



# Friends of *Streamline*

*Catch the Current!*



A Program of  HRDC

## MAY NEWSLETTER

Despite having to navigate some challenges due to COVID-19, April was a successful month for Streamline and for the Friends of Streamline group. We are still really excited and optimistic about the future of Streamline and public transit in Bozeman. Thanks for being part of the conversation!



### ONLINE MEET UP RECAP

Thanks to everyone who participated in our online meet up a few weeks ago. We had an awesome discussion about the existing conditions report and generated some ideas for how to better distribute the Redesign Streamline 2020 survey. We'll be hosting another meeting in the late summer/early fall. Until then, please be on the look out for upcoming public comment opportunities. The City of Bozeman's budget will be unveiled June 1st, and we'll need you help in ensuring transit is included.

### \$ COVID-19 FUNDING FOR TRANSIT

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act that was passed by Congress in March allocated \$35 million to rural transit providers in Montana. Since Bozeman is a rural transit system, Streamline (and Galavan) became eligible for this new funding. This additional money has enabled us to continue to pay our furloughed drivers as well as those drivers who are working fewer hours. It also covers the costs of our additional cleaning efforts and the 10 percent hazard pay increase that we are now giving our drivers.

**155** Friends of Streamline Members



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## COVID-19 Q&A

### **Why is Streamline still running?**

Public transportation is considered an essential service because it provides dependable transportation to healthcare workers, medical professionals, grocery store employees, and many other essential workers. It also provides much needed transportation to those who need to access essential services.

### **What changes has Streamline made to adjust to COVID-19?**

Streamline suspended the Bridger Bowl route, Campus Shuttle, and 1/2-hour frequency services in mid-March to respond to changes in service demand. On its routes that remained in service, Streamline adopted many cleaning measures, such as rotating through buses, creating a driver "buffer zone", asking drivers and riders to wear face masks, and disinfecting the buses multiple times a day.

### **What has happened to ridership during the pandemic?**

As expected, ridership in March and April was lower than in previous years. This lower ridership was due to fewer routes running and fewer riders riding. We asked riders to only use public transit for essential trips due to Montana's Stay-at-Home order. Thus, we expected much lower ridership than normal.

### **How will the COVID-19 pandemic affect future public transit funding?**

Because Streamline is a zero-fare transit service, it did not experience an immediate revenue decrease due to the pandemic. However, if the pandemic impacts the Bozeman 2020 Census count, funding could be affected in future years. In addition, if COVID-19 results in a substantial economic downturn, our current timeline for creating an Urban Transit District (UTD) could be delayed. A UTD requires a 20% voter initiative and a majority voter approval. If approved, it would create a sustainable annual revenue stream for public transit in the Triangle Area and would enable Streamline to significantly expand service.