

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

Meeting Date: January 20, 2026

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit Center, St Helens, OR

Present: Pam Heimuller, Angela Rose, Denise Watson

Absent: Dennis Spitze

Staff: Chris Wheatley, Transit Director

Guests: Megan Wirtz, Aire Uusitalo (virtual), “Bus with EMPTY Seats” (virtual), Alta (virtual)

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

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

Public Comments: Guest Uusitalo shared that they prepared route maps that could be used in the future and shared them with the committee. Those routes include two “Flex” routes in St. Helens, a fixed route to Hillsboro, an expansion of Line 1 to include stops in St. Johns, and a route from Hillsboro to Clatskanie along highway 47. (Links to the suggested routes can be found at the bottom of this document.)

Staff Replacement: Mr. Wheatley shared that a driver left with no notice three weeks ago. There are applications coming in, as well as a few scheduled interviews. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that it has been difficult to find someone with their Commercial Driver’s License (CDL). There are currently three drivers who have a CDL, but Mr. Wheatley stated that he would like to have four. Chair Heimuller asked if the part time driver hired as a utility worker/driver could move into the position. Mr. Wheatley shared that he is currently washing buses and driving Dial-a-Ride, which frees up the CDL drivers to drive Line 1. Chair Heimuller asked how soon a new driver could be hired. Mr. Wheatley stated that he should have a new driver selected by the end of the week, and then the hiring process can start. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that HR puts out job listings online, but he has found that the sign he made and placed outside has brought more people in to inquire about job positions.

Committee Members: Mr. Wheatley shared that Member Johnson resigned from her position, leaving the committee one member short. The committee needs to have at least five members, but ideally seven. Member Watson shared that she knows of someone who applied, and Mr. Wheatley shared that

Brian from Tillamook may join the committee. Mr. Wheatley will then join the Transit Committee in Tillamook.

Budget/Grants: Mr. Wheatley shared that the counties finance department is doing an audit at the moment, and the amendment application for the STIF grant just opened up, allowing for the Vanpool program to be removed from the list of projects. Reimbursement requests can now be submitted as well. Members discussed the current status of Oregon's Transportation Bill. Guest Uusitalo shared that TriMet is cutting service to Linnton and suggested that CC Rider extend their Dial-a-Ride service to Linnton. Chair Heimuller asked if it would be beneficial to do some surveys to see what services should be expanding. Mr. Wheatley shared that there are no changes in the budget until next year, 2027, during the next grant cycle. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that there is a meeting with finance about the budget in February.

Committee Roundtable: Member Rose asked Mr. Wheatley how the Line 1 extension is doing. Mr. Wheatley shared that there could always be more riders to Rainier. Member Watson shared that she had a meeting with RiverCities Transit to discuss the possibility of getting another connection, specifically the stop at the Senior Center. Member Rose asked about a timeline for when Line 1 can expand to Clatskanie. Mr. Wheatley shared that it would have to wait until the next grant cycle. Members discussed Park and Ride lots in the Rainier and Warren areas. Guest Wirtz discusses more about the meeting with Watson and RiverCities regarding promoting the Transit Center in Rainier with the goal of increasing ridership for both CC Rider and RiverCities. Members and Guest Wirtz discussed community events for the next year.

Guest Wirtz shared a list of organizations that she wants to reach out to with the goal to help get the word out about service. She asked the board what organizations they would like to see added to the list. Chair Heimuller shared that she thinks that schools and social service offices should be added to the organization outreach list. Mr. Wheatley shared that he has had a few meetings with the Columbia County tourism representative from the Columbia Economic Team.

Member Rose asked Mr. Wheatley about PCC wanting to have service, and he shared that nothing has happened with that. He shared that when he spoke to PCC last, they were wanting a bus to go to the Rock Creek campus. Chair Heimuller asked Mr. Wheatley if he followed up with his connection with Sunset Empire and the mayor in Vernonia/Ride Connections. Mr. Wheatley shared that Sunset Empire is unable to make any changes/additions to service for another year, and the mayor in Vernonia is using their bus for charter services. Guest Wirtz shared that she is doing a transportation survey and that information will go into a service plan for local organizations. The survey closes April 3rd.

Members discuss the possibility of having a resource fair this summer on a Wednesday when Rainier has their summer concerts. Member Rose suggested having a booth at the park where the concerts are held. Mr. Wheatley shared the wins that CC Rider has had for the Holiday competitions that the count departments participate in. Mr. Wheatley shared that there will be an ODOT audit at the end of February. Guest Uusitalo recommends that new buses are low-floor buses to be more ADA accessible, as well as adding a digital payment option. Mr. Wheatley shared that he is in the process of adding Token Transit as a digital payment option.

Adjourn: Chair Heimuller adjourned the meeting at 5:05 pm.

Documents shared/discussed in the meeting:

- https://teams.microsoft.com/l/message/19:meeting_NmUwYWQ4MTUtYjYyOS00NDM4LWlzOTkzWE5MzNINDRIODYx@thread.v2/1768954338374?context=%7B%22contextType%22%3A%22chat%22%7D
- https://teams.microsoft.com/l/message/19:meeting_NmUwYWQ4MTUtYjYyOS00NDM4LWlzOTkzWE5MzNINDRIODYx@thread.v2/1768954283646?context=%7B%22contextType%22%3A%22chat%22%7D
- https://teams.microsoft.com/l/message/19:meeting_NmUwYWQ4MTUtYjYyOS00NDM4LWlzOTkzWE5MzNINDRIODYx@thread.v2/1768954296449?context=%7B%22contextType%22%3A%22chat%22%7D
- https://teams.microsoft.com/l/message/19:meeting_NmUwYWQ4MTUtYjYyOS00NDM4LWlzOTkzWE5MzNINDRIODYx@thread.v2/1768954309508?context=%7B%22contextType%22%3A%22chat%22%7D
- https://teams.microsoft.com/l/message/19:meeting_NmUwYWQ4MTUtYjYyOS00NDM4LWlzOTkzWE5MzNINDRIODYx@thread.v2/1768954325820?context=%7B%22contextType%22%3A%22chat%22%7D
- https://teams.microsoft.com/l/message/19:meeting_NmUwYWQ4MTUtYjYyOS00NDM4LWlzOTkzWE5MzNINDRIODYx@thread.v2/1768954338374?context=%7B%22contextType%22%3A%22chat%22%7D

Columbia County Organizations for CWCOG Mobility & CC Rider Outreach - last updated Jan 2026													
#	County	Company Name	Agency Type	Website	Address	Contact Name	Email Address	Phone Number	Type of Outreach	Who reached out	Follow-up date	Notes	
1	Columbia	St. Helens High School	School		2375 Gable Rd, St Helens, OR 97051	TBD		(503) 391-1900				800 students	
2	Columbia	Rainier Jr./Sr. High School	School		28110 Old Rainier Rd, Rainier, OR	TBD		(503) 556-4215					
3	Columbia	Scappoose High School	School		33700 SE High School Way, Scappoose, OR	TBD		(371) 200-8000					
4	Columbia	OMIC Training Center at PCC Columbia County Center - Portland Community College	School	https://www.pcc.edu/	34001 NE Wagner Ct, Scappoose, OR 97056	TBD		(371) 722-6111					
5	Columbia	Rainier Riverfront Center	Community		375 S 15th St, St. Helens OR	TBD							
6	Columbia	Columbia Pacific Food Bank	Community		125 N 17th St, St. Helens, OR	TBD		(503) 391-9108					
7	Columbia	Columbia County Economic Team	Community		125 N 17th St, St. Helens, OR	TBD		503) 410-2000					
8	Columbia	Community Action Program - CAP	Community	https://cap.org/	108 E B St, 106 West B Street	Katie May	kmsy@cap-tsm.org					Attended Resource Fair 2025	
9	Columbia	City of Rainier	Community		106 West B Street	Denise						Attended Resource Fair 2025	
10	Columbia	City of Scappoose	Community		33568 E Columbia Ave, Scappoose, OR 97056	TBD							
11	Columbia	City of St. Helens	Community		265 Strand Street, St. Helens, Oregon	TBD							
12	Columbia	HOPE of Rainier	Community		404 East A Street PO Box 448 Rainier, OR 97048	Kelly Miller	hops37048@gmail.com	503-556-0701				Attended Resource Fair 2025	
13	Columbia	Kiwanis & Rotary clubs in Rainier/St. Helens	Community			TBD							
14	Columbia	Local VFW & American Legion posts	Community			TBD							
15	Columbia	Rainier Library	Library		106 W B St, Rainier, OR 97048	TBD		(503) 556-1301				Attended Resource Fair 2025	
16	Columbia	St. Helens Library	Library		375 S 18th St A, St Helens, OR 97051	TBD		(503) 391-4544					
17	Columbia	Scappoose Library	Library		52469 SE 2nd St, Scappoose, OR 97056	TBD		(503) 543-7123					
18	Columbia	Clatskanie Library	Library		11 Lillich St, Clatskanie, OR 97016	TBD		(503) 128-3732					
19	Columbia	Rainier Chamber	Community			TBD							
20	Columbia	Solway Apts.	Low-income housing		500 SW Bel Air Drive Clatskanie					Megan		Megan dropped off materials 2025	
21	Columbia	Columbia Park	Low-income housing		47 W 7th St Rainier								
22	Columbia	Victorian/Olivia Ct. Apts.	Low-income housing		33878 E. Columbia Ave Scappoose								
23	Columbia	Sycamore View Apts.	Low-income housing		33445 SW Sycamore St Scappoose								
24	Columbia	Kerns Apts.	Low-income housing		33703 Myrtle Street Scappoose								
25	Columbia	BrookShore Apts.	Low-income housing		52279 SW 4th St Scappoose								
26	Columbia	Meadow Lark	Low-income housing		NE 1st St Scappoose								
27	Columbia	Waxwings Apts.	Low-income housing		33763 E Columbia Ave Scappoose								
28	Columbia	Creekside Apts.	Low-income housing		52520 SW 4th St Scappoose								
29	Columbia	Sawyer Pointe Apts.	Low-income housing		52588 NE Sawyer St. Scappoose								
30	Columbia	Equitact Apts.	Low-income housing		33730 E Columbia Ave Scappoose								
31	Columbia	Candlelight Apts.	Low-income housing		51571 SE 2nd St. Scappoose								
32	Columbia	Columbia Hills Retirement Center	Low-income housing		36050 Pittsburgh Rd. Saint Helens								
33	Columbia	Gable Park Apts.	Low-income housing		2544 Gable Rd Saint Helens								
34	Columbia	Hidden Oaks	Low-income housing		26000 Gable Rd. Saint Helens								
35	Columbia	Big River	Low-income housing		345 N 16th St Saint Helens								
36	Columbia	Northcrest	Low-income housing		184 Broadway St. Saint Helens								
37	Columbia	Two Rivers Apts.	Low-income housing		544 N 10th St Saint Helens								
38	Columbia	The Crest Apts.	Low-income housing		244 N 14th at Saint Helens								
39	Columbia	18th Street Apts.	Low-income housing		134 N 18th St Saint Helens								
40	Columbia	Franklin Manor	Low-income housing		86 Shore Dr Saint Helens								
41	Columbia	St Helens Place Apts.	Low-income housing		700 Matzen St Saint Helens								
42	Columbia	Riverside Place Apts.	Low-income housing		405 South 2nd Street Saint Helens								
43	Columbia	Orcadia	Low-income housing		30 Cowlitz St Saint Helens								
44	Columbia	McCormick Apts.	Low-income housing		1691 Old Portland Rd Saint Helens								
45	Columbia	Lincoln Square Apts.	Low-income housing		98 Shore Drive Saint Helens								
46	Columbia	Arrowmilk Apts.	Low-income housing		2415 Columbia Blvd. Saint Helens								
47	Columbia	Forest Park Apts.	Low-income housing		2545 Columbia Blvd. Saint Helens								
48	Columbia	Broadleaf Arbor	Low-income housing		2250 Gable Rd. Saint Helens								
49	Columbia	Ark Realty	Low-income housing		Multiple locations								
50	Columbia	PMP	Low-income housing		Multiple locations								
51	Columbia	River City Rentals	Low-income housing		Multiple locations								

HOW DO YOU GET TO WHERE YOU NEED TO GO?

Share Your Experience of When, Where, and How you get around....



Cowlitz-Wahkiakum
Council of Governments
TRANSPORTATION



Your Voice Matters!



Fill out this short transportation survey to help make a change!

Make a difference by providing your feedback on the current and future accessible transportation needs in Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, and Wahkiakum Counties

Marque la diferencia brindando información sobre sus necesidades actuales y futuras de transporte accesible en los condados de Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific y Wahkiakum



Scan the QR code or go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CWCOG26Access>
You can also access the digital or print a physical survey by going to our website at www.cwcog.org
Survey Closes April 3rd, 2026

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