



Sunset Empire Transportation District BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Board Agenda Coversheet

Item number: 10d

Date: Feb. 26, 2026

Item type: New business

Subject: Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant application

Department: Executive Director

Summary: SETD has applied for a grant through the Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program.

If awarded, the grant would provide SETD with funding for a new microtransit project serving veterans throughout Clatsop County, modeled after the district's successful microtransit pilot project in Seaside.

The grant application was due Feb. 18, 2026. The application has been submitted, but it can be withdrawn if the board has concerns.

The grant application is attached for board review.

As part of the discussion, Executive Director Carr would like to clarify board expectations moving forward for pursuing grants and additional funding opportunities.

Attachments:

- RVHT grant application
- RVHT cost estimate work sheet
- Letter of support from Rep. Javadi
- Letter of support from the Astoria Warrenton Chamber of Commerce
- Letter of support from Warrenton Mayor Balensifer
- Letter of support from the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners
- Letter of support from Cannon Beach Mayor Knop and the city council

Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Program Application 2025 - 2027

Submissions are due by Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at 11:59 PM Pacific Time.

Thank you for your interest in the Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation grant program!

This application closes on Wednesday, February 18 at 11:59 p.m.

NOTE: Please read the entire [RVHT 25-27 Program Guidance](#) document before you begin AND carefully read all instructions in this application as you fill it out. Answering all questions is important and will help the project selection committee evaluate the applications. For scored questions, read the additional info below the text box to see what the selection committee will be looking for in our scoring.

For any questions about this application, please contact Hope Estes at Hope.Estes@odot.oregon.gov or reach out to your [Regional Transit Coordinator](#). Please note that Hope is out of the office Feb. 9-16 and will have an alternate contact in her out of office reply.

A. Applicant Information

Applicant Agency

Sunset Empire Transportation District

Name of Application Contact

Jason Jones

Email of Application Contact

jason@ridethebus.org

ODOT Region and Regional Transit Coordinator

2A - Arla Miller

B. Project Proposal

In the fields below, please enter:

1. The RVHT investment you're seeking for the 2025-27 biennium (ending June 30, 2027). Minimum and maximum requests may help project selection committee make decisions if we receive applications totaling more than the available amount for the biennium.

The minimum request is at \$10,000. There is no maximum request.

Please use the minimum and maximum requests you used in your earlier Letter of Interest. **If the requested minimum or maximum are different than your Letter of Interest from November 2025, please explain in the field provided. The project team may also reach out for clarification.**

RVHT does *not* require local match.

1. Request (if funded in full):

\$50,000.00

2. Minimum request:

\$25,000.00

Are the minimum or maximum request above different than your Letter of Interest?

No

Local Match or Other Non-RVHT Funds

\$10,000.00

Local Match or Other Funding Explained

The \$10,000 local match for this grant application is provided from the remaining funds of the Providence Health & Services (also referred to as Providence Health Services) Microtransit Pilot Project.

Project @ Full Request

\$60,000.00

Project @ Minimum Request

\$35,000.00

Proposed project is primarily intended to provide:

Mobility Management

Will you be engaging a contractor or subconsultant to deliver some or all of the proposed elements of this project?

Yes

Approximate percentage of funding to be spent on contracting/consulting services.

28

Name of contractor or subconsultant

TBD

Project Title

Patriot Pathways: Clearing the Path to Keep Veterans Moving

Project Description (5 points possible)

SETD would extend its Micro Transit Pilot Program—launched in 2025 with Providence Health funding—to prioritize veterans county-wide. The Patriot Pathways (Microtransit) program would utilize a seasoned, skilled call center to book rides and use accessible small buses for curb-to-curb, on-demand rides within the Route 20 zone (Seaside/Cannon Beach), Route 15 (Warrenton/Hammond), and the Route 10 (Astoria). Veterans book free rides to local clinics, pharmacies, behavioral health providers, Columbia Memorial Hospital, or wellness services (e.g., dialysis, therapy, nutrition support). The Patriot Pathways (Microtransit) program would allow access to more than just medical services. In an effort to create a total healthy outcome for our Veterans, the Patriot Pathways program would allow for co-mingled trips to other life or community activities. In one trip, a Veteran could access healthcare, visit their local American Legion and then shop for groceries before going home.

We will address out-of-area needs with dedicated trips to the Portland VA Medical Center or regional facilities two days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays). Door-to-door or hub-based service in accessible vehicles that ensures reliable, scheduled rides for specialist care, with wait-return options or coordinated drop-offs.

This expansion coordinates with NW Oregon Transit Alliance, ODVA (Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs), local VSOs (Veteran Service Officers), and Rural Transportation programs. Veterans ride free; we verify eligibility via ORS 408.225 and track rides separately for reimbursement.

Project Need (5 points possible)

Through the Patriot Pathways microtransit option, SETD aims to deliver free, on-demand rides specifically tailored to Veterans' needs for healthcare appointments, as well as essential community activities that support their overall well-being. This flexible, curb-to-curb service directly addresses key barriers our local Veterans face, including:

Long distances to fixed bus stops and shelters

Inflexible fixed-route schedules that often fail to align with medical appointment times or Veterans' daily needs

Mobility challenges, particularly for older Veterans or those with disabilities

Many Veterans in our community rely on uneven, unfinished pathways filled with loose gravel, roots, or debris—conditions that make traditional fixed-route access difficult or unsafe, especially for those using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids.

By implementing Patriot Pathways through our existing Micro Transit Pilot Program, SETD will provide a more responsive, accessible, and dignified transportation solution. This initiative will empower Veterans to attend VA-authorized healthcare visits reliably and without cost, while also enabling greater participation in community resources that promote physical health, mental wellness, social connection, and independence. Ultimately, Patriot Pathways will create healthier, more equitable outcomes for Clatsop County's Veterans by removing transportation obstacles and ensuring they can fully access the earned benefits and supportive services they deserve in our rural coastal communities. SETD is committed to partnering with Veterans' organizations and stakeholders to make this vital program a reality.

Project Readiness (5 points possible)

Patriot Pathways (Microtransit) Implementation Plan: The program expands upon the SETD Microtransit Pilot (launched 2025 with Providence Health funding, initially Seaside/Cannon Beach) in Clatsop County. It uses on-demand, curbside service with accessible small buses/vans, booked via call center, free for eligible veterans. Rides are flexible/shared, integrating with fixed routes. ****1. Launch & Veteran Focus**** - Verify eligibility per ORS 408.225 (DD-214, VA ID, etc.) during registration; maintain secure database and separate tracking. - Use existing SETD call center (503-861-7433, option #2) for phone bookings—no app needed initially. Riders specify locations, times, and purpose (healthcare prioritized). - Deploy ADA-compliant small buses/vans for curbside shared rides. ****2. Zones & Local Service**** - Zones align with SETD routes: Route 20 (Seaside/Cannon Beach), Route 15 (Warrenton/Hammond), Route 10 (Astoria). - Within-zone: On-demand curbside rides. - Purposes: Prioritize healthcare (clinics, pharmacies, behavioral health, Columbia Memorial Hospital, dialysis, therapy, nutrition). Allow co-mingled trips (e.g., clinic → American Legion → groceries → home) for holistic wellness; up to 25% non-healthcare community rides. ****3. Out-of-Area Service**** - Dedicated door-to-door or hub-based trips ****Tuesdays & Thursdays**** to Portland VA or regional facilities. - Accessible vehicles with reliable scheduling; include wait-return or coordinated drop-offs/pickups. Require 24–48 hour advance booking. ****4. Partnerships**** - Coordinate with NW Oregon Transit Alliance, ODVA, local VSOs, and Rural Transportation programs for integration, promotion, and funding support. - Outreach via veteran networks, American Legion, clinics, and events. ****5. Funding & Operations**** - Grants (e.g., RVHT, ODVA) fund operations, drivers, fuel, maintenance, and call center upgrades (scheduling tools, veteran training). - Track veteran rides separately for reimbursement. - Scale using existing pilot infrastructure (call center, vehicles, dispatch) to minimize costs; expand based on demand. ****6. 24-Month Outcomes & Evaluation**** - Targets: 400 one-way trips (~350 local, ~25 out-of-area); 25–75 unique veterans served. - ≥75% rides to healthcare; up to 25% other needs. - Measure via pre/post surveys (access, satisfaction, health impact), ride data (volume, on-time, missed appointments), and RVHT alignment: innovation (flexible microtransit), coordination (fixed routes/partners), measurable results. This approach prioritizes veterans in current zones, and scales sustainably with grants and partnerships for reliable, no-cost transportation. This project depends totally on this funding and the match. If the actual costs project to exceed the budget, we will scale down the service to stay within the contracted budgeted amount. We did receive RVHT funding before and achieved our estimated outcomes.

Outreach and Mobility Management (5 points possible, only scored for projects that selected Mobility Management as the primary project type.)

*While all veterans' projects should feature an outreach component, it's understood that **not all will explicitly offer Mobility Management**. If you selected Mobility Management as the project type, the following fields are mandatory and will count toward the points awarded by the project selection committee.*

In addition to describing your outreach efforts, please estimate how many events your project will conduct

and the number of veterans that will be contacted and informed about your proposed service.

Scored Answer Set (ONLY scored for projects that selected Mobility Management as the primary project type)

Outreach and Education

Goal

Reach 25–75 unique veterans in the first 14 months by building awareness, answering questions, and enrolling riders in the new free microtransit service. Focus on in-person, low-pressure interactions at trusted veteran spaces.

Planning Approach

Partner monthly with Clatsop County Veteran Services Office (VSO), American Legion Posts (12-Astoria, 99-Seaside, 168-Cannon Beach), VFW Post 10580 (Warrenton), and ODVA.

Prepare simple materials: one-page flyers, ride-request cards, eligibility checklists, and a sign-up tablet for the call center.

Staff every event with 2 Mobility staff + 1 veteran driver when possible.

Offer mini “demo rides” at larger events and collect contact info for follow-up calls.

Track outreach: number of veterans spoken to, sign-ups started, and materials distributed.

Budget: \$4,500-\$10,000 (booth fees, printed materials, giveaways like water bottles with program logo and radio advertising).

2026 Event Calendar – 10 Targeted Outreach Events

1. Free Veterans Breakfast at Lum's Auto.
2. Free Veterans Breakfast in Warrenton.
3. Memorial Day weekend.
4. Clatsop County Fair.
5. Set up at local American Legions
6. Annual Military Veterans Convention.
7. Quarterly Veterans transportation round table with the Mobility Manager.

Outreach Events

12

Veterans Contacted and Informed about RVHT services

300

Veterans Receiving Mobility Management Support

30

Veteran Outcomes (5 points possible, scores based on the project metrics calculated from your maximum request)

Please estimate the outcomes of the proposed project for veterans **based on the assumption that you receive the maximum requested amount**. For consistency across all applications, please estimate **only** the rides/miles/hours that would be funded from the requested RVHT funds (not other sources).

Scored Answer Set

Veteran Rides

400

Veteran Service Miles

4,000

Veteran Service Hours

500

Please describe how you estimated these outcomes

These estimates were roughly modeled after our microtransit pilot project. See attached spreadsheet

C. Project Metrics Summary

Project Metrics if Funded at Maximum Request

This section is auto-calculated from the information you provided earlier in the application. Keep in mind that these calculations include what would be funded with RVHT funds only, though ODOT may consider other funding sources in our evaluation.

Total Project \$50,000.00	Local Match 20.00%		
Cost Per Ride \$125.00	Cost Per Hour \$100.00	Cost Per Mile \$12.50	
Cost Per Event \$4,166.67	Cost Per Veteran Contacted \$166.67	Cost Per Mobility Management \$1,666.67	

Project Metrics if Funded at Minimum Request

This section is auto-calculated from the information you provided earlier in the application.

Total Project \$25,000.00	Local Match 40.00%		
Cost Per Ride \$62.50	Cost Per Hour \$50.00	Cost Per Mile \$6.25	
Cost Per Event \$2,083.33	Cost Per Veteran Contacted \$83.33	Cost Per Mobility Management \$833.33	

Additional Supporting Documents (Optional)

SETD ODOT Patriot Pathways.pdf

Patriots LOS.pdf

Letter of Support – ODOT Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant.pdf

CLATSOP - ODOT - SETD Veterans.pdf

260212_Sunset Transit Letter of Support.pdf

RVHT Grant Cost Estimate Work Sheet 2026.xlsx

Agreement to Reporting Requirements

Yes

The person signing this form must have the legal authority to submit this application on behalf of the applicant.

By electronically signing and submitting this form, the agency representative certifies that the information on the application is true and accurate to the best of their knowledge.

Signature

Name
David Carr

David Carr

RVHT				
Labor	Mobility	12	\$75.00	\$900.00
Labor	Support	2	\$55.00	\$110.00
Labor	Admin	2	\$75.00	\$150.00
Transportatation	Vehicle	1	\$50.00	\$50.00
Advertising	Various	1	\$250.00	\$250.00
Tabling items	Various	1	\$250.00	\$250.00
Events		12		\$1,710.00
				\$20,520.00

RVHT Rides				
MT Rides		350	\$65.00	\$22,750.00
Out of area		50	\$350.00	\$17,500.00
				\$40,250.00

\$60,770.00



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

February 15, 2026

Oregon Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division
Attn: Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program
555 13th Street NE, Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support – Patriot Pathways: Clearing the Path to Keep Veterans Moving

Dear RVHT Selection Committee,

As a State Representative for Oregon House District 32 which includes Clatsop County, I am writing to express strong support for Sunset Empire Transportation District’s application to the 2025–2027 Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant Program for the Patriot Pathways initiative.

Clatsop County is a geographically large, predominantly rural community with a significant veteran population. Reliable transportation remains one of the most persistent barriers to accessing healthcare—particularly specialty care located outside our immediate region. Many of our veterans face mobility challenges, limited fixed-route transit options, and long distances between services.

The Patriot Pathways program offers a thoughtful and efficient solution by expanding SETD’s Micro Transit Pilot Program to provide free, demand-response transportation for veterans. This includes access to local healthcare providers, pharmacies, behavioral health services, and essential community resources, as well as dedicated trips to the Portland VA Medical Center. By leveraging existing transit infrastructure and coordinating with regional partners, SETD is demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources while addressing a critical community need.

CYRUS JAVADI, DDS
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 32



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Improving transportation access is directly tied to better health outcomes, increased independence, and stronger community engagement for our veterans. This project aligns with our local commitment to supporting those who have served and ensuring equitable access to essential services in rural Oregon.

I fully support this proposal and respectfully urge the committee to fund the Patriot Pathways program. Thank you for your continued investment in Oregon's rural veterans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cyrus Javadi".

Representative Cyrus Javadi
State of Oregon House of Representatives



ASTORIA
WARRENTON
The Spirit of the Columbia

Oregon Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division
Attn: Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program
555 13th Street NE, Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301

February 12, 2026

Subject: Letter of Support – Patriot Pathways: Clearing the Path to Keep Veterans Moving

Dear RVHT Selection Committee,

The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce consists of some 600 local businesses, individuals and organizations. We recognize the acute need for transportation options, particularly among our large veteran population. We strongly support for Sunset Empire Transportation District’s application to the 2025–2027 Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant Program for the Patriot Pathways initiative.

Clatsop County is a geographically large, predominantly rural community with a significant veteran population. Reliable transportation remains one of the most persistent barriers to accessing healthcare—particularly specialty care located outside our immediate region. Many of our veterans face mobility challenges, limited fixed-route transit options, and long distances between services.

The Patriot Pathways program offers a thoughtful and efficient solution by expanding SETD’s Micro Transit Pilot Program to provide free, demand-response transportation for veterans. This includes access to local healthcare providers, pharmacies, behavioral health services, essential community resources, and dedicated trips to the Portland VA Medical Center. By leveraging existing transit infrastructure and coordinating with regional partners, SETD is demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources while addressing a critical community need.

Improving transportation access is directly tied to better health outcomes, increased independence, and stronger community engagement for our veterans. This project aligns with our local commitment to supporting those who have served and ensuring equitable access to essential services in rural Oregon.

We respectfully urge the committee to fund the Patriot Pathways program. Thank you for your continued investment in Oregon’s rural veterans.

Sincerely,

David L. Reid, Executive Director

CHAMBER of COMMERCE

February 17, 2026

Oregon Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division
Attn: Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program
555 13th Street NE, Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support – Patriot Pathways: Clearing the Path to Keep Veterans Moving

Dear RVHT Selection Committee,

As the Mayor for City of Warrenton, I am writing to express strong support for Sunset Empire Transportation District’s application to the 2025–2027 Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant Program for the Patriot Pathways initiative.

Clatsop County is a geographically large, predominantly rural community with a significant veteran population. Reliable transportation remains one of the most persistent barriers to accessing healthcare—particularly specialty care located outside our immediate region. Many of our veterans face mobility challenges, limited fixed-route transit options, and long distances between services.

The Patriot Pathways program offers a thoughtful and efficient solution by expanding SETD’s Micro Transit Pilot Program to provide free, demand-response transportation for veterans. This includes access to local healthcare providers, pharmacies, behavioral health services, and essential community resources, as well as dedicated trips to the Portland VA Medical Center. By leveraging existing transit infrastructure and coordinating with regional partners, SETD is demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources while addressing a critical community need.

Improving transportation access is directly tied to better health outcomes, increased independence, and stronger community engagement for our veterans. This project aligns with our local commitment to supporting those who have served and ensuring equitable access to essential services in rural Oregon.

I fully support this proposal and respectfully urge the committee to fund the Patriot Pathways program. Thank you for your continued investment in Oregon’s rural veterans.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Balensifer III
Mayor
City of Warrenton
hbalensifer@warrentonoregon.us



Clatsop County
Board of Commissioners

800 Exchange St., Suite 410
Astoria, OR 97103
503-325-1000

commissioners@ClatsopCounty.gov
www.clatsopcounty.gov

February 12, 2026

Oregon Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division
Attn: Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program
555 13th Street NE, Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support – Patriot Pathways: Clearing the Path to Keep Veterans Moving

Dear RVHT Selection Committee,

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners enthusiastically supports Sunset Empire Transportation District's application to the 2025–2027 Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant Program for the Patriot Pathways initiative.


Clatsop County is a geographically large, predominantly rural community with a significant veteran population (nearly 10% of population). Reliable transportation remains one of the most persistent barriers to accessing healthcare. Many of our veterans face mobility challenges, limited fixed-route transit options, and long distances between services.

The Patriot Pathways program offers a thoughtful and efficient solution by expanding SETD's Micro Transit Pilot Program to provide free, demand-response transportation for veterans. This includes access to local healthcare providers, pharmacies, behavioral health services, and essential community resources, as well as dedicated trips to the Portland VA Medical Center. By leveraging existing transit infrastructure and coordinating with regional partners, SETD is demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources while addressing a critical community need.

Improving transportation access is directly tied to better health outcomes, increased independence, and stronger community engagement for our veterans. This project aligns with our local commitment to supporting those who have served and ensuring equitable access to essential services in rural Oregon.

We fully support this proposal and respectfully urge the committee to fund the Patriot Pathways program. Thank you for your continued investment in Oregon's rural veterans.

Sincerely,



Mark Kujala, Chair
District 1



Courtney Bangs, Vice Chair
District 4



Anthony Huacuja, Commissioner
District 2



Lianne Thompson, Commissioner
District 5



Pamela Wev, Commissioner
District 3



CITY OF CANNON BEACH

February 12, 2026

Oregon Department of Transportation
Public Transportation Division
Attn: Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Grant Program
555 13th Street NE, Suite 2
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Letter of Support – Patriot Pathways: Clearing the Path to Keep Veterans Moving

Dear RVHT Selection Committee,

As a Mayor for Cannon Beach, I am writing to express strong support for Sunset Empire Transportation District's application to the 2025–2027 Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT) Grant Program for the Patriot Pathways initiative.

Clatsop County is a geographically large, predominantly rural community with a significant veteran population. Reliable transportation remains one of the most persistent barriers to accessing healthcare—particularly specialty care located outside our immediate region. Many of our veterans face mobility challenges, limited fixed-route transit options, and long distances between services.

The Patriot Pathways program offers a thoughtful and efficient solution by expanding SETD's Micro Transit Pilot Program to provide free, demand-response transportation for veterans. This includes access to local healthcare providers, pharmacies, behavioral health services, and essential community resources, as well as dedicated trips to the Portland VA Medical Center. By leveraging existing transit infrastructure and coordinating with regional partners, SETD is demonstrating responsible stewardship of public resources while addressing a critical community need.

Improving transportation access is directly tied to better health outcomes, increased independence, and stronger community engagement for our veterans. This project aligns with our local commitment to supporting those who have served and ensuring equitable access to essential services in rural Oregon.

I fully support this proposal and respectfully urge the committee to fund the Patriot Pathways program. Thank you for your continued investment in Oregon's rural veterans.

Sincerely,

Barb Knop, Cannon Beach Mayor and the Cannon Beach City Council