

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

Meeting Date: March 18, 2025

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit Center, St Helens, OR

Present: Karen MacKenzie, Dennis Spitze, Marty Rowe (Virtual), Denise Watson, Angela Rose, Brandy Johnson

Absent: Pam Heimuller

Staff: Chris Wheatley, Transit Director; Heather Shaw, Admin Assistant

Guests: Heather Epperly, Megan Wirtz (Virtual), "Any New Riders" (Virtual)

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

Approval of February Meeting Minutes: The Committee approved the February 18, 2025 meeting minutes unanimously.

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

Personnel Update: Mr. Wheatley shared that the on-call driver that was in the process of being hired fell through last minute. There is a new job listing posed on the county website for an on-call part time transit driver. Mr. Wheatley also shared that CC Rider is looking to fill a Bus Washer position. Mr. Wheatley shared that in order to get that job posted he has to present it to the County Commissioners and get it approved by them at an upcoming meeting. The bus washer job will be 15 hours a week. Mr. Wheatley shared that for now the drivers are cleaning their buses, and the staff is working together to keep the Transit Center clean in the meantime.

Participation in Upcoming Events: Mr. Wheatley shared that he has been looking to be a part of at least one community event per month for the rest of the year. CC Rider will be running a shuttle for multiple events in the upcoming months. Member Rose suggested that CC Rider provide a shuttle for Rainer Days in July, as well as River days in Rainer. Mr. Wheatley commented that if there is anyone putting on an event and wants CC Rider to provide a shuttle, to contact him to get things set up.

Potential Committee Member Projects: Mr. Wheatley proposed that the committee members get involved in some of the community events with CC Rider. For example, the Senior Health fair that is happening in September. Members suggested that CC Rider sell bus tickets at their booth at the health fair. Mr. Wheatley shared that he will send out emails to members to see if they would like to be involved in upcoming events. Mr. Wheatley suggested that members could be involved in projects relating to rider education; like how to place a bike on the bus, or how easy it is to ride the bus if you're in a wheelchair. An event like this could take place at the Transit Center and allow those in the community to get comfortable and familiar with riding the bus. Mr. Wheatley also suggested that some members could look into CC Riders pet policy and educate the public on that.

Updates: Mr. Wheatley shared that he talked to Mike at the roads department about removing old bus stop signs, and Mike said that he can help with that. Mr. Wheatley shared that one of CC Riders dispatches has been using google maps to locate old signs that need to be removed. Mr. Wheatley will also be driving around to locate old bus stop signs as well. Members were concerned that removing the old signs may cost CC Rider more money to put up signs if there are more routes added. Members also shared that some riders were used to getting on the bus at one location and may be upset that the bus stop has moved in the future.

Committee Roundtable: Mr. Wheatley shared that RiverCity Transit is looking into adding a route from Longview WA to Rainer. This may allow CC Rider to add a route that runs twice a day to Rainer to connect to that route to Longview. Mr. Wheatley shared that research, and a survey would need to be completed to gauge if the community would be interested in using that route.

Heather Epperly shared information about the "mEgga Egg Hunt" event that she is hosting at the fair grounds on April 19th. She shared that she would need about 72 volunteers for the event to happen. She also shared that CC Rider will be shuttling those who park at McBride school and those who ride the bus will receive a free pair of bunny ears. It was shared that there will be a new QR code feature at the event that will allow guest to upload photos they take while at the event.

Member Rowe shared that the buses could be washed as a fundraiser for the clubs at the high school. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that this may not be possible with the county having a minimum age requirement to wash buses for insurance purposes. Guest Megan Wirtz shared that she can provide youth activity books to hand out on the bus at upcoming community events.

Adjourn: Chair MacKenzie adjourned the meeting at 4:51 P.M.