Competitive Transit Grant Guidance Manual

2027-2028

Oregon Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division

Oregon Department of Transportation

February 2026

This document is available in alternative formats upon request

Table of Contents

1. Overview

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant. This call for projects is replacing the Oregon Department of Transportation's Mid-Cycle Discretionary Grant Program and the STIF Discretionary and Statewide Transit Network calls for projects. The information contained in this guidance applies exclusively to the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant and may be revised in future funding cycles.

1.1 About the Competitive Transit Grant

The 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant will award capital and operations funding to public transportation providers on a competitive basis for projects that maintain or improve Oregon's public transportation system. Funding is expected from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and administered by ODOT's Public Transportation Division (PTD).

To prevent lapsing federal funds, and due to uncertainty around state funds, the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant call for projects will be broken into two phases.

1.2 Program funding

The 2027-2028 will award funding from FTA's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, the STIF Discretionary fund and the STIF Intercommunity fund. Phase 1 of the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant will award $3.5 million in federal funding, and Phase 2 will award up to $21.6 million in federal and state funds.

1.3 Eligible projects

The following project types are eligible for funding:

Phase 1:

- Vehicle replacement, right-sizing, or expansion. Replacement and right-sizing projects will be prioritized. Only projects that serve rural areas or small urban areas will be eligible for funding.[1]

Phase 2:

- Vehicle acquisitions
- Construction or rehabilitation of transit facilities
- Purchasing or acquiring transit facilities
- Capital equipment purchases
- Ongoing operations or recently reduced operations
- New pilot projects

[1] A "rural area" is a geographical region outside of a urban area that has a population of less than 50,000. A "small urban area" is an urban area with population between 50,000 and 199,999.

- Preventive maintenance, mobility management, and purchased transportation services that maintain ongoing operations or recently reduced service
- Capital or operations projects that maintain or expand service on corridors identified in the Priority Intercity Bus Network study

For more information regarding these project types, please refer to Section *3. Detailed guidance by project type.*

1.4 Eligible grant recipients

Eligible grant recipients include the following types of public transportation providers:

Public transportation agencies
Mass transit districts
Transportation districts
Federally recognized tribes
Private non-profits that are engaged in public transportation
Cities
Counties
Special districts
Intergovernmental entities
Political subdivisions
Municipal corporations
Public corporations

Phase 1 applicants must provide fixed route service. Fixed route services provides service on a repetitive, fixed schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations; each fixed route trip serves the same origins and destinations.

Agencies that are currently undergoing a forensic audit or have repeat audit findings of significant deficiency regarding internal control over financial reporting will be considered "high risk." PTD will conduct a financial risk review of submitted applications to determine eligibility. After completing a financial risk review, PTD will communicate financial risk concerns with affected agencies. High risk agencies are eligible to apply for funding; however, if PTD determines that they are unable to mitigate financial risk concerns, they will be deemed ineligible for funding.

Please refer to section *3.1.2 Eligible grant recipients for capital projects* and section 3.2.2 *Eligible grant recipients for operations projects* for additional information.

1.5 Evaluation process and criteria

The Competitive Transit Grant awards funding on a competitive basis. PTD staff and members of the Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC), representing both transit providers and transit riders, will comprise the application evaluation committee.

To meet FTA deadlines for obligating Oregon's federal apportionment award and avoid lapsing funds, Phase 1 applications will complete an initial evaluation process.

The evaluation criteria used for the Phase 1 applications for vehicle replacement, vehicle right-sizing, and vehicle expansion projects will be Community benefits only. Fifty percent of the Community benefits score will be based on State of Good Repair (SOGR) for replacement and right-sizing projects. Vehicle expansion projects will receive 0% of the points for SOGR.

Phase 2 applications will be evaluated based on the criteria below.

- Safety – Project enhances safety of vulnerable road users and transit riders.
- Access – Project planning and implementation incorporates meaningful involvement of resource limited individuals or groups in decision-making. Project sustains or improves ridership and access to transportation for resource limited individuals or groups.
- Climate benefits – Project advances state goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by maintaining or increasing transit ridership, deploying low- or no-emission vehicles, or using low carbon materials or carbon-efficient design principles.
- Readiness to proceed – Applicant demonstrates that project will be successfully completed by end of grant agreement period.
- Infrastructure and multimodal connectivity – Project improves condition of transit-related infrastructure that supports multimodal connectivity of the public transportation system.
- Community benefits – Project addresses important community needs and will deliver a significant benefit to the community, such as increased ridership and vehicle state of good repair.

Please refer to section *3.1.4 Evaluation criteria and weighting for capital projects* and section *3.2.4 Evaluation weighting and criteria for operations projects* for additional information.

1.6 Match requirements

The match requirements for projects awarded through this solicitation will vary based on the project type and funding source for the project. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to provide a 20% match.

Please refer to section *3.1.5 Capital projects, Match requirements* and section *3.2.5 Operations projects, Match requirements* for additional information.

1.7 Grant agreement period

The start of the grant agreement period will be determined as part of the award process and will be assessed based on responses in the application.

For projects that are awarded federal funding from FTA's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, the target grant period will be October 2027 to September 2031.

For operations projects that are awarded STIF Discretionary or STIF Intercommunity funding, the target grant period will be July 2027 to June 2028.

For capital projects that are awarded STIF Discretionary or STIF Intercommunity funding, the target grant period will be July 2027 to June 2031.

1.8 Application deadlines

The application submission for the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grants will be broken into two phases.

Phase 1 of the Competitive Transit Grant call for projects will open on February 19, 2026 and will include applications for vehicle replacement, vehicle right-sizing, and vehicle expansion. Phase 1 will award FTA Section 5339(a) Buses and Bus Facilities rural and small urban apportionment funding. Initial applications for this phase are due April 3, 2026. Final applications are due May 29, 2026.

Applications for Phase 2 will include any projects that were not awarded in Phase 1, and applications for all other eligible projects. Phase 2 application submittal will begin March 11, 2026, with initial applications due April 20, 2026, and final application due June 22, 2026. Applications submitted for Phase 1 do not need to be resubmitted for Phase 2.

To be considered for funding, applications must be submitted by the initial application deadline for each phase. PTD staff will conduct a completeness and eligibility check on all initial applications. Some applicants may be asked to amend their applications and resubmit a final application by the final deadline. Applcations that are not submitted before the initial deadline will not be considered.

See Sections 3.1.3 *Eligible capital projects and project activities* and 3.2.3 *Eligible operations projects and project activities* for more information regarding eligible projects.

2. New to this funding cycle

Funding cycles and transition year for competitive awards

Starting with the 2028-30 call for projects, the grant agreement period for all federal and state funds awarded on a competitive basis will begin in even-numbered years (e.g., 2028). This new approach will replace the Mid-Cycle Discretionary Grant Program and the STIF Discretionary and Statewide Transit Network calls for projects. ODOT is launching the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant to cover the transition year (2027-28) as we shift to the new two-year cycle which will start for the 2028-30 period.

A project-based application

To streamline the application process and eliminate the burden of filling out multiple applications, PTD is changing to a project-based solicitation. For each project, applicants will complete an application for either a capital or operations project. Multiple applications may be submitted by an applicant. However, capital and operations projects may not be included on the same application.

Federal and STIF competitive grants administered by ODOT have been consolidated into a single call for projects. PTD will consider a project application for every eligible funding source within the call for projects. Applicants will not need to indicate which funding source(s) they are applying for. Rather, if an application is selected for award, PTD will determine the funding source as part of the award process. The award funding source will be determined during evaluation based on the project elements, the eligibility requirements of the funding source, and the amount of funding available for award.

Eligibility requirements and available funding sources vary between the two project types. For a more detailed explanation of the project types, please refer to section *3.1 Capital projects* and section *3.2 Operations projects*.

Phased application submission and review

To prevent the lapsing of approximately $3.5 million of available funds from the FTA's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, applications will be accepted for projects that are proposing vehicle replacement, right-sizing, or vehicle expansion prior to all other applications. These applications will be evaluated prior to all other applications using Community benefits and State of Good Repair for evaluation criteria. Vehicle projects that are not selected to receive an award during this accelerated application review will be eligible to compete for an award for Phase 2 application evaluation.

STIF Discretionary and ongoing operations

By temporary rule, STIF Discretionary funding can be used to support ongoing operations for the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant program solicitation. Please refer to section *3.1 Capital Projects, Eligible Capital projects* and section *3.2 Operations projects, Eligible operations projects* below for more information on project eligibility.

Federal grant period

For projects that are awarded funding from FTA's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, the target start date for the grant period will be October 2027. The federal grant schedule has been aligned with the availability of federal funding. This change will allow federal funds to be available to pay reimbursement requests on a timely basis.

State grant period

For projects that are awarded STIF Discretionary or STIF Intercommunity funding, the target start date for the grant period will be July 2027.

Application process

The application will be web-based and produced using the Cognito Platform, and can be accessed here. Alternatively, the application and other materials can be accessed on ODOT's Public Transportation Funding Opportunities webpage.

National Environmental Protection Act

The requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) apply to all projects receiving FTA funds. The process of addressing compliance with NEPA and all other applicable federal environmental laws (e.g., the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act) is referred to as the "environmental review process." Most projects meet the criteria to be classified as a Categorical Exclusion (CE) under NEPA. Time and documentation requirements for completing the CE environmental review process vary depending on project scope, location, and other factors.

For some activities, FTA makes the CE classification as part of the grant review process using the information/documentation in the grant application, and additional documentation is not required to complete the environmental review process. These activities include:

- Operating assistance
- Planning activities
- Engineering, design, drafting environmental documents and completing environmental studies that do not require ground disturbance
- Preventive maintenance that involves no physical changes and/or alterations
- Purchase of equipment that is not an interdependent part of a larger project and can be accommodated in existing building(s) or facility(-ies) with no physical changes, alterations, or installation required.

For other activities, FTA may require completion of a CE Worksheet to support the CE determination and/or additional documentation to demonstrate compliance with other federal environmental laws (as applicable). FTA determines whether to apply the CE Worksheet to a project, as well as the need to conduct additional analysis or documentation to ensure compliance with other environmental requirements. The solicitation process includes environmental screening questions to assist ODOT in determining whether to use a federal funding source and, if so, the timing and documentation requirements for the federal environmental review process.

Given the length of the 2027–2028 Competitive Transit Grant solicitation and the need to distribute funding in a timely manner, a project's requirement for FTA NEPA concurrence will be considered when determining eligibility for funding.

NOTE: Projects evaluated under NEPA must be usable and a reasonable expenditure even if no additional transportation improvements in the area are made. This often means that the full scope of a project for NEPA review may need to include local- or state-funded activities and/or activities from multiple different grants. For example, if a subrecipient wants to purchase a property with local or state funds and later develop that property using FTA funds, the subrecipient must obtain NEPA concurrence on the full scope of the project; i.e., both the property purchase and the future development *prior to purchasing the property*. Grant applications should reference previous and future activities on the same site and/or those related to the federal-funded project, regardless of funding source, to assist in determining the project scope for NEPA review.

3. Detailed guidance by project type

3.1 Capital projects

3.1.1 Funding available

The total available funding for Phase 1 vehicle replacement, vehicle right-sizing, and vehicle expansion projects is $3.5 million in federal funds from the FTA Section 5339(a) Buses and Bus Facilities Grant. Phase 2 capital projects are expected to include funds from the FTA's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, STIF Discretionary fund or STIF Intercommunity fund. Eligibilities, selection criteria, local match ratios, and available funds vary by funding program.

The maximum available funding for capital projects from each source is summarized below.

Phase 1:	
Section 5339(a) Buses and Bus Facilities Program	$3.5 million
Phase 2:	
Section 5339(a) Buses and Bus Facilities Program	$4.4 million
STIF Discretionary Fund	$9 million
STIF Intercommunity Fund	$8.2 million

Grant recipients should understand the unique reporting, environmental review, and documentation processes associated with the purchase of capital assets. The requirements vary based on the source of funding, project type, and applicable local, state, and federal regulations. It is the grant recipient's responsibility to understand and comply with all applicable requirements.

OAR 732-044-0050 specifies the capital asset requirements for recipients of STIF Discretionary funds. Please refer to Circular FTA C 9040.1H for federal Transit Asset Management Requirements.

3.1.2 Eligible grant recipients for capital grants

Transportation agencies that serve small urban (50,000-199,999 population) and rural areas (less than 50,000 population) are eligible to receive Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program funding. For Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program funding, transportation agencies are defined as state and local government authorities and private non-profit organizations that are engaged in public transportation. PTD prefers to contract with local governmental authorities, including tribal governments, and will contract with non-profit agencies only when a willing and able public agency is not available.

Recipients of Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program funding must operate fixed-route service and fulfill drug and alcohol testing requirements and reporting requirements per 49 CFR Part 655. Fixed route services provide service on a repetitive, fixed schedule basis along a specific route with vehicles stopping to pick up and deliver passengers to specific locations. Each fixed route trip serves the same origins and destinations.

Public Transportation Service Providers are eligible for STIF Discretionary and STIF Intercommunity funding. For the purposes of STIF Funding, these include mass transit districts, transportation districts, federally recognized tribes, or a city, county, special district, intergovernmental entity, or any other political subdivision or municipal or public corporation that provides public transportation services. A recipient of STIF Discretionary funds may contract with other Public

Transportation Service Providers and for-profit and nonprofit transportation service providers to implement project deliverables.

3.1.3 Eligible capital projects and project activities

Capital projects are defined as projects to purchase or lease real property or tangible items, including vehicles and structures, with a purchase price of $10,000 or more and a useful life of at least one year.

Only the following capital project types are eligible to receive capital funding during the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant solicitation: vehicle acquisitions, the construction or rehabilitation of transit facilities, bicycle and pedestrian projects and equipment acquisitions. Additionally, project administration is an eligible project activity for a capital project.

Vehicle acquisitions

The purchase or lease of transit vehicles such as buses, vans, trolley cars, and buses, and other vehicles used in revenue service. Vehicles that are not used in revenue service are considered equipment and will be included in equipment acquisition projects below. Vehicle projects may include fleet expansion vehicles, replacement vehicles, and vehicles for right-sizing. A right-sizing project is one in which a vehicle is being replaced with a different vehicle type and capacity that appropriately matches the service's ridership demand, operating environment, and service purpose. For projects awarded federal funds, the vehicle acquisition must comprise at least 51 percent of the award. Information for vehicles to be replaced must be current in the Oregon Public Transportation Information System (OPTIS), including current miles, age, and condition.

Construction or rehabilitation of transit facilities

Construction or rehabilitation of transit facilities, including but are not limited to, transit stations, bus depots, and bus and transit stops.

Bicycle and pedestrian projects

Bicycle and pedestrian projects with a physical or functional relationship to public transit are also eligible. For the purposes of this program, to have a "physical or functional relationship to transit" a bicycle project must be within a three-mile radius of a transit station or bus stop, and a pedestrian project must be within a half-mile radius. Pedestrian and bicycle improvements beyond these distances may be eligible for funding by demonstrating that the improvement is within the distance that people will travel by foot or by bicycle to use a particular stop or station.

Equipment acquisition

Acquisition of equipment with a purchase price of $10,000 or more, a useful life of at least one year, and has a physical or functional relationship to public transit. Vehicles not used in revenue service are considered equipment.

Project administration

Project administration costs may be included in capital projects, but these costs must be reasonable and cannot comprise the entire project. During the application process, a budget must be provided that details project administration costs. Project administration costs are considered to be those necessary and reasonable administrative costs associated with the implementation of specific approved project activities. Project administrative costs may include but are not limited to general administrative and overhead costs, staff salaries, office supplies, and development of specifications of vehicles and equipment. Such costs may be direct or indirect. Direct costs must be supported with documentation to show the nature and amount of cost including time and attendance records for actual staff time charged to the activity. Indirect costs must be supported with a federally approved indirect cost allocation plan if federal funds are awarded for the project.

3.1.4 Evaluation criteria and weighting for capital projects

The evaluation criteria used for the Phase 1 applications for vehicle replacement, vehicle right-sizing, and vehicle expansion projects will be Community benefits – how the project addresses important community needs and will deliver a significant benefit to the community, such as increased ridership and vehicle state of good repair.

Fifty percent of the Community benefits score will be based on State of Good Repair (SOGR) for replacement and right-sizing projects. Vehicle expansion projects will receive 0% of the points for SOGR. Projects that are not awarded in the Phase 1 application evaluation will be evaluated with the full criteria with the Phase 2 projects.

Phase 2 capital projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria and scoring weights:

- Safety: 20%
- Access: 20%
- Climate benefits: 20%
- Readiness to proceed: 10%
- Infrastructure and multi-modal connectivity: 10%
- Community benefits: 20%

For a detailed explanation of the criteria listed above, please refer to section *1.5 Evaluation process and criteria*.

If an applicant proposes a project that incorporated both a replacement vehicle or rightsizing vehicle, and an expansion vehicle, that application will be split. The replacement or rightsizing vehicles will be evaluated and awarded separately from the expansion vehicle.

3.1.5 Match requirements

Match requirements depend upon both the project elements and the potential funding source to be awarded. All projects must demonstrate their ability to provide at least 20 percent of the project's total costs. However, depending on project elements and award funding source, the match rate may be adjusted to 90%/10%.

For projects that are awarded funding from FTA's Section 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program, the match rates would be as follows:

- Vehicles: 80%/20%

- Vehicle-related equipment and facilities that comply or maintain compliance with Clean Air Act or Americans with Disabilities Act: 90%/10%
- All others: 80%/20%

Projects that are awarded STIF Discretionary or STIF Intercommunity Discretionary funding will be required to provide a match of 80%/20%. However, if sufficient funds are available, the 20 percent match may be reduced to 10 percent, upon ODOT's recommendation, if any of the following characteristics exist:

- The project will predominantly serve or provide access to and from rural communities (communities outside of urbanized areas with populations of fewer than 50,000 people).
- The project will serve an area located outside of a Public Transportation Service Provider's geographic jurisdiction.
- The project will fill a significant gap in the Statewide Transit Network.
- The project will provide statewide benefits to multiple Public Transportation Service Providers. The applicant should identify the benefits to areas outside the jurisdiction where the project will be located.

3.1.6 Grant agreement period

The grant agreement period for capital projects will be four years. The start date of the grant agreement period will vary by project and funding source. Generally, the target date for STIF-funded projects will be July 2027, and for federally-funded projects October 2027.

3.1.7 Additional requirements for capital projects

Independent cost estimate for vehicle acquisition projects

Vehicle acquisition projects (replacement, right-sizing or expansion) must include an independent cost estimate to demonstrate that the proposed vehicle can be procured according to the proposed budget and timeline. If the applicant intends to use the DAS/ODOT State Price Agreement, PTD has developed cost estimates that can serve as the basis of the independent cost estimate (https://www.cognitoforms.com/ODOT2/IndependentCostEstimate). If the applicant does not intend to use the DAS/ODOT State Price Agreement, the agency will need to conduct independent research. See section *9. Appendix B* for instructions.

Standard fuel vehicles

The acquisition of standard fuel vehicles (i.e., diesel or gasoline) are eligible projects. However, the Oregon Transportation Plan has established zero-emission vehicles as a key strategy for achieving the state goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, if the agency intends to apply for a standard fuel vehicle, it must demonstrate that it considered applying for a zero-emission vehicle and determined that a zero-emission vehicle is not a practicable option at this time. The application will ask why a zero-emission vehicle is not practicable and what efforts the applicant made to reach this conclusion.

Zero-emission capital projects
If the applicant is applying for funding for a zero-emission capital project, either a zero-emission vehicle (e.g., battery-electric vehicle) or related infrastructure (e.g., charging equipment), a zero-emission transition plan needs to be included with the application. Section *8. Appendix A* describes the requirements of a zero-emission fleet transition plan.

3.2 Operations projects

3.2.1 Funding available
Selected operations projects submitted for consideration during Phase 2 will be awarded with STIF Discretionary or STIF Intercommunity Discretionary funding.

Eligibilities, selection criteria, local match ratios, and available funds vary by funding program. However, as this solicitation will be project-based, applicants will not need to indicate which funding source(s) they are applying for. If awarded, PTD will determine the most appropriate funding source for the project, depending on project eligibility, project timeline, and funding availability.

The Oregon Transportation Commission has adopted a temporary rule allowing STIF Discretionary funds to be allocated to ongoing operations projects for this solicitation only.

The available funding for operations projects from each funding source is summarized below:

STIF Discretionary	$9 million
STIF Intercommunity Discretionary	$8.2 million

Recipients are not guaranteed ongoing operating funding and projects may not be funded in future competitive grant cycles.

3.2.2 Eligible grant recipients for operations funding
Public Transportation Service Providers are eligible to apply for STIF Discretionary and STIF Intercommunity Discretionary funding. For STIF Funding, these include mass transit districts, transportation districts, federally recognized tribes, or a city, county, special district, intergovernmental entity, or any other political subdivision or municipal or public corporation that provides public transportation services. A recipient of STIF Discretionary funds may contract with other Public Transportation Service Providers and for-profit and nonprofit transportation service providers to implement project deliverables.

3.2.3 Eligible operations projects and project activities
The following project types are eligible to receive operations funding: ongoing or recently reduced operations; intercommunity service; and preventive maintenance, purchased service and mobility management. Additionally, project administration is an eligible project activity for operations projects.

Ongoing or recently reduced operations

An ongoing or recently reduced operations project is defined as a project that sustains or reinstates recently reduced transit service that was funded by STIF or federal funds in the immediate prior biennium. Routes that were previously funded by local funds will not be considered eligible as STIF funds cannot be used to supplant local and regional funds (ORS 184.751(3)).

Ongoing or recently reduced operations projects include the continuation of pilots, purchased services and mobility management, fuel, and staff wages that are needed to sustain existing transit services or reinstate recently reduced operations. Project administration is an allowable cost for projects, but cannot comprise the entire project. Applications to support ongoing or recently reduced operations may not include the expansion or increase in frequency of an existing service or program. New pilots may be considered for funding if the application includes a feasible financial plan for ongoing operations beyond the initial pilot period, per OAR 732-044-0005.

An eligible ongoing or recently reduced operations project may not displace funding from any other source for the continued operations of that service.

Intercommunity service

Eligible projects include those that maintain existing intercommunity service or establish services on corridors that are identified in the Priority Intercity Bus Network. “Intercommunity service” is defined as public transportation service that connect two geographically distinct communities that are separated by at least 20 miles.

Preventive maintenance, purchased service and mobility management

Preventive maintenance, purchased services (i.e., the acquisition of transportation services under a contract, lease or other arrangement), and mobility management are eligible expenses if they are necessary to maintain existing or reinstate recently reduced operations, or for the purpose of establishing an intercommunity service on a corridor identified in the Priority Intercity Bus Network study.

Project administration

Project administration costs may be included in eligible ongoing or recently reduced operations projects, but these costs must be reasonable and cannot comprise the entire project. A budget must be provided with the application that details project administration costs. Project administration costs are considered to be those necessary and reasonable administrative costs associated with the implementation of specific approved project activities. Project administrative costs may include but are not limited to general administrative and overhead costs, staff salaries, office supplies, and development of specifications of vehicles and equipment. Such costs may be direct or indirect. Direct costs must be supported with documentation to show the nature and amount of cost including time and attendance records for actual staff time charged to the activity. Indirect costs must be supported with a federally approved indirect cost allocation plan if federal funds are awarded for the project.

3.2.4 Evaluation criteria and weighting for operations projects

Operations projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria and scoring weights.

- Safety: 10%
- Access: 30%
- Climate Benefits: 20%
- Readiness to proceed: 10%
- Community benefits: 30%

For a detailed explanation of the criteria listed above, please refer to section *1.5 Evaluation process and criteria*.

3.2.5 Match requirements

In order for projects to be awarded STIF Intercommunity Discretionary and STIF Discretionary funds, they must meet the match requirements described in OAR 732-044-0005(4).

Applicants seeking funding for operations projects must demonstrate the ability to provide a match of at least 20 percent of the project's total costs. For projects eligible to receive STIF Intercommunity Discretionary funds, the 20 percent match may be reduced to 10 percent, upon ODOT's recommendation, if any of the following characteristics exist:

- The project will predominantly serve or provide access to and from rural communities (communities outside of urbanized areas with populations of fewer than 50,000 people).
- The project will serve an area located outside of a Public Transportation Service Provider's geographic jurisdiction.
- The project will fill a significant gap in the Statewide Transit Network.
- The project will provide statewide benefits to multiple Public Transportation Service Providers. The applicant should identify the benefits to areas outside the jurisdiction where the project will be located.

Eligible project match sources may include federal funds and certain state funds (for example, STIF Formula funds) intended for public transportation purposes, local funds, private contributions, and in-kind labor or contributions. Match contributions, including capital assets such as property, should only be used once as match on a single project and may not be used again as a match. Farebox revenues are not eligible as match.

3.2.6 Grant agreement period

The grant agreement period for operations projects will be July 2027 to June 2028.

4. Application submission instructions

4.1 Application process

Phase 1 for vehicle replacement, right-sizing, or vehicle expansion projects will open prior to application Phase 2. Application Phase 2 will accept applications for any additional vehicle replacement, right-sizing, or vehicle expansion projects and all other eligible capital and operations projects. Applications that are not awarded during Phase 1 will be automatically considered for Phase 2.

Each project must have its own application. The application should include details of the proposed project, captured through its deliverables and tasks. All deliverables and tasks within a single project must be interrelated or dependent on one another. Unrelated activities cannot be grouped together and submitted as one project. For example, installing several bus stops and pedestrian facilities to access those stops would be considered a single project because the elements are functionally related. In contrast, constructing an administration building and implementing a new bus route would not be considered a single project, as these activities are unrelated.

For both application rounds, applicants are required to submit initial applications to be reviewed by PTD before submitting the final application. Applications will not be scored or assessed for funding during the initial application process. Initial applications will be reviewed for clarity and completeness, then returned to applicant at least 3 weeks before the final application due date. Applicants will have the opportunity to edit the applications at this point before submitting the final applications. Final applications will then be submitted to PTD for full review. Final applications must be equivalent in scope, purpose, and impact as project proposed in the initial application.

4.2 Accessing the application

The ODOT 2027-2028 Competitive Grant Application is a fillable, web-based form that can be accessed online on the Public Transportation Funding Opportunities Page. ODOT creates and publishes this form each solicitation cycle and accessing it requires an internet connection.

Chrome, Firefox, and Edge are the recommended web browsers. The form will not function in Internet Explorer. The application uses a combination of check boxes, yes or no questions, text boxes, and buttons for uploading documents and adding information. Some responses in the application generate additional questions from a drop-down menu based on the response. It is very important to answer all questions because they may generate additional choices depending on the answer.

4.3 Contact information

- For program-specific inquiries, your Regional Transit Coordinator, or Bobbi Cummiskey, ODOT Climate Specialist, (503) 930-5993.
- For technical assistance with the application process, contact Brian Roth, the Public Transportation Web Coordinator.

4.4 Additional information

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the program guidelines and eligibility criteria before submitting their applications. Several changes have been made to project eligibility.

4.5 Application deadline

Application Phase 1: Vehicle replacement, vehicle right-sizing, and vehicle expansion projects:

Initial Application Due: 5:00 PM on April 3, 2026
Final Application Due: 5:00 PM on May 29, 2026

Application Phase 2: Additional vehicle replacement, vehicle right-sizing, and vehicle expansion projects and all other eligible capital and operational projects:

Initial Application Due: 5:00 pm on April 20, 2026
Final Application Due: 5:00 pm on June 22, 2026

For more information regarding eligible projects, please see Section 3.1.3 *Eligible capital projects and project activities* and Section 3.2.3 *Eligible operations projects and project activities*.

5. Grant solicitation schedule

February 19, 2026	Phase 1 of call for projects opens - guidance and application materials available
March 11	Phase 2 of call for projects opens
March 12	Competitive Transit Grant Application Training Webinar
March 18	Competitive Transit Grant Q&A
April 3	Phase 1 initial applications due (5:00 pm)
April 20	Phase 2 initial applications due (5:00pm)
May 29	Phase 1 final application due (5:00 pm)
June 22	Phase 2 final applications due (5:00 pm)
December	PTAC presentation of STIF award recommendation; date to be confirmed
January 2027	OTC presentation of STIF award recommendation; date to be confirmed
February	Announcements of awards
July 2027	STIF Discretionary and STIF Intercommunity grant start date
October 2027	FTA Section 5339(a) Buses and Bus Facilities grant start date

6. Appeals process

PTD will follow the appeals process identified on page 34 of the State Management Plan for Public Transportation Programs.

7. Reporting requirements

As a condition of funding, PTD requires quarterly performance and fiscal reports from recipients and subrecipients for each of its funding programs. These performance reports are submitted through the Oregon Public Transportation Information System (OPTIS) online grant management program. Performance reports document the number of rides, hours, miles, senior rides, and disabled passenger rides. Fiscal reports authenticate quarterly revenues and expenditures, local contributions, sources of contribution, and other data as required by the specific funding source.

In addition to general periodic reporting requirements, PTD may require additional documentation and deliverables beyond those indicated in an application, as appropriate to the project and per specific grant agreement statements of work.

8. Appendix A: Zero-emission fleet transition plan guidance

8.1 General instructions

All applications for zero-emission capital projects are required to submit a zero-emission fleet transition plan (Transition Plan). This requirement applies to vehicle and equipment procurements as well as facility projects that support zero-emission projects (e.g., battery electric vehicles, fuel cell electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, hydrogen infrastructure, etc.). This requirement does not apply to planning projects or electric hybrid vehicles.

For agencies with smaller fleets, a Transition Plan need not be complex but must address all six elements described in the "Transition Plan requirements" section below. Applicants may submit an existing plan with a cover letter or addendum identifying the location of the six elements and/or adding any missing elements.

If your agency would like support in developing a Fleet Transition Plan, you may be eligible to participate in ODOT's Public Transportation Division's Zero Emission Technical Assistance (ZETA) program. The ZETA program provides Oregon's rural and small urban transit agencies with free technical assistance and planning help to transition to battery and hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles. ZETA helps agencies to develop transition plans, evaluate feasibility, plan infrastructure, and manage fleet electrification efforts that are financially beneficial, reduce emissions, and improve community health. For more information contact Bobbi Cummiskey at bobbi.jean.cummiskey@ODOT.Oregon.Gov

8.2 Format

There is not a required format for the Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan. However, each of the six required elements should be clearly labelled (see "Transition Plan requirements" below).

The Public Transportation Division has created a Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan template to aid the development of a Transition Plan. Use of the template is **optional** and should be adapted to the agency's goals and plans.

Link to template: https://www.oregon.gov/odot/rptd/pages/electrification.aspx

8.3 Transition Plan requirements

The Transition Plan requirements are identical to those required by the Federal Transit Administration's Low or No Emission Vehicle Program (5339(c)). The Transition Plan must include the following six elements:

1. Demonstrate a long-term fleet management plan with a strategy for how the applicant intends to use the current application and future acquisitions.
    a. Examples of how applicants may address this element (not exhaustive):
        i. Include excerpt or describe how long-term fleet management plan aligns with the zero-emission application.
        ii. Describe how the procurement plan aligns with the zero-emission application.

2. Address the availability of current and future funding to meet costs for the transition and implementation.
    a. Examples of how applicants may address this element (not exhaustive):
        i. Provide an overview of current funding levels and sources and how that will support/impact the transition.
        ii. Describe planning or other efforts underway to secure additional resources.

3. Consider policy and legislation impacts on technology.
    a. Examples of how applicants may address this element (not exhaustive):
        i. Listing of any state or local policies or legislation that support or hinder the implementation of relevant technology the applicant is looking to implement.
        ii. Analysis of future policy or legislation that the agency is considering that will support the implementation.

4. An evaluation of existing and future facilities and their relationship to the technology transition.
    a. Examples of how applicants may address this element (not exhaustive):
        i. Capital inventory relevant to fleet transition that includes information on the state of existing facilities and the scope and timing for future upgrades and/or expansion.
        ii. Analysis of existing facilities relevant to fleet transition and their ability to integrate relevant technology for both current and future acquisitions.

5. Describe the partnership of the applicant with the utility or alternative fuel provider.
    a. Examples of how applicants may address this element (not exhaustive):
        i. Letters of support, contract information, communications, etc. with the fuel or energy provider.
        ii. Analysis of ongoing coordination with providers and plans for integration and cooperation.
        iii. Explanation that based on the size of the vehicle fleet that no partnership is needed.

6. Examine the impact of the transition on the applicant's current workforce by identifying skill gaps, training needs, and retraining needs of the existing workers of the applicant to operate and maintain zero-emission vehicles and related infrastructure and avoid the displacement of the existing workforce.
    a. Examples of how applicants may address this element (not exhaustive):
        i. Usage of the FTA's Workforce Evaluation Tool.[2]
        ii. Coordination efforts with existing employee representation and/or members.
        iii. Employee retention and agency workforce planning strategies.

[2] [Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan – Element 6: Workforce Evaluation Tool | FTA (dot.gov)]

iv. Identification of type of training needed and training provider.

8.4 Frequently asked questions

1. My agency created a Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan to support an application to the Federal Transit Administration's Low and No Emission Vehicle Program and/or Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Programs (5339 b and c). Can we submit that plan rather than create a new one?

   Yes, if the Zero-Emission Fleet Transition Plan contains the six required elements and it is up to date, you can submit that plan. The Transition Plan requirements are the same as the Low-No and Buses and Bus Facilities Competitive Programs requirements.

2. Must our agency have a plan to replace all its existing vehicles with zero-emission vehicles (ZEV)?

   No. However, the Transition Plan should identify which vehicles it intends to replace or new ZEVs it will deploy.

3. Can our Transition Plan change in the future?

   Yes, a Transition Plan is a living document. It is recommended to update the plan as circumstances and technology changes.

4. Should we include just our agency's service vehicles in the Transition Plan, or should we also include maintenance and administrative vehicles?

   You should include all vehicles you intend to transition to ZEVs, including maintenance and administrative vehicles.

8.5 ODOT contact regarding Transition Plan

If you have additional questions about the Transition Plan requirement, please contact Bobbi Cummiskey (bobbi.jean.cummiskey@odot.oregon.gov).

9. Appendix B: Independent cost estimate requirement for vehicle acquisitions

9.1 Overview

For the Competitive Transit Grant program, an independent cost estimate must be included with all vehicle acquisition projects (vehicle replacement, right-sizing or expansion). The independent cost estimate must include an assessment of the expected cost and timeline for procurement based on reliable sources, such as paid historical prices, industry standard, market survey, and/or the ODOT/Department of Administrative Services State Price Agreement.[3]

9.2 Background

Over the past several years, transit agencies have been experiencing unprecedented increases in the cost of vehicles and extended procurement delays. To increase confidence that agencies will be able to procure vehicles within budget and within the grant agreement period, PTD is requiring that agencies submit an independent cost estimate with their application for all vehicle acquisition projects.

9.3 Instructions

1. Conduct an ICE based on reliable sources for each vehicle(s) for which you are applying for funding to determine the estimate cost and timeline for procurement. Reliable sources of information include paid historical prices, industry standard, market survey, and/or the ODOT/Department of Administrative Services State Price Agreement.

   If you intend to purchase a vehicle from the ODOT/DAS State Price Agreement, use the cost estimate information below. Depending on the propulsion type (e.g., diesel, electric, etc.) and optional features you intend to include, you may need to conduct additional research and increase the estimate. Additionally, you should factor in inflation and your timeline for procurement.

   If you do not intend to purchase a vehicle from the ODOT/DAS State Price Agreement, you should use other reliable sources to estimate the cost of the vehicle and timeline.

2. Complete an ICE worksheet.
   https://www.cognitoforms.com/ODOT2/IndependentCostEstimate

3. Submit the ICE in the Attachments section of the application in OPTIS.

9.4 ODOT/DAS cost estimate and procurement timeline information

[3] Commonly an ICE only includes the expected cost. For the 2027-2028 Competitive Transit Grant, it must also include an estimated timeline for procurement.

Table 2 contains estimates of the base price cost, cost of required specifications as well as timeline for delivery for each category vehicle included on the ODOT/DAS State Price Agreement. The information was updated in December 2023 based on input from a vehicle distributor and an analysis of the Request for Quotes (RFQ's) Oregon transit agencies received in 2023. There were no RFQ's received for Category A vehicles in 2023.

If your agency intends to use the ODOT/DAS State Price Agreement, use the information in **Table 1** as the basis for your ICE. However, keep in mind that key variables will affect the price, including the make, model and length, propulsion type, required specifications as well as inflation over time. Ultimately, your agency is responsible for the ICE budget and timeline, so you may want to seek out additional information to confirm your calculations.

Table 1 ODOT/DAS State Price Agreement estimated costs and timeline for delivery

Category	Current base price range	Average price quote for required specs (2023)	Price range for required specs (2023)	Number of quotes (2025)	Expected delivery time
A	$480,000 - $1,000,000	-	-	0	24+ months
B	$213,000 - $482,000	$70,000	$50,000-$90,000	6	12-24
C	$181,000 - $206,000	$56,000	$40,000-$70,000	4	6-18
D	$126,000 - $485,000	$30,000	$1,000-$70,000	10	6-9
E	$79,000- $195,000	$45,000	$1,000-$100,000	18	3-6

Table 2 provides a description of transit vehicle categories for reference.

Table 2: Transit vehicle categories

Category	Approximate GVWR in pounds	Approximate number of seats	Approximate length in feet
A: Large, heavy-duty transit bus	33,001+	35+	35 – 40
B: Medium-size, heavy-duty transit bus	26,001-33,000	25-35	≥ 30
C: Medium-size, medium-duty transit bus and truck chassis cutaway	17,000 – 26,000	16-30	≥ 25
D: Medium-size, light-duty bus & van chassis cutaway	11,000 – 16,000	12-16	≥ 22
E 1: Small, light-duty bus E 2: Modified van E 3: Modified minivan	8,000 – 11,000 8,000 – 11,000 6,000-8,000	10 5	E 1: 20 – 22 E 2/E 3: < 20

E 4 – E 7 vehicle purchase are not allowed using FTA funds.