

**Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton OR 97801 Room 114  
Zoom virtual option  
August 27, 2024 2:00PM

**AC Members Present:** Staci Kunz (transit consultant); Heidi Zeigler (DHS); Linda Carter (City of Pendleton); and Teresa Dutcher (Chair)

**AC Members Virtually:** JD Tovey (CTUIR/Kayak); Jose Garcia (New Horizons - Hermiston)

**County Liaison:** Charlet Hotchkiss (Interim Transit Coordinator); Robert Waldher (Director of Community Development Department)

**Public:** Eric Smith (General Manager, KAYAK); Angie Jones (ODOT Region 5 Coordinator)

Chair Dutcher greeted the group and called the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee (UCTAC) meeting to order at 2:00 PM. There were introductions of the UCTAC committee members in the room and online.

**Meeting Minutes:**

Chair Dutcher asked Charlet Hotchkiss if the minutes were being held for a future meeting. Ms. Hotchkiss confirmed that there were no meeting minutes to approve yet and they would be approved at a future meeting.

**Review of STIF Discretionary Applications:**

Eric Smith, General Manager of KAYAK, presented KAYAK's STIF Discretionary application and the projects that would be funded. First project to be presented on was the Hermiston Bus Barn construction project, which Mr. Smith announced is currently in the NEPA process and CTUIR expects that process to be completed by January 2025. Mr. Smith explained how the Bus Barn will support KAYAK's existing public transportation routes in the City of Hermiston including the Hermiston Hart fixed-route service and Hopper fixed-route service as well as KAYAK's new Hermiston-to-Boardman connector route which will be starting soon.

Mr. Smith went on to describe the future Hermiston Bus Barn, detailing that it will be able to house a minimum of six busses but maybe as many as many as eight. Mr. Smith states the building will also include a bathroom, breakroom, dispatch area and a bus maintenance area.

Mr. Smith referenced a study performed in 2021 by Kittelson and Associates titled "The Hermiston Boardman Connector – Boardman, Port of Morrow Circular" and quotes from page 7 of that study; "This project followed a process that gained consensus among CTUIR, Morrow County, Umatilla County, Port of Morrow, and various stakeholders and community members. Over 50 representatives and stakeholders including government bodies, employers, health, education and community organizations provided insight throughout the study project. The project purpose as stated in the plan aimed to make connections that will enable people to travel regionally and locally for employment, education, healthcare and more. These transit services will help improve accessibility to major employment clusters in the area, and particularly the 84/82 Westland Road Area and The Port of Morrow. And will establish critical last mile connections from regional transit services."

Staci Kunz asked Mr. Smith "If this money here (referencing the number in the application for the Bus Barn project) that you're asking for is that for like, you kind of have to start with an architect, right?"

Mr. Smith nodded yes.

Kunz asked "So that would be a portion of it?"

Mr. Smith said yes.

Kunz asks "Will you be able to break ground with that money?"

Mr. Smith said yes.

Discussion continued between Kunz and Smith regarding design of the Hermiston Bus Barn.

Next, Mr. Smith introduced the Hart Capital Bus Purchase Project. Mr. Smith described the Hart fixed-route service in Hermiston, who it serves, and their annual miles and ridership. Mr. Smith went on to state the bus to be replaced is a 2019 Ford E450 Class V, with a recent odometer reading of 109,302 miles, and a useful life of 150,000 for five years. Mr. Smith continues by saying with another 2 years before a new bus could be delivered this bus will surpass its useful life.

Chair Dutcher asked if there are any questions for Mr. Smith.

Staci Kunz asks Mr. Smith if this is KAYAK's main bus they are replacing and not a back-up. Mr. Smith says that is correct.

Chair Dutcher asks for Mr. Smith to go over the Arrow Route Project.

Mr. Smith goes on to describe the existing Arrow fixed-route service, who it serves, where it goes, and what other transit services it connects to.

Chair Dutcher asks if there any questions on this. No questions are asked, Mr. Smith moves on to presenting next project.

Mr. Smith described KAYAK's existing Whistler fixed-route service, who it serves and where it goes, and what other transit services it connects to.

Staci Kunz asked Eric Smith, "What's your match going to be on all of these?"

Chair Dutcher directed Kunz to the last page of KAYAK's application where it shows the match requirement.

Staci Kunz asked Chair Dutcher, "So these are all 20%?"

The group confirmed the match is 20%.

Staci Kunz asked if we could get that down to 10%. Chair Dutcher responded "ODOT will decide that."

Stacie Kunz then asked Eric Smith "How do you plan to pay for that match?"

Staci Kunz and Linda Carter start discussing the fact that KAYAK's match for those regional routes came out of STIF Formula Funds in the last biennium.

Ms. Hotchkiss confirmed that is true.

Chair Dutcher asked Angie Jones "We can use formula funds for match on STIF Discretionary?"

Angie Jones responded "Yes, once it's passed down to KAYAK it's considered Local Funds."

J.D. Tovey added "STIF Formula can be used as match for State and Federal Funds because it's considered

local.”

Eric Smith stated they plan to ask Umatilla County or FTA for the match.

Linda and Staci continued to discuss where KAYAK’s match will come from and that it came from Formula Funds last biennium.

Robert Waldher and Charlet Hotchkiss remind the UCTAC members that figuring out match will be determined in the future once we receive STIF Formula applications and that the solicitation for Formula Funds just opened today. Ms. Hotchkiss reminded the group that once they are done reviewing applications she will go over upcoming application deadlines with them.

Mr. Waldher asked Ms. Hotchkiss if the job for the UCTAC members today is to prioritize these applications.

Ms. Hotchkiss responded “Yes, the action before you today is to make a recommendation on whether or not the County should apply for these grant applications. The Board of Commissioners is the final decision maker, and states that she will be taking the recommendation before the Board on Wednesday, September 4.

The group discussed what 5311 F fundings is and Angie Jones helped clear up some confusion amongst UCTAC members.

Eric Smith moved on to presenting KAYAK’s final project “Admin & Operations for the Metro and Hart Routes”. Mr. Smith presents on the existing Metro & Hart fixed-route services, who it serves, where it goes and what the annual ridership is.

Linda Carter asked Mr. Smith “All these specific routes include the cost of operation plus administration or this just has all of your administration in it?”

Mr. Smith responded that this last project they are going over is for admin and operations for the Hart and Metro fixed-route service.

Linda asked if the other routes have administration cost worked into the project. Mr. Smith confirms the other route projects are operations and administration costs together.

Linda Carter made a motion to recommend the 5311 F Rural ask without any commitments for match. “Just because we are recommending it doesn’t mean we are committing match monies from Umatilla County STIF Plan, that would come later. I don’t want people saying ‘Well you recommended it not you have to fund the match.’” Linda said.

Chair Dutcher responded, “Well that’s not true on any of them.”

Ms. Hotchkiss reminded the group we are not discussing match today or the County’s STIF plan, this meeting is only to make a recommendation to the County Board of Commissioners on the 5310 applications the County had received.

Linda Carter made a formal motion to support the 5311 F Rural to go back up to ODOT and that the commissioners support it too.

Staci Kunz seconded the motion.

Chair Dutcher asked for all in favor, all member present voted yes.

Mr. Waldher recommended the group ask KAYAK how they would like the other four projects ranked before

making a decision.

UCTAC members took the recommendation and asked Mr. Smith to rank KAYAK's 5310 projects in order of importance.

Mr. Smith prioritizes the projects for the group with 1 being the top priority and 4 being the lowest.

1. Whistler.
2. Arrow.
3. Bus Barn.
4. Capital Bus Purchase.

Linda Carter noted to the group that based on the numbers the Arrow fixed-route service is a pretty expensive route.

Linda then stated "I personally would suggest, you never know, I can't imagine that they are going to come up with \$4.8 million for a bus barn when there is 5339 that you would shoot for again. I would like to throw out there, 1. Whistler, 2. Arrow, 3. Capital Bus Purchase for Hart Route, and 4. Bus Barn, because that's a lot of money not in a facilities-grant program. That's a lot of money that's in a discretionary pot. I have a hard time even supporting that one actually, because it's not within the facility grant program and it's taking discretionary money. But I would support it, I'm just saying it's a rough application in the discretionary pot. Because we had a hard enough time trying to get through discretionary a couple of years ago. So I would support 1 and 2, I would put in 3 as the Hart Capital Purchase. Because it's not a huge amount of money compared to everything else. I think you might be able to squeeze it in. And then say OK if there's money left in the pot go with the bus barn. But that's just my opinion"

Ms. Hotchkiss made a statement to the group before they continued discussion. She said "I like the way Eric prioritized these projects because it would be really helpful for KAYAK to get this money for the bus barn, where as some of the other things like the Hart capital bus purchase when it's a smaller amount of money, that might be easier for them to find somewhere else versus finding a large sum of money for the bus barn. That's my two cents."

Linda Carter then said "I have heartburn trying to get a bus barn out of the STIF Discretionary at \$4.8 million. I just don't think it's the right program."

Chair Dutcher asked Angie Jones if the 5311 comes out annually or if it is a bi-annual. Angie confirmed it is a biennium grant.

Staci Kunz asked when will 5339 come out again.

Chair Dutcher stated it would be 2026.

Angie Jones added "The congressional spending if approved by Congress will come out again January/February, but ODOT 5339 will be two years."

Staci Kunz then asked Eric "Did you use the Hermiston/Boardman Connector plan to kind of support the bus barn? Because you have to have your projects in a plan."

Chair Dutcher stated "Well that was the study that was done."

Staci added "I like the idea that a bus barn would save us some money and those deadhead miles. Because that's got to be expensive to be bring that bus back."

Eric responded, "Yeah, it's money and time."

Linda then stated "I don't care what order they are in. I think 1 and 2 are important to put in as 1 and 2. Again, I just hate seeing discretionary money going out to such a huge capital project. Where if you get in line, you know, like a lot of us have, that 5339 is what those programs are for."

J.D. Tovey spoke up and added "Quick question, so there is two pots of discretionary in the STIF Fund. The 4% Discretionary and the 5% inter-city connectivity discretion funds, correct? Which of those is that discretionary or is this all being considered as one of the 9%?"

Angie Jones answered: "So you're Whistler, Arrow, Mission-Metro can only come out of intercommunity. It is not eligible for discretionary. The facility would come out of discretionary."

J.D. asked: "And that's the 4% right?"

Angie replied: "Yes."

J.D. continued: "I just wanted clarification because it's not really 5% or whatever it's like 9% of the total STIF pot in the state. So it's a sizeable amount of funds."

Angie added: "Right, so, \$20 something million in total and over \$80 million in ask currently. So almost \$28 million for discretionary available but the ask is huge."

UCTAC members acknowledge this statement and discussion continues.

J.D. Tovey added: "But they're also doing regional equity on it too. I mean there's a little bit of history on that too. We did some effort on 5339 grants and I don't know if Eric wants to give an update on what happened with that. I don't know if everyone is familiar on what happened with our 5339 application last fall."

Linda Carted said: "He mentioned that it didn't get passed through."

Eric Smith said "I'd let ODOT talk about that."

J.D. said: "That's a good idea."

Angie responded: "Unfortunately, it was the 5339 B and C submissions were not submitted and ODOT missed a step there, so none of the applications state wide were submitted."

Linda Carter responded: "Wow. That's really too bad. I'm glad it wasn't the year we applied."

J.D. added: "But that's the intention though, is we probably would still. Correct, Eric? We'd probably still apply for that if those funds come up?"

Eric Smith confirmed that is correct.

J.D. then stated: "And so if that funds out of that then we wouldn't necessarily have to use the STIF Discretionary funds. We could prioritize those funds (5339) first."

Eric Smith added: "But that 5339 is not going to be available to apply to for another two years, and in the mean time we have this Hermiston Boardman Connector, just to get that going that's four full time drivers right out of the box. So, the sooner that we can get this going up there the better it's going to be for everybody."

Linda asked: "Remind me what's funding that new connector route?"

Robert Waldher and Charlet Hotchkiss confirmed the Hermiston Boardman Connector Route was originally funded through STIF Formula Funds last biennium.

J.D. Tovey said: "That fund was originally designed to be split 50/50 between Morrow County and Umatilla County Formula Funds. We're still working on it with Morrow County. I would think operations are on there for one cycle. I think it was acquisition of capital was on for two cycle and then we finally got the busses and then the operations was on for one cycle if I remember correctly. In that interim Morrow County started dropping this project off of their STIF plans even though they were up to pay for half of it. So, I don't know where that is right now, if it's still on their plan or not, but if not it should probably be included. So, the total operations and the capital is really split between to the two counties."

Angie Jones added: "What I would recommend in that situation is that you reach out to Ben and get an application and get an application submitted for their formula so it is a project on there. And not rely on them to just add it back in."

Staci Kunz asked "Are we able to get anything out of WASHDOT at all for like the Whistler? I know you worked with them on the Tri-City route or something?"

Eric answered: "Yes, they are picking up a portion and that started in June so for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter this year WASHDOT is picking up a portion of that now."

Staci confirmed Eric meant for the Whistler and Eric said "Yes".

Staci references past discussions the UCTAC has had about asking other counties/states for help with funding bases on where the routes miles are at and asks if any one remembers these conversations. She continues by saying she is looking at if we can get help because these routes are up there in cost and that asking for help is important.

Staci, J.D. and Eric continued discussion about asking other counties for help with funding KAYAK's various fixed routes and J.D. went over some history on the subject.

J.D stated: "It is not cost effective to be on yet another STIF Plan, we are already on three and to add another would just add more hours, more meetings, I mean it just wasn't cost effective just for a few thousand dollars."

Group discussion on the topic continued.

Linda Carter steered the group back towards the task before them and said: "Going back to the rating. If everyone wants to put the bus barn as number 3 when there is only \$28 million and you're asking for almost \$5 million of it. You know what's the chance? I don't know what the chances are on that one. I just think that maybe you might have a better chance of getting the bus purchase if you're not going to get the bus barn no matter what because of the limited money. So I mean I don't care if that's the way CTUIR really wants them to go in. You know maybe ODOT would not fund #3 and still give you #4. I mean if you leave the bus barn as #4 it maybe doesn't look like a priority but asking for almost 5 grand out of \$28 million for one project when you've got all of the west side and the huge systems. It's a gamble there. But if they want to go in at that order I'm not going to stop that order. I think you can get the bus maybe, if you said it was important."

Ms. Hotchkiss reminded the UCTAC member it is their decision. Linda Carter said she would be willing to let KAYAK order it how they would like. Ms. Hotchkiss confirmed the order with Eric Smith that Kayak would prefer:

1. Whistler.
2. Arrow.

3. Bus Barn.
4. Capital Bus Purchase.

Linda then made a motion: "I make a motion that for the STIF Discretionary the number 1 recommendation is the Whistler, the number 2 recommendation is the Arrow, the number 3 recommendation is the Bus Barn and the number 4 is the Hart Capital Bus Purchase."

Heidi seconded.

Chair Dutcher called for vote, all UCTAC members present vote yes.

### **Update legislations on forming a district (discussed at last meeting)**

Chair Dutcher introduced the next topic and Ms. Hotchkiss says it was something Staci Kunz had emailed to her to add to the agenda.

Staci Kunz said they discussed updating legislation to form a transit district at their last meeting.

Chair Dutcher reminded Staci that we did not have the minutes for that meeting yet. Ms. Hotchkiss recommends we hold this discussion until a future meeting once we have the meeting minutes.

Some group discussion continues on this topic with Chair Dutcher and J.D. Tovey explaining what type of legislation change would need to occur in order for CTUIR/KAYAK to form a transit district including holding a general election.

Staci asked if the group wanted the County to put in a project or study for this.

Angie Jones confirmed she had worked with Megan and had extensive conversations regarding the County applying for grant funds to do a study or hire a consultant to get the process going and get it pretty far down the road.

Group discussion continued on the topic.

Linda Carter asked if Milton-Freewater had any players in the transit game. Angie Jones responded stating that the city does not do the fixed-route service anymore and the city has a purchase services contract with a taxi company for 5310 services.

### **Update to Umatilla County Coordinated Human Services Plan**

Chair Dutcher introduced the next topic on the agenda. Ms. Hotchkiss states this is something else Staci Kunz emailed and asked to be added to the agenda. Ms. Hotchkiss then asks the group if they could give her some background on this since she is new to the position and wasn't sure what this was about.

Staci Kunz explained that County's Coordinated Human Services Plan was last updated in 2020 and ODOT wants it updated every 5 years and stated this is another project they wanted Umatilla County to add their plan.

Ms. Hotchkiss thanked her for the reminder and said she would look into that.

Staci Kunz asked about Megan wanting to put in more bus shelters and Ms. Hotchkiss stated she would have to ask Megan more about this.

Ms. Hotchkiss shared upcoming deadlines and updates with the group.

Chair Dutcher adjourned the meeting at 2:48 PM.

Submitted by Charlet Hotchkiss, Umatilla County Planner