

Mobility Minutes

Produced by the CWCOC Mobility Management Program



The Regional Mobility Guide Gets an Update

For the past several months, we have been working on updating the Regional Mobility Guide and rebranding it as the Regional Mobility Toolkit. The rebrand was necessary to encompass the variety of changes that were made to the document during the process of the update.

The document now contains definitions of different types of public transportation, instructions on how to use a flag stop, a trip planning worksheet, and so much more. We wanted the new toolkit to have everything someone would need to start their journey of riding the bus and using other forms of public transportation.

It still has information on local and regional resources, but the information is presented in a way that won't require such frequent updates. Links and QR codes are also included so that more details can be accessed regardless of if the document is being used digitally or as a hard copy.

We also took inspiration from the Youth Activity Book and included basic steps for riding the bus and general rules for using public transportation.

The new Regional Mobility Toolkit is now available on the CWCOC Mobility Management webpage and can be viewed [here](#).

Lauren Read, CWCOC Mobility Management Coordinator

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Quick Calendar

- 4/11 Cowlitz Area Transportation Advisory Committee
- 5/2 Cowlitz Area Transportation Advisory Committee
- 5/8 Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization Meeting
- 6/6 Cowlitz Area Transportation Advisory Committee
- 6/12 Public Transportation Stakeholder Committee

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Public Transit Updates

Grays Harbor Transit

- Ocean Shores Dial-a-Ride: 11:15 loop dropped and 12:15 loop added

[View New Schedules Here](#)

Pacific Transit

- Raymond-South Bend Shopper Shuttle: 1:00pm run added
- Aberdeen Express Route: 8:00am and 1:30pm added
- South County Veterans Connect Shuttle added

[View New Schedules Here](#)

Lewis County Transit

- Red Line: Stop added at Chehalis Recreation Park
- Red Line Weekend Only: Stop added Stan Hedwall Park, Stop removed from Port of Chehalis and Bishop & Sturdevant

[View New Schedules Here](#)

CC Rider Launches Vanpool Program

After many months of planning, Columbia County Rider (“CC Rider”), in partnership with Commute with Enterprise, has opened registration for its new Vanpool Service. The flexible shared-ride service is designed to support Columbia County residents commuting to shared work sites inside or outside the County, and Columbia County businesses who might have employees commuting from shared locations outside the County.

CC Rider is the designated public transit provider for Columbia County, OR. Operating as a department of the County Government, CC Rider primarily provides Demand Response Service in Scappoose, St Helens, Columbia City, and Rainier and continues to provide limited Portland Commuter Service between St Helens and Downtown Portland.

The idea of offering Vanpool Service originated as CC Rider was forced to reduce its Portland Commuter Service due to the lack of locally sourced grant matching funds. The vanpool program is based on a collaboration with Commute with Enterprise providing well-maintained and fully insured vehicles, CC Rider providing a financial subsidy, and riders splitting the remaining balance of vehicle rental and fuel costs. CC Rider’s financial subsidy aims to assure that vanpool riders pay no more per month than the cost of a monthly pass, \$120.00.

The program collects basic information from participants who indicate their interest and then matches them with other riders who have similar work shifts in similar areas. Only very basic information is collected. Commute with Enterprise customizes each vanpool to the needs of the identified group. When four or more people match as a potential vanpool group, a representative will work with the group to identify their needs and provide solutions.

To learn more and register, please visit <https://columbiacounty.info/commute>.

If you have additional questions, please contact: John Dreeszen, CC Rider Transit Director, at john.dreeszen@columbiacountyor.gov David Meigs, with Commute with Enterprise, at david.c.meigs@em.com

Contributed by John Dreeszen, CC Rider Transit Director

Lewis County Transit Receives Hydrogen Bus

According to an article from The Chronicle on March 18, Lewis County Transit has received their first of three hydrogen buses they will add to their fleet. It is also the first hydrogen bus in the Pacific Northwest. The article notes that Lewis County Transit will be adding another two hydrogen buses this year, one in May and one in September.

Lewis County Transit is part of the Pacific Northwest Hydrogen Hub (PNWH2), which is receiving federal funding through the U.S. Department of Energy. A temporary hydrogen fueling station has been set up at Lewis County Transit headquarters to test the new hydrogen buses.

The buses will be tested on city routes while drivers and mechanics are being trained. Lewis County Transit will begin phasing out their diesel buses once staff is ready to do so.

The article from The Chronicle can be viewed [here](#).

Two Rural Transit Feasibility Studies Funded in Cowlitz County

In October of 2023, the CWCOG Board of Directors approved a call for projects for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STGBP) and the Carbon Reduction Program (CRP). The STBGP and CRP are both federally aided transportation programs. The STBGP provides flexible funding to states and localities for transportation improvement projects ranging from general planning to planning and constructing projects on Federal-aid highways, bridge projects, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, transit capital projects, and Electric Vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure. Seven applications were received during this time, including one of the City of Kalama and one from the CWCOG. Both were for rural transit feasibility studies.

In January 2024, the CWCOG Board of Directors approved the Cowlitz Area Technical Advisory Committee's recommendation to fund all seven projects. Below are summaries of the City of Kalama and CWCOG projects that were awarded funding.

City of Kalama

The purpose of the Kalama Internal Transit Feasibility Study is to study the viability of the City of Kalama providing a transit system to residents and visitors within the city and surrounding local area. As a rural, historically auto oriented community, Kalama is finding that economic development as well as equitable access is being limited by the absence of public transportation for the community members as well as the visitors to Central Port, many of which arrive via cruise ship. Kalama will use this opportunity to study the idea of providing an internal busing system to serve the residential neighborhoods as well as helping to connect the Central Port district to Downtown and East Port/Haydu Park.

As development interests continue to seek growth in Kalama we would like to know if it is more cost effective to operate public transit or continue to require developers to build significant parking lots in our most valuable commercial land. The goal of the feasibility study is to preserve as much of our commercial zones for actual commercial development and commerce.

As the proposed project is a feasibility study, a request for qualifications and a selection process of qualified industry experts will be required. Data sets will need to be assembled and variables considered. Finally, analysis of the relevant data will be performed to provide a recommendation about feasibility of an internal transit system as well as recommendations for implementation and scope and scale of the system will be provided as the final deliverables of the project.

CWCOG

The purpose of the Cowlitz County and Rainier, OR Rural Transit Feasibility Study is to determine the types of transit service appropriate for serving areas outside the RiverCities Transit Public Transportation Benefit Area (PBTA) including the Cities of Kalama, Castle Rock, and Woodland as well as Rainier, Oregon. A consultant would be hired to complete the study.

This feasibility study has four main tasks as follows:

- Evaluation of the need for transit services and the service characteristics associated with the identified need.
- Development of different service options for how the need could be met.
- Estimation of costs and benefits associated with each identified service option.
- Identification of potential funding sources to support recommended service options.

The focus areas of Kalama, Woodland, Castle Rock, and Rainier (Oregon) are not served by fixed or on-demand transit service. There are minimal connections to the Kelso/Longview urban area or further south to Vancouver. This project would help improve alternative transportation options to better connect the rural and urban areas of Cowlitz County and Rainier, Oregon. The study area would include areas beyond the city limits of each of the four cities.

In short, this study seeks to answer the question of which mobility service, or combination of services, would meet localized needs at a lower cost, with more convenience, and with greater positive impacts on the local economy. The completed Rural Transit Feasibility Study would be used to secure funding for identified service options.

Contributed from information provided in the grant applications from the City of Kalama and the CWCOG.