

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

Meeting Date: July 15, 2025

Time: 4:00 P.M.

Place: Columbia County Transit Center, St Helens, OR

Present: Dennis Spitze, Angela Rose, Brandy Johnson

Absent: Pam Heimuller, Denise Watson

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

Guests: Megan Wirtz, "Bus empty Seats" (Virtual), Monica Seidl (Virtual)

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

Approval of April Meeting Minutes: There were not enough Committee members present to approve the June 17, 2025 meeting minutes.

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

Committee Member Selection: Not all members were present. No selection was made.

Line 1-Rainier Update: Mr. Wheatley shared that the Line 1 expansion to Rainier started on July 2. There have been a few riders, but many are interested in riding. There was a rider that rode CC Rider from Portland to Rainier. They then rode RiverCities, C-Tran and then TriMet to make their complete route. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that the Transit Center in Rainier is looking rough. The General Services department has it on their schedule to clean it up. Member Rose asked about the schedule to Rainier. She mentioned that there was some confusion about whether CC Rider will take riders back to the St Helens Transit Center from Rainier. Mr. Wheatley shared that the schedule has been updated to show the St. Helens return time.

STIF Approval: Mr. Wheatley shared that CC Rider has received the STIF agreement from ODOT. The Commissioners have agreed, and it is now on its way back to ODOT. Once it is accepted by ODOT, CC Rider will have to make an amendment to the agreement because there is no longer a Vanpool program. The money put aside for the Vanpool will go into the contingency fund. Mr. Wheatley shared that ODOT has experienced layoffs, and that may delay the process. The 5310 and 5311 grants have also been received. Mr. Wheatley shared that those grants have been sent to lawyers, but due to some of the language in the grants, it is taking the lawyers longer.

Transportation Package: Mr. Wheatley shared that the Transportation Package is not happening. There was no vote. CC Rider did not plan on having that extra money, so there will be no changes. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that there is hope for a special session being called, and then there will be a vote.

Committee Roundtable: Mr. Wheatley shared that Line 1 bus stop signs are being replaced. Each bus stop sign has the entire Line 1 schedule, with the current stop highlighted. Guest Megan Wirtz discussed the press release regarding CC Rider going to Rainier to meet up with RiverCities. Members discussed the Rainier Transit Center, and whether or not it would be left unlocked. Mr. Wheatley shared that the driver has let riders in to use the restroom while they were there. Guest Wirtz asked if there was any availability for advertising at the Rainier Transit Center. Mr. Wheatley shared that there is a Line 1 schedule posted there and shared that RiverCities could put signs up as well. Guest Monica Seidl asked how long CC Rider is committed to going to Rainier. As well as the possibility of altering the schedule to accommodate students after the summer season ends. Mr. Wheatley shared that all of that depends on ridership. He also shared that the big goal is to once again meet up with Sunset Empire. Guest Seidl also advocated for Clatskanie residents. Mr. Wheatley shared that he is going to Astoria on Friday for a meeting and will ask about possible connections. Guest Wirtz and Seidl shared their plans for the next few years, and the advertising and education they plan on providing to community. Member Johnson asked about her position representing low-income individuals. Mr. Wheatley shared that “representing” different groups of people is a smaller focus for the individual members. Members asked about CC Riders involvement in the Columbia County Fair. Mr. Wheatley shared that CC Rider is providing free rides to Seniors for Senior Day. There are seven senior homes/senior centers that CC Rider is picking up at. There are 50 seniors signed up to get a ride to the fair. Mr. Wheatley mentioned that there have been a few cancelations due to the heat.

Adjourn: Vice Chair Spitze adjourned the meeting at 5:03pm.