

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

**Meeting Date:** August 13, 2024

**Time:** 4:00 P.M.

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

**Present:** Karen MacKenzie, Pam Heimuller, Dennis Spitze, Marty Rowe, Denise Watson (virtual)

**Absent:** N/A

**Staff:** John Dreeszen, Transit Director

**Guests:** Natalee Phelps (virtual), Alta Lynch (virtual)

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

**Approval of May 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes:** The Committee approved the May 21, 2024 meeting minutes unanimously.

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

**Summer Events:** Mr. Dreeszen shared with the committee that the last of the summer community events have been completed. CC Rider took part in two new events this year, the Columbia City Community Library History Tour and the CCMH Picnic at the Fairgrounds.

**Soft Survey Show & Tell:** Mr. Dreeszen made copies available to the committee of the QR code that will take participants directly to the Transit Survey when it goes live.

**ColPac Contract:** Mr. Dreeszen explained to the committee that ColPac, Columbia Pacific Development District, is a regional economic development entity that provides administrative and research support to many transit providers and North West Oregon Transportation Association, NWOTA. Mr. Dreeszen has been speaking with ColPac regarding doing the research and provide talking points that may be educational to legislators about the loss of revenue that impacts Columbia County is specifically due to the Oregon Transit Tax.

Mr. Dreeszen recently has a meeting with ColPac and members of South Clackamas County transit providers as they share the same loss of revenue to TriMet. Mr. Dreeszen was surprised that these transit providers didn't share the same sentiment when it came to possibly changing the legislation to recoup those funds. As members of the Oregon Transit Association, OTA, they believe that all Transit providers should be on the same page and support the OTA, which in turn would support the legislation as it is.

**Legislative Outlook:** The OTA recently announced to its members that it is hoping to introduce new legislation to double the current Oregon Transit Tax. ODOT, Oregon Department of Transportation, is on board with this idea as it will get additional funding from OTA.

**NWOTA:** Mr. Dreeszen, in support with ColPac, took their grievance for the current legislation to the partners at NWOTA. CC Rider was given the same reception as with South Clackamas County. Other Transit providers do not share the same sentiment as CC Rider and are in support of the OTA and increasing the tax via legislation. Given these revelations, Mr. Dreeszen is unclear whether CC Rider should be a NWOTA member any longer.

In agreement with Mr. Dreeszen, Committee member Rowe questions how continuing to pay NWOTA member dues benefits CC Rider if our transit partners do show any support. Mr. Dreeszen went on to explain that NWOTA was formed as a method of increasing operation, connectivity, and promoting the service between neighboring counties. Unfortunately, CC Rider no longer has any connectivity to its NWOTA partners. Mr. Dreeszen believes that by the end of Fiscal year 2025, CC Rider should withdraw from NWOTA. Alternatively, Mr. Dreeszen also suggests ending the contract with ColPac as there doesn't seem to be any favorable outcome for CC Rider.

**Grant Planning:** Mr. Dreeszen shared with the committee that CC Rider ended the 2023-2024 fiscal year in good standing. Grant applications will be opening in the coming weeks and the committee will discuss how to use those funds.

**Committee Round Table:** The committee discussed Mr. Dreeszen's upcoming retirement. Mr. Dreeszen shared that three interviews for the Transit Program Manager were completed today and one more will follow tomorrow. One or two candidates will advance to another interview and will involve one of the County Commissioners.

**Adjourn:** The meeting adjourned at 5:17 P.M.