

# REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

## MEETING MINUTES

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

### **Committee Members:**

Richard Ross  
Annie Marland  
Bob Bryant  
Brian Potwin  
James Halliday  
Jordan Ohlde  
Cora Ives

### **Members of the Public:**

Andrea Napoli, Bend MPO  
Theresa Conley, ODOT  
Patrick DePriest, ODOT

### **COIC/CET Staff:**

Tammy Baney  
Andrea Breault  
Derek Hofbauer  
Rachel Zakem  
Ashley Mohni

### **Introductions - Derek Hofbauer**

### **Public comment - Bob Bryant**

- No public comments.

### **Review and approval of 6/16/21 meeting minutes Bob Bryant**

- The meeting minutes were approved unanimously by the committee.

**Paratransit boundary information + Bend Mobility Hub Feasibility Study update - Andrea Napoli, Derek Hofbauer**

- The Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is assisting CET in making improvements for ADA-transportation services (Bend DAR), such as scheduling, travel training and the current service boundary (Bend city limits).
- Transit providers must provide complementary paratransit service within ¾-mile of fixed-route transit service and CET currently goes beyond this requirement.
- Most entities from the best practices research use the ¾-mile requirement; however, some of these entities have county-based DAR to cover areas outside of the boundary, are looking to combine with other programs to expand the service area, or have expanded and since retracted service due to the lack of longer-term funding.
- Bend is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States, meaning the city limits will likely expand with the population. Without a dedicated funding source, how will CET continue to fund a continually expanding paratransit service? The Bend MPO will continue to work collaboratively with CET to explore opportunities.
- A mobility hub supports CET’s plans to transition away from the current “hub and spoke” system and provide a more “multicentric” transit system in Bend.
- The idea is to build off of the mobility hub conceptual planning that was developed in CET’s Transit Master Plan and the City of Bend’s Transportation System Plan. The feasibility study will explore the best approach to implement mobility hubs such as where are they located, what features/amenities are needed), and who manages/owns which aspects of the hub.
- The project will officially kick off in November during the first Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. The December TAC meeting will be held during the last hour of the RPTAC meeting.
- Parametrix is the lead consultant for the project with support from Cascadia Partners and Emerio Design. ODOT is the contract administrator and CET will lead the project TAC and public engagement efforts. The Bend MPO manages the project to ensure grant requirements are met, in addition to providing project updates to outside entities, developing an initial “interested parties” list, reviewing deliverables, and providing project guidance. The City of Bend will participate in project team meetings, review deliverables, and provide project guidance.
- The TAC is composed of RPTAC members plus other representatives from City, Environmental Center, OSU Cascades, and the transportation tech industry.
- Chair Bryant asked if there could be any opportunities with private partners for the market assessment to find future mobility hub projects.
  - Ms. Napoli hopes that the study will help convey the value and opportunity of mobility hub development that attracts private partners.
- Robust public engagement efforts will be targeted to transit riders and community partners, including traditionally underserved audiences, to receive meaningful and inclusive project input. Public engagement activities for the project include:

- Advertised public meetings in media and online calendars
- CET website and social media posts
- Printed meeting notices and online survey links in English and Spanish at CET’s main transportation hubs
- Email notifications and presentations at existing community events
- In-person engagement at key locations to showcase visual project elements and solicit feedback regarding amenities and locations.
- Mr. Hofbauer shared that the goal of a public-facing engagement campaign is to include participation from traditionally underrepresented communities.
  - Mr. Ross suggested adding private partnerships on a small scale in this project (i.e. bike shops or other retail, health clinics) and to consider nearby services as well.

**CET Electric Technology Feasibility Study Update - Ashley Mohni**

- CET received a grant from Pacific Power to conduct its first feasibility study focused on electric technology. The study will explore ways in which CET can reduce the footprint of its agency and fleet.
- First piece of operational review focused on looking at what buses could do on a single charge on our existing services (depot charging).
  - Tested services based off of various metrics
  - Looked at extremes in weather that could affect electric vehicle functionality and efficiency
  - Looked at the efficiency of a battery over its lifetime
- A key metric is existing service miles for our routes, which makes most of them not feasible with one charge of a battery.
- Mobility Hubs will make EV more feasible by creating more charging opportunities and shorter routes.
- Next steps are to develop a few stakeholder workshops with goals and agendas and schedule the meetings.
- Ms. Napoli asked how most electric buses go about charging - multiple times a day, overnight?
  - Ms. Mohni responded that it depends and that most agencies utilize multiple methods of charging and batteries.
- Mr. Hofbauer asked about the difference between electric car charging and bus charging
  - Ms. Mohni responded that a larger charging capability is needed for buses as compared to smaller personal vehicles.

**Transit Districts overview + committee input - Bob Bryant, Derek Hofbauer**

- CET is the largest provider in Oregon that is not a transit district.
- Transit districts allow agencies to become less reliant on competitive grants and make more strategic investments in fleet, personnel, services, and facilities.

- In order to be aspirational and obtain desired goals and outcomes developed in the 2040 Transit Master Plan, CET must rely on funding sources beyond grants and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF).
- Becoming a Transit District would allow CET to have a general fund and be more competitive when applying for funding (e.g. more local match), as well as having additional funds available to expand operations and enhance facilities. It also offers CET the flexibility to become fareless and attract a lot of users, thus helping reduce the numbers of private vehicles on the roads.
- Transit district funds would likely come from an excise, income, property, utility, or sales tax. A ballot measure would need to pass among voters prior to CET becoming a transit district
- House Bill 2745B was passed in 2017, which allows COIC the ability to form transit districts in Central Oregon communities on their own time frames and for their desired level of service and funding, thus ensuring local control.
- Becoming a transit district would provide a more efficient committee process for STIF funds – only one committee would be needed instead of four. Additionally, CET would not have to wait to get reimbursed by counties since funding would pass directly from ODOT to CET.
- Chair Bryant asked what is the timing for when to introduce this initiative to the public. What is a strategy that would make us most likely to be successful when introducing an initiative like this?
- Mr. Hofbauer - the City of Bend’s GOBond passed successfully, so that gives some indication that voters in Bend are interested in supporting transportation projects.
- CET was experiencing a steady increase in ridership in recent years, but COVID-19 and a nationwide driver shortage has negatively impacted ridership.
- Mr. Ross encouraged us to engage with RVTD to learn about their experiences in becoming a transit district.

**Equity measures roadmap update + committee input - Derek Hofbauer**

- CET’s recent Optimization Study benchmarks efficiency and effectiveness of CET’s services.
- Strategy 3 includes engaging the community to establish and monitor equity objectives, measures and targets.
- A CET equity and customer values survey will be launched during CET’s Welcoming Week event at Hawthorne Station on 9/15 from 3-6 pm.
- CET is seeking input regarding the following transit characteristics:
  - Geographic reach and accessibility of services
  - Information displays and formats (e.g. web, print, social, Spanish)
  - Customer service and travel training initiatives
  - Fare structures and platforms

- Mr. Halliday noted it would nice if Community Connector buses were express and connected across the service area without having to transfer buses (e.g. Madras to Redmond to Bend to La Pine. He also mentioned a preference for a bus stop in Tumalo.

### **Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) project updates - Derek Hofbauer, Ashley Mohni, Rachel Zakem**

#### Warm Springs Route 20 service addition

- CET is adding the DSH facility into route design starting October 4.
- Outreach for the new stop location will commence in late September.

#### Crooked River Ranch service

- CET developed specific stops for the proposed Crooked River Ranch the service, which will operate on Mondays and Wednesdays.
- Once the shuttle arrives in Redmond, it will drop off passengers at the Walmart in front of the store to ensure accessibility for older adults. It will then travel to St. Charles and the Fred Meyer. Service deviations can be called in ahead of time to the call center in the event a rider needs to access medical or health care services within Redmond. This provides more flexibility for riders to access health-care destinations in Redmond.
- Chair Bryant asked about the timing of the service.
  - The goal was to begin this service in late 2021; however, there is a nationwide driver shortage that has delayed the starting time.

#### Route 31 (La Pine to Sunriver)

- The service is projected to double ridership this year compared to last year.
- CET planned and hosted events at the Senior Center that were very successful and resulted in increased ridership.
- Enhanced outreach activities such as ads in local papers, radio ads, boosted social media posts, and tabling at employer and other local events have resulted in increased awareness of the service, as well as additional ridership.

#### Bend and Redmond bus stop design

- Bus stops are currently being designed by Century West Engineering for new routes in Bend (Routes 8 and 9) and two new deviated flex-routes in Redmond.
- The bus stop drawings will be finalized this winter. CET will then seek construction services in the late winter/spring of 2022 to construct the stops.
- The Cities of Bend and Redmond are very engaged in these projects and have provided beneficial guidance and assistance.
- Ms. Marland asked for an update on transportation service to Hoodoo or Black Butte Ranch. Mr. Hofbauer noted this could be a potential future service if demand exists.
- It was mentioned the parking lot across from the Warm Springs Market could be a potential transit hub.