REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 25 FROM 1:30-3:30 PM

ZOOM: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83785807989?pwd=NmRpVjBVWEdnc0lzZy9KUlBacVpPUT09

MEETING ID: 837 8580 7989 PASSCODE: j4jaiM

TO CALL IN BY PHONE, DIAL: 1-669-900-6833
MEETING ID 837 8580 7989# PASSCODE: 704520

AGENDA

TIME	SUBJECT	LEAD PRESENTER
1:30	Introductions	Derek Hofbauer
1:40	Public comment	Bob Bryant (Chair)
1:45	Review and approval of 6/16/21 meeting minutes	Bob Bryant
1:50	Paratransit boundary information + Bend Mobility Hub Feasibility Study update	Andrea Napoli, Bend MPO; Derek Hofbauer, CET
2:20	CET Electric Technology Feasibility Study Update	Ashley Hooper, CET
2:30	Transit Districts overview + committee input	Bob Bryant, Derek Hofbauer
2:45	Equity measures roadmap update + committee input	Derek Hofbauer
3:00	Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) project updates • Warm Springs service addition • Crooked River Ranch service • Route 31 (La Pine to Sunriver) • Bend and Redmond bus stop design	Derek Hofbauer, Ashley Hooper, Rachel Zakem
3:30	Adjourn	

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
- Vaccinations 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 Mobilty 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

MEMO

TO: ANDREA BREAULT, CET TRANSPORTATION DIRECTOR

FROM: ANDREA NAPOLI, BEND MPO SENIOR PLANNER

DATE: JULY 27, 2021

RE: ADA PARATRANSIT SERVICE BOUNDARIES

Background

The Bend MPO added Transit Coordination as a subtask to their 2021-2022 annual work program and had solicited CET for possible tasks where MPO staff could be of assistance. CET expressed that an analysis was needed to help determine an appropriate delineation of a paratransit service boundary. CET refers to their paratransit service as "dial-a-ride" (DAR) and currently the boundary is delineated by the Bend city limit. Under Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), transit providers must provide complementary paratransit service within ¾ of a mile on each side of each fixed route.

MPO staff began work on this topic by collecting information on paratransit boundaries from transit providers around the state and those just over state lines.

Paratransit Boundaries of Transit Providers

Information was collected on the paratransit boundaries of eleven (11) transit providers from communication with staff. A summary can be found below, with greater detail in Table 1.

Of all eleven (11) providers:

- Nine (9) currently use the ¾ mile of fixed routes minimum requirement as their boundary.
- Two (2) currently use city boundaries, individually stating that:
    - The ¾ mile rule nearly covers the entire city, so it was carried forward from past citywide senior DAR service.
    - A stable, long-term funding source was established (percentage of city sales tax to transit) which allowed for the expanded paratransit service area.

Of the nine (9) providers currently using the ¾ mile of fixed routes as their boundary:

- Four (4) stated that other county-based DAR services were available to assist those outside of the ¾ mile paratransit service area.
- One (1) uses a surcharge zone to expand service.
- Two (2) described having expanded their service area in the past, but once funding ran out they had to revert back to the ¾ mile requirement and grandfather/phase out those outside of the ¾ mile boundary.
- Three (3) are currently looking to combine with other programs (e.g.: NEMT, DHS) to expand their service area.
- One (1) was unresponsive to the request for additional information.

Table 1: ADA Paratransit Boundaries

Transit Entity/Provider	ADA Paratransit Service Area Boundary	Notes
Ben Franklin Transit (Franklin and Benton Counties, WA)	City boundaries of all member cities of Public Transit Benefit Area	7.5% of member sales tax to transit
Rogue Valley Transit District	¾ mile of fixed routes	Looking to combine ADA rides w DHS service to expand service area.
Josephine Community Transit	¾ mile of fixed routes	Previously expanded service area with new funding, but it ran out. Grandfathering service to cut back to ¾ mile. Looking expand for NEMT for those not eligible and outside of ¾ mile, but with strict guidelines.
Lane Transit District	¾ mile of fixed routes and surcharge zone	Those within five minutes of boundary are eligible with surcharge, but it has created problems.
Basin Transit Service Transportation District	¾ mile of fixed routes	Had made exceptions in the past within district boundary (or UGB) and now those are grandfathered, but phasing out.
Columbia Area Transit	¾ mile for paratransit, DAR county-wide	Other DAR service able to accommodate those outside ¾ mile.
Umpqua Public Transit District	¾ mile of fixed routes	County DAR service available covering inside/outside ¾ mile. Looking to combine them to expand paratransit service area.
Corvallis Transit System	¾ mile of fixed routes	Would only consider expanding if additional funds became available. County has a robust STF program for seniors and people with disabilities, for those who live outside of the CTS service area.
Albany Transit System	City boundary	Holdover from when city provided senior rides for entire city, prior to paratransit rules. ¾ mile rule nearly covers entire city, anyhow, so kept city boundary.
Northeast Oregon Public Transit	¾ mile of fixed routes	Have additional DAR service that gives free town-to-town rides within county, which has helped with need beyond ¾ mile.
Valley Regional Transit (Boise Area)	¾ mile of fixed routes	Unable to get a response re: additional information.

Next Steps

CET staff had expressed a need to analyze other elements of their paratransit service to help establish policy and increase efficiency of their program. Such elements include scheduling and travel training. MPO staff feel that this ‘deeper dive’ would be best completed as a transit planning consultant led project, with the option of the MPO serving in an advisory role.