

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

Meeting Date: May 20, 2025

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit Center, St Helens, OR

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

Absent: N/A

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

Guests: Jim Seeks, Robert Stevens

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

Approval of April Meeting Minutes: The Committee approved the April 15, 2025 meeting minutes unanimously.

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

Guest Speaker, Jim Seeks: Mr. Seeks shared that RiverCities Transit is coming to Rainier. Federal funding from DOT was designated to go to Columbia County, but here was no match. RiverCities then picked up the funding to make a connection to Rainer. The Federal Transit Administrations has had a reduction in staff, so the process has been slow. Mr. Seeks has asked the city council of Raider to help with the funding. Proposing 4 trips a day from the Rainer Transit Center, Rainer Senior Center, and the RiverCities Transit Center. The city of Rainer did a survey of the Rainer community, to see what times the community would like. Will survey again at the beginning of the summer to see if the proposed times are working. Mr. Seeks shared there is talk of some students in Rainer who are wanting to get to LCC. The proposed times may not work for that. They are testing out the schedule for now (see attached schedule). Mr. Seeks shared that it isn't easy to change the schedule because of their drivers work schedules. Member Watson asked about the local match, Mr. Seeks shared it was roughly \$48,000. RiverCities is asking \$10,000 from Rainer, the remaining from Cowlitz Transit Authority. This funding is from one-year grants, with the first one lapsing in June. Mr. Seeks shared that they will be charging the same fares as they do on RiverCities routes. 18 and under can ride free, 12 or under also ride free, but need to be accompanied by an adult. Mr. Seeks shared that one of their Cutaway buses is ready for this service. That bus is propane powered. The route has a July 1st start date, Monday through Friday. The bus has the capacity for two Wheelchairs. The cutaway is a 15-passenger bus. If ridership grows, they will

look into larger buses. Mr. Seeks shared he asked Washington state for funding for a Longview to Vancouver route. That would run 6 times a day if approved. Member Rowe mentioned that he received a call asking if someone would staff the Rainier Transit Center. Mr. Seeks shared that he doesn't have the staff to do that. Mr. Wheatley would be the point of contact to have someone staff that building. Mr. Seeks shared that a schedule will be posted online, and other places like the senior center and transit center for the Rainier route. Mr. Seeks shared the name of the route is Route 433. The next big step for the Longview/Kelso area is to add another hour of service at night. Mr. Seeks mentioned LCC staff and registered students can ride for free, some funding is given to RiverCities for that. Member Watson asked if the bus can be left at the Rainier Transit center. Mr. Seeks shared that due to security and insurance, the buses need to be housed behind a fence.

PCC/CHS Voucher Updates: Mr. Wheatley shared that he sent flyers and brochures to give out to OMIC students about CC Rider services. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that OMIC want to use CC Rider to get 10 to 20 students to a class in the months of June and January. That will add an additional 100 rides. Mr. Wheatley shared that Columbia Health Services received a grant to provide vouchers. We received 17 vouchers from them in April. The grant CHS received can provide up to 30,000 rides. Many organizations have been given vouchers to give to their clients. Chair MacKenzie asked if the vouchers can be given to pharmacies. Mr. Wheatley shared that the grant says that the vouchers can go to specific organizations. Member Heimuller suggested a flyer be put at the pharmacies to get the voucher information out. Mr. Wheatley shared that he would talk to CHS about it. Vouchers can be used for Dial-A-Ride.

Personnel Update: Mr. Wheatley shared that the new bus washer/back up driver started last Monday. He's going through training, and that is going well. There may be a retirement soon, the new employee may step into that position when the time comes.

Additional Decals on Bus 2440: Mr. Wheatley shared that there have been comments like, "What's a CC Rider?", in relation to what's on the buses. Mr. Wheatley shared he wants to add decals of the cities we go to and add "Columbia County Public Transportation" on the back on the buses. Chair MacKenzie added that the public transportation needs to be added to the side as well. Mr. Wheatley shared that adding the decals on the big bus will be about 100 dollars. The new round of buses arriving in about 2 years will have updated decals.

Committee Roundtable: Mr. Wheatley shared that CC Rider attended the NAMI Mental Health walk on Saturday. We received Dial-A-Ride registrations and passed out flyers and brochures. Member Rowe shared that the Vanpool idea has lived its course and is no longer going to work. Member Rose mentioned that there was a comment at the fair about the vanpool to Hillsboro and she mentioned that it was out of their price range. The contract with Enterprise vanpool ends at the end of July. Mr. Wheatley shared that CC Rider will not participate in the program any longer. The money set aside could be used for other things. Mr. Seeks shared that their Vanpool program didn't work well either. Mr. Wheatley shared that Enterprise is working with its companies and we were working with individuals. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that it doesn't seem like anything is happening on their end either. Mr. Wheatley talked to the former Mayor of Vernonia, and he shared that he purchased a small bus. He wants to run trips from Vernonia to St. Helens and Scappoose. It will be expensive for riders to take that bus. Likely \$30 to ride. Member

Rose asked about going to Clatskanie to meet up with RiverCities. Mr. Wheatley stated that it's a possibility. CC Rider would like to start a couple runs a day, then add more if they are needed. Chair MacKenzie shared that her and Member Rowe's term will be done after next meeting.

Adjourn: Chair MacKenzie adjourned the meeting at 4:52 P.M.



Memorandum

April 1, 2025

TO: Scott Jorgensen, Rainier City Administrator
FROM: Jim Seek, Transit Manager
SUBJECT: Sample Rainier-Longview Schedule and Fares

Based on the survey results and operating necessities, a sample Monday Friday schedule might appear similar to this:

Sample RCT Schedule: Mon - Fri

Rainier Transit Center	8:40	11:40	2:40	4:40
Rainier Senior Center	8:43	11:43	2:43	4:43
RiverCities Transit Center – arrv.	8:55	11:55	2:55	4:55
RiverCities Transit Center – dep.	9:00	12:00	3:00	5:00
Rainier Transit Center	9:15	12:15	3:15	5:15
Rainier Senior Center	9:18	12:18	3:18	5:18

This schedule permits transfers to/from most RiverCities Transit routes.

The fares would be the same as for other RiverCities routes, currently:

<u>Fixed Route Fares</u>	<u>One Way</u>	<u>Day Pass</u>
Adult (19-64)	\$1.00	\$2.00
Reduced (persons with disabilities and seniors 65+)	\$0.50	\$1.00
18 and Under with proper identification	Free	Free
(Under 12 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian)		

Transfers are free with a one-way fare and valid for one use on the day of purchase.

Monthly passes are also available.