

**Rogue Valley Transportation District  
Accessible Transportation Working Group Meeting  
March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025, 3:00pm – 4:00pm – Via Zoom Video Conference**

**Attended:**

- George Adams
- Robin Kissel
- Stanley Littrell
- Stephen Slavik
- Mickey Miner
- Adrienne Boutin

**Staff:**

- Maria Carrillo, Accessible Transportation Coordinator
- Cory Benton, Translink Operations Manager

**Absent:**

- Tim Fountain, Accessible Transportation Manager
- Paige West, Planning & Strategic Programs Manager
- Edem Gomez, Associate Planner

**Welcome:**

Meeting called order at 3:02pm

**Roll Call:**

Roll call conducted: 6 members were in attendance.

**Review and Approve September 18, 2024 Minutes:**

Robin made the motion to introduce September 18, 2024 minutes, George 2<sup>nd</sup>, all in favor, motion passed at 3:06 pm.

**SAF-T Program:**

Cory mentioned that there are no updates on the SAF-T Program and nothing new to report. She added that while the program may be revisited in the future, it is not a focus at the moment.

George asked Cory to explain what the SAF-T Program is.

Cory explained that the SAF-T Program was started by Tim to support service animal users by providing them with a card that allows them to use public transit without being questioned about their service animals.

### **Possible Valley Lift Changes:**

Maria explained that currently, Valley Lift operates based on the latest pickup times in relation to the fixed-route service across all cities. For example, the last fixed-route bus from Medford to Eagle Point departs at 7:30 p.m. However, Valley Lift currently allows pickups in that area as late as 8:30–9:00 p.m. She stated that technically, Valley Lift should align its service hours with the fixed-route schedule, depending on the city of origin and destination.

Maria then asked the committee for their thoughts on aligning Valley Lift service times to mirror the fixed-route service schedule.

Robin clarified that there would be no Valley Lift service from Medford to Eagle Point after 7:30 p.m.

Maria confirmed that this was correct.

Robin expressed concern that these time changes could affect not only Valley Lift users but the community. She stated that the issue isn't with aligning service times, but rather that the fixed-route bus doesn't run late enough. She believes the fixed-route should operate longer hours to better serve the community.

George added that Eagle Point residents might be left without transportation home after 7:30 p.m., which was his main concern.

Robin stated that no Sunday service or late-night service impacts people who work in service industries. She said this is an RVTD issue, not just a Valley Lift issue.

Cory stated that the discussion is part of potential service reductions. She stated that RVTD currently does not plan to expand service hours, and that aligning Valley Lift with the fixed-route schedule is under consideration.

George mentioned that there's only one taxi service that can accommodate wheelchair users late at night, which would make things difficult if service hours were cut.

Adrienne agreed with George's concerns. Maria added that if service reductions are considered, it is important to review data to determine which cities need longer operating hours.

Adrienne asked if Valley Lift could extend its service to Rogue River.

George responded that Rogue River is served by a commuter bus running between

Grants Pass and Medford.

Cory clarified that Rogue River is not part of RVTD's service area and does not contribute tax funding, which is why Valley Lift does not operate there. She explained that Eagle Point was not originally part of the service district either, but later opted in.

Adrienne asked if the Rogue River might be included in the future.

Cory said it's possible if the community advocates for it and chooses to join the RVTD tax district. She emphasized that any changes to Valley Lift service hours would depend on the cities involved.

Robin noted that limited transportation options could make it difficult for people to maintain employment.

Adrienne agreed and said Sunday service should also be considered.

Stephen commented that this is a complex issue affecting many areas, particularly for those who rely on transportation for work.

George asked Cory why this issue was being raised and whether it was related to cost.

Cory confirmed that cost reduction is a factor, and that the topic was introduced by Tim to gather feedback. She plans to review statistics to support further discussion.

George asked if any changes would be implemented this summer.

Cory replied that if changes were approved, they would take effect on July 1, 2025, in line with the start of the new budget cycle.

George requested that, if any changes to Valley Lift service occur, a notice be sent to all Valley Lift customers with specific service hours for each city.

#### **Brief update on Medicaid Services (PLUS Program):**

Cory reported that there are no updates or changes to the Medicaid Plus Program. She noted that they continue to receive referrals and have not been informed of any changes.

George asked Mickie, since this falls more within her area, if she had heard of any upcoming changes.

Mickie responded that she had not received any updates.

#### **Stats and Graphs:**

Maria mentioned that she does not have the statistics and graphs that Tim typically provides but had pulled out some numbers regarding service trends. During the COVID period, ridership averaged around 2,300 trips per month. This number rose to approximately 3,100 trips per month in 2022, and in 2024, the average reached about 3,500 trips per month. While data for 2025 is still limited, the current average is around 3,300 trips per month. Maria stated that February numbers were slightly lower due to service closures from the snow, but overall, ridership has shown consistent growth year over year.

Regarding Valley Lift applications, Maria shared that between 2022 and 2023, the program was receiving about 15–20 applications per month. That number has now increased with the current average at 50–60 applications per month or roughly 15 per week. With the return to in-person interviews, the process has become more demanding.

Stephen asked whether reducing service hours would result in a noticeable drop in ridership statistics.

Maria responded that there would likely be a slight decrease, but not a significant one.

George inquired whether additional call takers were being added to the call center.

Maria said we are hiring and expect a few more call takers to be hired.

George then asked Cory if she had anything further to add.

Cory replied that she had nothing more to share at this time but expressed appreciation for everyone's feedback.

#### **Plan to add more committee members:**

George asked the committee for ideas on how to bring more members to the AWG Committee.

Maria suggested including a message about the committee on Valley Lift's phone recording system. She also recommended posting the information on the RVTD website.

Robin agreed that the phone recording would be a great approach, stating that it was how she originally found out about the committee.

Stephen proposed using TV or launching a social media campaign, which he felt could be effective.

Robin added that she has seen RVTD content on TikTok, which could be another useful platform.

George also suggested advertising on Facebook. He then asked how many committee members currently serve on the AWG Committee.

Maria stated that there are currently six members, which meets the minimum requirement, but the committee can have up to eight members.

**Next AWG Meeting Date:**

June 18, 2024

**Next Meeting Agenda Items:**

Graph and Stats

High turnover in drivers (PTS)

New software update

**Comments, Questions, Or Concerns:**

Adrienne asked if the trip booking portal was working again.

Maria confirmed that it was now up and running.

George asked if there were any other updates from RVTD in Edem's behalf.

Maria responded that there were no additional updates at this time.

George then asked about the progress on the new software system.

Cory gave a brief update, explaining that RVTD is currently working on a new Request for Proposals (RFP) for software. They have received seven applications and are in the process of reviewing them. The team will begin scheduling demos for each software option and hopes to select one soon. The goal is to have a new system in place by early to mid-2026, likely around February.

She added that the new software is expected to improve user experience by allowing clients to schedule their own rides, cancel trips, view their driver's location, and receive notifications about arrival times.

Robin expressed hope that the new system will route trips more efficiently than the current software.

Cory noted that part of the RFP process includes visiting other agencies to see how they are using the software and whether they are satisfied with it. This is something that was not done during previous implementations.

George asked whether the new software would work for both TransLink and Valley Lift services.

Cory responded that this would depend on the chosen vendor and whether they are willing to support both programs.

George expressed he was concerned about the long wait times at the call center.

Maria explained that call takers are currently handling calls for both TransLink and Valley Lift calls. She also mentioned that the team is short-staffed but is working on hiring more call takers.

George then asked if there is a new updated rider guide coming out.

Maria replied that there is no update at this time regarding a new version of the rider guide.

**Adjournment:**

Meeting adjourned at 4:10pm.

*Maria Carrillo*

Maria Carrillo  
Recording Secretary