

Fiscal Year 2016-2017
ANNUAL REPORT



SALEM AREA MASS TRANSIT DISTRICT

Connecting People with Places

VISION // MISSION // VALUES

Vision

Making a positive difference by enhancing community livability through innovative, sustainable regional transportation options.

Mission

Connecting people with places through safe, friendly, and reliable public transportation services.

Values

SAFETY

We emphasize safety in everything we do. We are committed to providing safe, secure, and clean public areas and work sites.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We serve the public, each other, and our business partners with friendliness, courtesy, respect, and dignity. We recognize that our customers are why we exist, and we take pride in the positive impact we make in their daily lives.

COMMUNICATION

We foster trust, inclusiveness, and cooperation in our communication. We promote an open, respectful culture, where opinions and ideas are shared and where candor is valued. We listen to and actively engage our customers, community partners, and employees.

INNOVATION

We encourage and respect new and challenging ideas from employees, partners, and the public. We use innovation, technology, and best practices to anticipate and respond to the future needs of our community.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We take responsibility for our actions as individuals and as an organization. We are accountable as stewards of public funds and community trust; we honor this commitment with transparency, honesty, and integrity.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Steve Evans

Vice President
Subdistrict 1 – West Salem



Colleen Busch

Secretary
Subdistrict 2 - Keizer



Kathy Lincoln

Member
Subdistrict 3 – Central Salem



Doug Rodgers

Member
Subdistrict 4 – Northeast Salem



Jerry Thompson

Member
Subdistrict 5 – Southeast Salem



Robert Krebs

President
Subdistrict 6 – South Salem



Marcia Kelley

Treasurer
Subdistrict 7 – South Salem

A LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT AND THE GENERAL MANAGER

Change, transition and the beginning of transformation commemorated FY 2016-2017 for Cherriots.

In 2016, we introduced the new face of Cherriots with our rebranding initiative.

While we had a firmly established brand, it was becoming outdated.

Our goal was not to eliminate or diminish the brand value that has been developed through the years, but to update it so that it stays relevant.

Our old brand did not reflect our evolution or help tell our story. Cherriots is a complex organization with varied and distinct services. For example, we provide local, regional and paratransit services. There is a low level of public awareness that these services are all connected to the transit district.

This brand revitalization creates a stronger connection between our name and our visual identity. Through our brand refresh effort we hope to tell our story more broadly so that people know about the resources, support, and services we bring to the community.

We are still Cherriots, but a modern Cherriots.

In addition to the new, we also celebrated a year marked by returns and comebacks.

Externally, Cherriots entered into an agreement with the state to bring back the state-sponsored bus pass program. We will continue to look for similar opportunities with other community partners. Internally, we saw the comeback of the Bus Rodeo. This is a popular event where our professional transit operators compete on a course that showcases their safe and expert driving skills. The judges include employees of Cherriots and their family members. The top three competitors receive awards and the first-place winner goes on to compete at a national level.

Lastly, as we look forward to FY 2017-2018, we will be working on an enhanced service plan. In the fall of 2016, legislators began working in earnest with communities throughout Oregon to bring attention to the transportation infrastructure and mobility needs of our state. A number of meetings, including 11 town halls, were held statewide to solicit input and receive feedback from interested parties.

This work, made possible by a huge investment in time, money, and human effort, culminated in landmark legislation that positions Cherriots to provide enhanced services that could include weekend and later evening transit in the future.

We are in exciting times and the transit game in Oregon is changing. We are grateful to be part of it.

Thank you for taking time to read our annual report and for supporting Cherriots. We are humbled and honored to be part of an organization that is dedicated to improving the lives of people by providing an essential public service.



Robert Krebs
Board President



Allan Pollock
General Manager

NEWS ROUNDUP: EVENTS THAT SHAPED CHERRIOTS IN FY 2016-2017

Cherriots is constantly looking for ways to better serve its riders and the community. Here's a roundup of some of the achievements, as well as the challenges, for Cherriots.



Regional bus service relaunch

CARTS buses became Cherriots Regional buses in 2017. The changes for regional service went well beyond a new name.

Cherriots overhauled the operations of its regional bus service, which serves rural areas in Marion and Polk counties. The old system used by CARTS, known as deviated fixed route, allowed bus riders to request a drop-off anywhere near a route or hail buses for a pickup. The old system offered convenience for some customers, but it also created long, unpredictable commute times.

Customers in outlying towns, such as Dallas, Stayton and Woodburn, needed more reliable service. In response, the District hired a consultant to revamp operations of the regional buses.

The meandering trips of the deviated fixed route system have stopped. Most Cherriots Regional buses only pick up and drop off passengers at designated bus stops, adhering to a tighter schedule than in the old CARTS days.

Focus on reliability and simplicity

Cherriots recognized the need to improve existing services in order to increase service reliability and make the Cherriots system simpler to understand.

Following the 2015 Moving Forward service redesign, planning staff monitored and then modified the new service based on the on-time performance data and feedback received from riders, transit operators, and customer service staff.

Issues were identified with reliability, timed connections, and route complexity and numbering. To address the issues, planning focused on simplicity: eliminating confusing names for routes such as 5 and 5A, splitting routes through the Downtown Transit Center so riders could make their connections and buses could stay on time, and removing overlapping route numbers such as Route 10 and CARTS 10.

On-demand bus service replacement planned

A pilot project to test an on-demand bus service, called the West Salem Connector, is ending after a two-year run.

The Connector allows West Salem residents to book a ride through a browser-based mobile app or with a phone call. Passengers can board the bus at any Connector point in the West Salem neighborhood.

After extensive public outreach and evaluation, Cherriots has decided not to continue the on-demand West Salem Connector pilot project. Instead, West

Salem will be served with regular bus service beginning in 2018.

State worker bus pass program ends

The 2017 Oregon Legislature decided to end funding for the State Employee Bus Pass Program.

The yearlong, state-sponsored program provided bus rides for state employees, who worked in the Capitol Mall area. The program, which ended in July, helped to relieve traffic congestion and reduced some parking problems. More than 95,000 bus rides were provided.

Cherriots hopes the program can eventually be restored.



Planning for future growth

Bus routes can change from year-to-year. And that can be a problem for planners, who want to design transit-friendly communities and encourage development along certain corridors.

Cherriots has completed a process to end the uncertainty about the permanence of its bus routes. The Cherriots Board established a strategic plan called the Core Network.

The Core Network identifies corridors where the District intends to maintain high-frequency bus service. Changing the Core Network requires a vote by the Board, and reducing service requires public hearings.

NEWS ROUNDUP (cont.)

Rebranding the Cherriots services

Cherriots began a rebranding campaign in 2016. In addition to an updated logo design and color palette for marketing efforts, Cherriots services were given new names.

Salem-Keizer area residents often see the Cherriots local buses cruising city streets. Cherriots, however, also provides an array of other services that until recently didn't bear the Cherriots name. It's now clear that all the transit services are Cherriots services:

Cherriots Regional, previously known as CARTS, serves rural Marion and Polk counties, including Woodburn, the Santiam Canyon, Silverton, Dallas, Independence, and Monmouth.

Cherriots LIFT, previously known as CherryLift, provides transportation for passengers who can't independently use regular bus service. Cherriots LIFT meets Americans with Disabilities Act requirements to provide complementary paratransit service to eligible people, who must apply to use the service.

Cherriots Shop and Ride, previously REDLine, is a reservation-based service for seniors and people with disabilities. This shopper shuttle transports passengers to stores in Salem and Keizer to buy groceries and other household items. Cherriots also provides a dial-a-ride service that picks customers up at their homes and takes them to any destination in Salem and Keizer.

Cherriots Trip Choice, previously Cherriots Rideshare, promotes transportation options, including carpooling, vanpooling, biking and walking. The service does outreach to employers, the community, commuters, and students.

4/25 L

J 6

M

OUT OF SERVICE

230

201596



AWARDS

Cherriots and its employees received national recognition in FY 2016 - 2017. The District won awards for its marketing, sustainability efforts, financial transparency, and employee wellness program. Here's the roundup.



Catch Pokémon

Cherriots staff created an effective social media campaign to attract new riders with a little help from Pokémon GO.

To enter a District contest, Pokémon GO players took screenshots of Pokémon creatures lurking at the Downtown Transit Center, loitering at bus stops or lounging on buses.

Players posted their photos on Twitter or the District's Facebook page for a chance to win portable phone battery packs. That's an appropriate award because dedicated Pokémon GO players often need to charge their phones.

The Pokémon-themed tweets were viewed more than 67,000 times and resulted in more than 16,000 interactions, such as likes, retweets, link clicks, and comments. The campaign won the first place AdWheel Award from the American Public Transportation Association for Best Social Media to Increase Ridership.



Go green

Cherriots won praise for its environmental responsibility at the Pacific Northwest's Alternative Fuels Transportation Summit and Expo.

The District won the 2017 Western Region Sustainable Fleet Award. The Cherriots fleet includes a mix of vehicles powered by compressed natural gas and biodiesel fuel, a cleaner burning alternative to regular diesel.

To conserve fuel and reduce pollution, Cherriots has a "no-idle program" to reduce the times when bus motors are left running. For example, buses standing at the transit center are shut off when the temperature is between 45 and 78 degrees.

Cherriots also uses a process known as "recap" or a "remold" to replace the tread on worn tires. It preserves about 90 percent of the material in spent tires and saves the District money.



Show me the numbers

For the fifth consecutive year, Cherriots received an award from the Government Finance Officers Association.

Cherriots qualified for the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for its 2016 annual financial report. Established in 1945, the certificate program encourages public agencies to prepare comprehensive financial reports that embrace the spirit of transparency and full disclosure.

The Government Finance Officers Association established the certificate program in 1945 to encourage public agencies to prepare financial reports that embraced the spirit of transparency and full disclosure.



Staying fit

The Cherriots wellness program earned an eighth place for the 2017 Healthiest Employers of Oregon awards. The District won in the category of organizations with 100 to 499 employees.

After overhauling its wellness program in 2016, Cherriots trimmed its workers' compensation and health insurance costs. An employee-driven wellness committee, and promoting the use of Fitbits to encourage employees to exercise, helped Cherriots reach its goals for creating a healthier workforce.



Take a hike

The Cherriots mission isn't just about buses: It's also an advocate for carpooling, biking, and walking.

The Association for Commuter Transportation honored Cherriots Trip Choice for Wander Walks, a map showing a dozen suggested walking routes in Salem. The map includes photos, distance and time estimates, and points of interest.

Salem-Keizer area residents snapped up several thousand copies of the Wander Walks maps. Students from Willamette University's Master of Business Administration program collaborated with the District to produce the popular map.

FARMERS MARKET

On Wednesdays, vendors selling cut flowers, fresh produce, baked goods, crafts, and other items appear at Salem's Downtown Transit Center.

This year, Wednesday Farmers Market moved to the 16,000-square-foot concrete pad along the north side of Courthouse Square. The property's owners, Cherriots and Marion County, have wanted to find a productive use for the site since Courthouse Square opened in 2000.

"The transit center feels like it's made for that event," said Lisa Sherman, executive director of Salem Saturday Market LLC. Her organization oversees several farmers markets, including Wednesday Farmers Market.

Previously, Wednesday Farmers Market had been on Chemeketa Street, between High and Liberty streets NE. The market's former on-street location impeded the flow of traffic in downtown Salem. Moving to the transit center eliminated conflicts with traffic.

About 60 booths occupy space at the transit center on Wednesdays during the market's May through September season. The location has become a source of downtown vibrancy, buzzing with people and activity.

It's a welcome change

Cherriots and Marion County jointly own the Courthouse Square transit center and building. Years ago, county and transit officials briefly considered a proposal to use the site now occupied by Wednesday Farmers Market for "workforce housing" apartments. Plans for the apartments never came together and the property remained vacant.

Cherriots General Manager Allan Pollock said transit and county officials agreed to provide Wednesday Farmers Market space along the transit center free-of-charge for one year. Pollock called Wednesday Farmers Market at the transit center a "demonstration project" that could determine the feasibility of hosting other events at Courthouse Square.





122
Green

1.50

1.50

1.50

1.50

1.50

1.50

1.50

1.50

2.50

1.50

CHERRIOTS CONNECTS

Cherriots Connects provides a means for transit district employees to give back to the community – including standing in for superheroes.



Photo courtesy of Cyndi Leinassar, Deputy Director, Community Action Agency

Providing volunteers for the Community Action Superhero Dash – a 10k run, a 5k run, and a 1k kid’s fun run – was one of the Cherriots Connects projects in 2017. In May, a contingent of Cherriots employees joined about 50 other costumed volunteers at Salem’s Riverfront Park, who cheered on runners of all ages.

“We were down there in the rain with superhero capes on and Cherriots Connects shirts,” said Harry McFadden, a Cherriots transit operator and frequent volunteer. “We were trying to give motivation to the people, help them out, keep them on the path.”

“The main reason we get involved with the community is that we really enjoy it,” said Vicki Morris, a transit operator and volunteer.

Registration fees for runners at the Superhero Dash raised just under \$10,000 for Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency programs, said Cyndi Leinassar, deputy director of MWVCAA.

“I really like our organization getting involved in these kinds of programs and being out in the community,” said John Welch, another transit operator who assisted at the event.

But even without their superhero capes, Cherriots Connects volunteers did plenty of good work and fundraising. For example, Cherriots Connects oversaw the 2017 United Way campaign at the transit district.

Jeans Week, where employees pay to wear jeans to work, has raised money for organizations such as Liberty House, a local nonprofit that provides assessment and counseling for children and families facing concerns of child abuse, neglect, trauma, and grief.

Jeans Week also raised funds for the Family YMCA of Marion and Polk counties, the Willamette Humane Society, and the SMART Readers program, which helps children become avid readers.

Volunteers organized by Cherriots Connects keep an industrial neighborhood in northeast Salem looking good. The litter team collects trash along a section of Cherry Avenue NE, between Pine Street NE and Salem Parkway.

Cherriots Connects also promotes teamwork at the District by sponsoring events for Cherriots employees and their families, such as an annual holiday party and a Halloween festival.

BUS ROADEO

The bus roadeo, a competition for transit operators who steer 40-foot-long vehicles through a series of tricky maneuvers, has returned to Cherrlots after a decade-long hiatus.

Cowboys test their skills at the rodeo; but if your workhorse is a bus, the place to go is the roadeo. In fall 2016, Cherrlots decided to revive the local bus roadeo, a program that was shelved in 2006 because of tight budgets.

Dan Miller represented Cherrlots at the 2016 International Bus Roadeo in Reno, placing 28th out of a field of 70 participants.

Practicing for events, such as steering a bus through 90 degree turns without touching orange traffic cones, has made Miller a better driver on the streets of Salem. In competition, points are deducted if a bus tire brushes against an obstacle.

“It gave me a little more confidence knowing that I can squeeze through someplace with an inch and a half of clearance,” Miller said.

The top scoring Cherrlots operator goes on to compete at the annual International Bus Roadeo.

Charlie Clarke, the District’s transportation manager, was handed the assignment to bring back the bus roadeo.

“This is an opportunity for the entire District to support something that’s all about the operators,” Clarke said. Last year, the transit district’s management team served as judges for the event.

Participation in the bus roadeo is voluntary. A committee met monthly to plan the event.

For Cherrlots, the bus roadeo reinforces the professionalism expected of transit operators, Clarke said. Operators who advance to the International Bus Roadeo can bring back the story of competing with top-notch drivers from across the country, he said.

“**This is an opportunity for the entire District to support something that’s all about the operators.**”



BLINDSKILLS

Cherriots and Blindsight Inc., a nonprofit advocacy group, have collaborated on a series of training videos to help bridge communication gaps between transit employees and customers who are visually impaired.



For a person with little or no vision, the Downtown Transit Center and Customer Service Office can be a disorienting place. A person who is blind may need assistance when riding an unfamiliar bus route. Cherriots employees need to recognize these challenges.

The videos, which are available on YouTube, provide a candid assessment of the difficulties facing public transit users.

“I don’t go into the transit center. It drives me crazy because it’s a big open space and there’s tons of noise,” said Connie Murphy, one of the sight-impaired persons interviewed in the videos. She prefers buying bus passes at a local grocery store and communicating with Cherriots customers service by phone.

Lisa Carignan, a Cherriots outreach representative, said the videos emphasize expectations for good customer service. Carignan wrote scripts for the video productions.

“

I am still getting positive feedback from the blind community about what a difference it has made in customer service.

Cherriots used staff time for the project, but the videos were made on a shoestring budget. Blindskills assembled volunteer cast members from the local blind and vision-impaired community. Capital Community Television, a noncommercial station better known as CCTV, produced the videos as a public service at no charge.

Cherriots transit operators appear in the videos to explain the best practices



for serving customers who are visually impaired. For example, operators must avoid disorienting customers by stopping short of bus stops. Operators also need to be vigilant about noticing customers with vision impairments, who may be unaware that they are standing a good distance away from the bus stop.

Dramatizations in the videos also emphasize that precise, verbal directions are needed to assist customers with vision impairments.

“If somebody has a cane or a dog, you don’t point,” said Marja Byers, executive director of Blindskills. Talking to the service animal, instead of acknowledging the person, is another gaffe that’s highlighted in the video.

A Cherriots transit operator recently approached Byers and complimented her on the quality of information contained in the videos. The online videos are also “being shared around” by other organizations that provide public services, she said.

“I am still getting positive feedback from the blind community about what a difference it has made in customer service,” Byers said.

FINANCIALS AND PERFORMANCE DATA

2014-2017

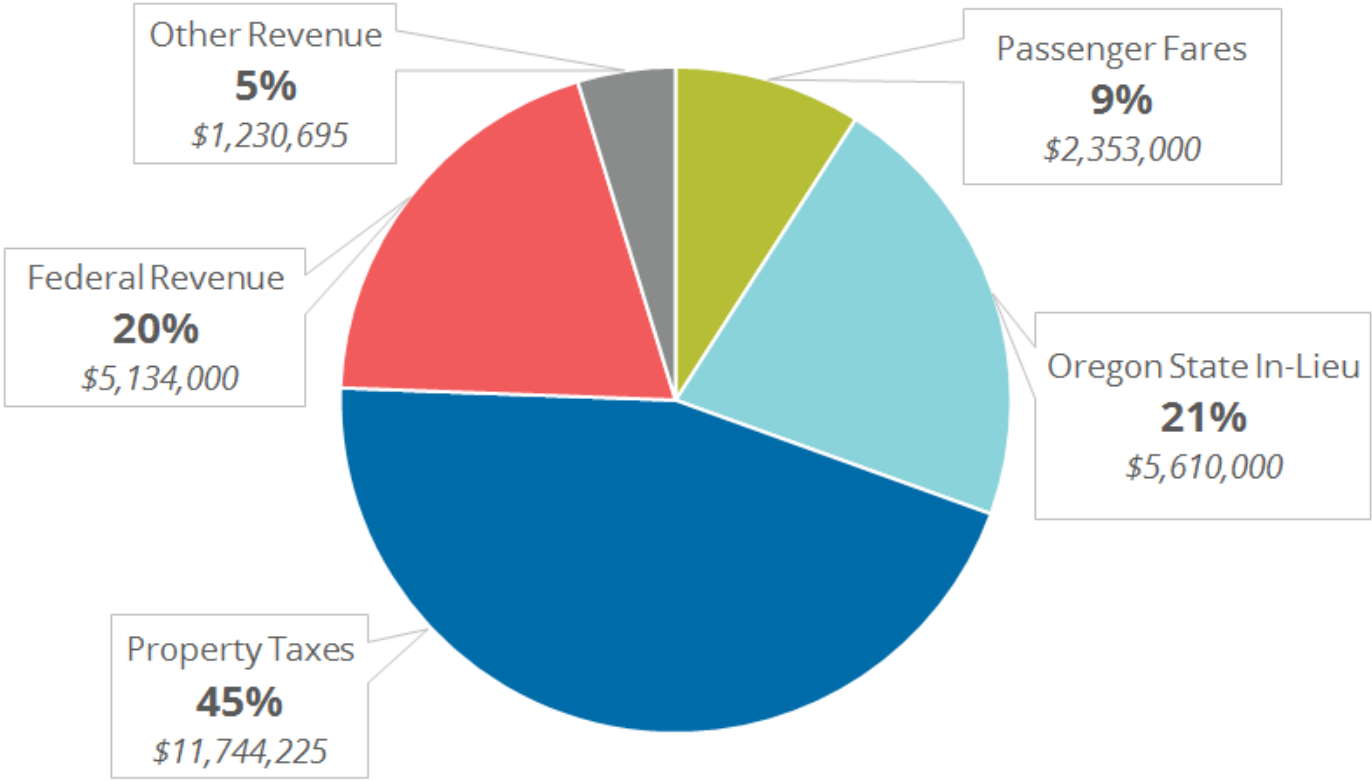
RIDERSHIP	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
<i>Local</i>	3,256,546	3,304,058	2,953,459	2,900,817
<i>Regional</i>	193,768	188,398	162,636	144,465
<i>LIFT</i>	159,985	160,327	150,906	140,875
<i>Shop and Ride</i>	8,856	7,998	7,851	9,107

REVENUE HOURS	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
<i>Local</i>	150,969	149,455	157,054	164,298
<i>Regional</i>	23,187	23,472	23,978	23,888
<i>LIFT</i>	63,380	62,849	62,444	61,380
<i>Shop and Ride</i>	4,216	4,091	4,103	4,684

REVENUE MILES	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
<i>Local</i>	1,814,263	1,861,951	2,004,511	2,044,465
<i>Regional</i>	509,720	506,411	527,127	263,271
<i>LIFT</i>	801,604	787,126	775,475	752,523
<i>Shop and Ride</i>	46,483	40,492	40,779	51,085

GENERAL FUND REVENUES/RESOURCES

FY 2016-2017









555 Court St. NE, Ste. 5230
Salem, Oregon 97301
503-588-2424
info@cherriots.org

Cherriots.org