



# 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](http://TransitMovesOregon.com)

# House District 5



## Your Guide to Rogue Valley Transit District

### Why riders view RVTB as so vital

*"On Sept. 8, 2020, we lost our home of 17 years in the Almeda Fire. After 101 days of living in the Girl Scout shelter, we were able to move into our new place. With so many families displaced, their kids will still be able to go to school in Phoenix and Talent because they can ride RVTB."*

**Jocksana Corona**

*"The bus goes anywhere I need to go. Giving me the freedom to choose how I spend my day. Many folks can't afford cars, but RVTB gets them where they need to be."*

**Lynda Hurst**

*"I was in the Navy for four years and I have medical appointments at the VA Dom. It's a blessing for veterans to get out and involved in the community and get involved. RVTB is the bus company with a heart."*

**Jacqueline Glynn**

Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTB) is the public transportation and paratransit provider for the Rogue Valley in Southern Oregon. RVTB provides service to more than 223,000 residents in Jackson County, directly serving Medford, Ashland, Central Point, Phoenix, Talent, Jacksonville, White City and Eagle Point. Post-COVID, RVTB provides more than 650,000 passenger trips annually.

RVTB operates routes that provide transportation to the area's largest employers such as Harry & David and Asante. The District provides critical services along the Highway 99 corridor and serves higher education institutions such as Rogue Community College and Southern Oregon University with a collective enrollment of 9,000 students. These large employment, education and healthcare providers generate jobs and opportunities that contribute to a healthy economy.

Many of RVTB's passengers rely on the district's bus service as their primary mode of transportation. 66% of passengers use RVTB's service weekly and 29% of passengers do not have access to a vehicle. Top destinations for RVTB's passengers include work (32%), shopping (22%), medical appointments (8%), and social and community opportunities (11%). Public transit serves as a lifeline for many in Southern Oregon and an opportunity to participate in the local economy.



*RVTB added six hybrid-electric passenger vans to its paratransit fleet, decreasing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 20% and achieving an increase of 25 mpg over its conventional vans.*

Year	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022
Average Daily Ridership	<b>4,570</b>	<b>2,098</b>	<b>2,403</b>	<b>2,811</b>



*”STIF has given RVTB the opportunity to achieve not only innovative delivery of service but the ability to support ongoing transit needs in our growing community.”*

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

RVTB maintains 45 active buses for fixed route service and 21 vehicles for Valley Lift paratransit service.

### Key priorities for making service route decisions?

RVTB’s recently adopted 2040 Transit Master Plan reflects community-generated vision for public transit service:

- Connect the region, focusing on increased equitable access to transportation and quality of life.
- Coordinate closely with regional partners and the public to ensure efficient delivery of high-quality services integrated with other modes and supportive land uses.
- Enhance RVTB’s cost-effectiveness and provide reliable, convenient service supporting the local economy.
- Lessen the environmental impact of travel.
- Provide safe, comfortable and convenient service.



### How has RVTB applied its STIF funding?

RVTB used STIF funds to increase frequency and add new routes:

- Express service on I-5 between Medford and Ashland for SOU students and commuters.
- Transit service to unserved areas of east Medford.
- A crosstown route that creates transfer opportunities and east and west connections in Medford.

RVTB purchased four 35-foot CNG vehicles to support additional routes.

STIF funded \$50,000 in low-income bus passes in coordination with local social service agencies and nonprofits.

### How would RVTB apply additional STIF funding?

Additional STIF funding would enable RVTB to increase public transit access to low-income and historically underserved communities and meet current and future mobility needs of the community by:

- Developing new routes and services.
- Increasing frequency of existing and future services.
- Maintaining and expanding a modern transit fleet.
- Expanding hours of operation and weekend service.
- Increasing access to employment, higher education, healthcare and social services.
- Providing opportunities for social mobility.



# Dealing with Devastation

The Almeda fire devastated the Rogue Valley over the course of just a few hours. Several communities were impacted – with more than 3,600 structures destroyed. Approximately 75 percent of those structures were affordable housing (apartments, mobile homes and RV parks). Phoenix, Talent and parts of Ashland were affected. Many people left behind vehicles and bicycles.

Thousands of people were evacuated from the ravaging fire. Most evacuees were placed directly in law enforcement vehicles, traveling door to door in neighborhoods, and in a flurry taken to safety. RVTB buses lined up outside Rogue Regional Medical Center on Barnett and the Armory for much of the night anticipating the entire hospital would need to be evacuated. Fortunately, the heroes fighting the fires started to win the battle so the patients, babies in the NICU and staff could stay in the hospital.

In other parts of the Valley, RVTB's Valley Lift assisted with evacuating some of the most vulnerable in our community – people in wheelchairs and with ambulatory or cognitive disabilities, who could not drive themselves out of danger. Eventually, buses, vehicles and exhausted employees returned to the RVTB yard to refuel. The 13-mile stretch of Highway 99 between Medford and Ashland was closed to contain and clean up the fires. RVTB used this stretch to access stranded communities.

A new route system needed to be created to continue serving these devastated areas. The morning after the fires, RVTB leadership sent a bus driver to Ashland to run an old route to help evacuees. Then they set out to connect Medford and Ashland by reactivating the 1X route using I-5. The final piece of emergency service was implemented in South Medford, where Harry and David employs more than 5,000 people during this season. Transit-reliant employees had no way to get to work due to the closures. RVTB quickly established a route, with an ADA-accessible stop, to help workers get to their jobs.

Residents affected by the fires were primarily healthcare, retail and food service workers. During the first few weeks, RVTB activated shuttle service between the evacuation center and designated temporary housing and shelters. Evacuees placed in hotels were given rack cards with RVTB trip planning options.

In the time since the Almeda fire, RVTB staff has worked with shelters to provide bus passes, totaling 20,000 bus trips, to those displaced by the fires. The 2020 fire season was one none of us will forget. RVTB also has employees who lost their homes.

***RVTB proudly serves this community and supports first responders who provided us with the greatest gift by saving homes and lives.***

