

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21 FROM 1:30-3:30 PM

Comittee Members:

Bob Bryant, Chair
Brian Potwin
Annie Marland
Cora Ives
Zachary Bass
Kim Curley, Co-Vice Chair
Richard Ross
Nick Snead, Vice Chair
Casey Bergh
Jordan Ohlde
Jennifer Glover
James Halliday
Denise LaBuda, Alternate

Members of the Public:

Theresa Conley
Benjamin Steen
Andrea Napoli

COIC/CET Staff:

Andrea Breault
Derek Hofbauer
Rachel Zakem
Ashley Mohni
Tammy Baney

Welcome and Introductions – Derek Hofbauer

- Attendees made virtual introductions to the group.

Public Comment Period – Bob Bryant, RPTAC Chair

- No public comments.

Review and approval of 2/17/21 meeting minutes – Bob Bryant, RPTAC Chair

- The February 17 meeting minutes were unanimously approved by the committee.

2021 summer recreation services updates & fare discussion – Derek Hofbauer, Rachel Zakem

- CET’s recreation service fares have never increased for Lava Butte and fares for Ride the River have not increased since the 2014-2015 season.
- CET proposes the following fare changes for recreation services:
 - Lava Butte - Ridership has grown from 50,937 passengers in 2015 to 53,794 passengers in 2019, which is the last season the service operated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic that occurred in 2020. Indirect labor costs have increased since 2015 due to increased partner collaboration efforts, marketing and communications, and a transition to electronic fares. Additionally, driver wages, fuel costs, and vehicle maintenance have risen since the inception of the Lava Butte service. CET proposes an increase for the Lava Butte shuttle fare from \$2 to \$3 for the 2021 summer season.
 - Ride the River - The overall service operation costs continue to increase due to the popularity of the program. With COVID-19 maximum capacity restrictions in place, CET must operate additional buses and at higher levels of frequency. This equates to more fuel consumption, wear and tear on vehicles, and additional drivers required to operate the service. CET proposes a fare increase from \$3 to \$4 per day starting in summer, 2021.
- Co-Vice Chair Curley asked if an analysis was conducted to determine the impact this increase will have on farebox recovery.
 - Ms. Breault responded that before COVID-19 there were discussions about increasing fares. For example, for the Lava Butte service many people would pay \$5 (more than the fare amount of \$2) and donate the additional funds to Deschutes National Forest. She also added that CET anticipates that we will operate these services at a loss, but that CARES funding will help cover this deficit.
- Mr. Bass asked if this fare increase is considered to be temporary. He noted that the language in the memo focuses only on the 2021 season.
 - Mr. Hofbauer responded that this increase could be readdressed to lower the fare amount next year if operation costs are less than anticipated.
- Ms. Marland shared her concern for increasing fares when many in the community are struggling financially because of COVID-19.
- Vice Chair Snead shared his support for the fare increase. He added that tourism in Central Oregon is returning back to normal and anticipated to increase this summer. A fare increase of a dollar is still a bargain for those seeking recreation activities.
- Mr. Bass entertained a motion to approve a \$1 fare increase for both Lava Butte and Ride the River recreation services starting in summer, 2021. Vice Chair Snead seconded, and all approved.

Route 31 La Pine to Sunriver Summer Shuttle outreach discussion – Ashley Mohni, Derek Hofbauer

- Ms. Mohni shared that CET has attended multiple job fair events in Sunriver and La Pine to promote the second summer season of Route 31, which starts on May 29 and operates through Labor Day. Based on feedback from riders and community partners, the route has two new stops this year at the La Pine Senior Center and the Sunriver Homeowners Aquatic & Recreation Center (SHARC). CET staff is working with employers in Sunriver finalize the schedule based on shiftwork times.

- The committee was asked to weigh in on three different design options for the Route 31 bus wrap. Committee member preferences are below.
 - Co-Vice Chari Curly voted for Option 1
 - Vice Chair Snead voted for Option 1
 - Ms. LaBuda voted for Option 1
 - Chair Bryant voted for Option 2
 - Ms. Ives voted for Option 1 and 3
 - Mr. Halliday voted for Option 3
 - Ms. Marland voted for Option 1
 - Ms. Glover voted for Option 1 and 3
 - Mr. Ohlde voted for Option 1

CET Saturday service update – Derek Hofbauer

- CET will return to Saturday service on May 1 for Community Connectors and Bend Fixed-Route service. Bend Dial-A-Ride will operate on Saturdays and Sundays.
- CET is partnering with Commute Options to host social distance events at Hawthorne Station (12 – 2pm) and the Redmond Transit Hub (2 – 4pm) on May 1.
- To ensure that this information is communicated to riders, CET has pushed out a press release, website post, social media, radio ads, and an E-newsletter to riders.

CET new grants overview – Ashley Mohni, Derek Hofbauer

- Ms. Mohni shared that CET is pursuing unique grant opportunities beyond state and federal grants.
 - Pacific Power grant for Electric Technology Feasibility Study – Awarded \$60,000
 - The report will provided a strategic road map to the implementation of electric technology. The tasks for the project include partner involvement, operational review, facility/equipment review, fleet/maintenance review, financial/economic analysis, and a final report.
 - 5 proposals were received during the request for proposals
 - The Evaluation Committee consists of City of Bend staff and COIC board members to ensure partner involvement from the start of the project. The committee will meet for a second (and final) time before making a formal recommendation.
 - Travel Oregon grant for a recreation service strategic branding and communications campaign – Requested \$45,000
 - The requested funds would support the development of a tool-kit for community partners to share with their networks about CET’s recreation services, as well as promote safe and responsible use of CET’s services into the future. Additional marketing and promotional efforts through online and radio communications would also be funded.
 - University of Oregon’s Resource Assistance for Rural Environments (RARE) Program
 - COIC’s Community and Economic Development Department has historically participated in this program with great success. If awarded, CET will have a high-level RARE participant to support transit projects and build internal capacity through an 11-month placement.
 - Veteran’s Healthcare Transportation Service – ODOT grant supported through a partnership with the Oregon Department of Veteran’s Affairs.

- This service provides transportation to veterans in Central Oregon to reach healthcare-related destinations throughout the region (cross county lines). For veterans living in rural areas of the counties and the tribes, this service is a lifeline. There is a bill going through the legislature that would provide a permanent source of funding for this grant-supported service. In the meantime, CET is working with partners to identify funding opportunities to continue operations. This service is very successful and other agencies are looking to CET as best practices model for this type of service.
 - Bend Mobility Hub Feasibility Study – RPTAC members will be engaged in the study starting in October of 2020. Outcomes from the study will provide CET guidelines for implementing and managing mobility hubs.
- Chair Bryant requested that Ms. Mohni create a list of grants (current and future) for the committee moving forward.

2040 CET Transit Master Plan Regional Blueprint discussion Derek Hofbauer, Bob Bryant

- Mr. Halliday shared that for many people on the tribal reservation the bus is their only transportation option.
- Ms. LaBuda encouraged Mr. Hofbauer to include testimonials to illustrate the importance of this work for the community.
- Chair Bryant added that it is important for this work to not duplicate the current Transit Master Plan. Is there an opportunity to discuss goals of becoming a transit district?
- Ms. Marland asked that Sisters be considered in this document, especially for transportation connections to Bachelor and/or Hoodoo.
- Ms. Ives asked, who is the intended audience for this document?
 - Mr. Hofbauer responded that the intended audience is funding partners and planners, but also community partners.
 - Chair Bryant added that the audience should be those who do not typically think of transit—particularly, community leaders who can influence the future development of Central Oregon.
- Chair Bryant shared that we need an aspirational vision for transit that would serve the community more equitably.
- Ms. Napoli added that the Bend MPO Board recently approved funding to relaunch bike share in Bend starting this summer.

Adjourn