

# Council Business Meeting

January 15, 2019

<b>Agenda Item</b>	Letter of Support for Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) Grant	
<b>From</b>	Scott Fleury PE	Deputy Public Works Director
<b>Contact</b>	<a href="mailto:scott.fleury@ashland.or.us">scott.fleury@ashland.or.us</a>	541-552-2412

## **SUMMARY**

Before the Council is a letter of support for an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) discretionary program grant to be prepared and submitted by the Rogue Valley Transit District (RVTD) for a two-year demand response micro transit pilot project within the City of Ashland. The City's Transportation Commission (TC) supports the grant application and recommends the City Council provide a letter of support (see attachment) for RVTD's grant request.

## **POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED**

Climate Energy Action Plan-Urban Form, Land Use + Transportation:

- ULT-1-1. Coordinate with neighboring local governments to promote use of transit, carpooling, and car-sharing.
- ULT-1-2. Work with RVTD to implement climate-friendly transit.
- ULT-1-3. Establish policies to support development near transit hubs without displacing disadvantaged populations.
- ULT-1-4. Evaluate feasibility of expanded local transit options.

## **PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION**

The Council previously awarded a Transit Feasibility Study contract to Nelson Nygaard at the [February 20, 2018 Business meeting](#). The Feasibility Study was meant to develop a set of flexible strategies with respect to improving transit within the City of Ashland. The requested letter of support for RVTD supports and compliments early findings and recommendations from the Study. Staff and Nelson Nygaard will bring the full Transit Feasibility Study and supporting documentation before the Council at a future date.

## **BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Since award of the contract for the Transit Feasibility Study in February 2018 to Nelson Nygaard, the project team has worked to develop two technical memorandums and an executive summary with respect to potential transit enhancements within and to the City. The study has developed a list of flexible strategies for improving transit that include fixed route services (intra-city and inter-city), demand response services within the City, propulsion technologies and infrastructure capital improvements to support accessibility to transit and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In addition to the City performing a transit feasibility study, RVTD is currently developing a 2040 Transit Master Plan. RVTD staff are a part of the City's Transit Feasibility Study Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and City staff in return are working with RVTD on their master plan as part of their TAC. Paige West, RVTD's Planning and Strategic Programs Manager, presented background information and discussed funding sources and options for region-wide transit projects at the City's TC meeting in November 2018.

A follow up TC meeting occurred in December 2018 with Nelson Nygaard presenting the final technical memorandum documents for the Feasibility Study. The Commission discussed the documents and potential grant funding opportunities through RVTD to support enhanced transit within the City.

With the passing of House Bill 2017 “Keep Oregon Moving,” an increase in dedicated transit funding through a payroll tax is available for local transit district operators. One source of available funding is through a discretionary competitive grant program for transit enhancement projects. RVTD has been supportive of potential transit enhancements within the City and in working with Nelson Nygaard and the Transportation Commission. Two potential projects for discretionary grant funding were presented to the TC to gain a recommendation for a grant application in 2019. The first potential project was a Route 10 express bus that would have limited stops between Medford and Southern Oregon University and most likely run on interstate 5. The second potential project was an intra-city demand response pilot program that would utilize four ADA accessible Ford Transit Hybrid vans. The demand response program would operate during normal RVTD hours and citizens would be able to reserve a ride 30 minutes in advance with a phone call, website reservation or phone application-based reservation. The specialty software would group trips whenever possible. RVTD would be able to track ridership and destination data from the program and this information could be used to move towards fixed route circulation or continued/expanded use of the demand response program.

After discussion, the TC recommended the Council provide a letter of support for an RVTD discretionary grant application for the on demand micro-transit pilot program.

**Motion:**

Graf moved for the Transportation Commission to recommend the City Council provide a letter of support for the RVTD Demand Response Micro-transit demonstration project. Borgerson seconded. All ayes.  
Motion passed.

The Commission also strongly recommended the use of plug-in hybrids if RVTD was awarded the grant.

**FISCAL IMPACTS**

The main fiscal impact associated with the grant application are staff soft costs to support RTVD. RVTD would manage and implement the project if a grant was received. RVTD did request at the December 20, 2018 Transportation Commission meeting, that if successful with the grant application that City staff assist with marketing the pilot project which will require additional soft match staff time. Staff anticipates not more than 60 hours a year and has the capacity to dedicate time in support of this marketing and outreach effort.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends Council provide a letter of support for RVTD’s grant application.

**ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS**

I move to approve the Mayor sign a letter of support for RVTD’s discretionary grant application for a two-year demand response micro-transit pilot project using hybrid vans.

The alternative is to do nothing and not provide a letter of support at this time to RVTD.

**REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Draft Letter of Support  
Attachment 2: RVTD Grant fact sheet



January 15, 2019

Oregon Transportation Commission  
355 Capitol Street NE, MS #11  
Salem, OR 97301-3871

Oregon Transportation Commissioners,

I am writing in support of Rogue Valley Transit District's (RVTD) grant application for Oregon Department of Transportation Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund discretionary funding of an on demand micro-transit pilot project using Ford Transit hybrid vans within the City of Ashland.

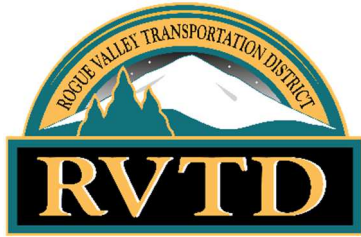
The City of Ashland has developed its own transit feasibility study and this micro-transit project is a highly feasible transit enhancement for the City that will meet the needs of citizens and tourists alike.

RVTD provides 1.3 million trips annually throughout the Rogue Valley in Southern Oregon, serving the communities of Medford, Ashland, Central Point, Talent, Phoenix, White City, and Jacksonville. Through its service, RVTD aims to provide a viable, quality public transportation option that improves quality of life in the Rogue Valley by reducing traffic, boosting business, and allowing individuals to access jobs, school, and health care. This grant would allow RVTD to enhance service in Ashland as a two-year pilot project.

Thank you for your consideration of this important grant application.

Sincerely,

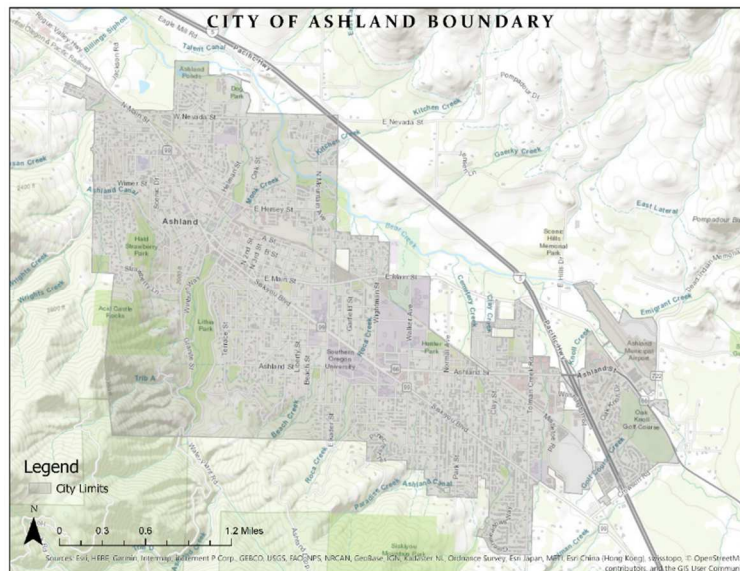
John Stromberg  
Mayor  
City of Ashland



## Ashland Demand Response MicroTransit Demonstration Project

RVTD in partnership with the City of Ashland will provide a flexible curb to curb demand response service that connects to regional routes. On demand scheduling, similar to taxi and ride-hailing services, uses a sophisticated trip reservation system available by phone, website or smartphone. Passengers will share rides to reduce cost and improve efficiency. Uses wheelchair equipped Ford Transit Hybrid Vans.

- Service available Monday through Saturday between 6:00am and 8:00pm.
- Key destinations include downtown Ashland, Ashland Hospital, Science works, Mountain Meadows and several neighborhoods above and below the boulevard.
- Estimated annual route ridership of 9,390.
- Uses new MicroTransit fleet with hybrid technology.
- Ongoing funds would be provided by STIF funds if sufficiently available.



### BUDGET

Total Operating Cost	\$ 380,000
Administration	\$ 45,000
Purchase 3 Ford Transit Hybrid Vans	\$ 210,000
Marketing and Vehicle Wraps	\$ 13,500
On board Eqpt. And Reservation Software	\$ 35,000
Match (Federal CMAQ Grant)	\$(110,000)
<b>TOTAL STIF DISCRETIONARY REQUEST</b>	<b>\$ 573,500</b>