

**Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes**  
Umatilla County Courthouse, Pendleton OR 97801 Room 035  
Google Meet option  
November 7, 2022 1:30PM

**AC Members Present:** Kim Beck (U.C. CDDP); Staci Kunz (transit consultant); Heidi Zeigler (DHS)

**AC Members Virtually:** Jeremy Umbarger (Clearview Meditation); Teresa Dutcher (Chair); and JD Tovey (CTUIR/Kayak)

**County Liaison:** Megan Davchevski (Transit Coordinator) and Bob Waldher (Planning Director)

**Public:** None.

Chair Dutcher greeted the group and called the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee (UCTAC) meeting to order at 1:42 PM.

**Meeting Minutes:**

Heidi moved to approve the July 21, 2022 minutes as presented. Staci seconded. Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**STIF Discretionary Applications:**

Megan provided information about the two discretionary grant applications, the Hermiston Hopper and the Pilot Rocket.

The Hermiston Hopper is an existing route and serves many communities. The route starts in Mission at Kayak's Transit Hub, and then has stops within Pendleton, Stanfield, Echo, Hermiston, Umatilla and Irrigon. This route has continued to grow even after the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This application would have Umatilla County as the applicant applying for Intercommunity grant which requires a 20% match. Megan suggested a few minor changes within the application, the match is being requested in the next STIF plan cycle, not CTUIR local dollars like the applications state. It was also suggested to add language acknowledging the County's System Sustainability Reserve Fund and why the reserve fund will not be used to fund these routes – it is because the reserve is to protect existing transit routes in the event of an economic downturn.

The Pilot Rocket application is very similar to the Hopper. It serves Pilot Rock, and goes into Pendleton and the Mission area. Both routes connect the small towns in Umatilla County to the larger regional routes that travel to Walla Walla and La Grande. It has also continued to grow despite the pandemic creating a loss in ridership for most transit agencies. The same modifications to the application for the Hopper are being requested for the Rocket.

**\* JD Tovey joined the meeting\***

Staci mentioned that both routes have been funded by discretionary dollars for the last five years. Discretionary funding was not set up as a long-term funding source.

Megan shared that herself and Susan (Kayak) met with Angie Jones, Regional Transit Coordinator (ODOT), to discuss these concerns a few weeks ago. Angie encouraged the County and CTUIR to still apply for the discretionary dollars, but to add contingency projects to the STIF plan so that the routes could be partially funded even if they were not selected for discretionary funding. The proposed contingency amount would allow the routes to operate at 63% of current levels.

Staci asked how routes will be funded in the future. JD shared since we are being encouraged to apply for discretionary funding, that is the current path and if the funding goes away the routes should go on the STIF plan. Staci asked what cutting services met. JD said this would be cutting the number of trips, it would be hard to know where the cuts would be as far as operations, without knowing how much funding there will be.

Teresa shared that service reductions results in a lack of confidence of the services for riders, and ridership drastically plummets. Regional routes should continue to operate at current levels, and after operations are cut it is hard to build confidence back up. JD shared there are funding safety nets to keep the routes running even without discretionary dollars, like the contingency project that Megan mentioned. The tribe also has a reserve for these cases.

Staci made a motion to recommend the applications be submitted to ODOT for both the Hopper and Rocket routes. Heidi seconded. Motion passed unanimously 5-0, JD abstained.

**Other Business:** Megan shared that STIF plan applications are due to the County on November 11, this Friday, so far only one application has been received. A reminder email went out to all the providers this morning. Megan shared some of the proposed County STIF projects which include the transit coordinator position, bus stop signage and shelters, Grant County People Mover, marketing, reserve fund contributions, match and contingency projects for the Hopper and Rocket. The proposed project list shared is just an estimate based on conversations, only one application has been physically received. Meetings for the STIF plan applications will be coming up very quickly.

Kim shared that an increase in marketing and brochure development is a great project. She realized how much herself and her staff do not know about public transit options. Megan stated there are some existing brochures that she will share for Kim to distribute. They are available in English and Spanish. Creating the online presence is important. Staci echoed the importance of distributing brochures to private and public agencies.

Heidi shared about a homeless individual at Martha's House who struggled to get from Hermiston to work in Pendleton in a reliable manner. Kim shared some of the barriers with the taxi ticket programs, sometimes rides are not timely to get people to work on time. Heidi asked about being able to input a destination and having something help navigate users on how to utilize public transit to get to their destinations. Megan shared most providers locally and in the region are beginning to utilize iTransitNW which provides that service to riders. JD shared Kayak is having issues getting the bus systems wired correctly. Their buses are being redone to get the program launched. The app provides cross-jurisdictional trip planning.

JD mentioned that Kayak will be able to provide maintenance on the bus shelters, Megan and JD will discuss this later. Spots for shelters have been identified, but not guaranteed at the following locations: Umatilla Post Office, Hermiston Wal-Mart, Pilot Truck Stop in Stanfield and Fry's True Value in Milton Freewater. The Til Taylor park shelter is still underway.

Meeting adjourned at 2:10 pm. Submitted by Megan Davchevski, Umatilla County Transit Coordinator