

**COLUMBIA COUNTY CITIZEN TRANSIT ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND  
STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT FUND COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date:** January 17, 2023

**Time:** 6:15 P.M.

**Place:** Columbia County Transit, St. Helens, OR

**Present:** Karen MacKenzie, Marty Rowe, Pam Heimuller, Dennis Spitze

**Absent:** Dena Chesney

**Staff:** John Dreeszen, Transit Director

**Guests:** Alta Lynch (virtual), Patty Hawkins (virtual), Collette Tipper (virtual)

**Call to Order (CCRTAC):** Chair MacKenzie called the meeting to order at 6:19 P.M.

**Approval of November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes:** The Committee approved the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes unanimously.

**Public Comments:** The Committee paused for public comment and PCC OMIC's new Director, Patty Hawkins, introduced herself to the committee. Collette Tipper, PCC OMIC's Government Relations Manager, also introduced herself. Both guests are interested in learning more about CC Rider's services and how PCC OMIC may be helpful.

**Line 1 Portland Ridership Update:** Mr. Dreeszen wanted to provide the committee a comparison of Line 1 ridership from the first 16 days of January 2022 and January 2023 regarding the impact of the service reduction. In January 2022 CC Rider provided 388 one-way trips on Line 1 compared to January 2023 which has seen 271 one-way trips. As of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023 service was reduced by 66% and ridership has since reduced by 30%.

Chair MacKenzie commented that she has noticed that most of riders she's familiar with are still riding into Portland, but she has seen new faces coming into St. Helens in the evenings. Chair MacKenzie did note that approximately half of the evening riders wait up to a minimum of half an hour before the evening bus arrives and the rest only wait about ten minutes or less. Chair MacKenzie believed that she would hear complaints about the reduced service from riders but was surprised to hear mostly gratitude that Line 1 is still operating at all.

**SETD Grant Application Review:** Mr. Dreeszen wanted to turn the committee to the topic of upcoming grant applications. CC Rider's Northwest Oregon Transit Association's (NWOTA) partner, Sunset Empire Transit District (SETD), has put in an application to fund an extension to their daily service that will continue onto the PDX Airport. Sunset Empire District has asked CC Rider to either endorse or not endorse their application.

The committee discussed the advantages this extension would bring to Columbia County residents as there is no direct public transportation to the PDX Airport. Committee member Heimuller while seeing the benefits of this proposal shared that she is worried how this could potentially affect CC Rider ridership. Committee Member Rowe shared that he spoke about the grant application on KOHI Radio and that it garnered public excitement. Chair MacKenzie believes that this grant could bring residents from Cowlitz county over the bridge and utilize the Rainier Transit Center as a connection point to board this service. 3 out of 4 members of the committee approved to endorse the SETD grant application.

**Committee Round Table:** Mr. Dreeszen updated the committee on CC Rider's exploration into a van pool collaboration with Enterprise. The proposed draft agreement states that Enterprise agrees to provide vehicles while CC Rider would agree to provide 'ride matching', which would mean grouping together rides with a similar destination.

Chair MacKenzie asked Mr. Dreeszen how CC Rider would ultimately benefit from this partnership. Mr. Dreeszen explained to the committee that this partnership can create additional rides which plays into the reporting that is required to create formula fund grants for transit agencies. The committee continued to speak about the possibilities this van pool could create, such as transportation for students to the PCC OMIC campus in Scappoose, Intel in Portland, Wauna Paper Mill in Clatsop County, and even transportation for Columbia County residents that work in the Longview/Kelso area.

Committee member Rowe voiced his support of the van pool collaboration because it offers an advantage within the county & agrees with Committee member Heimuller that he doesn't believe it will compete with the Line 1 commuter service. Committee member Rowe went on to say that the van pool collaboration would be a great marketing opportunity as it would bring CC Rider back into the awareness of Columbia County.

Chair MacKenzie requested an update for the CC Rider posters that Committee member Rowe and Mr. Dreeszen were previously drafting. Committee member Rowe shared that the posters were finalized, and they have been posted on community bulletin boards, senior center facilities, and local businesses around Columbia County. Mr. Dreeszen is going to look into getting a version of this poster made into a decal to be wrapped on CC Rider buses.

Committee member Heimuller asked out guest from PCC what their interest is in CC Rider. Ms. Hawkins answered that the training center is interested in being a supporter and collaborator. She is interested in getting posters for the center and sharing information on the PCC OMIC website and social media page regarding CC Rider resources. She shared that one of the biggest hurdles for students attending PCC OMIC is transportation and she wants to be well versed in what options are available for current, potential students, and the community. Ms. Hawkins went on to explain that the PCC OMIC center offers apprenticeship courses for skilled labor, general adult education, community education, and in May 2023 will open a 'Fab Lab' that aims to bring the community into the center for fun activities.

Committee member Heimuller shifted the topic to paratransit and potentially how CC Rider could combine the idea with micro-transit. Committee member Heimuller believes that CC Rider could change its operations, vehicles, and combining the two with existing resources. Mr. Dreeszen explained that paratransit doesn't apply to CC Rider because our fixed route service is classified as 'commuter' and is not required to provide complimentary paratransit. Committee member Heimuller clarified that she is more interested in making the Dial-A-Ride service more efficient overall because many riders are currently using it as a taxi service.

Committee member Rowe brought forth a point of order that today's advisory meeting time is in violation of the committee bylaws, which state that the committee must meet during service hours. The committee members will discuss through email the best time to conduct future meetings that are in accordance with the bylaws.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 7:50 P.M.