Cascades East Transit
Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
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Regional Public Transit Advisory Committee (RPTAC) Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, April 16th
Hawthorne Station Conference Room

Call to order

Welcome and introductions

Attendees:

Brian Potwin

Greg Bryant

Jordan Ohlde

John Livingston

Trevor Johnson

Janet Llerandi-Gonzalez

Jessica Rich

COIC Staff:

Derek Hofbauer

Robert Townsend

Jane Woodward

Megan Krickhan

Guests:

Kristin Reidelberger

Jovi Arellano

Public comment

Trevor Johnson suggested moving the hospital bus stop in Redmond to Larch Avenue due to construction at the Cancer Center, noting the shelter there provides better access. He also

recommended adding a new stop on 19th Street (between Kingwood, Ivy, or Hemlock) on the Northwest Flex Route to improve neighborhood accessibility.

Derek Hofbauer responded to a previous RPTAC meeting public comment made by Kristen Reidelberger, noting that COIC and CET submitted a pre-application to update the Transit Master Plan and Coordinated Transportation Services Plan through ODOT's Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) program.

Approval of minutes from meeting on February 19, 2024

Mr. Bryant moved to approve, Mr. Potwin seconded. Motion carried.

Introduction of New Staff

Jane Woodward introduced herself as the new Community Affairs and Operations Assistant for Cascades East Transit. She shared her excitement about joining the team and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to work with the committee and community members. Jane explained that her primary focus will be on outreach efforts across all transit routes with the goal of increasing ridership and enhancing the visibility of transit services within the community. She emphasized her commitment to engaging the public and fostering stronger connections between Cascades East Transit and the populations it serves. Jane mentioned she looks forward to further introducing herself and collaborating with everyone in future meetings.

Transportation Director's Update • Bob Townsend

Service Expansion

Starting June 2nd, fixed-route service hours in Bend will expand from the current 7:30 AM–5:30 PM to 6:00 AM–7:30 PM to better accommodate commuter traffic. This expansion will be supported by outreach and communication efforts.

Try Transit Week

CET will host a week-long event focused on promoting transit ridership through a variety of activities and incentives. Events will include on-bus prize giveaways and partnerships with local organizations to increase community engagement. Volunteers interested in helping during this week are encouraged to contact Derek Hofbauer, though specific volunteer roles are still being finalized.

New Route Launch

On July 14th, Route 8 will launch, serving Northeast Bend with stops along 3rd Street, Cooley, 18th, Empire Point Acres, and Pioneer Street. This expansion will increase transit access to underserved parts of the city. Minor adjustments to Routes 5 and 6 will be made to reduce route overlap.

Transit Pass Implementation

CET is introducing a new transit pass system requiring riders to use a pass or mobile app to board the bus. The pilot soft launch will begin in June for selected groups to allow time for riders to sign up

and adapt to the new system, with full implementation expected by September 1st. Exceptions will be made for riders in emergency or safety-sensitive situations who may board without a pass. Outreach efforts for the pass rollout include sign-up events at Hawthorne Station, on buses, and within community spaces, supported by QR codes for easy access.

Staffing and Organizational Growth

- Driver recruitment has improved, supporting expanded service and new routes, though efforts continue to fill vacancies.
- Additional driver supervisors have been added, reducing the supervisor-to-driver ratio from 1:40 to 1:20 for better management.
- Justin Graybeal has joined as the new Fleet and Facilities Supervisor, overseeing maintenance staff and mechanics.
- A new Safety Manager will start in May, following background checks, to strengthen safety protocols.
- Jane Woodward, Community Affairs and Operations Assistant, will focus on outreach, station support, and increasing ridership.
- One station attendant will be hired to cover expanded service hours.
- A new dispatcher position will be added, and the call center is under review to handle increased inquiries related to fare changes.
- CET is recruiting an IT specialist to manage new technology systems such as fare apps, bus communications, and onboard cameras.

CET New Logo Development • Derek Hofbauer

Derek shared that CET is in the final stages of its logo redesign. Staff and COIC Board members provided feedback on early drafts, with 40 employees responding to a survey focused on colors, shapes, and font styles.

A darker pine green was added to the color palette for better contrast and accessibility. The updated designs aim to make “CET” more prominent while honoring the old logo’s signature orange. Final versions will be presented to the Board in May, with hopes of finalizing the logo over the summer so new buses and materials can be branded consistently.

Color versions will be used publicly, while black-and-white versions may appear internally (e.g., uniforms, shop signage).

CET Grants Update – STIF Discretionary • Derek Hofbauer

STIF Discretionary Funds
Derek explained that CET applied for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) discretionary funds, which are competitive, one-time grants for special projects. Unlike formula funds, which are based on payroll tax and distributed by county advisory committees, discretionary grants are awarded at the state level. CET has applied for several projects under this program.

Innovative Mobility Program (IMP)
CET also received ODOT IMP funding, which supports outreach and service improvement efforts.

One project—submitted by the City of Madras—was awarded and will be carried out largely by CET. This includes hiring a Latino-focused outreach firm to help CET improve its Spanish-language and culturally relevant communication in Madras, which has a large Latino population. The goal is to develop better materials, improve maps, and engage the community more effectively.

Warm Springs Pilot Project
Another funded project is a 15-month internal Warm Springs bus route, supported by $199,000 in discretionary funds. This pilot aims to connect key areas like Kah-Nee-Ta Resort and Simnasho, creating stronger links to CET's Bend-bound routes. The project lays the groundwork for future tribal transit grant opportunities worth millions, which Warm Springs is well-positioned to receive.

CET Draft Fare Policy Updates • Bob Townsend

- CET is in the process of updating its fare policy to meet federal requirements and streamline a system that hasn't been revised since 2012. This updated policy doesn't set fare prices—instead, it lays the foundation for how fare changes are proposed, communicated, and approved.
- Definitions are included to clarify what counts as a fare increase or major service reduction, and the policy ensures compliance with federal and state public meeting laws. While RPTAC won't vote on the policy, its feedback will be shared with the board before any formal approval.
- Mr. Townsend presented the draft fare structure table.
- Unlike TriMet, where a single fare covers travel throughout the system for two hours, CET's system charges per route—meaning if you travel from Bend to Redmond and then onward to Madras or Warm Springs, you'll pay $2 for each leg unless you hit the daily fare cap. The tentative full-fare daily cap is $6, and the reduced-fare cap is $3.
- CET currently operates on a budget primarily funded by payroll tax revenue; fare revenue only helps cover inflation and operational costs, and increasing fares won't significantly expand services without additional funding.

RPTAC New Member Recruitment • Derek Hofbauer

- Recruitment is underway to fill a primary and possibly an alternate position on RPTAC, with outreach through newsletters and social media. The application deadline is being extended to mid-June, and several applications have already been received. The Bend position is open following a longtime member's departure. An internal committee will review applications, check references, and present candidates in June for feedback before final appointments are made by the CYC board this summer. Follow-up is also planned with an alternate member with low attendance to confirm their interest.

Community Engagement Opportunities• Derek Hofbauer & Jane Woodward

- Earth Day tabling at the Environmental Center will promote expanded service times, fares, and Try Transit Week (June 2–8).

- A Walk & Roll Open House at Hawthorne Station is scheduled for May 8, in partnership with the City of Bend and local advisory committees.
- Try Transit Week will include multiple events to encourage ridership and highlight earlier service times starting at 6 a.m.
- Jane Woodward is leading route-specific outreach for Bend fixed routes, identifying key destinations and community partners for each route. Outreach strategies include social media promotion, printed materials, on-the-ground visibility, and event tabling.

RPTAC Next Meeting, Committee Organization• Derek Hofbauer

- Next meeting is Wednesday, June 18th
- Committee retreat discussion and possible date.
    - Committee members preferred a four or five- hour meeting with lunch in the middle to allow ample time to set procedures on how this committee functions and decide future agenda topics
    - Proposed date of retreat of October 15, 2025

Committee Member Reports

- James notes that as the seasons shift towards spring, he notices increased ridership and expresses appreciation from the community regarding service. Members of Simnasho are currently not being served, encourages service to these areas.
- Mr. Snead echoes James concerns regarding current lack of service to Simnasho.
- Ms. Arellano notes that she is working diligently to get funding agreements and formula funds out to organizations for the July 1 start date.

Meeting Adjourned