

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

Meeting Date: March 17, 2026

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit Center, St Helens, OR

Present: Pam Heimuller, Dennis Spitze, Denise Watson, Angela Rose, Nicolle Tasoulas

Absent: N/A

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

Guests: Megan Wirtz, Aire Uusitalo (virtual), "Bus Empty Seats" (virtual)

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

Approval of February Minutes: The Committee approved (with suggested edits) the February 17, 2026 meeting minutes unanimously.

Public Comments: Guest Uusitalo asked for an update regarding Token Transit. Mr. Wheatley shared that he is still talking with them about their services.

ODOT Audit: Mr. Wheatley shared that there was an ODOT Audit that took place at the Transit Center last month. He shared what the audit looked into and mentioned that the audit took two days to complete. Mr. Wheatley shared with members that he will receive the official report in 45 days. He shared that the changes he will have to make will be small. Mr. Wheatley noted that overall, the audit went very well.

Events: Mr. Wheatley shared a list of events that CC Rider will be attending this year. He shared information about each event listed. Mr. Wheatley noted that he is still adding events to the list as they are announced. He noted that the Megga Egg hunt event is still looking for volunteers. Mr. Wheatley shared that CC Rider will be providing a shuttle for the Crown Z Trail run. Chair Heimuller asked if the drivers are paid for those events. Mr. Wheatley shared that the drivers are paid for their time shuttling for events. Members discussed the NAMI walk event and shared more information about that event with new committee member Nicolle Tasoulas. Guest Uusitalo shared information about a career event that is taking place in Portland that they believe would be a good event for CC Rider to attend. Guest Wirtz shared that she attends career events and would be willing to bring CC Rider flyers and brochures. Guest Wirtz also shared that she would like to help put on another community event at the Rainier Transit

Center. Members discussed possible dates for that event and many suggested that the community event should be held during “Rainier Days” with the hope that more people in the area would attend.

Committee Roundtable: Mr. Wheatley shared ridership numbers with the committee members. Mr. Wheatley shared that he is working on a way to get more accurate numbers for those who ride Line 1 to Rainier. Guest Uusitalo mentioned that ridership may increase in August due to TriMet canceling service for Line 15 that runs into Linnton.

Chair Heimuller asked Mr. Wheatley about new committee members. Mr. Wheatley shared that Nicolle Tasoulas was appointed to the committee last week. Member Watson asked Mr. Wheatley what grants he is applying for. She then describes a new grant and what she would like CC Rider to do with that grant. Chair Heimuller suggested testing a Flex route during the summer months. Mr. Wheatley shared that in order to have money to run that route it would have to be tested in the next biennium, next summer (2027). Member Watson shared that the “real time tracker” on the county website is no longer working.

Member Rose asked about the new buses. Mr. Wheatley shared that the new buses will be delivered next year. Guest Uusitalo suggested that the new buses should be low floor buses and suggested that the Line 1 stop on Sauvie’s Island be added back on the route. Mr. Wheatley shared that Ride Connections is going to be running a shopper route from Sauvie’s Island to Scappoose.

Guest Wirtz asked for an update on the NWConnector website changes. Mr. Wheatley shared that the URL for the website will stay the same despite the website changes. Members discussed what being a part of the NWOTA group means for CC Rider. Members discussed the changes RiverCities Transit is planning to make to their route to Rainier. Mr. Wheatley shared that there is a possibility that he will change the Line 1 schedule so that there is still the opportunity to meet up with RiverCities Transit towards the end of the day. Guest Uusitalo suggested adding a stop for Line 1 in Columbia City. Members discussed a connection with Sunset Empire in Clatskanie or Westport. Guest Uusitalo shared that Sunset Empire goes to Knappa twice a week for \$12.00 each way.

Adjourn: Chair Heimuller adjourned the meeting at 4:49 pm.