



Wednesday, March 11
1:30 pm to 3:30 pm
COIC offices in Bend
334 NE Hawthorne Ave.



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Attendees:

Annie Marland – Age Friendly Sisters
Richard Ross – RPTAC Chair
Tyler Deke – Bend MPO
Kim Curley – Commute Options
Sally Jacobson – CTAC
Gavin Leslie – CTAC
Heidi Hagemeyer – High Desert Museum
Casey Bergh – OSU-Cascades
Theresa Conley – ODOT
John Baldwin – Housing Works
Brooke Eldrige – Abilitree
James Halliday – Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
Deborah McMahon – City of Redmond (phone)

Members of the public:

Sara Russell
David Olewiler
Zach Coda

COIC/CET Staff:

Derek Hofbauer
Andrea Breault
Ashley Hooper
Rachel Zakem

Welcome and Introductions – Richard Ross, RPTAC Chair

- Attendees were asked to sign in and make introductions to the group.

Public Comment

- No public comment.

Review and Approval of December 4 Meeting Minutes – Richard Ross, RPTAC Chair

- Chair Ross asked the committee to review and approve the December 4 meeting minutes. Minutes were unanimously approved by the committee.

CET Updates – Andrea Breault, CET/COIC

- Ms. Breault provided an overview of recently implemented Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) projects, which include Saturday service on many regional routes, the

procurement of new buses to support expanded services, and planning for the new La Pine-Sunriver service launching in May 2020.

Project Status and Schedule – Andrea Breault, CET/COIC

- Ms. Breault explained that the Transit Master Plan update is three-quarters through the planning process with the goal of formal adoption by the COIC Board of Directors this summer.

Proposed Service Plan Overview – Andrea Breault, CET/COIC

- The proposed Service Plan provides an overview of plan time frames, funding/cost assumptions, and possible future services.
- The proposed Capital Plan provides a framework for the capital investment needed to support these services.
- The Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) program provides dedicated funding through a state payroll tax to invest in public transportation service expansion with a focus on low-income communities.
- The budget includes the following funding types: FTA, ODOT, contract revenue, local general funds, farebox, and one-time revenue opportunities through grants, and advertising. The Service Plan phases and funding assumptions are calculated based on the following timeframes: Existing 0-1 Years (FY 2019, includes initial implementation of STIF), Near-term: 1-2 Years (FY 2020-2021, includes STIF), Short-term: 3-5 Years (FY 2022-23 and FY 2023-24, includes STIF), Mid-Term: 6-10 Years (Potential sources in addition to STIF), Long-Term: 11-20 Years (unconstrained financially).
- There are several additional funding sources that CET could pursue, such as a property tax, employer-based payroll tax, or transit utility fee.
 - Mr. Leslie mentioned that TriMet utilizes a local income tax in the City of Portland.
 - Ms. Breault responded that House Bill (HB) 2745 allows COIC to seek voter approved funding when and if communities choose to pursue transit funding.
 - Ms. Jacobson asked if HB 2745 makes COIC a transit district.
 - Ms. Breault responded that COIC is a Council of Governments (COG) and not a transit district. Under the current scenario, STIF funds allocated to four separate Qualified Entities (QE) in Central Oregon (Deschutes, Crook, and Jefferson Counties and Warm Springs) and then reimbursed to COIC. As a transit district, the funds would likely get disbursed directly to COIC, thereby avoiding excessive administrative burden. Some of the funding scenarios are based on the future possibility of CET/COIC becoming a transit district.
- Chair Ross mentioned that CET is operated by COIC, which is a COG designated by ORS 190, but is not a tax district. Are there other agencies in Oregon that are operated by a COG?
 - Ms. Curley noted it is rare for COGs to operate transit services in Oregon. While the new STIF dollars are important for the region, it is also an example of the high-level of administrative burden carried by COIC. In this case, funding cannot go directly to COIC/CET and must be allocated to the three counties Warm Springs first—this means four separate processes for each QE and reimbursements to cover high cost items, such as fleet and infrastructure.

- The Service Plan outlines the following proposed service enhancements:
 - Route modifications to move toward a more decentralized transit system and away from the current hub-and-spoke model, which will relieve pressure at Hawthorne Station.
 - Increased frequency on the major N/S/E/W corridors
 - Phasing of mobility hubs
 - Ms. Conley asked for an overview of the mid-to-long term goals for Hawthorne Station.
 - Ms. Breault responded that the goal is to have reduced capacity at Hawthorne Station. One advantage of Hawthorne Station's current location is its proximity to major activity at Greenwood and 3rd street, which are the city's two major corridors. The addition of mobility hubs in geographic quadrants will relieve pressure from the current hub-and-spoke model.
 - Mr. Leslie asked if there are other efforts supporting mobility hubs in Bend.
 - Ms. Breault responded that there are efforts outside the Transit Master Plan process through smaller grants (like the TGM grant with the Bend MPO) to support mobility hubs.
 - Chair Ross added that in Portland local business are engaged through bus stop sponsorships and this process could be replicated in Bend for future mobility hubs.
 - The community pull-out sections that will be include in the Transit Master Plan will provide an overview of current services and possible future service with varying funding scenarios.
 - Mr. Halliday asked if there is a plan to serve Tumalo in the future.
 - Ms. Breault responded that the CET does not currently stop in Tumalo due to safety concerns with the current road infrastructure, but she is working closely with ODOT regarding future improvements in this area that will make that intersection safer.
 - Chair Ross asked if there are plans to connect Prineville to East Bend.
 - Mr. Hofbauer added that there is a current STIF project for vanpool and CET is working with Commute Options to explore those opportunities, particularly focusing on businesses that are east of Bend such as the Facebook facility.
 - Ms. Eldridge mentioned that Sisters is known as a great place to age, but there is very little transit service. How is CET addressing this gap in service?
 - Ms. Breault added that a future project could include a local circulator to provide people with more service and stops within Sisters.
- Mr. Olewiler asked for a definition of microtransit.
 - Ms. Breault responded that microtransit is not a traditional scheduled service, but an on-demand model with an emphasis on shared rides, like Uber or Lyft.
- Ms. Hagemeyer added that conversations have started between CET and the High Desert Museum to explore a possible future service to the museum. The focus of these discussions is along Highway 97 to ensure safe access to the museum for buses.

- Ms. Marland asked if Hoodoo was considered for future recreation service.
 - Ms. Breault responded she is working with the City of Sisters regarding opportunities to serve Hoodoo; however, there has been a hesitation to provide transit service due to inconsistent snow and a small employment base.

Proposed Capital Plan Overview – Andrea Breault, CET/COIC

- Ms. Breault shared that CET will transition to a smaller, more nimble fleet and exploring hybrid and low-emission vehicles for the future. CET is monitoring other transit agencies, like RVTD, to learn how they manage these new vehicles and learn from their experience. Low floor buses are important because they provide more accessibility to passengers that experience mobility challenges, but they are not suited for inclement winter weather conditions.
- Mr. Coda encouraged CET to look at buses that can board people in wheel chairs more quickly.
 - Ms. Breault mentioned CET is currently exploring these opportunities. CET’s fleet includes four Gillig buses, which are equipped with an ADA ramp (not a lift) to speed up boardings.
- Mr. Coda asked if future service to Deschutes River Woods has been considered.
 - Ms. Breault responded that more public input in this area is necessary to identify potential demand for transit service. CET is exploring deviated flex service or microtransit as future service options in this area.

Local TAC Meetings and Virtual Workshop Feedback – Derek Hofbauer, CET/COIC

- Local Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings were held in La Pine, Bend, Sisters, Redmond, Madras, Warm Springs, and Prineville to discuss the draft service and capital plans developed by the consultant team.
- In addition to the local TAC meetings, a Virtual Workshop was available for public feedback. In addition to the online survey, CET staff collected paper surveys on buses and at Hawthorne Station to capture input directly from riders.
- Ms. Marland mentioned that she would like to see more outreach and increased ridership in Sisters. She believes adding a midday run from Bend to Sisters is very important for future ridership.
 - Mr. Hofbauer responded there are opportunities provide enhanced travel training via organized group trips to encourage more people, especially older adults, to use transit for trips to the doctor, store, or to visit friends and family.

Review Plan Goals and Objectives – Andrea Breault, CET/COIC

- Ms. Breault asked the group if any updates are needed for the goals and objectives of the Transit Master Plan.
- Objective 1: “Develop and maintain a public transportation system that is well integrated with local communities, planning documents, and partner agencies.”
 - Mr. Leslie suggested separating the objective into two sentences.
 - Mr. Halliday suggested changing “local communities” to “community partners.”
 - The committee approved of the suggested changes for language concerning Objective 1.

- Objective 2: “Provide convenient and attractive public transportation choices for users throughout Central Oregon both within and between communities.”
 - The committee approved the existing objective language.
- Objective 3: “Make riding easy and comfortable with improved stop amenities and “how to ride” information readily available to residents, employees, and visitors.”
 - Chair Ross suggested “Easy, comfortable, and safe riding.”
 - Mr. Bergh suggested adding language around education/awareness of transportation services.
 - The committee approved the new objective 3 language with the suggested changes.
- Objective 4: “Enhance transit options to provide a time and cost competitive alternative to traveling by automobile and increase transit ridership while reducing automobile dependency.”
 - Mr. Halliday mentioned that this daughter rode the CET bus to get to school because it took less time than the school bus.
 - Mr. Olewiler added that this is the most important goal for CET to achieve.
 - Mr. Leslie added that incentives should be utilized as a tool to encourage the community to use transit.
 - The committee approved the new objective 4 language.
- Objective 5: “Evaluate emerging technologies and transit service models and how they might be used to support transportation options in Central Oregon.”
 - The committee approved the language of the objective.

RPTAC Membership Update – Derek Hofbauer, CET/COIC

- Mr. Hofbauer explained that in addition to launching a robust public recruitment process across our region, current members of the RPTAC committee were asked to submit formal applications to ensure a consistent process for all committee member positions. Overall, 36 applications were received.
- RPTAC typically consists of 13 member positions; however, staff are proposing adding four additional committee positions to include the designated STIF representatives for a total of 17 members.
- A final decision for RPTAC members will be made by the COIC Board of Directors in May. RPTAC will make a recommendation to the COIC board regarding the Transit Master Plan update during the adoption phase of the plan.

Next Steps/Adjourn – Andrea Breault, CET/COIC

- The next RPTAC/Project Steering Committee will likely be scheduled during the summer. Mr. Hofbauer will reach out to the committee via email with more specific information.
- Next steps include a draft Transit Development Plan and Implementation Plan Local Agency Briefings by summer 2020.