



**MINUTES OF THE
June 15, 2021
CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
5:30 PM – 7:30 PM**

Present Members:	Patrick Schwab, Chair; John Hammill, Vice-Chair; Laurie Dougherty, Member, Davis Dyer, Member; Rick Hartwig, Member; Mark Knecht, Member; Erin Ross, Member, Michele Roland-Schwartz, Member
Absent Members:	Mary Sarabia, Member, John Hammill, Vice-Chair, Mark Knecht, Member
Board:	Maria Hinojos-Pressey, Liaison
Staff:	Allan Pollock, General Manager, David Trimble, Deputy General Manager, Steve Dickey, Director of Technology/Project Management, Tom Dietz, Director of Operations, Karen Garcia, Security and Emergency Management Manager, Chris French, Planning Services Manager, Don Clifford, Transportation Manager
Guests:	Ryan Farncomb – Parametrix; Ben Cavaletto and Audrey Ramirez-Loudenback – Sign Interpreters

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Patrick Schwab called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

a. Safety Moment

Mr. Trimble gave our safety moment regarding summer safety. There are many areas to be aware of when it comes to summer safety. When around water, be sure to always have an eye on smaller children and also watch out for those whom may not be very good at being in the water. For eye safety, remember that ultraviolet rays can harm the eyes so wear sunglasses that are rated to block 100% UVB and UVA rays. You should wear sun glasses year round to protect your eyes. And when playing sports, injuries can occur, but heat exhaustion can also happen before you know it. Keep yourselves hydrated while doing outside activities. Keep cool, wet towels nearby in case you get overheated. Take care of yourself, your family and your pets, during the summer so your summer can be an enjoyable one.

b. Additions/Changes to the Agenda

None at this time.

2. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Trimble introduced our newest member of the Citizens Advisory Committee, Ms. Michele Roland-Schwartz. Ms. Schwartz gave the committee a little background on herself. She currently lives in Keizer and is the Executive Director of the Oregon Sexual Assault Task Force. Welcome to the committee, Michele.

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - Minutes of March 16, 2021

Motion:	Motioned to approve the meeting minutes of March 16, 2021
Motion by:	Member Rick Hartwig
Second:	Member Erin Ross
Discussion:	None
Vote:	Motion passed with six votes in favor; Absent: Member Mary Sarabia, Member Mark Knecht, Vice-Chair John Hammill

5. PRESENTATIONS

a. Parametrix Follow-up: South Salem Transit Center;

Mr. Steve Dickey introduced Mr. Ryan Farncomb from Parametrix to give us an update on Cherriots South Salem Transit Center project. Last meeting the committee was presented what the City of Salem was doing in regards to development on the South end of Salem for both residential and commercial use and what needs will be facing transit. Those needs have been determined and tonight we will learn of the next steps in the process.

Mr. Farncomb shared a presentation with the committee. An extensive survey was mailed out to a large number of residents in the south Salem area. There is a findings memo that will be posted to the South Salem Transit Center website, which is assessable by anyone. The project is on schedule and the project team is ready to start the conceptual designing phase. Part of this is based on the feedback from the survey. Also reviewed was demographics, zoning, origins and destinations, development in the past 10 years, top trip purposes, along with other questions that were asked on the survey. 74% of the respondents felt positive about the new transit center. Some of the desired amenities are restrooms, benches, sheltered area, park and ride spaces and the ability to purchase food and beverages. There is a need to serve the employment and population growth in and around the study area.

Mr. Farncomb completed his presentation and asked if there were any questions. Not necessarily questions as much as comments were made. The committee agreed the findings made sense and they are looking forward additional updates.

Does this committee have any advice or thoughts on features that would be desirable for this transit center? Ways to get to the transit center that weren't just large buses. It would

be nice to see smaller transit vehicles from surrounding areas that go to the transit center and then they can connect to the larger bus that goes on to down town. This is the definition of a micro-transit, which could include on-demand service. It would be good to also have a bike lane that leads to the transit center that is not necessarily on the road and a place to lock up your bike and keep it protected from weather. Motorcycles might also want to park there. Have it located near a shopping center, but where you don't need to cross a large street to access the shopping center. At KTC, you need to cross a very large street to get to the shopping area. It could be possible to have rotating food trucks at a center like this. There will most certainly be more updates on this project to the committee. Part of the amenities findings will help determine the size of property that needs to be identified to help meet the needs of our community.

b. Organizational Priorities – General Manager/CEO Allan Pollock

Mr. Pollock joined the meeting to discuss some of Cherriots organizational priorities. He will base his comments on current fiscal year and next fiscal year. Current FY21 can pretty much be summed up in three words; COVID, COVID, COVID. This pretty much was our top priority of the year and keeping employees and those in the community using our services safe. We are working to begin rebuilding service and ridership. We'd also like to implement our extended service that was delayed. Today we are back to a full level of service that we were providing before the pandemic. Ridership is not there yet, but every month ridership has increased.

A top priority for FY22 is to complete the implementation of our enhanced service by adding our Sunday and Holiday service. Mr. Pollock went through a portion of the budget and encouraged the committee members to review the budget document as it is posted on Cherriots website.

When we start the budgeting process, we have three major funds; the General fund, the Transportation Programs fund and the Capital Projects fund. Added together it's about \$75MM, plus \$36MM in unappropriated reserved funds. General Fund - \$46MM is used for providing the Fixed Route service in Salem and Keizer. Some projects also support this service, i.e. Long Range Transportation plan, Strategic plan, Diversity Equity and Inclusion plan, Attitude and Awareness survey of our community, and implementing our Health and Safety campaign, which has already kicked off and will be continuing. Transportation Programs fund - \$10MM is used to provide our Cherriots LIFT, Cherriots Shop and Ride service, Cherriots Regional service, the Call Center, Mobility Management and our Transportation Options service. Capital Projects - \$18MM for assets to continue to provide the services just mentioned, which includes the purchase of 24 vehicles, a new Compressed Natural Gas station, and a variety of infrastructure projects, i.e. new security fencing for our Del Webb facility, in-ground lifts for working on the buses, the South Salem Transit Center, electronic fare payment system, transit signal priority project, to name a few.

Chair Schwab asked if Cherriots is done seeing the negative economic impact of COVID and if the district is ok financially. Yes, the district is fine, but only because of the federal COVID relief funds. We have seen \$2-3MM in loss revenue for not collecting fares for over a year, we anticipate a dip in our revenue based on the employee payroll tax, which provides

Cherriots some funding. We received three different federal relief funds with the last one to fund unforeseen delayed impacts through 2024. We have been very fortunate to not lay off any employees. Member Dougherty asked about why Cherriots is still purchasing CNG buses and not the electric buses? You can purchase 3 CNG buses for the cost of purchasing 2 electric buses and Cherriots still has an investment in the CNG infrastructure that still has another 12 years life expectancy. Although electric buses are the newest and greatest technology, they are new and there are hiccups with the technology. Just like when CNG buses first came out, they, too, were the newest and greatest and now they are reliable. Over time, the electric buses will get there, too.

Member Erin Ross mentioned how she appreciates the new Google Maps feature that shows the arrival time of all the buses. She has been concerned that she will miss her bus, but now has more confidence in knowing she can find the arrival time. Mr. Steve Dickey did let the committee know this data and features were a surprise to Cherriots and is not being generated by Cherriots real time data information. We are not confident all of this information is accurate. Please use this information on Google Maps with caution. There is the "Transit" app and it can help predict the real-time arrival of the bus. We have not yet confirmed the software that provides our bus real-time is accurate so we have not yet provided that informational feed to the public and not to Google Maps. We, too, just found out about this feature through Google Maps and we are in contact with Google to see how it can be removed. We are sorry for this inconvenience and look forward to providing real-time information on our buses in the near future.

c. Battery Electric Buses

Mr. Gregg Thompson, Maintenance Manager joined to let us know about our electric bus purchase process. Mr. Thompson shared a presentation with the committee about where we are with this project and where we are going. The presentation went over the project origins, which began back in 2015. In 2020 we were successful in receiving a Lo/No grant for electric buses. Electric buses have zero tailpipe emissions, can lower fuel costs and improve passenger, bystander and operator comfort by being cleaner, quieter and smoother. Five buses were ordered in April after we had determined the bus specifications and received board approval. Route 11 is the identified route the buses will be used on. We have the charging infrastructure narrowed down to three vendors. Buses are slated to be here in July 2022. There will be training that will need to take place with operators and maintenance workers before the buses are put into revenue operation. These buses will help Cherriots reinforce being the "Cleanest Transit Fleet in Oregon", which Cherriots was recently named. Electric buses reduce maintenance costs, will generate Low Carbon credits when charging. Once the buses are here, the committee will be invited to go on a ride, see how the charging is done. Questions: Considering the cost of the bus, the infrastructure, etc. how does that compare to the current fleet. When measuring side-by-side, electric buses are more expensive. Receiving credits for the charging infrastructure will help reduce the gap and there is the positive impact on the environment with zero emissions. How do they compare to the CNG buses Cherriots run? We also receive renewable gas credits with our CNG fleet, so electric is still more expensive.

d. Ridership Update

Mr. Chris French, Planning Services manager shared a presentation on Cherriots ridership performance. As mentioned earlier, overall ridership is down for the year, but is climbing on a steady basis. Cherriots is down about 50% of rides for both the local and regional systems. Current stops are based around shopping and doctor offices, not necessarily around work areas. We had averaged around 12,000 rides per day before the pandemic and are currently at around 6,000.

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. COVID 19 Activity and Returning Ridership Report

Mr. Tom Dietz, Director of Operations gave an update on what Cherriots has done to ensure riders and employees have been kept safe during this last year. An exceptional job has been done to make sure space for both riders and employees has been kept sanitized and comfortable. This includes Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for not just staff, but also for riders that have not had the appropriate face coverings. We hired extra short-term duration employees to clean and sanitize the buses between stops and also to sanitize high touch points in our office spaces. Cherriots is pursuing an active air purification system that will deionize the air you breathe and sanitize the surfaces that are touched. That way chemicals are not being used. Plans are being finalized to bring staff back to the office, which will be after the 4th of July, and that is when we will go back to front door boarding and fare collection. This also means the customer service lobby will be open as of June 28th. There is a "Just Ask Me" campaign where staff is out on the transit center in bright blue vests and you can go up to any of them and ask questions. It was asked if there are any riders that refuse to wear masks and Mr. Dietz said there are some interactions along those lines, but we approach them as an education and not enforcement interaction. Our teams have handles these very well. It was asked how the community will be informed that we are going to be collecting fares again so they don't go to ride the bus and can't because they weren't prepared to pay? Cherriots has an incredible marketing and communication team that has already started that notification process. It will be done through various media ways and also through social media.

At this time, Mr. Trimble wanted to turn the meeting over to the committee members to hear about their confidence in the system, or what they may be hearing from their constituents. Member Ross is using the bus more now, but one thing that has bothered her is the limited seating and at times she is concerned there might not be seating available when she gets on the bus. Ms. Ross understands that availability is not up to Cherriots as they must follow CDC rules. Mr. Trimble understands this concern, as do other transit agencies in the same position. We see the change coming where these types of rulings will be changing and some relief coming along these lines. Chair Schwab teaches those that are visually impaired how to travel by bus and he continually hears from his students how much things are changing constantly and their confidence that they will know about the changes are low. Getting the word out regarding limited travel, which routes are, or are not being served, needs to be communicated. Cherriots does try to work hard to get information out, not just to our employees so they can relay the information, but also to our community. Anyone can call our customer service line, or visit our website, which we work to keep updated with current notifications. Member Schwartz relayed what she has heard from others and it's the anxiety of starting up again, doing what we used to

do, being in closer proximity to other individuals and how communication can help alleviate some of that anxiety. It will just take time as we all adjust again.

b. CAC Work Plan Activities

We are looking to the members of this committee in helping us with the work plan. There are three major areas that will be worked on. These are 1) Awareness and sensitivities to seniors and those with disabilities; 2) Safety (sanitized) and Security (feel safe as a user); and 3) Signage – braille, tactile maps, printed schedules. How do we communicate information? As we improve our transit stops and centers, how can we reach and communicate to all that use our transit buses. Chair Schwab has reviewed the work plan and what can be done sooner, what would be on hold, or take longer and he would like to have a full discussion on timelines on these items. This is a good example of planning for a committee such as this.

c. Committee Members Concerns/Discussion

Member Hartwig agreed the more diverse this committee is, the better work it can do. He has recently been appointed to the Salem Parks and Recreation advisory board and in discussing the enhancements to Geer Park, there is a problem with parking. There were questions regarding bus service in that area. These master plans can take 10 years, but let's just be aware of the coming discussions. Congratulations also went out to Board member Maria Hinojos-Pressey on being a new member voted to the Salem/Keizer school board. Also, with the new members on this committee, it might be a good idea to have another tour of the Del Webb location, a behind the scenes look at what goes on to keep these buses on the road. Maybe in the fall. Member Dougherty would like to see the Cherriots sustainability program and how it will interact with the City's plan/program. And next year the city will be working on the transportation systems plan. It would be nice to have a board member or even someone from the city to come and discuss these topics. Mr. Trimble mentioned these items have been added to the CAC work plan and this is something that will take place.

7. ACTION ITEMS

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Committee Work Plan
- b. Performance Reports
- c. Cherriots Sustainability Program Working in Tandem with Salem City's Program

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion:	Motion to adjourn meeting at 7:30 p.m.
Motion by:	Member Rick Hartwig
Second:	Member Erin Ross
Vote:	Motion passed with six votes in favor; Absent: Member Mary Sarabia, Member Mark Knecht, Member John Hammill

