

City of Bend agrees to bus-stop lawsuit settlement

by *Bend_Weekly_News_Sources*

On Wednesday, May 16, the Bend City Council approved a settlement agreement between the City of Bend and the Plaintiffs represented by the Oregon Advocacy Center (OAC) in a lawsuit seeking to make the fixed route bus system accessible to people with disabilities in the City of Bend.

Under the settlement agreement, the City of Bend has agreed to:

Â§ Make 70% of the bus stops accessible within the next three years;

Â§ Have all bus stops compliant at the end of five years; and

Â§ Create accessible routes to key facilities served by a bus stop.

Plaintiffs applaud the City of Bend for making a commitment to ensure that all of its citizens can enjoy the benefits of the new bus system. "This is an important day for all of Bend's residents," said Carol Fulkerson, the lead plaintiff in the action. "We are glad that Bend is stepping up to fulfill the promise of the Americans with Disabilities Act that all people, regardless of disability, be able to participate fully in the activities of daily life."

The City is committed to providing improved access to riders with disabilities. "We appreciate that the OAC was willing to work with us in resolving this law suit. We will now move forward towards achieving our mutual goal: a fully accessible transit system," said Andy Anderson, City of Bend City Manager.

In February of this year, the Bend City Council approved additional funding of \$200,000 for the City's bus stop improvements. This allocation includes funding for accessible routes, useable bus stop pads, and compliant curb ramps near bus stops, as well as, signage in Braille and tactile letters.

The City has completed construction on the first prioritized project, Bus Stop #515, located at 27th Street and Conners. This is one of sixteen projects identified and prioritized by a combined citizen and City staff group called the Committee on Accessible Transportation. The Committee has also identified fourteen stops on transit route five for improvements.

The City of Bend and the Oregon Advocacy Center will continue to work together to achieve their shared goals and to ensure implementation of the agreement.

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