

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

In the Matter of Adopting Service  
Reductions for Columbia County Rider  
Transportation

ORDER NO. 4-2020

WHEREAS, due to current and projected budget shortfalls, Columbia County Rider Transportation (CC Rider) requires certain reductions in transit service to maintain solvency; and

WHEREAS, the CC Rider Fare and Service Change Policy, adopted by Order No. 2-2012, established procedures to allow for and encourage public participation in any consideration of route, fare and/or service changes for the CC Rider transit system; and

WHEREAS, CC Rider staff, with the support of the Columbia County Citizens Transportation Advisory Committee, initiated a public outreach process in December 2019, through three public forums seeking public input on transit service reductions. A survey was also available on the buses; and

WHEREAS, based on CC Rider staff's analysis of ridership, financial data, and system efficiencies and input from the public, staff recommends service reductions, as described in the staff report and recommendation, attached hereto and incorporated herein as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, CC Rider staff also recommends a reduction in fares to simplify the fare system and boost ridership, as described in Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, on January 8, 2020, the Board of County Commissioners (the "Board"), following proper notice, held a public hearing to receive further public input; and

WHEREAS, after receiving testimony and evidence, the Board closed the hearing, deliberated and voted to approve service and fare changes;

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HEREBY ORDERS, as follows:

1. The following changes to CC Rider services are hereby approved:
  - a. Line 2 PCC/Willow Creek shall be reduced to three trips per day beginning March 21, 2020.
  - b. Line 3 Flex shall be reduced to five trips per day.

- c. Dial-a-Ride shall be reduced to 16 hours per day, with no service beyond one mile of lines 3, 5, 6 and Sunset Empire service within Columbia County.
2. The following changes to CC Rider fares are hereby approved:
- a. The current three-zone system shall be replaced with a two-zone system, which shall provide one fare for trips within Columbia County (Longview-Kelso included) and one fare for trips that are to or from outside of the County.
  - b. Fares shall be as follows, and shall be paid for each boarding:
    - i. \$2.00 for rides within Columbia County (Longview-Kelso included).
    - ii. \$3.00 for rides to or from outside of Columbia County.
  - c. The monthly pass shall be \$120.
  - d. The fare changes shall become effective March 1, 2020.
3. In support of its decision, the Board adopts as findings the above recitals and the staff report, attached as Exhibit A.
4. Unless others stated herein, the service changes shall become effective January 12, 2020.

DATED this 8th day of January, 2020.

Approved as to form

By:   
Office of County Counsel

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
FOR COLUMBIA COUNTY, OREGON

By:   
Alex Tardif, Chair

By:   
Margaret Magruder, Commissioner

By:   
Henry Heimuller, Commissioner

# COLUMBIA COUNTY

Transit Department: CC Rider



ST. HELENS, OR 97051

1155 Deer Island Rd.

Direct (503) 366-0159

[www.columbiacountyrider.com](http://www.columbiacountyrider.com)

DATE: January 8, 2020

FROM: Todd Wood, Transit Director

TO: Board of County Commissioners

RE: Service reduction recommendations / Fare system adjustment

---

On November 5, 2019 voters overwhelmingly rejected a measure that would have provided a stable local funding source for Columbia County Rider. Because of the lack of local funding, the system is running a deficit that threatens the future of service in Columbia County. The system currently has a projected deficit of \$313,000 for Fiscal Year 2020.

It is imperative that Columbia County Rider reach a model of sustainability, given the current level of grant funding. Three public forums were held on December 10, 12 and 14, 2019 in order to obtain public input. Additionally, a survey was made available on the buses. Below is the recommendation of staff to close the \$313,000 projected gap based on analysis and feedback:

### **Line 1 Portland: No change**

Staff considered removing the Sauvie Island run that is funded by a TriMet grant. However, a suitable alternative has not been identified and any changes must be negotiated with TriMet. Additionally, Sunset Empire is beginning a new service that may affect the usefulness of this piece. Since this trip is grant funded staff is recommending to leave it as is until the end of the fiscal year and relook at it for the coming fiscal year.

### **Line 2 PCC \ Willow Creek: Stay with current schedule until March 20, 2019. Reduce to three trips per day beginning March 23, 2019**

Line 2 is funded partially by a grant through PCC. PCC has agreed to keep funding at the current level given the condition that CCRider maintain the current four trips per day for winter term. Beginning March 23, 2019 service will reduce to three trips per day with one AM trip, one mid-day trip, and one PM trip. These trips will be based upon the spring schedule. The service will be revisited during contract negotiations in the summer.



Service ~ Engagement ~ Connection ~ Innovation

**Line 3 Flex:** *Reduce to five trips per day with two reverse trips*

Line 3 flex currently operates at 10 trips per day. Staff is recommending a reduction of five trips per day. The remaining five trips are grant funded and the reverse trips are a requirement of the grant funding. This line will be revisited in the summer for efficiency and service levels.

**Line 5 Rainier:** *No change*

Line 5 is fully grant funded. Other than some minor schedule tweaks staff is recommending this line remain unchanged.

**Line 6 Vernonia:** *No change*

Line 6 is fully grant funded. Staff is recommending this line remain unchanged.

**Dial-A-Ride:** *Reduction to 16 hours per day. No service beyond 1 mile of lines 3, 5, 6, and Sunset Empire services within Columbia County*

Dial-A-Ride is one of the most requested services throughout Columbia County; it is also the most expensive and the least efficient. It currently serves all of Columbia County and operates 25 hours per day. By reducing the service hours per day and reducing the reach of the Dial-A-Ride service, staff believes the efficiency can be brought up to industry standards. Staff is recommending a reduction of nine hours per day and a reduced service area of no more than one mile off lines 3, 5, 6, and Sunset Empire services within Columbia County. Once efficiency has been improved and system stability has been achieved, the number of available hours will be re-evaluated.

**Final Service Recommendation:** Staff is recommending the above service adjustments be effective on January 12, 2020. Once implemented, the changes will save the system approximately \$320,000 per year. However, as this system is still a grant-funded system any changes to grants or matching funds will affect current and future services.

**Fares**

Columbia County Rider uses a zone fare system that consists of three zones where the cost is \$5 for the base zone and \$1 for each additional zone, except on the line 3, and on the line 5 to Kelso where the fare is \$2. The price of monthly passes are \$150 for all zone, \$130 for two zone, \$75 for 1 zone.

A committee of peer systems reviewed our current fare structure. The consensus was that our fare system was overly complicated and priced at a level that will discourage

ridership. Since several of our grants are based on ridership, and the goal of Columbia County Rider is to create a system that is utilized by the community, the group recommended we take the following action:

Elimination of the three zone system. All rides are per-boarding (i.e. you pay to board). Reduce the number of fares to two: In-County or Out-of-County.

The cost of each fare should be:

- \$1.50, or \$2.00 for In-County Rides (including Longview/Kelso)
- \$3.00, or \$4.00 for Rides to and from outside of the County (i.e. to Portland, PCC or Willow creek).

The fare would still be subject to the STIF reduced fare program thus making the fare

- \$.50, or \$1.00 in-county for those who qualify
- \$2.00, or \$3.00 out of county for those who qualify.

Only one monthly pass will be issued at a single rate \$120.

The goal of the reductions is to increase ridership, reduce printing costs, and reduce system complexity. While the reduction of fares will result in some revenue loss, an increase in ridership would help minimize the impact. A recent test by Sunset empire showed a 7% increase in ridership when the fares were lowered to \$1. Wilsonville is currently moving to a zero fare system and is similarly seeing ridership increases. Additionally, several grants are based on ridership data. An increase in ridership could result in an increase in grant funding.

### **Final Fare Recommendation:**

Even with the potential loss of revenue, the committee whole-heartedly recommended fare reduction as a way to boost ridership and offset potential losses. Staff recommends implementation of reduced fares to begin March 1, 2020.