

REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16 FROM 1:30-3:30 PM

Committee Members:

Annie Marland
Bob Bryant, Chair
George Conway
Casey Bergh
Zachary Bass
Richard Ross
Cora Ives
Brian Potwin
Kim Curley
Denise LaBuda, alternate

Members of the Public:

Theresa Conley
Edem Gomez
Andrea Napoli

COIC/CET Staff:

Andrea Breault
Derek Hofbauer
Rachel Zakem
Ashley Mohni

Welcome and Introductions – Derek Hofbauer

Public Comment Period – Bob Bryant, RPTAC Chair

- No public comments.

Review and approval of 4/21/21 meeting minutes – Bob Bryant, RPTAC Chair

- The April 21 meeting minutes were unanimously approved by the committee.

Dr. George Conway - Vaccine hesitancy presentation

- Locally we have seen substantial progress with vaccination rates
- A substantial amount of people have changed their minds and confidence has increased
- Uptake varies by zip code with rural areas having the lowest percentages
- Vaccination rates are lower for younger age groups
- Vaccine concerns around long term effects for the vaccine, cultural values (trust, distrust); I'm healthy, don't like shots
- Ways to influence hesitancy - messaging around wellbeing of others/community + want to gather again with family and friends; health care settings are considered the most comfortable vaccination sites
- Vaccine Hesitancy Coalition - leveraging trusted messenger; building visibility and social norms; engaging and involving community members; tailoring communication to our audience

Chair Bryant asked how vaccine hesitancy affects the customer base of CET. It was noted that many countries including the EU are considering vaccine passports; however, it is doubtful local transit systems would ask passengers for proof of vaccination. Mr. Ross asked about lessons learned for rural Eastern Oregon. Ms. Curley asked a question in the chat about some challenges public transportation agencies are facing (i.e. needing to operate additional vehicles, financial constraints) with respect to the three feet social distance and maximum capacity requirements on vehicles. Dr. Conway mentioned the social distance requirements on public transit help protect passengers. He also noted equity concerns around access to vaccines. Mr. Hofbauer asked how transit agencies can help distribute information about vaccine availability. Dr. Conway noted Deschutes County has videos and posters and can put us in touch with the right people to more effectively promote the recommendation of vaccines for transit riders. Ms. Marland noted in Sisters, volunteer drivers take people to get their vaccinations. Ms. La Buda also noted coordinated efforts with older adults for transportation access to vaccine sites.

Edem Gomez - Rogue Valley Transit District (RVTD)

Mr. Gomez works on marketing and outreach and passenger communications programs for RVTD. RVTD operates 13 express routes and microtransit services in eight different Southern Oregon cities, with some service reductions over the past year taking place due to COVID. Colleges and universities are expected to return to in-person classes in September. RVTD started collecting electronic fares (E-fares) six years ago and they have had a significant adoption of E-fare, with over half of riders using the system. Mr. Gomez described some challenges related to branding, as TouchPass was bought out by Cubic and branding transitions (it is now called UMO Pass) often cause confusion for users. This presented an opportunity to implement other fare programs such as store value and fare capping, which offer calendar-based passes and also trip-based passes which helps provide flexibility so passengers can pay as they ride. RVTD serves a lot of low-income riders and this helps them financially. Fare capping allows passengers to earn benefits of daily and monthly passes as they ride. Once they reach a set cap (\$56), they ride the rest of that day or month as free. RVTD promoted the services via paid advertisements on TV, social media in English and Spanish (they have a 15% Latino audience). They received new E-fare cards as part of the new promotion and gave them away for free. Pass sales have been going up and passengers are riding more often. People are more confident in riding the system. Considerations and lessons learned include being clear regarding the changes they are making. There are no longer grace periods for the monthly passes. Nearly 25% of passengers are using fare capping. Next step is getting automatic updates on the app to finalize stored value. They are looking at having retail centers sell the E-fare passes, for which there is a 3.5% fee. Mr. Ross noted he loves the system, as

it provides rider confidence, based upon an experience from riding transit in Boston. Customers aren't required to have an email address with the new UMO Pass but it is recommended. They can add different types of systems (e.g. micromobility shuttle). If they wanted to increase the costs, it would automatically pull dollars off of that platform.

Go Vets program overview - Southern Oregon has a 10% veteran population, which is large. The Go Vets program goals are to provide mobility and access to services for vets and RVTD hired a travel trainer who is a veteran to connect other veterans with transportation options information and resources. They also fix up bikes and provide them to veterans for free. Overall, it is a successful program.

CET Optimization Study overview and equity measures road map

Mr. Hofbauer provided an overview of CET's optimization study and discussed equity measures that will be assessed over the next year. CET is developing a communications plan for this effort that focuses on engaging the community to host listening sessions and establish equity objectives, measures, and targets. Ms. Napoli mentioned that she worked on an equity assessment in Rogue Valley and would be happy to support CET with the equity measures project.

ODOT Transportation Options Innovation Grant opportunity for bikeshare analysis in Bend

Mr. Hofbauer discussed a collaborative effort among CET, the City of Bend, Bend MPO, and OSU-Cascades to seek ODOT funding for a bikeshare analysis in Bend. If funded, the project will utilize Remix, a popular transit planning tool, to examine potential bikeshare locations and equity data for the project. Ms. Napoli mentioned how the bikeshare analysis project can potentially help inform aspects of the Mobility Hub Feasibility Study, which is set to kick off in October of this year. Both projects will utilize RPTAC as a meeting forum in an effort to seek input and recommendations from committee members, as well as the general public. Mr. Bergh discussed ways in which outcomes from the bikeshare analysis will feed into an overarching Bend urban mobility framework that is being developed by the OSU-Cascades Mobility Lab.

Warm Springs to Government Camp winter shuttle update

CET just purchased a bus that will arrive in the fall to provide service between Government Camp and Warm Springs. This service will provide access to job opportunities for tribal members at Ski Bowl and potentially other winter resorts around Mt. Hood such as Timberline and Mt. Hood Meadows. CET staff are working collaboratively with Ski Bowl representatives, the Warm Springs STIF committee, and community partners to develop schedules and stop locations.

CET and Partner Announcements

- Commute Options formed two subsidized vanpools for the Deschutes County STIF vanpool pilot project, with destinations at Black Butte Ranch and Crescent. Funding is available for additional vanpools to be formed and there is greater potential now that COVID restrictions are being lifted and commuters are going back into the office.
- Bend fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services will transition to MTM Transit (a women-owned business) on September 1, 2021. MTM operates in 31 states, including Oregon, and provides an array of transit services with a focus on customer service and equity.

- Stakeholder engagement for the 2022 summer shuttle pilot project to Mt. Bachelor and Elk Lake will occur in late summer
- Ride the River and Lava Butte recreation services begin 6/19
- Surveys are being conducted to assess transit needs in Deschutes River Woods and also between Bend and Sunriver
- Bend fixed-route and Dial-A-Ride services are roughly 50% lower compared to pre-COVID ridership baseline; Community Connector service is 43% lower; rural Dial-A-Ride is 61% lower
- Route 31 (La Pine to Sunriver) ridership is off to a good start. The first 18 days of service in 2021 had a total of 79 boardings, compared to 18 boardings in 2020 (339% change). The highest ridership is on Thursdays, with morning and mid-day runs being the most popular
- 2020-2021 winter Mt. Bachelor Service update
 - 21,532 total riders during the 2020-2021 winter season
 - A majority of passengers were Mt. Bachelor employees
 - Highest ridership runs were at 6:50 AM (up the mountain) and 4:30 PM (down the mountain)
 - Electronic fares were utilized to reduce interactions between drivers and passengers; fares increased from \$5 to \$10 (one way)
 - The service provided an important transportation option for locals and visitors to access the mountain without needing a parking reservation

Meeting adjourned at 3:32 pm