



MEETING MINUTES

City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee

Location: City Hall, 710 NW Wall Street, Bend, OR 97703

Date: January 22, 2026

Start Time: 1:00 p.m.

Facilitator: John Heylin, Chair

Livestream: [January 2026 Recording](#)

City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee

1. The meeting called to order at 1:00 pm by roll call:

- 1.1. John Heylin, Chair - C
 - 1.2. Amanda Hamer, Vice Chair - C
 - 1.3. Aaron Rivers - Z
 - 1.4. Andrew Caruana -Z
 - 1.5. Carl Burnett - Z
 - 1.6. Ian Isaacson - C
 - 1.7. Liz Diether-Martin - Z
 - 1.8. Liz Woodfin - Z
 - 1.9. Stephanie Utzman - Z
 - 1.10. Whitney Bennett - Z
 - 1.11. Mariah Tennison (alternate) - A
 - 1.12. Alys MacRae (alternate) - A
 - 1.13. Bob Townsend (*ex officio pending*) - Z
- (Z) – Zoom Attendance / (C) – Present in Council Chambers / (A) - Absent

City Staff:

- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison. (Zoom)
- Ariel Méndez, He/Him, City Councilor & COBAAC Liaison (Chambers)
- Derek Hofbauer, He/Him, Mobility Programs Manager, City of Bend (Chambers)
- Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist (Chambers)



2. Minutes: Approval of December 18, 2025, Draft Minutes. **Timestamp 4:52**

The voice vote passed 10-0: **Yes:** Rivers, Hamer, Caruana, Burnett, Isaacson, Heylin, Deither-Martin, Woodfin, Utzman, Bennett. **No:** none.

3. Public Comment: **Timestamp 6:06**

Evie Lerner will email her question to the accessibility inbox.

4. 2026-27 COBAAC Workplan Finalization Workshop: COBAAC Members. **Timestamp 7:49**

- (COBAAC Vote) Discussed about a standing subgroup meeting time to each COBAAC meeting, with no mandatory attendance. These sessions can be cancelled the month prior for no topics.
 - Utilized for:
 - Ad-hoc conversations/topics.
 - Quorum conversations
 - Event Planning (outside the scope of COBAAC scheduled time) e.g. Walk and Roll, Breaking Barriers.

Heylin, Chair mentioned themed subgroup meetings of interest to avoid the possibility of meeting as a quorum, having to split into two subgroups and not being able to record them both, because of public meetings law.

Manager Kehoe added members can still meet outside these built-in subgroup's meetings, especially when COBAAC is busy and capacity is short. We will look at having break-out rooms to see if the decision is to hold subgroups right after the regular meetings.

Utzman suggested having an agenda to find out what is going to be discussed for members that do not have time to attend but still provide input for the subject.

Vote: Chair Heylin motioned to approve holding a COBAAC non-quorum themed / open topic subgroup meetings 30 minutes before the regular meeting. This will be a trial run.

The voice vote passed 10-0: **Yes:** Rivers, Hamer, Caruana, Burnett, Isaacson, Heylin, Deither-Martin, Woodfin, Utzman, Bennett. **No:** none.

Timeline:

December 2025 to January 2026: Collect initiatives, projects of interest, timely concerns to create workplan overview.

February 2026: City Manager Review.

**List of proposed items members discussed in December:**

- Transportation Safety/ Sidewalk Safety
- IDD Mentorship Programming
- Formalized COBAAC Engagement Process
- IDD: Streamlined application process for greater representation
- City Council participation greater COBAAC representation and presence
- ADA Parking Enforcement/ Snow Removal
- COBAAC draft letter template Breaking Barriers Presentation In 2026
- Spring 2026 walk + roll
- White Cane Awareness in Education
- accessible community participation (videos)
 - Recorded videos, public comment
 - Letter to the Editor/ Guest Columns
- Sidewalk Cost Sharing Proposals - future of true sidewalk connectivity
- Bend Parks and Rec Department exercise classes for people with disabilities
- Ongoing transportation conversations
- Taxi Licensing Letter and outreach continued from 2025
- Trauma Informed Luncheon Learn continued from 2025

Manager Kehoe met and shared this list with City Manager King. He was excited about the momentum behind the work, the excellent topics and agreed with many COBAAC members' suggestion of creating a two-year Workplan rather than the historical one-year Workplan.

Manager Kehoe: Call for 2026 presenters, submission deadline, February 10, 2026. Is there interest in submitting a proposal to present at the Breaking Barriers 2026, and/or tabling? Are there any members interested in meeting with Manager Kehoe before submission deadline to work on the proposal to present?

Manager Kehoe asked Vice Chair to share her ideas and thoughts on COBAAC hosting a reciprocal listening session. Explaining how we try to idealize the idea of communicating with the community, public comment, how does government interact and interface with people who have disabilities and serve our community wholly, and ask what they need to see from Government In advocacy and policy.

Vice Chair Hamer: Inviting panel members could consist of COBAAC, people from Redmond who work in accessibility or mobility, or someone from the state, because Breaking Barriers is statewide. This is an all-day event held at the fairgrounds. Inviting High Desert Advocates was also suggested.



Manager Kehoe added: The option of Breaking Barriers tabling at and letting folks know regionally know about COBAAC and the work they do; inviting them to public comment or interface with us more proactively. Woodfin and Chair Heylin volunteered to be on the Breaking Barriers panel this year.

5. COBAAC Roundtable: **Timestamp 35:22**

- Woodfin expressed gratitude to Bob and Katie who came to Full Access High Desert this morning to set up for the folks that use public transportation. Woodfin also share she is the Secretary for an organization called Unity for Inclusion and sends a shout out to its President, Sam Robinson, for the grant received from St. Charles.
- Deither-Martin wants to propose meeting one-on-one and building closer relationships. Contact her if you are interested.
- Chair Heylin had the first meeting of the Urbanist group where they chose their different lanes of advocacy.

6. Accessibility & Equity Manager: Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella. **Timestamp 41:12**

Manager Kehoe addressed Utzman, COBAAC member and Central Oregon Coalition for Access (COCA) Manager during the past COCA meeting that is projected on our workplan this year. It came up as accessible parking and potentially working with our code/ police and code enforcement. Asking if there is any support COBAAC can provide.

Utzman is concerned with the availability of ADA parking stalls for people that hold disability parking placards. COCA is regional covering Central Oregon. They want to work with the various municipalities, City of Redmond, City of Bend, and Deschutes County, for those that may not have a law enforcement agency. Finding out codes around accessible parking and how it is enforced. Creating a public awareness campaign. We have talked about talking to the police department to see if they can patrol and issue citations. Utzman will meet with a past COCA member, Carol Fulkerson, who has a lot of ideas.

Manager Update:

Equity Consultant, Ben Duncan, Kearns & West: Recommendations + Overview. Stephanie Betteridge, Assistant City Manager, Chief Innovation Officer will present an overview of the recommendation to COBAAC in February.

City Manager King will attend a future COBAAC meeting to discuss the workplan and potential insight on:

- City Council Work Session
- Transit Conversation (Oregon state transportation funding)
- Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (OHNA)
 - Accessibility focus on Affordable Housing



Derek Hofbauer, Bend Mobility Program Manager, will be asking for feedback on the different types of intersection that will be modeled from COBAAC in February about the 3D Modeling Project.

7. COBAAC February Agenda Items – Request:

This agenda item was skipped and is found under agenda item 9 with the **Timestamp 1:20:00**

8. LiveAble Homes: Jackie Haddon – Accessible Design: Jackie Haddon, Co-Founder of LiveAble Homes. Beth Kellen. **Timestamp 49:09**

They are here to give an overview of the services they provide and how they are working with city of Bend and Chamber of Commerce and some of your local construction companies on building more physically accessible housing inventory, creating more physically accessible housing inventory.

Slides:

- Accessible Building Strategies Designing for the Future.
- What is ADA:
The ADA is a comprehensive civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. In the context of construction and design, it mandates the facilities be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

The ADA sets forth specific design standards for accessibility, ensuring that buildings and facilities are usable by people with disabilities. These standards address various aspects of building, including entrances, restrooms, parking, and more.
- What is Aging in Place:
The ability to live independently, safely, and comfortably in one's own home and community. This is regardless of age, income, or ability level.
- What are Type A Building Codes:
In ICC codes, Type A and B Designations for dwelling units with different levels of accessibility, with type A offering more adaptable features while type B provides essential, basic accessibility features as required by fair Housing Act principles.
- What is Universal Design:
Universal design standards are structured guidelines that translate inclusive design principles into specific, actionable criteria for creating spaces and products used by people of all ages and abilities. "Universal design is design that is usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design" Ron Mace, Founder of the Universal Design Project.



- AARP Home and Community Preferences Survey 2024 – Adults age 50 and Older:
 - 75% want to stay in their home or community for as long as possible
 - 43% need to make their homes more accessible as they age
 - 72% plan to add bathroom modifications
 - 72% extremely important to have trustworthy, high-quality contractors
- Local ODS Statistics of Accessible Homes (active July 29, 2025) in our region:
 - 1900 Detached homes active in Deschutes County
 - 69 (3.6%) Listed with accessible Entrance or accessible approach with ramp
 - 31 have no step threshold
 - 1.6% of the total current inventory can be entered by someone in a wheelchair
- Future Housing Stock Needed:
 - The oldest baby boomer turns 81 in 2026
 - 10,000 people turned 65 every day
 - By 2043, 30% of central Oregon’s population will be over 65
- US Accessible Housing Needs (NAR 2024):
 - 5 million homes sold in 2024 in the US
 - generation X purchase 24% (1.2 million)
 - 19% for multi-generational homes
 - Baby boomers purchased 31% (1.55 million)
 - 1.75 million homes sold in 2024 likely needed some form of accessible modification
- US Accessible Housing Needs Continued
 - Only 10% of American homes are estimated to be aging ready. homes with a step-free entryway, first floor bedroom and bathroom, and at least one bathroom accessibility feature.
1,575,000 Homes likely needed some form of modification to safely serve the residents.
- Benefits of Living in Accessible Homes:
 - Aging in Place
 - Increase safety and reduced risk of fall
 - Long term cost savings for homeowners
 - Ability to stay in the community
 - Reassurance for family members
 - All Life Stages
 - Easier access for strollers, crutches, furniture
 - Spacious rooms support entertaining and extended family
 - Higher energy efficiency reduces utility bills
 - Broader market appeal for increased resale value
- **Timestamp 1:01:03 to listen and watch the rest of the slides.**



For more information call: 503-267-7708 or email info@LiveAbleHomes.org or visit the website at www.LiveAbleHomes.org

COBAAC members asked questions about the process, existing home modifications and specific questions about aging people's needs.

9. COBAAC February Agenda Items – Request: **Timestamp 1:20:00**

- Chair Heylin anticipates draft letters for COBAAC to review.
- Rivers will work on having his dog leash letter ready to share during public comment section on March 4th, City Council meeting.
- Discuss and recommendations for the 3D Modeling Project.

10. City Council Update: Councilor Ariel Méndez, He/Him: **Timestamp 1:23:23**

- He heard an informative update from last night's council meeting on Council Goals that are set every two years. We talked about Permit turnaround time, housing and the percentage of home that are electric.
- Previous goals:
 - Number of reported crashes – reducing them by 10%,
 - Maintaining 525 shelter beds – currently have 586
 - Creating 15 new safe parking spaces – we have created 19 and we now have 141 safe parking sites.
 - Goal of transitioning 300 people who are experiencing homelessness to more permanent housing, we have 107 that have reached that goal.
 - We have a goal of building 3,942 homes within the biennium and so far, we have 1,230 built since July 1, 2025.
- Reminder that bus fares will start February 1, 2026, download the Cascade East Transit fare app.
- Councilor Méndez attended the last Human Rights and Equity meeting (HREC). He heard questions about what we want to accomplish and our expectations of city council liaisons and the structure that would be more beneficial to the city and city council. Councilor Méndez received an email from Manager Kehoe suggesting that he meet 1 on 1 with COBAAC members and talk about what kinds of initiatives this committee is looking into.

11. The next COBAAC meeting is on Thursday, February 26, 2026, from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.

12. Meeting adjourned at 2:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Larsen, Administrative Support Specialist, Accessibility & Equity Program



Accommodation Information for People with Disabilities & Language Assistance Services

You can obtain this information in alternate formats such as Braille, electronic format, etc. Free language assistance services are also available. Please email accessibility@bendoregon.gov or call 541-693-2198. Relay Users Dial 7-1-1. All requests are subject to vendor processing times and should be submitted 48-72 hours in advance of events.

Servicios de asistencia lingüística e información sobre alojamiento para personas con discapacidad

Puede obtener esta información en formatos alternativos como Braille, formato electrónico, etc. También disponemos de servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Póngase en contacto en correo electrónico accessibility@bendoregon.gov o número de teléfono 541-693-2198. Los usuarios del servicio de retransmisión deben marcar el 7-1-1. Por favor, envíe sus solicitudes con 48-72 horas de antelación al evento; todas las solicitudes están sujetas a los tiempos de procesamiento del proveedor.