



MEETING MINUTES

City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee

Date: 02/26/2026

Start Time: 1:00 PM

Facilitator: Chair, John Heylin

Livestream: [February 2026, Recording](#)

City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee

1. Called to order at 1:01 pm by Roll Call, and where they attended: Chair, John Heylin,

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

City of Bend Staff:

- Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella, Accessibility & Equity Manager / COBAAC Staff Liaison. (Zoom)
- Eric King, He/Him, City Manager, (Chambers)
- Ariel Méndez, He/Him, City Councilor & COBAAC Liaison, (In Chambers at 2:10 pm)
- Tyler Deke, MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) Manager, (Chambers)
- Derek Hofbauer, He/Him, Mobility Programs Manager, (Chambers)
- Lisa Larsen, She/Her, Administrative Support Specialist, (Chambers)



2. Minutes: Approval of January 22, 2026, Draft Minutes. John Heylin, Chair. **Timestamp 3:04**

January 22, 2026, meeting minutes approved unanimously with the correction: amend spelling from *Diether*-Martin to *Deither*-Martin, under agenda item 1, Roll Call.

The voice vote passed 7-0:

Yes: Rivers, Caruana, Burnett, Isaacson, Heylin, Deither-Martin, Bennett.

No: none.

3. Public Comment: Timestamp 4:19

Here is the public comment from Terri Dickinson (shared with permission), received via phone conversation last week, on February 19, 2026: Read aloud by Accessibility Manager, Kehoe:

“People like me, we’re going to start avoiding Bend – maybe that’s fine – maybe Bend is for athletes and skiers and tourists – I’m a small drop in the pond of people, but I just think I was very frustrated, it’s not easy having a disability. Over the years, as a social worker, I advocated for other people – it is humbling to be in space to have to advocate for myself – it takes a lot of energy and effort – and sometimes you need another person to speak on your behalf.

It’s disheartening to see that focus seems to be 100% on walkability and biking. If you’re unable to bike or walk, you’re left out in the cold. Moderation is the key – it’s great to focus on trails and bike lanes – great – but not to the cost of someone who has to use a car – we don’t have great public transportation, and I have to drive or be driven into town, I have no other choice. I know that it can’t be everything to everybody – but it’s really important not to specifically rule out part of a population and make it like you don’t care about them. It makes you feel tired and pushed to side and made to feel like we don’t matter.”

4. Equity and Accessibility Update, Eric King, City Manager. Timestamp 6:29

City Manager King wanted to provide an update on the efforts to look critically at the equity functions within the city. Which includes the Accessibility Program. We recently contracted Ben Duncan from Kearns and West to look at our structure and how it was achieving outcomes both internally and externally since we recently had some staffing changes. Ben Kearns was the former Chief Diversity Officer for Multnomah County from 2014 to 2021 and currently works for Kearns and West, which is a consulting firm in Portland. Kearns has a specialty in this area and previously worked with Bend’s Human Rights and Equity Commission years ago.

Slides:

SCOPE AND PURPOSE



- **Purpose:**
 - *Conduct an independent review of the City's equity and accessibility structures. Understand how the City's existing systems, staffing, and strategies align with the City Council goals, strategic focus areas, and organizational outcomes.*
 - **Phase 1:** Analyze current state of accessibility and equity work at the City. This includes reviewing the current organizational structure of employees focused on equity work and evaluating the effectiveness of that structure in delivering on Council goals and strategies with both internal and external audiences.
 - **Phase 2:** Develop recommendations for potential future states of accessibility and equity work at the City. This includes proposing revised internal and external organizational structures that the City. At its option, could adopt in the future.

ANALYSIS TO INFORM RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Review of Background Documents/Plans:**
 - Council Goals
 - Employee Experience Action Plan
 - AIM (Assumptions, Identify, Measure) Equity Tool
 - HREC Work Plan
 - City of Bend Websites, program descriptions
 - City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee (COBAAC)
 - National Best Practices Scan
- **Stakeholder Interviews and Discussion:**
 - Equity and Accessibility Leads
 - City Manager Office Leadership
 - City Executive Leadership Team and Departmental Leadership
 - Mayor, Council Members
 - Community Relations Manager
 - DEIA Advisory Committee
 - Human Rights and Equity Commission Members
 - Community Organizational Representatives
 - Compare City Discussion

CORE CITY FUNCTIONS AND EXISTING WORK

- **Internal Efforts:**
 - Language Access
 - ADA Compliance
 - Future Work (Employee Experience)
 - AIM (Assumptions, Identify, Measure) Equity Tool
 - Employee Indicators and Data Analysis
 - Employee Resource Group Leader
 - Digital Accessibility
 - Training Supplier Diversity in our procurement & legal divisions
 - Human Resources



- **External Efforts:**

- Human Rights and Equity Commission
- City of Bend Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Complaints and Investigations (Civil Rights focus – Accessibility Manager Kehoe)
- Tribal Relations: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Confederates of Warm Springs
- Extensive Engagement Program: through sponsorship and events. With an announcement of opening up applications this week; having around 240K in awards provided each year.

HIGH LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

- **Embed Equity Analysis into Decision Making:** Ensure that at entry level of the City, from City Council to frontline programs and practice, utilization of the AIM tool is part of standard operations.
- **Balance Centralized Oversight with Decentralized Implementation:** Frameworks reflecting best practices are developed centrally and consistently applied within departmental programmatic work.
- **Develop Capacity Organization-Wide to Sustain Change:** Activate and set expectations for equity staff with expertise to provide technical assistance, consultation, training, tools, and resources for staff across the city.
- **Embed Community Engagement as a Core Component:** Clarify the role and relationship between equity and engagement leadership positions and HREC and COBAAC. Invest in best practices and frameworks that are employed across the City and inform(s) all engagement efforts.

RECOMMENDATION

- Establish a “hub and spoke” model, with a **centralized office that would focus on policy and programs** to ensure that equity expertise, leadership, and analysis is embedded at the highest level of policy development, implementation, and equity programs. The centralized office (“hub”) would have an internal focus by working with and influencing Departmental practitioners (the “spokes”) on programs, practice and policies advancing equitable external outcomes. This model will require a parallel process defining and clarifying the role of the Engagement Leadership role, ensuring that there is a strong link between roles.



CORE EQUITY TEAM – With Department Liaisons

- **City Manager’s Office: Policy** – Office of Equity & Accessibility
 - Equity Leader
 - Accessibility & Equity Manager
 - Equity Management Analyst
 - Administrative Support
- **Communications & Engagement**
 - Engagement Leader
 - Community Relations Manager

Next steps

- Recruitment for Equity and Engagement Leadership roles (March)
- Recruitment: Selection Process (April)
- Focused consultant work defining the Human Rights and Equity Commission's purpose, scope and authority (March-May)
- Equity Leaders: definition of departmental liaisons (Spring/ Summer)

5. COBAAC Workplan Approval, Cassandra Kehoe, Accessibility Manager and Eric King, City Manager. **Timestamp 19:06**

COBAAC: Draft Workplan Review – COBAAC Community Engagement

Any final additions to 2026 events/ community engagement opportunities we'd like to see COBAAC support/ lead/ initiate?

Going forward, in 2026-7, COBAAC members may motion to add events to the work plan where appropriate and needed.

The 2027 calendar will be updated next year.

COBAAC Community Engagement

In 2026-2027, COBAAC will participate in a variety of Community Engagement opportunities that will raise awareness of the Committee’s work, encourage community to bring pertinent access issues to COBAAC public comment, and will work in conjunction with the Accessibility Department to ensure that the City is accessible to all of Bend’s residents and visitors. It is anticipated that additional opportunities will be added to this foundational list:

Breaking Barriers Conference: COBAAC Members: Amanda Hamer, Hohn Heylin, Andrew Caruana, Liz Woodfin, Lisa Larsen, Cassandra Kehoe.

Sprout Film Festival: COBAAC Members TBD.

Trauma-Informed Lunch + Learn: COBAAC members, Amanda Hamer, Liz Woodfin, Stephanie Utzman. DEIA Advisory members: Rachel Ruppel, TBD.

2026 COBAAC Walk + Roll: Whitney Bennet, Carl Burnett. Bob Townsend.



2026 Welcoming Week - COBAAC Support: TBD.

TBD Ongoing: Future COBAAC Opportunities for Community Engagement.

Last Call for the additions to the 2026 portion of the 2026-2027 two-year COBAAC Workplan for the Events and Community Engagement List. These will be added and approved at the COBAAC March 2026 meeting.

- Add Member Isaacson to the Walk + Roll list.
- Add Member Bennett to the Welcoming Week list.
- Manager King mentioned that the Council is a resolution supporting our immigrant community at the request of the Latino Community Association (LCA) who presented to the Council earlier this year. Council is responding with resources and reaffirmation of our values.

The City of Bend has been a part of a Welcoming Week network since 2017. This year for Welcoming Week we are working on reentering our immigrant community in that effort in the resolution with the LCA and scoping that out currently.

Initiatives and Advocacy Section: The following accessibility initiatives are member-driven areas of advocacy set out in subcategories below:

I. Programmatic / Policy Focus

- Supporting individuals with intellectual developmental disabilities (IDD) access leadership positions through mentorship (Amanda Hamer and Andrew Caruana)
 - Explore COBAAC’s role in development of mentorship program (Carl Burnett)
- Develop an engagement process for COBAAC on projects, planning, and infrastructure, throughout the city, at every agency – county level, park district, or private development. Creation of a process will streamline capacity, requirements and member availability (Ian Isaacson)
- Revisit COBAAC Charter to explore inclusion of IDD community within membership (Andrew Caruana)
- Drafting and finalization of a formal COBAAC ‘Letter of Support’ template to utilize for expedited timelines to reduce editing backlogs (Aaron Rivers)
- Monthly letter campaign: COBAAC sends a timely letter each month to our City of Bend City Manager discussing timely accessibility considerations (John Heylin)

Burnett: Mentioned 2 separate templates; letters of concern and letters of support and the letters are sent to Manager King for approval.



II. Transportation and Infrastructure

- COBAAC Participation in the Transportation Safety Action Plan Advisory Committee (Liz Diether-Martin)
- BPRD: Deschutes River Trail South Project Refinement Study Stakeholder Group (*COBAAC Member TBD*) **Add Rivers to this initiative?**
- COBAAC Taxi Letter Next Steps: Licensing/Accessibility Taxi Workshop and Listening Session (Carl Burnett)
- Increased enforcement of ADA parking spaces/ access-aisles. Exploring enforcement actions and awareness campaigns to curb wrongful parking (Stephanie Utzman)
- Educational Opportunities: ADA Parking Spaces
- Snow removal, as it pertains to ADA Parking Spaces and Access Aisles
- Explore opportunities for greater sidewalk connectivity programming, possible cost-sharing initiatives with property owners and the City of Bend, in addition to snow-removal responsibilities related to sidewalk connectivity (Carl Burnett)
- Planning 2026 Walk and Roll Event (Whitney Bennett, Carl Burnett, Bob Townsend)

Manager Kehoe will reach out to Henry, the project lead and see if he would like to have another COBAAC member, along with Burnett.

III. COBAAC Assigned Initiatives

- Transit Conversation: March 2026 City Council Work Session (City Manager Eric King)
- Oregon Housing Needs Analysis (City Manager Eric King)

City Manager King: Review of COBAAC's initiatives and advocacy that he has identified and intersections with other city council initiatives.

It was helpful to hear from COBAAC and where their interest is in this and the Workplan is excellent; emphasizing that COBAAC is a model. He hopes the members attending the Advisory Summit will share this information with the other boards and committees. The City has a spectrum with 10+ boards and committees that all report to City Council.

COBAAC is unique and reports to the City Manager. The idea is that having a robust process to advance your priorities is helpful.

King wants COBAAC's help to be heavily engaged in the revisioning of the transit system. There is a lot of work to do as we work with Cascade East Transit. We want to make changes to the current configuration to be more



effective and reimagine a transit system that is right for Bend within the context of the regional needs, community connector shuttles, the fixed route component of that the paratransit and the on-demand system, mobility hub and spoke model through Hawthorne Station, but decentralizing that a bit more.

COBAAC ex officio Townsend who works for Cascade East Transit (CET) mentioned COIC and CET answers to a lot of groups throughout the Tri County and Warm Springs area with different groups feedback. Suggesting the benefits of moving forward at an upcoming meeting to present the same options that we are talking about with the City to this group at some level, depending on timing. As well to get input on our recommendations for improvement. Scheduling these meetings in advance of the City of Bend work sessions.

6. COBAAC 2026: Scheduling. **Timestamp 38:14**

- **Vote:** Summer Break, November & December 2026, Alternate Meeting Dates.
 - **COBAAC members will take a summer break in July 2026**
 - July 2026: 3 online, 2 Chambers, 1 abstained (A. Rivers) = 5, majority
 - August 2026: 0 online, 3 chambers = 3
 - **The November COBAAC meeting will be held on November 19, 2026**
 - November 5, 2026: 1 online, 0 chambers = 1
 - November 19, 2026: 3 online, 4 chambers = 7, majority
 - **The December COBAAC meeting will be held on December 17, 2026**
 - December 3, 2026: 1 online, 0 chambers = 1
 - December 17, 2026, 2 online, 4 chambers = 6, majority

7. COBAAC Draft Letter Review: **Timestamp 45:55**

Due to the push in March for off leash enforcement, COBAAC will discuss finalizing the Off -Leash Dog Enforcement letter to be ready for the Bend Park and Rec March meeting.

Table the Veo E-Bikes and CET Fares and the Revenue, Dial-A-Ride Enforcement, and Transit Infrastructure letters.

- Off-Leash Dog Enforcement, Author Aaron Rivers

Letter Edits:

- first sentence, no s the word parks
- recreation district, not department



- Edit the area that says specifically designated as unleash areas to say outside of designated off leash areas.
- The part that talks about reports of dog attacks and aggressive encounters in parks. It might be good location for some of the data that Rivers was able to pull to include data in those reports actually are to bolster that section (What the data is trying to portray)
- Instead of adding another sentence about the number of police reports regarding dog bites, it would be easier to say see appendix and attach the report from Bend Police Department. (Rivers' FOIA request) (see appendix may be misleading)

Include a sentence that introduces what this data represents.

King: The City is working with Bend Park and Rec to deputize their park stewards. It is a process and needs to go through legal channels. They have a joint board meeting with the City Council and Bend Park & Rec on March 17.

Manager Kehoe asked Rivers to email her the data.

The Off Leash Enforcement Letter was approved unanimously with the corrections in the above 5 bullets under the text: **"Letter Edits"**.

The voice vote passed 7-0:

Yes: Rivers, Caruana, Burnett, Isaacson, Heylin, Deither-Martin, Bennett.

No: none.

- Veo E-Bikes and CET Fares, Author John Heylin (Tabled)
- Revenue, Dial-A-Ride Enforcement, and Transit Infrastructure, John Heylin (Tabled)

8. Roundtable: COBAAC Members. **Timestamp 1:00:34**

Rivers: Invited members to join in on the City Council comment section about the dog leash issue, either online or in person.

Deither-Martin: Brought awareness to the **Seattle Deaf Film Festival**. This year is the first time it is available virtually or streaming. She wants to know if there is interest or opportunity for community outreach. Purchasing tickets to livestream and watch it as group if a venue can be found. Streaming: April 13 – 26, 2026. Chair Heylin will talk to Deither-Martin after the meeting (COCC).

9. **Accessibility & Equity Manager Update:** Cassandra Kehoe, She/Her/Ella. **Timestamp 1:03:49**

Breaking barriers, April 21st, 2026



- Contacts Cassandra if you are interested in developing 2026 COBAAC brochure/ tabling materials and swag for tabling/ community outreach opportunities (Breaking Barriers, Sprout Film, etc.).
 - Congratulations to Amanda Hamer, John Heylin, Liz Woodfin, Andrew Caruana and Lisa Larsen for their accepted conference presentation at Breaking Barriers.
- The 2026 Seattle Deaf Fest Festival (SDFF) is a hybrid event, with streaming access April 13th through the 26th. Gauge interest if in a possible COBAAC watch party on agreed upon films.
- Thank you to COBAAC members for your participation representing and advocating for accessibility in our community:
 - **Bend Transportation Safety Action Plan Update**, Liz Deither-Martin
 - **bend park and rec recreation district stakeholder group**, Deschutes River Trail South refinement study, Carl Burnett
 - **City of Bend Advisory Body Summit**, John Heylin, Amanda Hamer, Liz Deither-Martin, and Carol Burnett
- **Jesse Jackson (1941-2026)**: A moment of reflection on his passing last month. A staunch advocate for all-things civil rights, but especially his work with disability rights.

10.TSAP Advisory Board Overview, Tyler Deke, MPO Manager with the Bennett Colton Planning Organization. **Timestamp 1:07:23**

Slides:

BEND TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACTION PLAN (TSAP) UPDATE

TSAP UPDATE OVERVIEW – What is a TSAP?

- Approach to Transportation Safety and promotes USDOT’s safety system approach
 - **Evaluates** crash trends/ issues based on current data
 - **Identifies** broad range of strategies including projects, policies, and programs
 - **Creates** a decision-making framework for MPO/ city
 - **Helps** the MPO/city increase its eligibility for state and federal funding for safety projects

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

- **FIRST TSAP** - Developed in 2019 for Bend Urban Growth Boundary
- **UPDATE NEEDED** - Several projects completed/ programmed; New crash data needs assessment; Review progress since 2019



- **NEW STUDY AREA** – All roads within BMPO boundary
- **PROJECT FUNDING SOURCE** - Federal Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) Grant; specific requirements

NEXT STEPS

- Project Team actively working through Crash Analysis
- PCA #2 / Community, Engagement Round #1 (Spring 2026)
- Bend City Council Work Session #2 (June 10, 2026)

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Liz Deither-Martin potential participation on Project Advisory Committee
- Committee interest in future projects.

MPO Manager Deke asked COBAAC members if they were interested in them returning to spend more time talking about what they are seeing in terms of crash patterns and potential emphasis areas and getting COBAAC’s perspective into the process.

Chair Heylin would like them to return and asked if HWY 97 encompasses the MPO’s broad areas outside the City. Deke replies that they met with the consultant and talked about how do we look at the state highway system in the context of this bigger crash analysis, because the crashes that are occurring mat be a little different than we see on the City system.

Burnett: What do you think are the ways in which this work intersects with accessibility?
Deke’s reply: The inability for someone with a disability to cross some of our major roads. Upon looking at the crash data, there are dots at every intersection along Greenwood at every intersection and Third Street. In a month or so, we will be able to look at that and see how many of those crashes involve someone walking, rolling or on bikes.

Deke will work with Kehoe to schedule a time in April, May or June.

11.3D Intersection Models, Project Update, Derek Hofbauer, Mobility Programs Manager.
Timestamp 1:13:54

These are 3D models for intersections for blind or low vision to better understand how some of our intersections function with a tactile surface that shows the difference between each intersection.

Slides:

3D PRINTED INTERSECTIONS – For Accessibility Applications

- Team: City of Bend | Kittleson & Associates
- Project: Outreach | Products | Future Planning



- Schedule: They have scheduled a focus group with participants for feedback
- Feedback: Focus Group | COBAAC

Project TEAM

- City of Bend
 - Derek Hofbauer, Mobility Programs Manager
- Kittleson & Associates
 - Scott Beard, Principal Engineer
 - Dan Bower, Engineer
- Timothy Gorbald, local expert in 3D printing. He has worked with Nancy Stevens. He is able to interpret 2D designs and print them into 3D. As the process unfolds and the City schedules an open house, there may be an opportunity to have Gorbald create other intersections when needed.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

- Improve accessibility for local blind and low vision community
 - Some intersection types are not straightforward to navigate
- Process identifying what is useful to communicate
 - Feedback from community on model types and functionality via focus groups
- application 3D prints tactile maps of noted intersection types
 - Provide models in central locations for education and outreach
 - Coordinate with future construction projects to keep “library: updated

A 3D model was passed amongst the COBAAC members.

Two community members who are blind will be part of the process and will give feedback. Then the team will print 5 testing models and bring the focus group back to test the 3D prints in May or June. The participants will give feedback on where they should be housed.

INTERSECTIONS

- 1: Single Lane Roundabout
- 2: Multi-lane Roundabout
- 3: Protected Signalized Intersection
- 4: Skewed Intersections
- 5: Not finalized, ideas:
 - Protected Roundabout – 9th/Wilson
 - Mid-Block Crossing – W of Empire/Purcell
 - Channelized Right Turn Lane – 27th/US20
 - Your Idea, please give us your suggestions

Chair Heylin would like to have one printed for Walk + Roll. Hoffbauer replied: It depends on where it is held.



COBAAC Suggestions and questions:

- In front of the Shilo Inn. Traffic move fast and shooting along the river.
- These 3D prints are not proprietary, right? Can people print their own? Hoffbauer replied, yes, they are transferable.
- Protected intersection on Greenwood where there are pedestrian crossings and know where there are flashing lights or barriers.
- 27th and 20, on the sheer size of it.

12.City Council Updates: Ariel Méndez, City Councilor, He/Him. **Livestream 1:24:09**

- Council is aware of the concern about the off-leash dogs and a challenging area to address given our relationship with Bend Park & Recreation. They use an education first approach and do achieve good compliance. The park stewards are reminding them of the rules and treats for dogs.

Councilor Méndez said that if you have been hassled, bitten or attacked by an off-leash dog, he wants to acknowledge that the education first approach is going to be insufficient. And there are challenges involved with authorizing park staff to issue citations because it converts them to becoming law enforcement agents. This is an ongoing conversation.

- Council agreed to move forward with the climate fee. This was agreed to the 20% level of social cost of carbon. That means they look at the impact the cost of emitting carbon and attach a monetary value in terms of how much carbon is emitted.

Our fee is sensitive to the proportion of electricity that is generated from fossil fuels, it is about 50%.

- We are moving forward with the one-time revenue from Juniper Ridge sales. We are facing significant shortfalls with state support for homeless shelters. We need to find a source of revenue to support the temporary safe stay area.

13.Thank you all. As a reminder, our next COBAAC meeting will take place on March 26, 2026

14.Adjourned: at 2:32 pm, with no further COBAAC business.

Respectfully submitted by,

Lisa Larsen, she/her, 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 7-7-1. 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.