REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2023

Staff
Andrea Breault
Derek Hofbauer
Rachel Zakem
Laura Scully
Tammy Baney

Committee Members
Kim Curley
Brian Potwin
Annie Marland
Casey Bergh
James Halliday
Jordan Ohlde
Bob Bryant

Guests
Tobi Marx

Public comment
- None

Review and approval of 10/19/22 meeting minutes

- Minutes were approved

CET Service, Planning, and Detour Updates

- Ms, Breault provided an update on MTM driver hiring. There are currently 4 drivers in training. Once they are able to be full time drivers, the first task will be to split out Routes 1 and 7 into 30-minute frequencies.

A Year Ahead in Transit

- Eric Lint, CET Strategy and Program Manager, gave updates on year ahead in transit. He is working on bringing on a new security camera system, public WIFI on buses thanks to the new CAD/AVL system, updating the e-fair system, a new asset management system, and capital improvement plan, which is something that CET has not previously had.
- The Capital plan will be a finance plan for the year.

- RFP to bring modernized bus shelters to our system. The Hawthorne Station parking lot redesign will include new shelters, followed by high traffic stops along Bend fixed routes.
- Shared information for how Bend Area Transit was transferred to COIC. Mr. Lint shared a presentation with Bend City Council.
- Mr. Lint introduced the idea of forming a transit district in Bend. He spoke on the various funding options and how this governmental structure would function to streamline transit operations.
- CET is one of the largest metro areas without a transit district, and the largest in Oregon.
- A transit district would provide a stable revenue stream. CET will provide a report to the City of Bend to highlight research and findings.
- CET will continue to serve the entire region even if we become a Transit District
- This initiative will go to the ballot if CET and the City of Bend decide to become a transit district. Lots of stakeholder engagement is needed for this effort.
- A consultant will be hired to carry out the research and advise on a campaign.

CET Service, Planning, and Detour Updates

- CET's Planning Specialist Rachel Zakem shared that total ridership in January 2023 increased 38% compared to last year. Bend fixed-route ridership increased 23%, Dial-a-Ride ridership increased %10, and Community Connector increased 29% (near pre-pandemic levels.)
- Ms. Zakem shared that the Madras Dial-a-Ride boundary will be expanded.
- Routes 8 and 9 bus stops have been constructed and schedules and branding are currently being planned.
- Routes 5/6/7 will be on detours for the next 3-4 months, starting February 20th and 22nd, respectively.
- CET staff has been doing ride-alongs to inform riders about these detours. Information is available on the CET website and flyers are posted in shelters.
- Mr. Hofbauer shared about CET's Cascades Lakes Summer Shuttle which is currently in the service planning phase. The shuttle was not able to run last summer due to driver shortages, but the plan is to start the service this summer. CET is exploring service models that are feasible given ongoing driver shortages.
- Ms. Curly discussed opportunities for residents to use the Get There tool to explore transportation options during construction activities such as at Neff and Purcell roundabout and the realignment of US 97 and US 20.

CET Outreach Initiatives

- Ms. Scully conducted outreach in rural communities to share information about CET's routes and services. She traveled to Madras and Warm Springs to visit churches and senior living facilities, which helped increase awareness of CET's services.
- A Travel Training Presentation was conducted for Heart of Oregon. They expressed the desire to include CET Travel Training in their orientation materials, which is a great opportunity to get more rural community members to ride the bus.
- Ms. Zakem and other CET staff have been alerting passengers about upcoming detours, and riders are well informed.
- CET staff presented transit information to Spanish speaking residents at the Pine Mobile Home Park in SE Bend on Feb 10. The presentation was well received, and this was a great opportunity to conduct additional outreach to the Spanish-speaking community in Bend. Ms. Zakem spoke in Spanish with help from a translator.

CET Technology Updates

- CET recently implemented a new CAD/AVL system, which is on-board software and GPS that improves route and scheduling efficiencies.
- Passio Go is the new app that is being promoted by staff to see our buses in real-time.
- Staff are developing communications for the rollout of Wifi on all Fixed Route Buses, in addition to a new text notification feature for Dial-A-Ride.
- Bus Buzz is a new system for riders to provide feedback - customers can go online and fill out a simple feedback form that will be sent to the customer service team.
- A question was posed regarding how older people who do not use the internet will be able to use Bus Buzz and Passio Go. Mr. Lint and Ms. Breault emphasized the new technology was implemented to streamline and modernize the agency and customers can also call CET's Customer Service if they have questions.
- Mr. Halliday asked if the app will track the Warm Springs bus.
    - Ms. Breault responded due to the on-demand status of the route, a different program is utilized.
- CET will release an RFP for e-fare which will be a separate system from Passio.

2023-2025 Biennium Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Project Overview

- Ms. Breault shared funding updates: The three counties and Confederated Tribes successfully submitted their STIF plans. CET will be informed regarding the status of awards in May. It is important to note the STIF and Special Transportation Fund (STF) programs were consolidated this biennium to increase efficiency.

- Total funding request for all Qualified Entities in Central Oregon of nearly $21 million, which includes the ODOT-recommended 20% budgeting calculations due to potential changes in payroll tax forecast estimates.
- The Deschutes County STIF meeting in December was successful - providers collectively requested $2 million more compared to the ODOT forecast in funding. Providers were able to work collaboratively to reduce funding requests so that the Deschutes County STIF plan could be submitted according to the forecasted budget.
- CET was awarded 5311 funds for Community Connector Services, which supports operations and maintenance.
- 5310 funding applications were successfully submitted by the cities and counties.

Advisory Committee Engagement Activity

- Mr. Hofbauer discussed RPTAC committee member recruitment efforts. Applications will be accepted through May 17, 2023
- COIC has a new slate of board members.
- Ms. Marland asked if anyone from Redmond is included in RPTAC, Zach Bass from the airport represents the City of Redmond.
- CET is seeking additional committee members from Bend, La Pine, and Metolius/Culver/Terrebonne.
- Mr. Hofbauer asked if there were more opportunities for engagement like committee field trips, meeting at new locations, or guest speakers.
- Ms. Marland expressed her concern that meetings tend to focus more on Bend as opposed to other areas of Central Oregon like Sisters.
- Ms. Curly shared that she would like to hear from users of transit, like RPA students or Heart of Oregon students.
- Mr. Marx shared that he would like to learn about new ideas and initiatives in these meetings and echoed Ms. Curly's comment that it would be beneficial to hear from transit users. He added it would be equally beneficial to hear from people who are not using transit. This would be a good way for the committee to hear the reasons why people in Central Oregon are not using transit.
- Ms. Marland mentioned she would like the opportunity to demonstrate to residents in Sisters how they can take the bus to work and medical appointments in Bend; however, the current schedule and multiple transfers can be confusing for people. The STARS volunteer driver program allows residents to access medical facilities in Bend without transferring buses, which can be difficult for older adults and people with disabilities. Ms. Marland asked Mr. Hofbauer if any internal CET discussions have taken place regarding the Sisters to Bend route that includes a direct connection to the hospital in Bend. Mr. Hofbauer suggested there could potentially be a partnership between STARS

and CET that can be explored to ensure Sisters residents can more conveniently access medical facilities in Bend.

- It would be beneficial for this group to hear from a speaker who has gone through the process of creating a transit district. Mr. Lint noted CET will provide a future presentation to this group about the transit district process.
- Mr. Marx believes that this is a great opportunity to envision a future of transit in Central Oregon.

Committee Roundtable

- Mr. Marx shared that Bird Bikes are still in Bend; however, the number of bikes was reduced due to the weather. Additional bikes will be provided this spring/summer. Additionally, neighborhood mobility points will be enhanced with improved signage to make it clear what is shared bike parking and what is public bike parking.
- An automated parking guidance system is being planned that would add sensors so that members of the public can see what parking is available. This information will be updated in real-time and can be accessed via an app. The city plans to include real-time signage on Bond and Arizona, on Greenwood and Wall, and on Franklin. The goal is to eventually implement dynamic parking pricing. Mr. Marx believes that this data will be a great asset for the City of Bend.
- The parking app will work in tangent with an app that lets people with disabilities rate and report parking from a disability perspective (people taking ADA spots, wheelchair access is limited, etc).
- Commute Options is expanding Safe Routes to School and ramping the program back up in May in collaboration with the Get There Challenge. The Electric Bike Voucher program will start in March. The vanpool program has also proved successful, with more subsidized vans on the roads.
- Mr. Byrant is busy building homes with Habitat for Humanity in Sisters.
- Ms. Marland shared that the high school, middle school, and elementary school in Sisters have been pushed closer to the highway. She wonders if a bus stop could be added to accommodate this change.