting, and how the City should be thinking about spending Transportation Fee funds that align to those policies.
 - Feedback included: community engagement and holding roundtables do not equal equity and that equity requires ongoing revision; question on how federal funding plays into the overall funding strategy; comment on how the current system is inequitable so not ideal to build upon it and that having a dedicated percentage of the fee going to active transportation and modifying street standards could be ways of addressing this; importance of using more inclusive language such as "rolling"; how it could be helpful to have scoring criteria for projects—in addition to geographic considerations, could also look at socio-economics, road conditions, housing, and current access to transportation options.

3. Accountability Methods

- Mayor Melanie Kebler highlighted accountability methods so the community can be assured the City is spending Transportation Fee dollars as intended. Methods highlighted include built-in methods (e.g., voting, budget process), as well as additional options like reconvening the roundtable group, biannual reporting of spending, and outlining permitted expenditures in the code.
- Mayor Melanie Kebler asked roundtable participants about other specific ways accountability can be built into this policy, keeping in mind that some methods are associated with more resources to administer.
 - Feedback included: comment on how transportation should be part of the metrics for scoring affordable housing projects; that every road in the City should be guaranteed a sidewalk or rolling path; instead of reconvening roundtable group, prefer to engage community partners in a way that centers their constituencies and prioritizes voices of those who don't use cars; older adult population is relying on a system that can keep them independent in their own homes; support for the idea of a graphically oriented scorecard for projects funded by this fee and revisiting in a public manner; that affordability is a key element of accountability and demonstrating to the community that this is being done as cost-consciously as possible and showing how the City is contributing to keeping costs down; who are we bringing to partner with us and can they be a lens into how to do things differently; spaces for community engagement embedded within community organizations to have a dialogue on a regular basis and the City providing funding for holding those types of events; the importance of visibility, especially for smaller projects, on what the transportation fee is paying for; using the term "citizen" committee is not inclusive language when considering the many valuable community members who aren't officially citizens; interest in community engagement to inform what is built in the city and what the city is building toward with specific feedback on level of stress and what the system looks like to a more detailed degree than the Transportation System Plan, as well as having a Transportation Fee oversight committee; question on how Councilors should approach language in the code in terms of level of specificity on how the funds are used; comment on not needing to reinvent the wheel about how to spend funds – can use the Neighborhood Street Safety Program as a blueprint as it's already a successful program with visibility; comment on how there are a lot of things this money will be spent on that aren't visible, from operations and maintenance to a pedestrian master plan, so wanting to hold ourselves accountable to that as well; comment on the importance of flexibility and not being overly prescriptive, especially because costs can change – focusing more on the guiding spirit of the code to relay enough information to have public appreciation and buy-in; comment on communicating directly with people on their utility bill on what the fee is and where it's being spent; support for the point of utilizing existing structures but needing to look into whether those existing structures equitable; agreement that the Neighborhood Street Safety Program has a decade of familiarity and shows great outcomes; importance of using metrics that demonstrate outcomes rather than accomplishments, such as how many people are actually using a new bike lane; having a location on the City's website where plain language is used, without jargon, to describe projects that are going on that different partners can easily pass on; comment on how maintenance can be more equitable, in terms of which streets are

plowed or swept first – that the plan needs to be updated to also prioritize things other than cars now that we have multi-modal equipment; comment on that the keeping the good roads good policy feels inherently inequitable because it means you are prioritizing the streets you have previously prioritized – suggestion that maybe half is spent on untouched streets; how painted lines are not keeping people safe enough and also aren't necessarily where the poorest people in the community are; comment on the record high number of car accidents in the City highlighting that the current system isn't safe; question on if there is something we can put in the language regarding a standards update before the fee is implemented to act as a stop gap to know standards will be to an equitable and safe standard rather than outlining those types of details in the transportation fee code itself; response that the particular code for this fee is about the fee and what it will be spent on but won't dictate all the elements of our transportation policy – that happens through council goals and actions, transportation system plan updates, or street standards updates and is separate from this particular code; comment that while there are elements that aren't safe enough in our system, the City is doing things to move forward – not just keeping the good roads good, but also moving beyond basic maintenance and making improvements that people want to see – part of this accountability is making sure we're meeting those expectations as much as possible and showing the community how we're meeting them; comment that the most important accountability measure is elections and if Council does not carry out promises they've made, there is a very clear accountability measure to replace the Councilors – isn't inherently equitable because many people disenfranchised by the Oregon constitution from voting; encouragement to use the equity framework for engagement – most often community spaces are used to inform, but can use those opportunities as a person-centered approach to also advise and recommend; comment that many in the community are inequitably impacted by this fee, especially those in the refugee and immigrant communities – suggestion for a grace period to settle before they are expected to pay this fee; reminder that we have one of the fastest growing older adult populations in the state and nation and the importance of looking at this fee and its uses through an aging lens; comment that a lot of folks don't have access to the city in an easy format and question on how the City create a mechanism for community members to give feedback in an easy way where they don't have to jump through hoops; comment that the keeping the good roads good policy came from prior councils failing to find funding, so the policy is reflective of a city that doesn't not have enough money, which the transportation fee will help address; question on whether there will be an example for what the city code will be; response that yes, code will put together and be available as part of the process; desire for making routes to school safer with more complete sidewalks because bussing not provided within mile to a mile and a half from a school, and that addressing those gaps would make the community feel safer.

4. Break

5. Other Funding Tools

- Mayor Melanie Kebler discussed the importance of discussing and getting feedback on other funding tools to make sure we're thinking long-term about the transportation system.

- City Manager Eric King provided background on Citywide funding strategy. He provided context around property tax limitations and that, as a result, the City is strategically targeting specific fees for the highest community priorities: public safety, transportation, and housing.
- Councilor Mike Riley reviewed the work of the Citywide Transportation Advisory Committee's Funding Work Group to develop the Transportation System Plan's funding strategy. He discussed both the recommended near-term funding action plan, as well as the potential funding tools for consideration in the long-term, and gave details on the uses and limitations of each of the tools recommended by the Funding Work Group.
- Mayor Melanie Kebler discussed larger state-level policy efforts like property tax, transient room tax, and state fuel tax reform that weren't part of the Transportation System Plan funding conversation because outside of local control. She mentioned that there are larger conversations that have and may occur.
- Mayor Melanie Kebler asked participants for feedback on tools that may be a best next step in the longer term.
 - Feedback included: comment on whether we're missing a greater multi-modal vision project on what Bend needs to become so there are alternatives for not using a car and can have more targeted types of taxes and fees for people who are really burdening the system; that if someone has a contracting business and drives around in their truck all day, only being charged once because they have a home-based business – is there an opportunity to identify and account for these types of impacts; comment on how the fee isn't a perfect tool and not possible to capture all the impacts, but why a mix of tools can be helpful; when considering equity of various tools, Local Improvement Districts can be problematic and may not meet goals; sales tax may be a more direct way to address tourism; comment that it may be worth adding regional fees to the funding puzzle in the future, where the County takes on a larger role in revenue-sharing with their cities, and may be worth considering as the area becomes more urbanized; question about whether the intention of the funding plan was that all of the fees would be passed or just possible options; response that assumptions that a variety of tools would need to be used but not necessarily all of the options; comment that at state-level, reform will be a more complicated exercise; question on whether it is possible to consider funding options not outlined in the Transportation System Plan; response that it would be helpful to know the pros and cons of the ideas the group came up with after deeply exploring the local options; support for parking fees; response that there is a plan to implement that but limited in that it is an enterprise fund and not a very large source of revenue; question on to what extent the City is accessing federal infrastructure bill funds and comment on wanting to understand who we are targeting with the different fees, as well as interest in assessing the income of community members; response that the City has received close to \$30 million in federal grant funds although that type of funding not able to pay for operations and maintenance; comment on how the City is hiring a grant-related position to dedicate even more resources to grant efforts; discussion on how the City needs to partner with Oregon Department of Transportation in order to complete projects with federal funds because not certified to directly deliver federally funded projects, although City looking at how to build that internal capacity; comment on the challenge of income capture for a variety of funding tools, so at least accounting for impact to different income levels; example provided of how vehicle registration look

sat year of vehicle as a way of backing into this; comment on distributional equity and fair distribution of benefits and burdens and a question about how people are thinking about criteria for fairness; comment on how electric vehicles aren't being taxed and putting a higher burden on the system than similarly sized vehicles and often have more affluent owners – question on if it is possible to have some sort of climate or congestion toll; how food and beverage tax can also impact residents and could diminish the vibrancy of the city for our residents; comment on support for a mileage usage fee; question on general obligation bond limitations and whether that is impacted by whether the school or park go for bonds; response that those are separate – each entity capped at three percent of real market value – although some compression considerations; comment on how fuel tax will probably be difficult to pass given it being turned down in 2016; thinking about how visitors are moving and forms of transportation they are using in our city, like flying into Redmond and getting a rental car, and whether we can be thinking about that in fee and funding considerations; question on whether there are lessons learned from the fuel tax not passing and whether it could be more successful now; response that there wasn't full agreement on City Council at that time, so a different context; suggestion to look to other cities with large visitor impact for ideas; response that a lot of those communities have sales or gas taxes; comment on whether we could consider fees for businesses that offer electric charging for electric vehicles.

6. Wrap Up

- Mayor Melanie Kebler thanked everyone for their participation and outlined the next touchpoints in the process: Bend Economic Development Advisory Board discussions, Neighborhood District meetings, Council work sessions, possible listening sessions, email updates to roundtable participants, and future check-ins depending on what gets outlined in the accountability approach. City Councilors expressed their appreciation as well.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.

Attendees:

Bend Bikes	Elisa Cheng
Bend Chamber of Commerce	Sara Odendahl
Bend Economic Development Advisory Board (BEDAB)	Kevin Perkey
Bend La Pine School District	Kim Crabtree
Bend Park & Recreation District (BPRD)	Kristin Toney
City Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)	Richard Ross
Commute Options	Brian Potwin
Council on Aging	Cassie Regimbal
Environment and Climate Committee (ECC)	Mark Buckley
Human Rights and Equity Commission (HREC)	Joanne Mina
Latino Community Association (LCA)	Daniel Altamirano Hernandez
Old Farm Neighborhood Association	James Dorofi
Transportation Bond Oversight Committee (TBOC)	Gina Franzosa
Transportation Bond Oversight Committee (TBOC)	Will Green
Bend City Council	Melanie Kebler
Bend City Council	Megan Perkins
Bend City Council	Anthony Broadman
Bend City Council	Ariel Mendez
Bend City Council	Barb Campbell
Bend City Council	Megan Norris
Bend City Council	Mike Riley
City of Bend	Andrés Portela
City of Bend	Elizabeth Oshel
City of Bend	Eric King
City of Bend	Sarah Hutson
City of Bend	Susanna Julber