



Gorge Transit: Existing and Proposed Routes



Transit Moves People. People Move Oregon.

Public transportation does a lot of important things that you might not even notice. It enables workers to get to jobs, older adults to medical facilities, younger people to schools, bike riders to urban centers, disabled adults to appointments and family members to shopping areas.

As public transportation matures and expands in Oregon, it will do many more important things. Electric buses will cut carbon emissions. Dial-a-ride and weekend service will give people more mobility options. Inter-community routes will expand the concept of neighborhood. On-demand scheduling and integrated payment platforms will empower statewide car-free travel. And that’s just the beginning.

Oregon’s 41 transit agencies have benefitted from additional funding through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) approved by the 2017 legislature.

In the attached backgrounders, the agencies tell their stories – what they did during the pandemic, how they invested their STIF funds and where they could invest additional STIF funding if it was available.



Check out the backgrounders at TransitMovesOregon.com

House District 59



Your Guide to Cascades East Transit (CET)

Why CET service is so vital

During the two-year pandemic, CET never stopped operating, providing fareless rides to grocery stores and doctor's visits.

CET provided free transportation for evacuees in Redmond during the 2020 wildfires, including rides to cooling centers during hot, smoky days in Bend.

As housing prices soar in Bend and Redmond, CET provides critical transportation links to work and schools for residents who found affordable housing in outlying rural areas.

CET's services for recreation take thousands of cars off roads, keeping streets less congested and safer – and reducing carbon emissions.

Cascades East Transit (CET) is operated by the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council serving Deschutes, Crook and Jefferson counties and the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs. CET provides service to more than 200,000 residents.

CET operates fixed routes in Bend, regional Community Connectors, Dial-A-Ride and recreation services. Since the pandemic, all of CET's core services except for recreation routes have remained free to the public to ensure community members can access jobs, education, shopping and medical appointments.

CET provides more than 600,000 passenger trips annually, with roughly half of those trips on Bend fixed routes. Bend's transit system contains nine routes that connect to downtown, the Old Mill District, Oregon State University Cascades, Central Oregon Community College, St. Charles and Mosaic medical facilities, and shopping destinations on the north and south ends of the city.

CET's main transit facilities include Hawthorne Station in Bend and the Redmond Transit Hub. Thousands of customers utilize CET's transit centers to access destinations within Central Oregon and throughout the state.

CET's Regional Community Connector routes provide important transit connections between La Pine, Sunriver, Bend, Redmond, Sisters, Prineville, Madras, Culver, Metolius, Crooked River Ranch and Warm Springs. Redmond Proficiency Academy (RPA) students make up a large percentage of ridership on CET's Community Connector routes during the school year. More than two-thirds of students ride CET's buses using a group pass program. Without a regional bus service, students living in rural areas would not be able to attend the RPA.

CET's recreation services, such as the Mt. Bachelor, Ride the River and Lava Butte shuttles, transport locals and visitors to scenic destinations within Bend, helping to reduce traffic congestion and CO₂ emissions. For example, CET's Ride the River shuttle provided more than 30,000 rides in July 2022.

	Average Weekly Ridership		
	FY 2019	FY 2021	FY 2022 YTD
Bend Fixed Route	5,714	2,752	3,433
Community Connector	2,258	2,349	2,047
Bend Dial-A-Ride	490	439	530
Rural Dial-A-Ride	667	371	320
Recreation	3,000	2,186	10,731
Total	12,129	8,096	17,061



In the past three years, CET has Oregon's best performing Veterans Health Care Transportation Program. From November 2020 through December 2021, CET provided 1,848 trips enabling veterans to access VA clinics, hospitals, dialysis, physical therapy and mental health services in Central Oregon.

How many buses, vans and other vehicles do you operate?

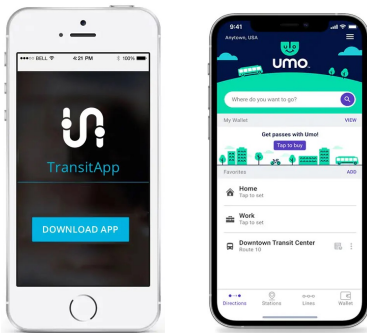
CET operates 30 vehicles daily, depending on the season. Large Freightliner and Gillig buses are used for Bend fixed routes and Community Connectors. Mid-size buses and vans are used for shopper/medical shuttles and Dial-A-Ride services.

Key priorities for making service route decisions?

CET works collaboratively with community partners, cities and counties to assess and fill public transportation service gaps. CET also works with developers as they build new neighborhoods to make sure bus stops are incorporated into plans. CET is planning two new routes in Redmond and Bend that will be implemented in 2023, pending bus driver availability.

How has CET applied its funding from the STIF?

CET applied STIF funds for service expansion, which required hiring additional staff members and purchasing new buses. For example, STIF funding enabled Saturday Community Connector service and a summer shuttle between Sunriver and La Pine in 2020. STIF funding also supports:



CET's informational and electronic ticketing apps

- Facilities, maintenance and security
- Vehicle purchases
- Planning efforts and service expansions
- Match requirements for state and federal grants
- Land purchases for mobility hubs
- Free fares on CET's core services
- Technology projects such as on-demand scheduling and apps
- Vanpool program
- Marketing and outreach materials

How would CET apply additional STIF funding?

CET is not a transit district and relies on STIF for most of its funding. Future transit initiatives would include:

- Developing five mobility hubs within Bend that provide a nexus of transportation options for community members.
- Purchasing electric and alternative fuel buses and vans.
- Investing in new technologies such as real-time information signs at bus stops, wi-fi on buses and solar powered kiosks.
- Operating micro-transit services late into the evening for locals and visitors to enjoy concerts and nightlife.
- Expand Dial-A-Ride services to ensure rural areas access to shopping and medical appointments.
- Build a fleet and operations facility in Redmond.
- Build additional mobility hubs to connect rural commuters with employment opportunities in Bend and Redmond.
- Fund additional employee vanpools.

