

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

Meeting Date: July 18, 2023

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit, St. Helens, OR

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

Absent: Denise Watson, Dena Chesney

Staff: John Dreeszen, Transit Director

Guests: Lauren Read, Mobility Management Coordinator - Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments

Call to Order (CCRTAC): Chair MacKenzie called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M.

Approval of May 16, 2023 Meeting Minutes: The Committee approved the May 16, 2023 meeting minutes unanimously.

Public Comments: The Committee paused for public comment, and none was given.

Chair Karen MacKenzie wanted to take the opportunity to share with the committee, if they hadn't heard already, that one of the CC Rider's drivers unfortunately passed away. She shared information for his memorial services and stressed what a wonderful & caring individual Mark Crampton was.

Guest Lauren Read shared that the mobility management program has completed its second year and has received funding from Washington state for an additional four years. Miss Read has created a youth activity book that demonstrates how to use public transit and all the safety aspects. Regional transportation meetings have begun as a method for all local providers in Longview and Rainier to have continuous communication, especially when it comes to changes in routes.

Line 1 Portland Ridership Update: Mr. Dreeszen provided the committee with handouts that compare the ridership for Line 1 and Dial-A-Ride from last quarter (April-June 2023) and from this time last year. Mr. Dreeszen wanted to highlight that when comparing the data, it is

important to remember that last year Line 1 had six runs into Portland whereas this year it is only two. Chair MacKenzie notes that although ridership is not the same as last year, CC Rider is appearing to be more efficient with the number of riders it is taking in with just two runs.

Dial-A-Ride Update: Along with the Line 1 comparison, Mr. Dreeszen also included Dial-A-Ride data that shows that ridership is about the same as it was last year. Mr. Dreeszen shared that over the last few weeks there have been instances where it's been clear that some drivers are far exceeding their duties when it comes to assisting riders. Mr. Dreeszen wants to focus on standardizing internal procedures so no matter who the driver is, the rider can expect the same level of service.

Committee member Spitze asked how far the Dial-A-Ride boundary lines are. Mr. Dreeszen explained that Dial-A-Ride primarily focuses on travel through St. Helens, Warren, Scappoose, Columbia City and Deer Island. Every Thursday a single Dial-A-Ride vehicle goes to the North end of Columbia County for riders in Rainier and Clatskanie that have appointments and errands to complete in Longview, WA. Every week on alternating Tuesdays and Wednesdays a Dial-A-Ride vehicle goes into Portland to take riders for advanced scheduled medical appointments.

ODOT/FTA Periodic Review: Mr. Dreeszen shared with the committee that the compliance review in May 2023 and it went exceptionally well. The reviewers only found two items, or compliance observations, that needed to be corrected whereas in 2020 there were eleven items.

Mr. Dreeszen explained that the compliance observations noted are mirror images of each other and only require some editing. CC Rider's ADA and Civil Rights policies include protected classes from the other's policy and the reviewers have asked that each policy only reflect its protected classes as outlined in the law. The third item found is more of a suggestion, but the reviews would like to see the ADA and Civil Rights policies posted at physical locations.

The reviewers give Transit providers 60 days to correct all compliance observations which Mr. Dreeszen believes will be an easy fix.

Service & Performance Survey: Mr. Dreeszen pivoted the conversation to the exploration of potential new services for CC Rider with input from Columbia County residents, not solely focused on current riders. Mr. Dreeszen gave the committee a goal of creating a survey that is wide reaching, open ended, with multiple options. Mr. Dreeszen will focus on tools and resources to get the survey known to as many residents as possible and the committee will focus on crafting the survey questions. Chair MacKenzie wants for the committee to prepare some questions and suggestions in time for the next committee meeting.

Committee Round Table: Mr. Dreeszen updated the committee on one of CC Rider's transit partners, Sunset Empire Transportation District, and where they are financially after their sudden halt of services. Mr. Dreeszen has been working closely with the Interim Executive Director and Finance Officer to build up a financial system to restore local services in Clatsop County. Sunset Empire has received a loan from ODOT to keep limited and local services on the road for its residents. After Mr. Dreeszen has studied their financials, he believes that the current services they are offering (1 fixed route, ADA Paratransit, and limited Dial-A-Ride) will remain the same for the next biennium. He does not anticipate that Sunset Empire will reinstate the Lower Columbia Connector as the price to fund that route was much more expensive than he believes the staff were aware.

Mr. Dreeszen also shared that two of the four Ford Transit vans that were ordered in January 2020 have arrived in Portland and on July 22nd he will accompany a hired consulate to complete inspections.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:08 P.M.