



Meeting Minutes

City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee

October 23, 2025, from 1:00 to 2:30 PM

Council Chambers, 710 NW Wall, and Zoom

Liz Woodfin, Chair, called the **City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee** (COBAAC) Thursday, October 23, 2025, meeting to order at 1:01 pm. Please [watch livestream recording](#).

1. Roll Call: Committee Members.

1.1. Liz Woodfin, Chair - Chambers	1.7. John Heylin - Chambers
1.2. Aaron Rivers - Zoom	1.8. Liz Diether-Martin - Absent
1.3. Amanda Hamer - Chambers	1.9. Stephanie Utzman - Zoom
1.4. Andrew Caruana - Zoom	1.10. Whitney Bennett - Zoom
1.5. Carl Burnett - Zoom	1.11. Mariah Tennison (alternate) - Absent
1.6. Ian Isaacson - Chambers	1.12. Alysa MacRae (alternate) - Zoom
	1.13. Bob Townsend (<i>ex officio status pending</i>) - Zoom

City Staff:

- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison. (Zoom)
- Ariel Méndez, He/Him, City Councilor & COBAAC Liaison (Chambers)
- Stephanie Betteridge, She/Her, Asst. City Manager, Chief Innovation Officer (Chambers)
- Derek Hofbauer, He/Him, Mobility Manager, attended as a an attendee (Zoom)
- Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist. (Chambers)

Public Member:

- Sharlene Wills

2. City of Bend Land Acknowledgement: [Timestamp 3:48](#)

COBAAC member Hamer read the City of Bend Land Acknowledgement in English.

3. Minutes: Approval of August 28, & September 25, 2025, Draft Minutes, Liz Woodfin, Chair. [Timestamp 4:49](#)

Motion: Member Caruana motioned to approve the COBAAC August 28 and September 25, 2025, Draft Minutes with no corrections. Member Heylin seconded the motion. The motion to approve unanimously passed, by all voting members who attended today's meeting in chambers (4), Zoom (5).

4. City Council Update, Councilor Ariel Méndez: **Timestamp 5:43**

- Follow-up Topic: Equity is a core principle the city and city council is committed to. We are reviewing the internal and external focus of the equity program, and the city hired a third-party consultant to help. The City of Bend is one of three cities in Oregon suing the Trump administration to maintain our commitment to equity.
- Vehicle for hire: Listened to the city attorney's presentation and the question whether it is a federal law that requires vehicles for hire to comply to comply and what is the city's role of enforcing violations. City attorney mentioned someone could file a lawsuit. Council said there may be reluctance because lawsuits are expensive, and the goal is to provide accessible services to meet mobility needs. Council Liaison Méndez's goal is to find a creative way to provide those accessible transportation services without resorting to a lawsuit. Possibly identify a funding source to help vehicle for hire program.
- It is the first time council has set a goal for zero transportation fatalities and looked back at available data that suggested we have zero in 2025. The way it is defined; you need to look back 30 days to see if anyone passed away a result of the injuries they sustained in a vehicle accident. It is challenging because it goes through the chain of custody three times before it reaches the Department of Transportation. Council Liaison wants to ensure that we have a robust and accurate reporting system and have found that there were several that have happened in the last year.
- The topic of mental health and hopes to reduce the strain on police resources: The Community Crisis Response Team (CCRT), implemented in 2023 and a partnership program with Deschutes County. The goal was to provide specialized non-law enforcement support for individuals experiencing mental health crisis, including potential suicidal cases. After three years of data
 - Three years before 2023 partnership program, CCRT average was 167 calls per month.
 - Three years after 2023 partnership program, the average is eighty-six calls per month, which is a 48% reduction.
- Council Liaison invited a couple of members from two of the committees, where he is the liaison, to meet him for lunch, and will email with first people to reply to basis.

5. Public Comment: No public commenters in attendance in Chambers or online. Mobility Manager Hofbauer attended as an attendee; left no comment. **Timestamp 12:23**

6. White Cane Safety Day/Blind Americans Equality Day Proclamation Review, Sharlene Wills. **Timestamp 12:50**

Sharlene, who is blind, is here to share her lived experience as a person navigating through the City of Bend.

She has been an advocate for equity, freedom, job placement and to end discrimination for many years and has been with different organizations. Sharlene has been involved with White Cane Safety Day. President Lydon B. Johnson signed the White Cane Safety Day Proclamation on October 15, 1964.

Sharlene is a member of chapter for the American Council of the blind, she recruited to join the statewide Pedestrian Safety Coalition, based out of Portland. They encouraged Sharlene to submit a proclamation to the mayor.

Sharlene submitted her proclamation to the mayor; the proclamation was passed on to city council and Councilor Franzosa sponsored the proclamation and read aloud at the October 1st council meeting.

The city has enacted **City of Bend White Cane Safety Day Proclamation pdf**. It mentions, white canes and guide dogs are tools that people who are blind or visually impaired use to identify themselves and to navigate their environments with greater independence. Sharlene added this frees her from the necessity of sited help.

Sharlene also shared the history about the white cane and shared some suggestions on how to interact with the blind and visually impaired while they are using a white cane or their guide dogs in public spaces.

COBAAC member Bennett works for the school district and would like to meet with Sharlene about education for the youth navigating the streets.

7. Bend Parks and Recreation District: COBAAC Letter of Support: **Timestamp 39:34**

Letter of Support Slides:

- **COBAAC Letter of Support: BPRD Request** – BPRD (Park Planner Quinn Keever) is working on a grant application to acquire 47 acres of natural area in northwest Bend, located off NW Putnam Road. If successful in earning the grant, BPRD would acquire the land in late 2026. We would then work with the community to create a park with universal design, including the following improvements:
 - Accessible parking lot with ADA parking spaces
 - ADA trailhead
 - ADA restroom
 - A primary soft surface trail constructed to ABA standards (this would be an extension of the Deschutes River Trail)
 - Secondary soft surface trails
 - Nature and wildlife viewing areas
 - Bilingual directional signage
 - Bilingual interpretive signage
 - ADA benches with companion seating
 - Bike racks
- **COBAAC Letter of Support: BPRD Site Plan Map (Shared)**
- **COBAAC Letter of Support: BPRD Draft**
- **COBAAC Letter of Support: BPRD II**
- **COBAAC Letter of Support: Q+A**

COBAAC did not vote on the Bend Parks and Rec District letter of support for the Bend Parks and Recreation District - Land and Water Grant Fund (LWCF) grant application for the acquisition of the Deschutes River Trail Natural Area. They wanted more details before they agree to support the letter.

8. COBAAC Workplan 2026 Preliminary Workshop: COBAAC Members. **Timestamp 57:20**

COBAAC 2026 Workplan Timeline:

- **October – December:** Draft 2026 Workplan.
- **December 2025:** Submit Workplan for review by Eric King, City Manager by the end of 2025, for feedback and approval.
- **January 2026:** City Manager Approval/ Edits.

COBAAC 2026: Prep: For November's meeting, begin thinking about what projects or initiatives you would like to see COBAAC take on, plan and participate in. (Some outstanding/pending 2025 projects will be carried forward).

COBAAC Workplan: On the Horizon – Upcoming Events.

- **Trauma informed Lunch + Learn: Winter 2026.**
 - Collaborating with the City of Bend DEIA Advisory Committee, in addition to evergreen training resources for City employees.
- **Accessibility Community Mixer.**

9. COBAAC Elections: COBAAC Member: Spring 2026. **Timestamp 1:01**

The roles of Chair and Vice Chair were read from the COBAAC Charter.

Chair Position – Voice Vote: With one nominee, Member Heylin will be the Chair for COBAAC until October of 2026, with nine voting members approval.

Vice Chair Position – Voice Vote: With two nominees, Chair Woodfin and member Hamer. With the vote of 9 to 1, Member Hamer will be the Vice Chair until October 2026.

10. COBAAC Roundtable: **Timestamp 1:09:19**

COBAAC members shared updates and information: **Member Caruana** with the Oregon Disabilities Commission was tasked with writing the annual report for their activities from August 2024 to July 2025 and said he would share a copy of the report. **Member Burnett** went to the premiere of a new documentary, Adapted –it follows 3 adaptive athletes who live in Bend now. **Member Heylin** shared his frustration with the culture of needing to own a car and move forward with an equitable future that we have modes of getting around, bikes, walking, and buses. **Member Caruana** is having problems with roundabouts and people not using their blinkers, this is problematic for people using mobility aids when crossing the street (Can COBAAC create outreach?). **Member Bennett** mentioned one program she runs is Oregon Friendly Driver where they try and educate people crossing and what to expect and possibly expanding that education. **Member Heylin** asked about possible signage posted at roundabouts.

11. Accessibility & Equity Manager Update: Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella. **Timestamp 1:17:25**

Manager Kehoe brought attention to the group about the future work on roundabouts. The Transportation Mobility Team has been working with an associate to scope out a project about the creation of 3D model roundabouts.

- a. Federal Impact to Access – IDEA

- b. National Disability Employment Awareness Month
- c. Disability Rights Oregon – Bend Listening Sessions
- d. Congratulations to Ian Isaacson and Ashley Schahfer – Miller’s Landing Award

QR Code to a short video 1:21:41

12. Agenda Setting: COBAAC Members. **Timestamp 1:22:29**

- Discuss Winter Access Award (WAA). Changes and adaptations
- Invite park planner, Quinn Keever

13. Due to the November holiday, the next COBAAC meeting will be on an alternate date, on Thursday, November 20, 2025, from 1:00 to 2:30, PM.

14. Adjourn: With no further COBAAC business, Chair Woodfin adjourned the City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee meeting at 2:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility & Equity

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