

**Rogue Valley Transportation District
Accessible Transportation Working Group Meeting
June 18th, 2025, 3:00pm – 4:00pm – Via Zoom Video Conference**

Attended:

- George Adams
- Robin Kissel
- Stanley Littrell
- Stephen Slavik

Staff:

- Maria Carrillo, Accessible Transportation Coordinator
- Cory Benton, Translink Operations Manager
- Tim Fountain, Accessible Transportation Manager
- Paige West, Planning & Strategic Programs Manager
- Edem Gomez, Associate Planner

Absent:

- Mickie Miner
- Adrienne Boutin

Welcome:

Meeting called order at 3:07pm

Roll Call:

Roll call conducted: 2 members were in attendance during roll call. Stanley attended the meeting at 3:09pm. Stephen attended the meeting at 3:16pm.

Review and Approve March 19, 2025 Minutes:

Robin made the motion to introduce March 19, 2025 minutes, Stanley 2nd, all in favor, motion passed at 3:37pm.

New Software Update:

Tim shared that the RFP process began a couple of months ago, resulting in responses from seven software vendors offering paratransit software. A five-member scoring evaluation group independently reviewed and ranked each vendor. The group came down to three vendors which were RideCo, The Routing Company, and Spare.

Tim stated they began in-person evaluations and met with other paratransit agencies currently using these platforms. They visited agencies in Oregon, Oklahoma, and California to observe the software in real time. Based on all the information they received, the group selected RideCo as the preferred vendor.

Tim stated that RideCo has shown impressive qualities and is expected to have a significant positive impact on passenger service. The software will also handle the application process, and many other procedures. We plan to present the recommendation to the Board of Directors and get their approval. We are hopeful we will move forward with signing a contract with RideCo. If all goes as planned, implementation will begin as early as July 2025.

Tim asked the committee if they had any questions or comments.

George asked if the software includes a mobile app.

Tim confirmed that it does, and that passengers will be able to schedule rides, cancel trips, and track the driver's location through the app.

George then asked if this software would also be used for Non-Emergency Medical Transportation services.

Tim stated that the software will only be focused on Valley Lift services.

George also asked about the expected launch date.

Tim responded that they are hoping for a launch in November or December, with the latest possible rollout by February 2026.

Tim has invited the committee to test the software before full implementation.

Robin volunteered to participate in the testing phase.

Graphs & Stats:

Tim shared ridership and mileage data for Valley Lift, showing changes month by month. For example, in July 2024 there were 2,352 weekday rides, and the numbers peaked in October with 2,815 rides. In February 2025 there were only 2,010 weekday rides.

Maria pointed out that February's lower numbers were likely due to snow days.

Saturday ridership also showed a peak in August, while February had the lowest numbers.

He then presented mileage data, stating that the vans traveled a total of 22,608.67 miles in October the highest month.

Tim asked the committee if they found the information helpful or if there was other data they'd like to see.

George stated he enjoys seeing the information.

High turnover on PTS drivers:

Robin brought up concerns about high driver turnover and the quality of their training. She mentioned that many of the drivers don't seem well trained and shared that she's noticed a lot of new drivers recently.

Tim responded that he hadn't noticed this issue directly. He explained that PTS is no longer located in the same building as Valley Lift, so there's less daily interaction. He also mentioned he wasn't aware there are new drivers.

Robin said she's observed a noticeable number of new drivers in a short period of time and feels the training may not be up to standards. She mentioned concerns about how some drivers handle vehicles, especially during turns. Robin said that the new vans have more suspension, which makes her feel unsafe and unprepared as a passenger.

Tim said he would follow up with PTS and added that PTS does quarterly training. If there's a mistake, drivers are retrained or counseled. He also said that PTS usually follows up on any reported incidents, but he will check to see if anything has changed. He mentioned that he had recently asked drivers to exit the vehicle and assist passengers to their doors.

George also shared that some drivers get too close to other vehicles at stoplights or while driving, which makes him feel unsafe. He agreed that this should be addressed.

Tim said he would bring up these concerns during his weekly Monday meeting with PTS.

Robin asked if Valley Lift has a contract with PTS.

Tim confirmed that Valley Lift is in a 15-year contract with them.

RVTD Budget Outlook:

Paige gave a presentation on RVTD's new budget and shared that unfortunately, the news isn't great. She wanted to keep the committee informed.

While RVTD is celebrating its 50th anniversary, they're also facing financial challenges in the upcoming budget. Paige shared a brief overview of how RVTD receives its

funding from 2023 to 2024. Almost half of the funding comes from the Federal Transit Administration. Another major source is the Employee Transit Tax (STIF), which makes up about a quarter of the budget. This tax is based on payroll and population. She also stated that RVTD receives a portion of property taxes of 17.03%, though not all cities contribute such as Eagle Point.

Paige explained that RVTD depends heavily on state and federal funding. She showed a chart covering the years 2015 through 2032. Looking ahead to 2025, expenses are projected to be higher than revenue, with this gap continuing through 2032. Since state and federal funds are not increasing at the same rate as RVTD's costs, the financial situation is becoming more difficult.

Paige stated there is a new legislative bill being discussed, called TRIP (Oregon Transportation Bill), which has not yet reached the floor. The last major transportation bill passed in 2017. These bills tend to come up every 5 to 7 years. The proposed TRIP bill would raise the gas tax and introduce a mileage tax for electric vehicles. It also includes an increase in the payroll tax for transit agencies. RVTD is asking for a 0.4% increase, but the bill currently proposes only 0.2%. Paige expressed that this smaller amount will not be enough to cover the funding gap RVTD is forecasting.

Paige gave examples of rising costs to help explain the funding need:

- A new bus cost \$451,292 in 2015. In 2024, the price jumped to \$738,443 a 64% increase.
- The cost per service hour went from \$70 in 2017 to \$125 in 2025 a 78% increase.
- Healthcare and other benefits increased from \$2.3 million in 2017 to over \$5.1 million in 2024 a 119% increase.

Paige also explained that RVTD is relying heavily on STIF funds, which currently come from a payroll tax of 0.1% which is one penny for every \$10 earned. RVTD also has a special levy of \$0.13 per \$1,000 in property value, which will expire in 2026. If the levy doesn't pass in the May 2026 election, RVTD will begin losing funding starting July 1, 2026.

Paige said state revenue projections are due next week, which will give RVTD a better idea of where they stand with STIF funding.

Because of all this, RVTD is preparing to make service changes in the coming months to keep the company running. These changes will be presented to the Board of Directors next month, followed by a public hearing. Valley Lift will be affected, but it's not clear how much at this point.

To help manage the budget, every department at RVTD has been asked to cut their budgets by 10%.

Next Meeting: September 17, 2025:

Paige recommended scheduling the next meeting in August instead of waiting until September. This would allow the committee to stay informed about upcoming service changes directly from RVTD rather than hearing it in the news. It would also give the committee a chance to provide feedback on the proposed changes before they take effect in September.

Change the meeting to sometime in August instead of September. The date will be discussed in a couple of weeks.

Next Meeting Agenda Items:

Any other agenda items will have to be sent to Maria via email.

Comments, Questions, Or Concerns:

George asked if there's a chance ODOT will no longer oversee transportation decisions and if that responsibility will be given to the governor.

Paige said she hadn't heard anything about that.

George also asked if RVTD will be cutting routes, and how many.

Paige confirmed that some routes will be cut, but the exact number is still being worked on.

Stanley asked if Saturday service might be eliminated.

Paige said it's being discussed because it's very expensive to operate.

George suggested keeping routes 60, 40, and 10.

Paige agreed those routes are important and currently serve a lot of riders in the area. She apologized for not having more details but assured the committee they will stay informed.

Robin commented that it seems like RVTD is being thoughtful about the decisions being made for the community.

Paige agreed and said they are working hard to make the best choices possible.

Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned at 4:24pm.

Maria Carrillo

Maria Carrillo
Recording Secretary
