

FROM (DEPT/ DIVISION): Planning Department

SUBJECT: STIF Discretionary Grant Applications

<p>Background: The Transit Coordinator is requesting approval to submit grant applications for operations of the Hermiston Hopper and Pilot Rocket transit routes. Both routes are currently funded under Discretionary Fund grants that the County applied for and are operated by Kayak Public Transit.</p> <p>The Hermiston Hopper is an intercommunity transit route that stops in Mission, Pendleton, Echo, Stanfield, Hermiston, Umatilla and Irrigon. The estimated expense for operations for FY 2024-25 is \$632,336. Discretionary Fund grant matching dollars will come from the STIF plan.</p> <p>The Pilot Rocket is an intercommunity transit route with stops in Pilot Rock, Pendleton and Mission. The estimated expense for operations for FY 2024-25 is \$285,647. Discretionary Fund grant matching dollars will come from the STIF plan.</p> <p>The Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee (UCTAC) met on November 7, 2022 to provide a recommendation on the STIF Discretionary Fund grant applications. The UCTAC voted to recommend approval of the application, with some minor changes to both applications to clarify why the County's reserve fund will not be utilized and the matching source. The application must be submitted to ODOT, and ODOT conducts the project selection.</p>	<p>Requested Action:</p> <p>(1) Approve the Hermiston Hopper Discretionary Fund grant application and authorize the County Transit Coordinator to submit the project applications to ODOT.</p> <p>(2) Approve the Pilot Rocket Discretionary Fund grant application and authorize the County Transit Coordinator to submit the project applications to ODOT.</p>
--	--

ATTACHMENTS: Hermiston Hopper grant application, Pilot Rocket grant application

Date (11/7/2022)

\*\*\*\*\*For Internal Use Only\*\*\*\*\*

Checkoffs:

- ( ) Dept. Head (copy)
- ( ) Human Resources (copy)
- ( ) Fiscal
- ( X ) Legal (copy)
- ( ) (Other - List:)

To be notified of Meeting:  
Megan Davchevski

Needed at Meeting:

\*\*\*\*\*

Scheduled for meeting on: November 9, 2022

Action taken:

\*\*\*\*\*

Follow-up:

# HERMISTON HOPPER

## Applicant Information

### Agency Legal Name\*(required)

Umatilla County

### Project Title\*(required)

Hermiston Hopper

### Agency Legal Address\*(required)

216 SE 4th St Pendleton Oregon 97801

### Application Contact Name\*(required)

Megan Davchevski

### Application Contact Title\*(required)

Transit Coordinator

### Application Contact Email Address\*(required)

megan.davchevski@umatillacounty.gov

### Application Contact Phone Number\*(required)

(541) 278-6246

### Name of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

John Shafer

### Title of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, Chair

### Email Address of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

john.shafer@umatillacounty.gov

### Phone Number of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

541-278-6203

## Agency Information

### 1. Transit Agency Type\*(required)

County

### 1.A Does the agency have any existing grant agreements with ODOT?\*(required)

Yes

**2. What is the main type of service that will be supported by this award?\*(required)**

Fixed Route

**3. Would this award support ongoing operations of an existing service?\*(required)**

Yes

**3.A Brief history of current project/service. What, if any, elements of the proposed project differ from existing efforts and services?\* Limit 750 Characters**

The Hermiston Hopper is an existing transit route that connects west Umatilla County to the rest of Umatilla County, Grant County, Walla Walla County and Union County. The City of Pendleton serves as a “hub” to these other regional routes. The Hopper is mainly a commuter route, that also serves a unique population that is travelling for recreation, doctor appointments, and shopping.

**Risk Assessment Information**

**4. Did your agency have any turnover of management or financial staff in the last two years?\*(required)**

No

**5. Does your agency have an accounting system that allows you to completely and accurately track the receipt and disbursement of funds related to the award?\*(required)**

Yes

**6. What type of accounting system does your agency use?\*(required)**

Combined

**7. Does your agency have a system in place that will account for 100 percent of each employee's time?\*(required)**

Yes

**8. Did your staff members attend required training and meetings during the previous biennium?\*(required)**

Yes

**9. Was your agency audited by the federal government in the past two years?\*(required)**

No

**10. Did your agency stay on budget in the past two years?\*(required)**

Yes

**Agency Qualifications**

**11. Describe how your agency has the legal, managerial and operational capacity to perform and report on project progress within the scope, schedule and budget of the anticipated grant agreement. (Description of operational capacity should apply specifically for the workload of projects in this application.) Limit 1000 Characters**

Umatilla County has a full-time employee that serves as the Transit Coordinator (TC). The TC provides support to transit providers, oversees reporting, is liaison to the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee and represents the County at various transit events and training opportunities. The TC works to increase coordination between providers, improve services by obtaining rider feedback and identifies projects that would enhance public transit.

Reimbursement funds are distributed by the County Finance Department by request of the TC once reporting is complete, accurate, and submitted to ODOT. The Finance Department is composed of a Chief Financial Officer, an Assistant Finance Director and two fiscal assistants.

KPT has 17 drivers who provide routes throughout Umatilla County and beyond, and 2 dispatchers, 1 bus washer, 1 mechanic an assistant manager and one program manager. The Program Manager is the lead contact for the TC and responsible for quarterly reporting.

**12. Certification of Compliance**

**13. Do you plan to use a Sub-Recipient or contractor to implement the grant supported activity?\*(required)**

Yes

**13.A If Yes, please list the Sub-Recipient(s) and describe how the applicant will provide sufficient Sub-Recipient/contractor oversight to ensure eligibility is maintained while receiving STIF Discretionary or Statewide Transit Network moneys. \*(required) Limit 500 Characters**

Umatilla County, through a partnership with Kayak Public Transit, (operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation) is contracting purchased services for operations and project administration for the Hermiston Hopper regional route. The TC works with all subrecipients on quarterly reporting and annual site visits to ensure compliance. Additionally, the TC routinely rides the transit routes.

**16.B Describe the project to be funded. Clearly describe what the requested fund award would be used to accomplish, detailing the specific tasks and deliverables. Where relevant, identify the origin and destination of the proposed service as well as each municipality visited along the route. Please see page 7 of the application instructions for additional guidance on writing a project description. \*(required) Limit 5000 Characters**

The Hermiston Hopper route is an existing regional route that has stops in Mission (an unincorporated community on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, CTUIR), Pendleton, Stanfield, Echo, Hermiston, McNary, Umatilla and Irrigon. Irrigon is located in Morrow County, the other five cities are located within Umatilla County. This regional route provides an otherwise missing connection across Umatilla County's rural cities. It serves commuters, those traveling for groceries, recreation, medical appointments and more. Hermiston and Pendleton are the largest of these cities, both with booming economies offering employment, hospitals, airports, grocery stores, retail and event centers that host

annual events such as the Pendleton Round-Up, Whiskey Fest and Umatilla County Fair/Pro Rodeo. Hermiston and Umatilla are experiencing a population, workforce and economic boom with the recent addition of countless Amazon Data Centers, with additional data centers on the horizon. The remaining cities are much smaller and lack medical care, are food deserts, lack commercial retailers and to some degree, eateries. CTUIR, located east of Pendleton, also has a flourishing economy with a casino and resort center, an industrial park and a proposed housing development. In addition to the larger regional connections (Union and Grant counties, Washington State, and beyond) the Hopper connects the larger rural cities to their smaller counterparts, allowing people to live and work in various parts of Umatilla County.

The Hopper runs four times daily (Monday through Friday) and twice on Saturdays from the Kayak Public Transit Hub in Mission, Oregon through Umatilla. It travels to Irrigon twice daily and twice on Saturdays. In route it serves the communities of Pendleton, Echo, Stanfield, Hermiston, Umatilla and McNary - as well as the unincorporated populations in between. The Hopper is Umatilla County's east-west transit artery. KPT ensures efficiency in the Statewide Transit Network by coordinating shared stops with other regional routes that are served by Greyhound, the Pendleton Airport, Letter Bus, Hermiston Area Regional Transit, Grant County People Mover, and services running to Walla Walla, Washington and La Grande, Oregon. Connections to major regional employers and to Tribal Enterprise Zones, where CTUIR is the largest employer in Umatilla County, have been integrated into the route with scheduling and transfer considerations designed around the schedules of large employers.

In the most recent quarter, ending June 2022, the Hopper provided 3916 rides which surpasses the pre-COVID average (nearly 14,000 rides in the year 2019). These rides are fare-free, and with the rising cost of fuel, more commuters are switching from single occupancy vehicles to public transit, fully embracing Kayak and the County's partnered regional routes.

Resources, equipment and infrastructure for the Hopper route have already been procured and CTUIR KPT is the existing and continued transit provider operating the Hermiston Hopper route. Umatilla County will continue to have contracted purchased services from KPT. This intercommunity project will allow the Hopper to continue existing operations, providing a regional connection linking Pendleton (connections to eastern cities in Umatilla County and Walla Walla Washington) with the western cities of Hermiston, Echo, Stanfield, McNary, Umatilla and Irrigon (Morrow County).

According to the 2020 Census, Umatilla County's population is 80,075 people and estimated that 11.7% of Umatilla County's population is in poverty. Within a quarter mile of the transit stops for the Hopper is a population of approximately 3000, of which about 22% are in poverty and 44% are of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin (according to Remix). Within a half mile of the Hopper's stops is a population of about 10,400 with 21% in poverty and 44% of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin. KPT knows its riders, and regular ridership rely on the Hopper for their daily travel.

Attached to this application are maps from Remix and the current schedule for the Hermiston Hopper.

**17. What is the minimum project cost that will still allow your project to proceed?**

\$632,366. This is the minimum amount to keep the current service levels. A reduction in funding amount would require services to be cut either to the Hopper route, or to Kayak's other regional routes that see less ridership, such as the La Grande Arrow and the Pilot Rocket. Ultimately, the County and Kayak

would like these other two routes to have an increase in services, but limited funding is making that difficult.

Should the Hopper not be awarded the Intercommunity funds, the County TC is requesting a contingency project in the STIF plan to partially fund the project. This would result in a loss of services, due to the large operating cost and other existing STIF projects. The Hopper does not depend on other discretionary grants for funding.

**18. Select the fund source(s) for which you would like to compete and that you believe your project is eligible to receive. Check all that apply.\*(required)**

**STIF Discretionary STIF Intercommunity Discretionary FTA Section 5311(f) Intercity**

**19. Why is this an important project? What are the consequences of this project not receiving funding?\*(required) Limit 1000 Characters**

The Hermiston Hopper is an important project because it is a regional connection that fills a gap in the Statewide Transit Network and largely serves transportation disadvantaged communities. With fuel prices constantly increasing, more people rely on public transit for transportation. The Hopper has continued to see an increase in ridership, which is unique when looking at other transit providers within Oregon. Other providers are struggling to grow ridership, the Hopper is thriving and growing due to the reliability, consistency and dependability of both the route and KPT. KPT's great reputation is recognized amongst the rural communities in Umatilla County.

If the Hopper were not to receive funding, this would result in a loss of transit services. Other regional routes served by KPT, such as the La Grande Arrow and Pilot Rocket would have limited services. Both the Arrow and Rocket have slightly lower ridership and already a lesser number of daily trips, when compared to the Hopper.

**20. Will this project involve breaking ground or any other activity that might require environmental review per federal requirements?\*(required)**

No

**Oregon Transportation Commission Investment Priorities**

**Equity and Public Transportation Service to Low-Income Households**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 20%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

**21. Describe how this project would support and improve access for vulnerable populations and/or historically marginalized communities.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Without a doubt, the Hopper supports and provides transportation services to vulnerable populations and historically marginalized communities. Within a quarter mile of the transit stops for the Hopper is a population of approximately 3000, of which about 22% are in poverty and 44% are of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin (according to Remix). Within a half mile of the Hopper's stops is a population of about 10,400 with 21% in poverty and 44% of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin. The Hopper stops at Wal-Mart (Hermiston and Pendleton), Columbia Harvest Foods (grocery in Umatilla) with connections to Good Shepherd Hospital (Hermiston), Walla Walla VA clinic and St Anthony's Hospital (Pendleton),

transporting vulnerable and historically marginalized populations to priority locations such as grocery stores and hospitals. The Hopper also provides connections to government agencies, such as the State Department of Human Services building in Pendleton, Post Offices, City Halls, the County Courthouse and to tribal neighborhoods within the Umatilla Indian Reservation. There are also key connections to employment centers, providing work transportation to those lacking vehicles or with unreliable personal vehicles.

Currently, Umatilla County in partnership with the City of Umatilla and other agencies, is implementing a new project, known as Practical Assistance through Transitional Housing (PATH). The intent of this program is to bring together various services to assist individuals and families facing homelessness with the objective to move them into and through transitional housing to permanent housing. An integral part of Project PATH will be the suite of services that will be available to participants within the Hermiston, Umatilla, Echo, and Stanfield area. Project PATH will provide housing and other resources to individuals and families experiencing homelessness. As part of PATH, the County and Kayak are working together to modify the current Hopper route to include a stop at the PATH location. Project PATH is slated to open in early 2023.

Should the Hopper not be fully funded by STIF Discretionary, it would result in a loss of services to these disadvantaged communities. These communities rely on the great, free public transit that Umatilla County and Kayak Public Transit strive to provide.

#### **Coordination of Public Transportation Services**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 10%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 30%)**

#### **22. Describe how this project would improve the passenger experience, benefit multiple transit providers, or involve consolidation, coordination, or resource sharing between agencies, including use of transportation data and technology. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Currently, KPT provides transit services for the City of Hermiston and operates the Hermiston Area Regional Transit (HART) route. This fare free route circulates the Hermiston, connecting residents to grocery stores, medical clinics, and other necessary locations. The HART and Hopper coordinate with timely stops at the Hermiston Wal-Mart and 3<sup>rd</sup> and Orchard. The coordinated stops allow for smooth transfers. The City of Hermiston and KPT have a thriving collaborative relationship that ensures connectivity, resource sharing and a transit system with a consistent passenger experience.

In Pendleton, the Hopper has timely shared stops at the Pendleton Wal-Mart, Circle K and Til Taylor Park. These stops provide transfers to the City of Pendleton Let'r Bus routes; the Northeast route and Southwest route, both are fare free and the routes serve as circular routes for Pendleton residents and visitors, serving neighborhoods and downtown area. The City of Pendleton and Kayak have a collaborative working relationship and are actively seeking more opportunities to create more efficiencies in the regional transit network.

Regional transit providers all have recently embraced [iTransitNW](#), a public transit trip planner. This has created even more coordination between agencies, iTransitNW contains live maps, trip features, bus schedules and stops and is a mobile app and web viewer.

Umatilla County's TC provides coordination services between transit providers and promotes each providers' services. The TC manages [EOGO.org](http://EOGO.org), which contains route and contact information and website links for all of the providers. The TC distributes EOGO materials and providers' informational and marketing materials throughout the communities and at community events.

Umatilla County recently received a 5304 planning grant to develop a Transportation Development Plan (TDP). This plan is currently under development by a consulting firm and will be completed and adopted by June 2023. Representatives from each of the transit providers, the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee, cities, ODOT, Morrow County transit and members of the public make up the TDP advisory committee. The TDP is identifying areas for more collaboration and consolidation within the 20-year planning horizon, in addition to identifying future transit projects and routes. This effort highlights the dedication that the transit providers within Umatilla County and surrounding region have for coordination of services.

### **Environmental and Public Health**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 15%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

**23. Describe how this project would go beyond providing an alternative to personal car use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollution, and/or support positive health outcomes. How does this project support applicant's climate planning efforts? \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

The Hopper is an existing regional transit route operated by Kayak Public Transit (KPT). KPT operates transit buses that contain bike racks, which both encourages and allows riders to utilize both active and public transportation simultaneously. Active transportation, opposed to personal vehicle use, is transportation that creates very minimal greenhouse gases, if any, and active transportation is a key driver in urban areas for reducing localized pollution. With cleaner air comes better health of the community. The Hopper has key stops in several cities that are located with many destinations in walkable and bikeable distances. For example, within ¼ mile of the Til Taylor stop in Pendleton is the Umatilla County Courthouse, County Public Health Department and State of Oregon Building (contains Department of Human Services and Child Support Program). This allows people to travel farther and still minimize their pollution footprint.

One could ride their bike from their home in Umatilla to the nearest Hopper stop (there are several in Umatilla proper), place their bike on the bus' bike rack, ride the Hopper to the Til Taylor Park stop in Pendleton, and then ride their bike to the County Courthouse. The Hopper allows someone who lives in the western part of Umatilla County to travel far distances without needing their own vehicle. In addition to removing a single occupancy vehicle from the local road systems, this person has also utilized another mode of transportation that reduces green house gas emissions and pollution, while also providing the personal health benefit of exercise. One could switch the bicycle used in this example for walking, rolling, or other active transportation modes and the result would be the same; a successful use of pairing public transit (the Hopper) with active transportation.

KPT is a pro-active public transit provider that is looking at the future and how rural transit can evolve and become more efficient. Currently, Umatilla County has limited charging infrastructure, a majority of existing personal vehicle charging stations are located within CTUIR's boundaries. Fully electric regional transit in rural Umatilla County and the surrounding areas is not feasible with current infrastructure.



However, Kayak is evaluating how the fleet can become more efficient and is creating efficiencies in route schedules and structures to reduce environmental impacts. Fixed routes are more efficient at moving people than demand-response transit.

### **Safety, Security, and Community Livability**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 20%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

#### **24. Describe how the project would increase use and participation in active transportation, and support connections between transit and other travel modes like biking and walking.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Active transportation provides numerous health benefits to riders, as a means of transportation and exercise. It also greatly reduces localized pollution which has public health benefits to the local communities. The Hopper has key stops in several cities that are located with many destinations in walkable and bikeable distances. For example, within ¼ mile of the Til Taylor stop in Pendleton is the Umatilla County Courthouse, County Public Health Department and State of Oregon Building (contains Department of Human Services and Child Support Program).

The example above would also serve as an excellent example of the connection that the Hopper provides to other travel modes like biking and walking. One could ride their bike from their home in the City of Umatilla to the nearest Hopper stop (there are several in Umatilla proper), place their bike on the bus' bike rack, ride the Hopper to the Til Taylor Park stop in Pendleton, and then ride their bike to the County Courthouse for jury duty or other business. The Hopper allows someone who lives in the western part of Umatilla County to travel far distances without needing their own vehicle. In addition to removing that single occupancy vehicle from the interstate and local road systems, this person has also utilized another mode of transportation that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, while also providing the personal health benefit of exercise. One could switch the bicycle used in this example for walking, rolling, or other active transportation modes and the result would be the same; a successful use of pairing public transit (the Hopper) with active transportation. The Hopper has stops designed for all levels of activity, meaning, the stops are close to activity centers and within a distance that is manageable for most mobility constrained users.

In addition to the above, the Hopper offers a unique opportunity for its riders. If a couple lived in Hermiston, went to downtown Pendleton for lunch, and then wanted to catch a movie at Wildhorse they could use a personal vehicle to make three different trips. Or, they could use the Hopper (no transfers required) with just a few blocks of walking spread throughout the trip. In addition to cost savings, the couple would experience health benefits by having some exercise.

#### **25. Describe how the project would support and improve safety of passengers in transit vehicles and safety of other roadway users.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

The Hermiston Hopper service is operated by Kayak Public Transit. Kayak is owned and under the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). CTUIR and Kayak receive both state and federal funding, therefore they must comply with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements for training, licensing, safety and fleet management. Kayak strives to go above and beyond FTA requirements to ensure safety of passengers and other roadway users.

Kayak's drivers are trained to handle unruly and disruptive riders. Kayak's fleet and safety manager provides quarterly safety training to the drivers and dispatchers. All of Kayak's busses have live feed video surveillance to deter any criminal or violent activity, in addition to capturing evidence should it be necessary. Kayak has a full maintenance facility with a full-time fleet mechanic whom utilizes maintenance software such as Fleetio and Mitchell 1 to maintain all of Kayak's vehicles regularly and to keep them in peak condition. Kayak has recently upgraded their on-board software to iTransitNW which allows trip planning. This minimizes the time riders may face in layovers or unknown delays. ITransitNW also allows the public to obtain real-time updates on the bus location and estimated arrival times.

### **Statewide Transit Network Connections**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 10%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 30%)**

#### **26. Describe how this project would support and improve the utility and connectivity of the Statewide Transit Network and/or create a foundation for future Statewide Transit Network improvements.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

As existing operations, the Hopper already supports and improves the connectivity of the Statewide Transit Network. The Hopper serves as the only connection between central Umatilla County and western Umatilla County. According to the 2020 Census Pendleton has a population of 16,972, Hermiston with 19,455, Umatilla with 7,373, Stanfield with 2,144 and Echo with 632. In addition to connecting the western cities to Pendleton, Milton Freewater, Pilot Rock, Walla Walla Washington, and La Grande Oregon and several small cities in between.

Aside from being the connection to Pendleton and beyond, the Hopper serves as the only public transit connection between the cities of Echo, Stanfield, Hermiston, Umatilla and Irrigon for people travelling the Highway 395 corridor. The Highway 395 corridor boasts amenities like grocery stores, schools, shopping malls, recreational activities (bowling, movie theatre and sports fields) and serves as the main artery for those traveling between the four western cities in Umatilla County. Without the Hopper, citizens are reliant on single occupancy vehicles or biking and/or walking. Biking/walking presents safety challenges as Highway 395 contains minimal if any infrastructure to protect people while travelling. Portions of Highway 395 have sidewalks and bike lanes, however the more rural portions in between cities do not have this type of infrastructure. The Hopper allows those without reliable transportation the means to travel between cities for work and play.

In 2021, CTUIR, in coordination with Umatilla and Morrow Counties, developed the Hermiston-Boardman Connector Strategic Report. This report provided a basis for establishing a transit connection between Hermiston (Umatilla County) and Boardman (Morrow County). The report provided a route and possible route schedules for the Hermiston-Boardman Connector (Connector). The Connector will allow the Hopper to eliminate some stops in the rural outskirts of Hermiston and portions in Umatilla creating more efficiencies. Instead of the Hopper, the Connector will service these stops and provide transfer opportunities in addition to travelling to Boardman. The Connector route is ready to launch and has baseline funding in the current Umatilla County STIF plan, Kayak is currently waiting for busses to be shipped. Thus, the Hopper creates the foundation for filling another gap in the Statewide Transit Network as a connection to the future Connector.

### **Funding and Strategic Investment**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 20%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

**27. Describe why investment in this project makes sense from both the perspective of current need and long term Oregon transit needs. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Investment in the Hermiston Hopper makes sense from both the perspective of current need and long-term Oregon transit needs for many reasons although due to space requirements I will only share a few. First, public transit in rural areas is already limited. The Hermiston Hopper is the only regional transit route that connects the Mission area east of Pendleton, Pendleton, Stanfield, Echo, Hermiston, Umatilla, McNary and Irrigon. Reducing or eliminating this service would have a detrimental effect on public transit in rural Umatilla County, isolating many low-income and transportation disadvantaged individuals that rely on this service to get to work, school, grocery stores and doctor appointments.

Secondly, this project proposal is for a route that is already operating with an established ridership that relies on the service. As outlined earlier in this application, despite many other transit agencies seeing a decrease in ridership both during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hermiston Hopper has seen a rapid increase in ridership. It is anticipated that ridership numbers for the Hopper will continue to increase as folks begin to understand the dependability of the service. Perception of rural transit is the biggest barrier in growing ridership in Eastern Oregon. Rural transit tends to have negative connotations: unreliable, unpredictable and limitations in services (infrequency and lack of productive stops). However, from surveys gathered during Umatilla County's Transportation Development Plan outreach initiative, riders were overwhelmingly satisfied with the Hopper's performance and services. Riders shared that the Hopper was reliable, comfortable, affordable (free), and offered stops at places they needed to travel.

Additionally, it is one of Oregon's transit goals to connect transit isolated communities. The Hopper serves as the only transit connection (and it is free for all riders) between the several rural small cities with the larger city of Hermiston. Should the Hopper not receive discretionary funding, this connection would see reduced service hours and possibly a loss of other services like the Hopper, such as the Arrow and Rocket.

For the reasons above, one could determine that funding the project clearly makes sense both from the perspective of current need and long-term Oregon transit needs.

**28. If this project will last beyond the 2023-25 biennium, describe the plan for ongoing funding including match. If not applicable, type N/A. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

It is the intent of Umatilla County and Kayak Public Transit to continue the Hopper route for many years to come. As outlined throughout this application, it is a transit route that is widely used by not only low-income, minority, and transportation disadvantaged communities, but also the general public who utilizes it for their daily commute as both a climate-friendly and economic transportation option. It would be tragic to provide an incredible service that is seen and used widely by the public, and then take it away due to a loss in funding.

With that being said, currently, the TC and KPT realize that grants are not the most secure way to fund transit routes long term. This does make it difficult to start new pilot projects when local funds are currently near capacity. KPT is working to create more efficiencies in other routes so that funding may be redirected to the intercommunity routes. Umatilla County and CTUIR do not receive enough STIF

dollars to keep the Hopper, other existing intercity routes, and the existing public transportation projects fully funded without receiving discretionary dollars. The discretionary dollars received in the past, and in the future, allow these transportation gaps to be filled with routes like the Hermiston Hopper, Walla Walla Whistler, Pilot Rocket and La Grande Arrow. These routes cover long distances, and therefore the operation costs are very high. But they fill a large gap in the Statewide Transit Network and serve many transportation disadvantaged people, or those who suddenly have lost personal transportation and need to make it to a medical appointment, the grocery store, or elsewhere.

Match will be provided by CTUIR's tribal dollars. Although limited in transit dollars, CTUIR does receive a small amount for transit projects and that is dedicated to match for the various grant programs. While Kayak Public Transit is umbrellaed under CTUIR, KPT provides transit serves to all Umatilla County residents, and other members of the public who hop-on their busses. These services are fare free and a huge asset to the local communities. A majority of ridership for the Hopper are those with limited incomes who greatly benefit from the Hopper's fare free transit.

**29. Does this project depend on other funding sources including other discretionary grants whose outcomes are uncertain? If yes, please list those fund sources. If not applicable, type N/A.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

In the past, the Hopper has been funded by Intercommunity Discretionary dollars with local match provided by CTUIR. Should the Hopper not be rewarded the Intercommunity funds, the County TC is requesting a contingency project in the STIF plan to partially fund the project. This would result in a loss of services, due to the large operating cost and other existing STIF projects. The Hopper does not depend on other discretionary grants for funding.

**30. Capital Asset Purchases**

**Capital assets are items that cost at least \$5,000 and have a useful life of at least three years.**

**Describe proposed capital purchases. If no capital assets are included in your application, type N/A.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

N/A

**Project Details**

**Select each Task Category needed to complete the Project. Additional information will be requested below for each selected category.**

**Task Category\*(required)**

**Vehicle Purchase Equipment Purchase Facility Purchase Signs/Shelters Purchase Planning Project Administration Operating Preventive Maintenance Mobility Management**

Operating

**Give a brief (1-3 sentences) description of this project cost.\*(required)**

**Total Task Cost (Grant Amount + Match Amount)**

\$632,366

**Project Task and Match Amounts**

**50% Match Rate Calculations**

**Grant Amount - 5311f (50% Fed Share)**

\$316,183.00

**Match Amount - 5311f (50% Local Share)**

\$316,183.00

**20% Match Rate Calculations**

**Grant Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (80% State Share)**

\$505,892.80

**Match Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (20% Local Share)**

\$126,473.20

**10% Match Rate Calculations (For Qualified Applicants)**

**Grant Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (90% State Share)**

\$569,129.40

**Match Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (10% Local Share)**

\$63,236.60

**Application Totals**

**Match Sources**

**Match Sources\*(required)**

Local

**Amount\*(required)**

\$126,473.20

**Add Match Source**

**Are matching funds of at least 20% of project costs available if the project is awarded?\*(required)**

Yes

**What percent of funds will be used for demand response transportation?\*(required)**

0%

**Percent of funds used for fixed route transportation**

100%

**Note on Application Totals: If applying for 5311(f) Operating, a 50% match rate is applied to identified Operating costs. However, the application form automatically applies a 20% match rate to the full Project Cost, including Operating costs. Therefore, Section 5311(f) applicants should ensure the accuracy of the Total Task Cost for each Task Category, as the 20% match rate will only apply to non-Operating costs in a 5311(f) grant award. The form is unable to calculate an accurate application total using two different match rates.**

# Free Bus Service



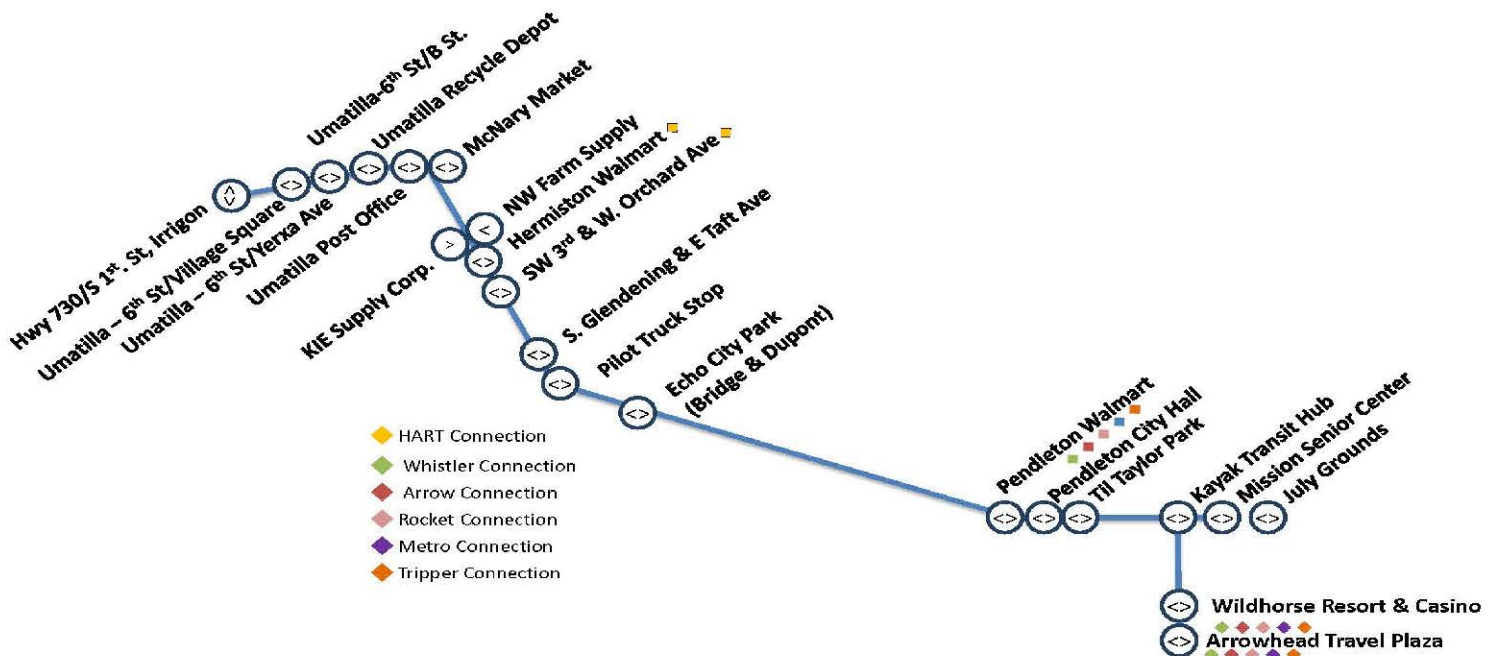
Location	AM	Mid AM	Mid PM	PM	Sat AM	Sat PM
Kayak Transit Hub	--	8:14 AM	12:33 PM	--	--	--
July Grounds	--	--	12:37 PM	See below	8:30 AM	3:30 PM
Mission Senior Center	--	--	--	--	8:32 AM	3:32 PM
Wildhorse Resort & Casino	--	8:19 AM	12:43 PM	See below	8:36 AM	3:36 PM
Arrowhead Travel Plaza	4:52 AM	8:21 AM	12:45 PM	See below	--	--
Kayak Transit Hub	--	--	--	See below	--	--
Til Taylor Park	5:00 AM	8:31 AM	12:55 PM	See below	8:45 AM	3:45 PM
Pendleton City Hall	--	8:35 AM	12:59 PM	See below	8:49 AM	3:49 PM
Pendleton Walmart	5:07 AM	8:41 AM	1:05 PM	*5:34: PM	8:53 AM	3:53 PM
Echo City Park (Bridge & Dupont)	--	9:06 AM	1:30 PM	--	9:18 AM	4:18 PM
Pilot Truck Stop	5:30 AM	9:10 AM	1:35 PM	5:57 PM	9:22 AM	4:22 PM
Stanfield/S. Glendening & E Taft Ave	5:35 AM	9:15 AM	1:40 PM	6:02 PM	9:27 AM	4:27 PM
SW 3rd & W Orchard Avenue - To Umatilla	5:46 AM	**9:26 AM	**1:52 PM	6:15 PM	9:39 AM	4:39 PM
Hermiston Walmart - To Umatilla	5:51 AM	9:31 AM	2:03 PM	6:20 PM	9:44 AM	4:44 PM
Northwest Farm Supply - To Umatilla	5:57 AM	9:36 AM	2:09 PM	6:25 PM	9:49 AM	4:49 PM
McNary Market	--	9:44 AM	2:15 PM	6:31 PM	9:55 AM	4:55 PM
Umatilla Recycle Depot	--	9:48 AM	2:21 PM	6:37 PM	10:01 AM	5:01 PM
Umatilla - 6th & B St.	--	9:52 AM	2:25 PM	--	10:05 AM	5:05 PM
Irrigon - Hwy 730 & S. 1st St. (Bus Shelter)	--	10:00 AM	2:33 PM	--	10:13 AM	5:13 PM
Umatilla - 6th Street/Village Square	--	10:12 AM	2:46 PM	6:39 PM	10:25 AM	5:25 PM
Umatilla - 6th Street/Yerxa Avenue	--	10:13 AM	2:47 PM	--	--	--
Umatilla Post Office	6:01 AM	10:15 AM	2:49 PM	6:42 PM	10:28 AM	5:28 PM
Arrive McNary Market	6:06 AM	10:20 AM	2:54 PM	--	10:33 AM	5:33 PM
Depart McNary Market	6:06 AM	10:33 AM	3:04 PM	--	10:43 AM	5:43 PM
KIE Supply Corporation - To Pendleton	6:14 AM	10:40 AM	3:11 PM	6:50 PM	10:50 AM	5:50 PM
Hermiston Walmart - To Pendleton	6:19 AM	*10:45 AM	3:17 PM	6:54 PM	10:56 AM	5:56 PM
SW 3rd & W Orchard Avenue - To Pendleton	6:24 AM	10:51 AM	3:23 PM	6:59 PM	11:00 AM	6:00 PM
Stanfield/S. Glendening & E Taft Ave	6:35 AM	11:03 AM	3:35 PM	7:10 PM	11:11 AM	6:11 PM
Pilot Truck Stop	6:40 AM	11:08 AM	3:40 PM	7:15 PM	11:16 AM	6:16 PM
Echo City Park (Bridge & Dupont)	--	11:12 AM	3:44 PM	--	11:20 AM	6:20 PM
Pendleton Walmart	7:04 AM	11:37 AM	4:09 PM	7:39 PM	11:45 AM	6:45 PM
Pendleton City Hall	7:07 AM	11:41 AM	4:13 PM	7:42 PM	11:49 AM	6:49 PM
Til Taylor Park	7:11 AM	11:45 AM	4:17 PM	7:46 PM	11:53 AM	6:53 PM
Kayak Transit Hub	7:21 AM	--	4:27 PM	--	--	--
Mission Senior Center	End	--	End	--	12:03 PM	7:03 PM
July Grounds	--	--	--	--	12:05 PM	7:05 PM
Wildhorse Resort & Casino	--	11:54 AM	--	7:56 PM	12:10 PM	--
Arrowhead Travel Plaza	--	End	--	End	End	7:10 PM
						End

All Scheduled Times are Arrival and Departure Times unless otherwise noted

Connector to Hermiston via Rocket at July Grounds/4:55 PM ~ Wildhorse/5:00 PM ~ Arrowhead/5:02 PM ~ Cayuse Holdings/5:05 PM ~  
~ Kayak Transit Hub/5:10 PM ~ Til Taylor Park/5:19 PM ~ Pendleton City Hall/5:24 PM ~ Transfer at Pendleton Walmart at 5:34 PM

\*Connect to Hermiston area on HART at 9:26 AM & 10:45 AM & 1:52 PM      Connect to July Grounds, Wildhorse on Rocket at 4:51 PM

\*Connection with Rocket at 5:34PM      Connection to July Grounds and Mission area on Metro at 7:46 PM



Dispatch Line (541) 429-7519

[ctuir.org](http://ctuir.org)



**Transit lines**

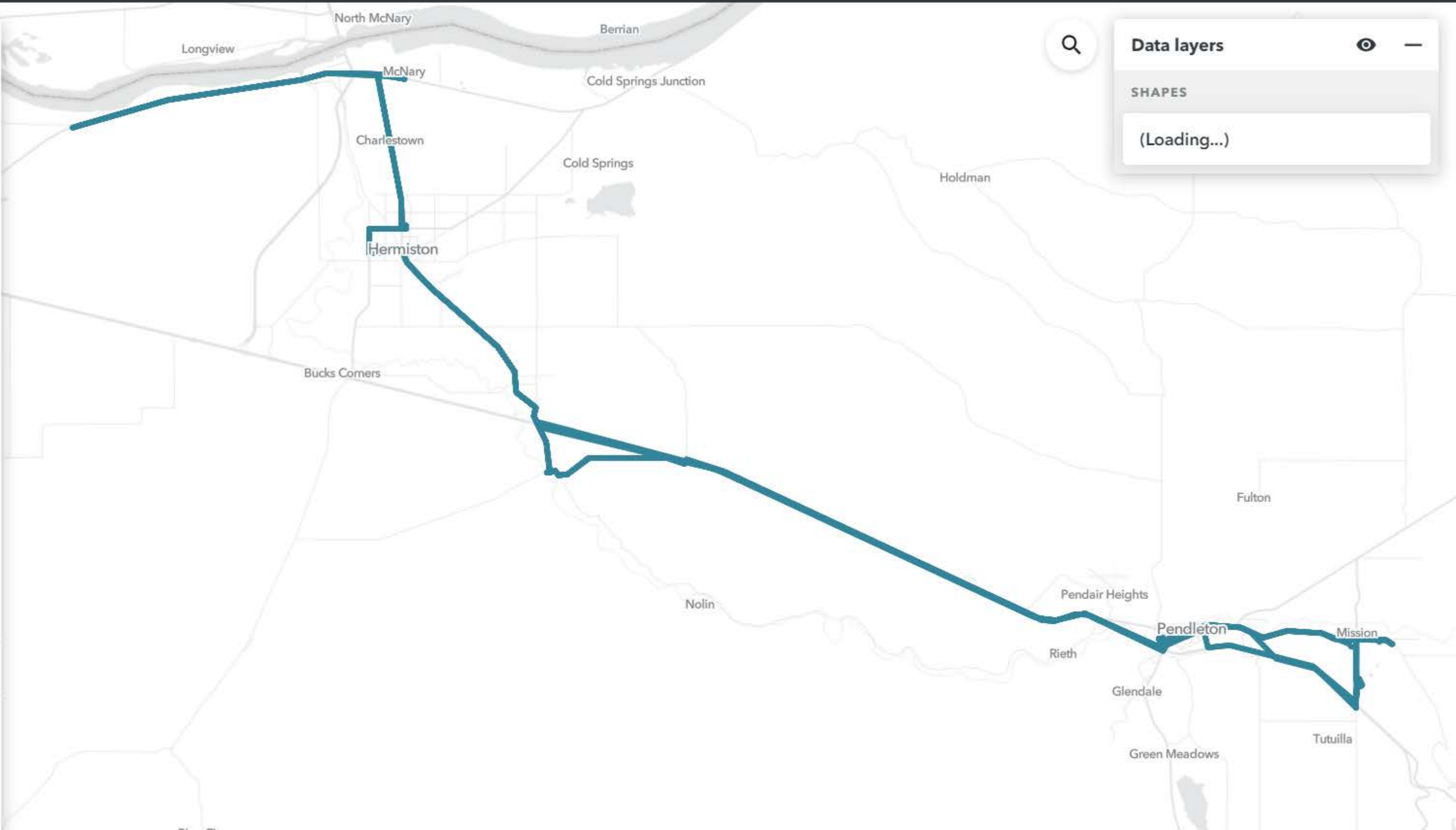
Display by line color ▾ + Add line

ALL LINES (1)  ▲

- █ Hermiston Hopper

**FAVORITE STATS**

1 line & 1 vehicle  
 \$385.7k / year  
 22 stops  
 Within 0.25 mi of stops:  
 ~2 900 population



**Data layers**

SHAPES

(Loading...)



**Service** 🕒 ↗️

**Weekday**

FROM TO EVERY RUNTIME ⓘ

04:45 08:15 202 min 205.0 min →

12:30 17:30 301 min 209.8 min →

**Saturday**

FROM TO EVERY RUNTIME ⓘ

12:00 19:00 420 min 13.5 min →

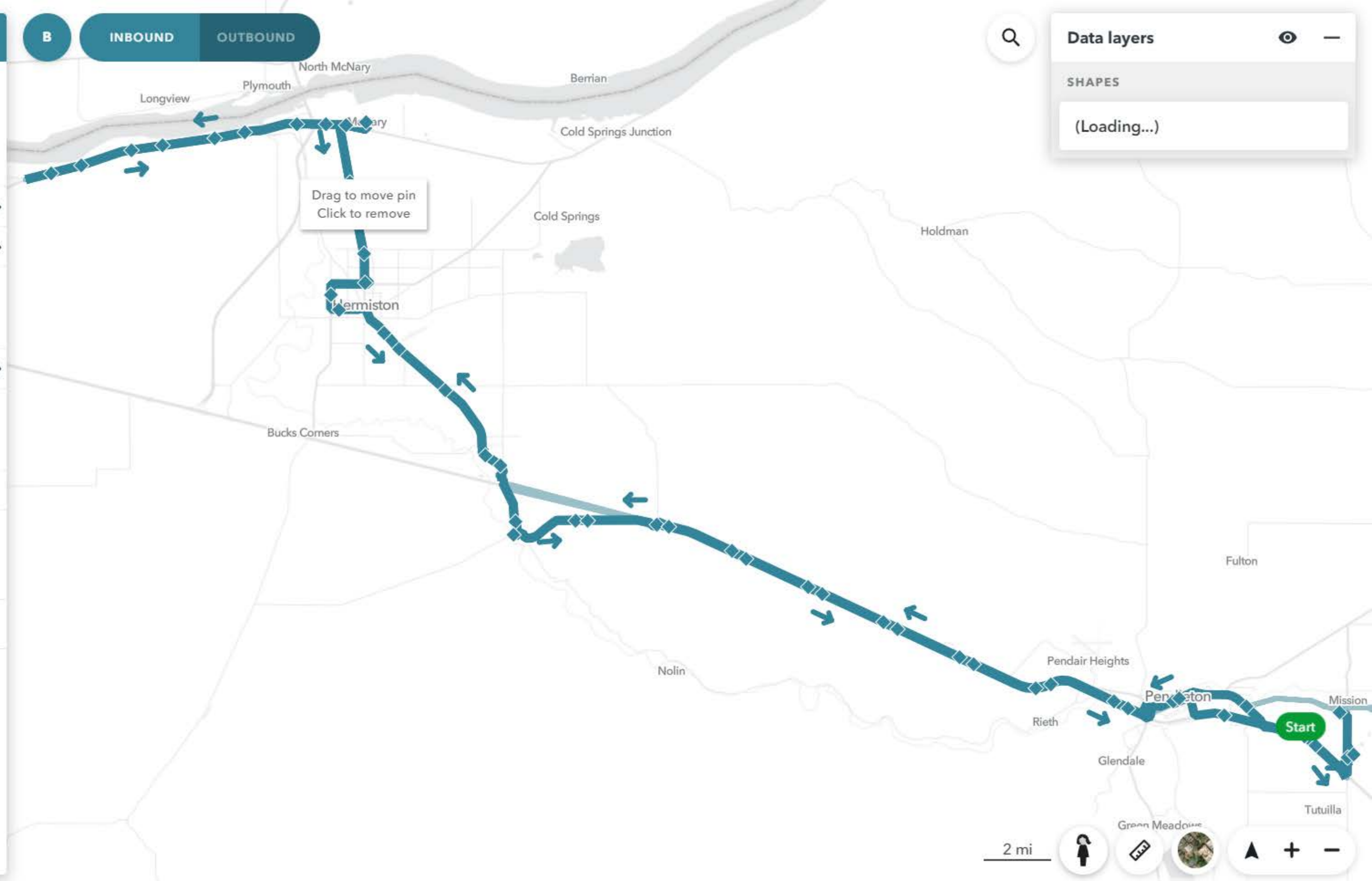
**Sunday**

FROM TO EVERY RUNTIME ⓘ

00:00 00:00 0 min 0.0 min

**FAVORITE STATS** —

118.84 miles  
1 vehicle - Bus  
\$385.7k / year  
📍 Within 0.25 mi of stops:  
~2,900 population  
~22% % of people in poverty  
~44% % of people who are non-White or of Hispanic / Latino origin



SHAPES  
(Loading...)

# PILOT ROCKET

## Applicant Information

### Agency Legal Name\*(required)

Umatilla County

### Project Title\*(required)

Pilot Rocket

### Agency Legal Address\*(required)

216 SE 4th St Pendleton Oregon 97801

### Application Contact Name\*(required)

Megan Davchevski

### Application Contact Title\*(required)

Transit Coordinator

### Application Contact Email Address\*(required)

megan.davchevski@umatillacounty.gov

### Application Contact Phone Number\*(required)

(541) 278-6246

### Name of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

John Shafer

### Title of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

Umatilla County Board of Commissioners, Chair

### Email Address of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

john.shafer@umatillacounty.gov

### Phone Number of Person Signing Agreement\*(required)

541-278-6203

## Agency Information

### 1. Transit Agency Type\*(required)

County

### 1.A Does the agency have any existing grant agreements with ODOT?\*(required)

Yes

**2. What is the main type of service that will be supported by this award?\*(required)**

Fixed Route

**3. Would this award support ongoing operations of an existing service?\*(required)**

Yes

**3.A Brief history of current project/service. What, if any, elements of the proposed project differ from existing efforts and services?\* Limit 750 Characters**

The Pilot Rocket is an existing transit route that connects the rural city of Pilot Rock to other cities in Umatilla County (Pendleton, Hermiston and Milton-Freewater), Walla Walla County and Union County by means of other transit routes. The City of Pendleton serves as a “hub” to these other regional routes. The Rocket is mainly a commuter route, for people working in Pendleton and also serves a unique population that is travelling for recreation, doctor appointments, and shopping.

#### **Risk Assessment Information**

**4. Did your agency have any turnover of management or financial staff in the last two years?\*(required)**

No

**5. Does your agency have an accounting system that allows you to completely and accurately track the receipt and disbursement of funds related to the award?\*(required)**

Yes

**6. What type of accounting system does your agency use?\*(required)**

Combined

**7. Does your agency have a system in place that will account for 100 percent of each employee's time?\*(required)**

Yes

**8. Did your staff members attend required training and meetings during the previous biennium?\*(required)**

Yes

**9. Was your agency audited by the federal government in the past two years?\*(required)**

No

**10. Did your agency stay on budget in the past two years?\*(required)**

Yes

#### **Agency Qualifications**

**11. Describe how your agency has the legal, managerial and operational capacity to perform and report on project progress within the scope, schedule and budget of the anticipated grant agreement. (Description of operational capacity should apply specifically for the workload of projects in this application.) Limit 1000 Characters**

Umatilla County has a full-time employee that serves as the Transit Coordinator (TC). The TC provides support to transit providers, oversees reporting, liaison to the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee and represents the County at various transit events and training opportunities. The TC works to increase coordination between providers, improve services by obtaining rider feedback and identifies projects that would enhance public transit.

Reimbursement funds are distributed by the County Finance Department by request of the TC once reporting is complete, accurate, and submitted to ODOT. The Finance Department is composed of a Chief Financial Officer, an Assistant Finance Director and two fiscal assistants.

KPT has 17 drivers who provide routes throughout Umatilla County and beyond, and 2 dispatchers, 1 bus washer, 1 mechanic an assistant manager and one program manager. The Program Manager is the lead contact for the TC and responsible for quarterly reporting.

**12. Certification of Compliance**

**13. Do you plan to use a Sub-Recipient or contractor to implement the grant supported activity?\*(required)**

Yes

**13.A If Yes, please list the Sub-Recipient(s) and describe how the applicant will provide sufficient Sub-Recipient/contractor oversight to ensure eligibility is maintained while receiving STIF Discretionary or Statewide Transit Network moneys. \*(required) Limit 500 Characters**

Umatilla County, through a partnership with Kayak Public Transit, (operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation) is contracting purchased services for operations and project administration for the Pilot Rocket regional route. The TC works with all subrecipients on quarterly reporting and annual site visits to ensure compliance. Additionally, the TC routinely rides the transit routes.

**16.B Describe the project to be funded. Clearly describe what the requested fund award would be used to accomplish, detailing the specific tasks and deliverables. Where relevant, identify the origin and destination of the proposed service as well as each municipality visited along the route. Please see page 7 of the application instructions for additional guidance on writing a project description. \*(required) Limit 5000 Characters**

The Pilot Rocket route is an existing regional route that has stops in Mission (an unincorporated community located on the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, CTUIR), Pendleton, the outskirts of Pendleton and Pilot Rock. This regional route provides an otherwise missing connection between rural Pilot Rock and the more urban city of Pendleton. It serves commuters, those traveling for groceries, recreation, medical appointments and more. Pendleton has a booming economy offering employment, a hospital, airport, grocery stores, retail and event centers that host annual events such as the Pendleton Round-Up, Whiskey Fest. Pilot Rock is much smaller and lacks medical care, is a food

desert, lacks commercial retailers and eating establishments. CTUIR, located east of Pendleton, has a flourishing economy with a casino and resort center, an industrial park and a proposed housing development. These developments are near the unincorporated community of Mission. In addition to the larger regional connections (Union and Grant counties, Washington State, western Umatilla County and beyond) the Rocket connects the larger rural cities to their smaller counterparts, allowing people to live and work in various parts of Umatilla County.

The Rocket runs three times daily (Monday through Friday) from the Kayak Public Transit Hub in Mission, Oregon through Pendleton and to Pilot Rock. The Rocket is Pilot Rock's only public transportation (aside from Grant County People Mover on Tuesdays). KPT ensures efficiency in the Statewide Transit Network by coordinating shared stops with other regional routes that are served by Greyhound, the Pendleton Airport, Let 'er Bus, Hermiston Hopper, Grant County People Mover, and services running to Walla Walla, Washington and La Grande, Oregon. Connections to major regional employers and to Tribal Enterprise Zones, where CTUIR is the largest employer in Umatilla County, have been integrated into the route with scheduling and transfer considerations designed around the schedules of large employers.

The Pilot Rocket is one of the fastest growing transit services in Umatilla County. In the quarter ending June 2022 it recorded 1406 riders, which is an immense increase from the pre-COVID number of 725 riders for the quarter ending December 2019. These rides are fare-free, and with the rising cost of fuel, more commuters are switching from single occupancy vehicles to public transit, fully embracing Kayak and the County's partnered regional routes.

Resources, equipment and infrastructure for the Rocket route have already been procured and KPT is the existing and continued transit provider operating the Pilot Rocket route. Umatilla County will continue to have contracted purchased services from KPT. This intercommunity project will allow the Rocket to continue existing operations, providing a regional connection linking Pilot Rock with Pendleton and connections to eastern and western cities in Umatilla County and Walla Walla Washington.

According to the 2020 Census, Umatilla County's population is 80,075 people and the 2020 Census estimated that 11.7% of Umatilla County's population is in poverty. Within a quarter mile of the transit stops for the Rocket is a population of approximately 1900, of which about 22% are in poverty and 28% are of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin (according to Remix). Within a half mile of the Rocket's stops is a population of about 5,000 with 22% in poverty and 25% of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin. KPT knows its riders very well and drivers have an established relationship with regular riders. Regular ridership relies on the Rocket for their regular travel to work, grocery stores and activity centers.

Attached to this application are maps from Remix and the current schedule for the Pilot Rocket.

**17. What is the minimum project cost that will still allow your project to proceed?**

\$285,647. This is the minimum amount to keep the current service levels. A reduction in funding amount would require services to be cut to the Rocket route in addition to Kayak's other regional routes that see less ridership, such as the La Grande Arrow. Ultimately, the County and Kayak would like these other two routes to have an increase in services, but limited funding is making that difficult.

Should the Rocket not be awarded the Intercommunity funds, the County TC is requesting a contingency project in the STIF plan to partially fund the project. This would result in a loss of services, due to the

large operating cost and other existing STIF projects. The route would run less frequently and possibly serve less stops. The Rocket does not depend on other discretionary grants for funding.

**18. Select the fund source(s) for which you would like to compete and that you believe your project is eligible to receive. Check all that apply. \*(required)**

**STIF Discretionary STIF Intercommunity Discretionary FTA Section 5311(f) Intercity**

**19. Why is this an important project? What are the consequences of this project not receiving funding? \*(required) Limit 1000 Characters**

The Rocket is an important project because it is a regional connection that fills a gap in the Statewide Transit Network and largely serves transportation disadvantaged communities. With fuel prices constantly increasing, more people rely on public transit for transportation. The Rocket has continued to see an increase in ridership, which is unique when looking at other transit providers within Oregon. Other providers are struggling to grow ridership, the Rocket is thriving and growing due to the reliability, consistency and dependability of both the route and KPT. KPT's great reputation is recognized amongst the rural communities in Umatilla County.

If the Rocket were not to receive funding, this would result in a loss of transit services. Other regional routes served by KPT, such as the La Grande Arrow would have even more limited daily trips. Both the Arrow and Rocket already have a lower frequency than other regional routes such as the Walla Walla Whistler and Hermiston Hopper.

**20. Will this project involve breaking ground or any other activity that might require environmental review per federal requirements? \*(required)**

No

**Oregon Transportation Commission Investment Priorities**

**Equity and Public Transportation Service to Low-Income Households**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 20%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

**21. Describe how this project would support and improve access for vulnerable populations and/or historically marginalized communities. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Without a doubt, the Rocket supports and provides transportation services to vulnerable populations and historically marginalized communities. Within a quarter mile of the transit stops for the Rocket is a population of approximately 1900, of which about 22% are in poverty and 28% are of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin (according to Remix). Within a half mile of the Rocket's stops is a population of about 5,000 with 22% in poverty and 25% of non-white or Hispanic/Latino origin. In Pendleton, the Rocket stops at Wal-Mart and St Anthony's Hospital, transporting vulnerable and historically marginalized populations to priority locations such as grocery stores, hospitals, medical clinics and social gathering places. On tribal land, the Rocket also stops at Kayak Transit Hub for transfers to other regional transit routes and Wildhorse Resort and Casino which offers recreational opportunities like a bowling alley, a movie theatre and a golf course. The Rocket also provides connections to government agencies, such as the State Department of Human Services building in Pendleton, the County Courthouse and to tribal neighborhoods within the Umatilla Indian Reservation. Thoughtful route and

schedule planning correlate with the Rocket providing key connections to employment centers, this allows the Rocket to provide work transportation to those lacking vehicles or with unreliable personal vehicles. Additionally, there are also several transfer opportunities for riders to transfer to the Pendleton Let'r Bus, for free public transit within the city of Pendleton.

The city of Pilot Rock is very rural and small and lacks many of the amenities that the larger city of Pendleton has to offer. However, those living within Pilot Rock tend to have a lower income than the statewide average and the average commute time is 23.5 minutes which likely means a majority of people are commuting to Pendleton or Mission. The Rocket offers an economic and ecofriendly method of transportation for commuters between Pendleton and Pilot Rock.

Should the Rocket not be fully funded by STIF Discretionary, it would result in a loss of services to these disadvantaged communities. These communities rely on the great, free public transit that Umatilla County and Kayak Public Transit strive to provide.

### **Coordination of Public Transportation Services**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 10%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 30%)**

#### **22. Describe how this project would improve the passenger experience, benefit multiple transit providers, or involve consolidation, coordination, or resource sharing between agencies, including use of transportation data and technology. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

In Pendleton, the Rocket has timely shared stops at the Pendleton Wal-Mart, Blue Mountain Community College and Til Taylor Park. These stops provide transfers to the City of Pendleton Let'r Bus routes; the Northeast route and Southwest route, both are fare free and the routes serve as circular routes for Pendleton residents and visitors, serving neighborhoods and downtown area. The City of Pendleton and Kayak have a collaborative working relationship and are actively seeking more opportunities to create more efficiencies in the regional transit network. Additionally, the Rocket has timely stops at the Kayak Transit Hub which provides transfers to regional routes going to Milton Freewater, Walla Walla, Washington, La Grande and Hermiston.

Regional transit providers all have recently embraced [iTransitNW](#), a public transit trip planner. This has created even more coordination between agencies, iTransitNW contains live maps, trip features, bus schedules and stops and is a mobile app and web viewer.

Umatilla County's TC provides coordination services between transit providers and promotes each providers' services. The TC manages [EOGO.org](#), which contains route and contact information and website links for all of the providers. The TC distributes EOGO materials and providers' informational and marketing materials throughout the communities and at community events.

Umatilla County recently received a 5304 planning grant to develop a Transportation Development Plan (TDP). This plan is currently under development by a consulting firm and will be completed and adopted by June 2023. Representatives from each of the transit providers, the Umatilla County Transportation Advisory Committee, cities, ODOT, Morrow County transit and members of the public make up the TDP advisory committee. The TDP is identifying areas for more collaboration and consolidation within the 20-year planning horizon, in addition to identifying future transit projects and routes. This effort highlights

the dedication that the transit providers within Umatilla County and surrounding region have for coordination of services.

### **Environmental and Public Health**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 15%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

**23. Describe how this project would go beyond providing an alternative to personal car use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, reduce pollution, and/or support positive health outcomes. How does this project support applicant's climate planning efforts? \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

The Pilot Rocket is an existing regional transit route operated by Kayak Public Transit (KPT). KPT operates transit buses that contain bike racks, which both encourages and allows riders to utilize both active and public transportation simultaneously. Active transportation, opposed to personal vehicle use, is transportation that creates very minimal greenhouse gases, if any, and active transportation is a key driver in urban areas for reducing localized pollution. With cleaner air comes better health of the community. The Rocket has key stops in several cities that are located with many destinations in walkable and bikeable distances. For example, within ¼ mile of the Til Taylor stop in Pendleton is the Umatilla County Courthouse, County Public Health Department and State of Oregon Building (contains Department of Human Services and Child Support Program). This allows people to travel farther and still minimize their pollution footprint.

One could ride their bike from their home in the City of Pilot Rock to the Pilot Rock Community Pavilion, place their bike on the bus' bike rack, ride the Rocket to the Til Taylor Park stop in Pendleton, and then ride their bike to the County Courthouse for jury duty or other business. The Rocket allows someone who lives in rural Pilot Rock to travel far distances without needing their own vehicle. In addition to removing a single occupancy vehicle from local road systems, this person has also utilized another mode of transportation that reduces green house gas emissions and pollution, while also providing the personal health benefit of exercise. One could switch the bicycle used in this example for walking, rolling, or other active transportation modes and the result would be the same; a successful use of pairing public transit (the Rocket) with active transportation.

KPT is a pro-active public transit provider that is looking at the future and how rural transit can evolve and become more efficient. Currently, Umatilla County has limited charging infrastructure, a majority of existing personal vehicle charging stations are located within CTUIR's boundaries. Fully electric regional transit in rural Umatilla County and the surrounding areas is not feasible with current infrastructure. However, Kayak is evaluating how the fleet can become more efficient and is creating efficiencies in route schedules and structures to reduce environmental impacts. Fixed routes are more efficient at moving people than demand-response transit.

### **Safety, Security, and Community Livability**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 20%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**



**24. Describe how the project would increase use and participation in active transportation, and support connections between transit and other travel modes like biking and walking.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Active transportation provides numerous health benefits to riders, both as a means of transportation and exercise. It also greatly reduces localized pollution which has public health benefits to the local communities. The Rocket has key stops in several cities that are located with many destinations in walkable and bikeable distances. For example, within ¼ mile of the Til Taylor stop in Pendleton is the Umatilla County Courthouse, County Public Health Department and State of Oregon Building (contains Department of Human Services and Child Support Program).

One could ride their bike from their home in the City of Pilot Rock to the Pilot Rock Community Pavilion, place their bike on the bus' bike rack, ride the Rocket to the Til Taylor Park stop in Pendleton, and then ride their bike to the County Courthouse for jury duty or other business. The Rocket allows someone who lives in rural Pilot Rock to travel far distances without needing their own vehicle. In addition to removing that single occupancy vehicle from the interstate and local road systems, this person has also utilized another mode of transportation that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and pollution, while also providing the personal health benefit of exercise. One could switch the bicycle used in this example for walking, rolling, or other active transportation modes and the result would be the same; a successful use of pairing public transit (the Rocket) with active transportation. Similar actions could be taken to achieve a similar outcome across the Rocket transit system. The Rocket has stops designed for all levels of activity, meaning, the stops are close to activity centers and within a distance that is manageable for most mobility constrained users.

In addition to the above, the Rocket offers a unique opportunity for its riders. If a couple lived in Pilot Rock, went to downtown Pendleton for lunch, and then wanted to catch a movie at Wildhorse they could use a personal vehicle to make three different trips. Or, they could use the Rocket (no transfers required) with just a few blocks of walking spread throughout the trip. In addition to cost savings, the couple would experience health benefits by having some exercise.

**25. Describe how the project would support and improve safety of passengers in transit vehicles and safety of other roadway users.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

The Pilot Rocket service is operated by Kayak Public Transit. Kayak is owned and under the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR). CTUIR and Kayak receive both state and federal funding, therefore they must comply with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements for training, licensing, safety and fleet management. Kayak strives to go above and beyond FTA requirements to ensure safety of passengers and other roadway users.

Kayak's drivers are trained to handle unruly and disruptive riders. Kayak's fleet and safety manager provides quarterly safety training to the drivers and dispatchers. All of Kayak's busses have live feed video surveillance to deter any criminal or violent activity, in addition to capturing evidence should it be necessary. Kayak has a full maintenance facility with a full-time fleet mechanic whom utilizes maintenance software such as Fleetio and Mitchell 1 to maintain all of Kayak's vehicles regularly and to keep them in peak condition. Kayak has recently upgraded their on-board software to iTransitNW which allows trip planning. This minimizes the time riders may face in layovers or unknown delays. ITransitNW also allows the public to obtain real-time updates on the bus location and estimated arrival times.

## **Statewide Transit Network Connections**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 10%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 30%)**

**26. Describe how this project would support and improve the utility and connectivity of the Statewide Transit Network and/or create a foundation for future Statewide Transit Network improvements. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

As existing operations, the Rocket already supports and improves the connectivity of the Statewide Transit Network. The Rocket serves as the only transit connection between the rural town of Pilot Rock and the remaining cities in Umatilla County and other nearby urban clusters like Walla Walla. According to the 2020 Census Pendleton has a population of 16,972 and Pilot Rock has a population of 1,328. The Rocket provides Pilot Rock a transit connection to other cities such as Pendleton, Milton Freewater, Hermiston, Walla Walla Washington, and La Grande Oregon and several small cities in between. It also serves as a connection to the Pendleton Municipal Airport which has flights to Portland's international airport, PDX.

Aside from being the connection to Pendleton and beyond, the Rocket serves as the only public transit connection for Pilot Rock citizens. The City of Pendleton and CTUIR communities boast amenities like grocery stores, schools, shopping centers, recreational activities (bowling alley, movie theatre and Round-Up grounds) and these communities serve as the nearest urban center for recreational opportunities, in addition to necessities like hospitals, employers, and grocery stores. Without the Rocket, citizens are reliant on single occupancy vehicles or biking and/or walking. Highway 395 is the main corridor for people traveling between Pendleton and Pilot Rock. Therefore, biking/walking between the two cities presents safety challenges and limitations due to the distance and the fact that Highway 395 contains minimal if any infrastructure to protect bicyclists and pedestrians while travelling. Portions of Highway 395 have sidewalks and bike lanes, however the more rural portions in between Pilot Rock and Pendleton do not have this type of infrastructure. The Rocket allows those without reliable transportation the means to travel between cities for work and play.

## **Funding and Strategic Investment**

**(Score weight: Discretionary = 20%, Statewide Transit Network (STN) = 10%)**

**27. Describe why investment in this project makes sense from both the perspective of current need and long term Oregon transit needs. \*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

Investment in the Pilot Rocket makes sense from both the perspective of current need and long-term Oregon transit needs for many reasons although due to space requirements I will only share a few. First, public transit in rural areas is already limited. The Pilot Rocket is the only regional transit route that connects the city of Pilot Rock to the Mission area east of Pendleton and Pendleton proper. Reducing or eliminating this service would have a detrimental effect on public transit in rural Umatilla County, isolating many low-income and transportation disadvantaged individuals that rely on this service to get to work, school, grocery stores and doctor appointments. Someone who has recently lost reliable transportation may not be able to provide their own transportation from Pilot Rock to Pendleton, the Rocket offers this very valuable service to those who need it most.

Secondly, this project proposal is for a route that is already operating with an established ridership that relies on the service. As outlined earlier in this application, despite many other transit agencies seeing a decrease in ridership both during and post the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pilot Rocket has seen a rapid increase in ridership. It is anticipated that ridership numbers for the Rocket will continue to increase as folks begin to understand the dependability of the service. Perception of rural transit is the biggest barrier in growing ridership in Eastern Oregon. Rural transit tends to have negative connotations: unreliable, unpredictable and limitations in services (infrequency and lack of productive stops). However, from surveys gathered during Umatilla County's Transportation Development Plan outreach initiative, riders were overwhelmingly satisfied with the Rocket's performance and services. Riders shared that the Rocket was reliable, comfortable, affordable (free), and offered stops at places they needed to travel.

Additionally, it is one of Oregon's transit goals to connect transit isolated communities. The Rocket serves as the only transit connection (and it is free for all riders) between the rural city of Pilot Rock with the larger city of Pendleton. Should the Rocket not receive discretionary funding, this connection would see reduced service hours and possibly a loss of other regional services such as the Arrow.

For the reasons above, one could determine that funding the project clearly makes sense both from the perspective of current need and long-term Oregon transit needs.

**28. If this project will last beyond the 2023-25 biennium, describe the plan for ongoing funding including match. If not applicable, type N/A.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

It is the intent of Umatilla County and Kayak Public Transit to continue the Rocket route for many years to come. As outlined throughout this application, it is a transit route that is widely used by not only low-income, minority, and transportation disadvantaged communities, but also the general public who utilizes it for their daily commute as both a climate-friendly and economic transportation option. It would be tragic to provide an incredible service that is seen and used widely by the public, and then take it away due to a loss in funding.

With that being said, currently, the TC and KPT realize that grants are not the most secure way to fund transit routes long term. This does make it difficult to start new pilot projects when local funds are currently near capacity. KPT is working to create more efficiencies in other routes so that funding may be redirected to the intercommunity routes. Umatilla County and CTUIR do not receive enough STIF dollars to keep the Rocket, other existing intercity routes, and the existing public transportation projects fully funded without receiving discretionary dollars. The discretionary dollars received in the past, and in the future, allow these transportation gaps to be filled with routes like the Pilot Rocket, such as the Walla Walla Whistler, Hermiston Hopper and La Grande Arrow. These routes cover long distances, and therefore the operation costs are very high. But they fill a large gap in the Statewide Transit Network and serve many transportation disadvantaged people, or those who suddenly have lost personal transportation and need to make it to a medical appointment, the grocery store, work or elsewhere.

Match will be provided by CTUIR's tribal dollars. Although limited in transit dollars, CTUIR does receive a small amount for transit projects and that is dedicated to match for the various grant programs. While Kayak Public Transit is umbrellaed under CTUIR, KPT provides transit serves to all Umatilla County residents, and other members of the public who hop-on their busses. These services are fare free and a

huge asset to the local communities. A majority of ridership for the Rocket are those with limited incomes who greatly benefit from the Rocket's fare free transit.

**29. Does this project depend on other funding sources including other discretionary grants whose outcomes are uncertain? If yes, please list those fund sources. If not applicable, type N/A.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

In the past, the Rocket has been funded by Intercommunity Discretionary dollars with local match provided by CTUIR. Should the Rocket not be rewarded the Intercommunity funds, the County TC is requesting a contingency project in the STIF plan to partially fund the project. This would result in a loss of services, due to the large operating cost and other existing STIF projects. The Rocket does not depend on other discretionary grants for funding.

**30. Capital Asset Purchases**

**Capital assets are items that cost at least \$5,000 and have a useful life of at least three years.**

**Describe proposed capital purchases. If no capital assets are included in your application, type N/A.\*(required) Limit 2500 Characters**

N/A

**Project Details**

**Select each Task Category needed to complete the Project. Additional information will be requested below for each selected category.**

**Task Category\*(required)**

**Vehicle Purchase Equipment Purchase Facility Purchase Signs/Shelters Purchase Planning Project Administration Operating Preventive Maintenance Mobility Management**

Operating

**Give a brief (1-3 sentences) description of this project cost.\*(required)**

**Total Task Cost (Grant Amount + Match Amount)**

285,647.00

**Project Task and Match Amounts**

**50% Match Rate Calculations**

**Grant Amount - 5311f (50% Fed Share)**

\$142,823.50

**Match Amount - 5311f (50% Local Share)**

\$142,823.50

**20% Match Rate Calculations**

**Grant Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (80% State Share)**

\$228,517.60

**Match Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (20% Local Share)**

\$57,129.40

**10% Match Rate Calculations (For Qualified Applicants)**

**Grant Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (90% State Share)**

\$257,082.30

**Match Amount - STIF Discretionary/STIF Intercommunity (10% Local Share)**

\$28,564.70

**Application Totals**

**Match Sources**

**Match Sources\*(required)**

Local

**Amount\*(required)**

\$57,129.40

**Add Match Source**

**Are matching funds of at least 20% of project costs available if the project is awarded?\*(required)**

Yes

**What percent of funds will be used for demand response transportation?\*(required)**

0%

**Percent of funds used for fixed route transportation**

100%

**Note on Application Totals: If applying for 5311(f) Operating, a 50% match rate is applied to identified Operating costs. However, the application form automatically applies a 20% match rate to the full Project Cost, including Operating costs. Therefore, Section 5311(f) applicants should ensure the accuracy of the Total Task Cost for each Task Category, as the 20% match rate will only apply to non-Operating costs in a 5311(f) grant award. The form is unable to calculate an accurate application total using two different match rates.**

# Rocket (Monday - Friday)

October 1 - December 31, 2021



Location	AM	NOON	PM
Kayak Transit Hub (behind Nixyaawii Governance Center)	--	11:05 AM	4:51 PM
Aspen & Cedar	--	11:10 AM	--
July Grounds	--	11:12 AM	4:55 PM
Wildhorse Resort & Casino	--	--	5:00 PM
Arrowhead Travel Plaza	--	--	5:02 PM
Cayuse Technologies	--	--	5:05 PM
Mission Senior Center	--	11:14 AM	--
Kayak Transit Hub ( behind Nixyaawii Governance Center)	6:05 AM	11:18 AM	<b>*5:10 PM</b>
Til Taylor Park	6:14 AM	11:28 AM	5:19 PM
Pendleton City Hall	6:17 AM	--	5:24 PM
U.S. Bank (Court Avenue & SW 1st. St.)	--	11:31 AM	--
Pendleton Walmart	6:22 AM	11:35 AM	<b>**5:29 PM</b>
Pilot Rock Community Pavilion	6:42 AM	11:55 AM	5:49 PM
BMCC (bottom of hill/bus shelter)	--	12:18 PM	--
Pendleton Walmart	7:02 AM	12:23 PM	6:09 PM
Kayak Transit Hub ( behind Nixyaawii Governance Center)	<b>End</b>	<b>End</b>	6:24 PM
			<b>End</b>

All Scheduled Times are Arrival and Departure Times

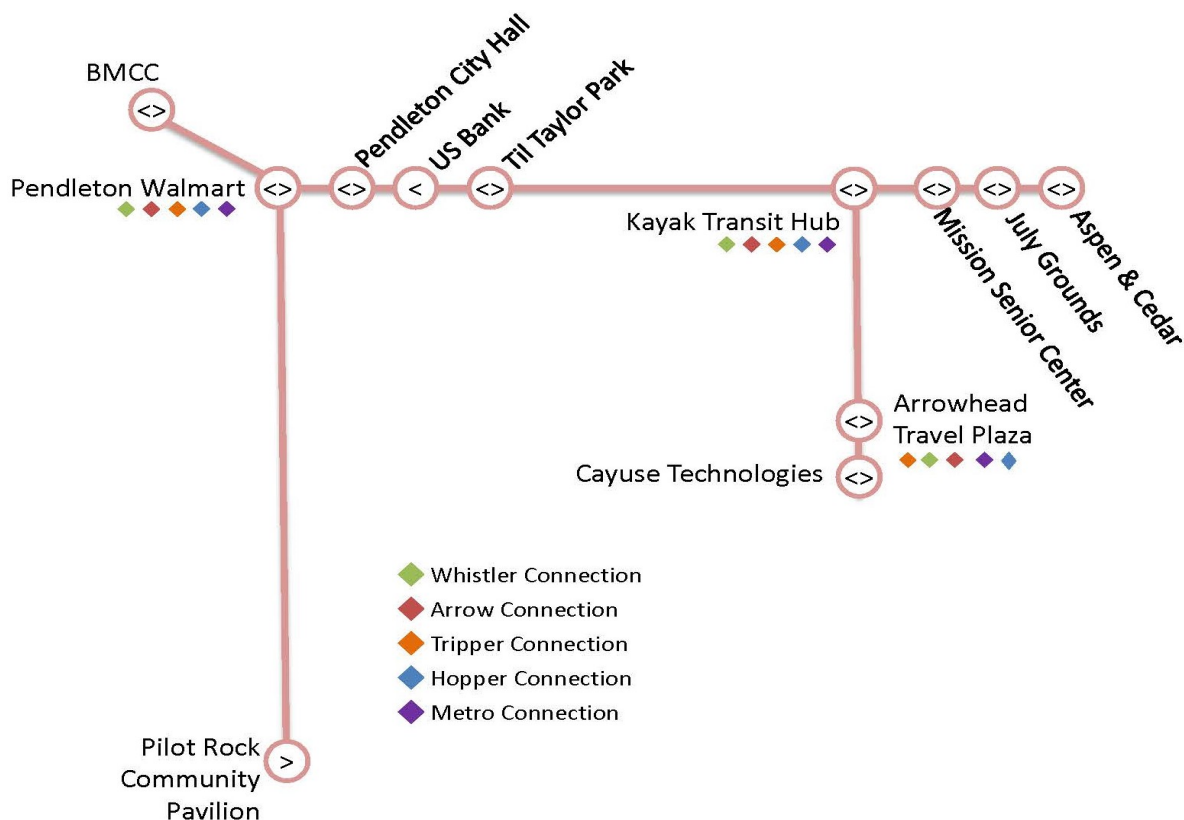
\*Connect to LaGrande via Arrow at 5:17 PM

Via Mission Express to Pilot Rocket

\*Connect to Walla Walla via Whistler at 5:20 PM

\*\*Connect to Hermiston via Hopper at 5:34 PM

Noon Route -- Mission Express and Rocket (Same bus)




Dispatch Line (541) 429-7519

[ctuir.org](http://ctuir.org)

**Transit lines**

Display by line color ▾ + Add line

ALL LINES (2)  ▲


 Hermiston Hopper 

 Pilot Rocket

**FAVORITE STATS**  ▾

1 line & 1 vehicle  
 \$106.6k / year  
 13 stops  
 Within 0.25 mi of stops:  
 ~1,900 population  
 ~22% % of people in poverty  
 ~28% % of people who are non-White  
 or of Hispanic / Latino origin



**Data layers**  ▾

SHAPES  
(Loading...)

2 mi      

**Service**

Weekday

FROM	TO	EVERY	RUNTIME
06:00	16:45	323 min	73.4 min

Saturday

FROM	TO	EVERY	RUNTIME
00:00	00:00	0 min	0.0 min

Sunday

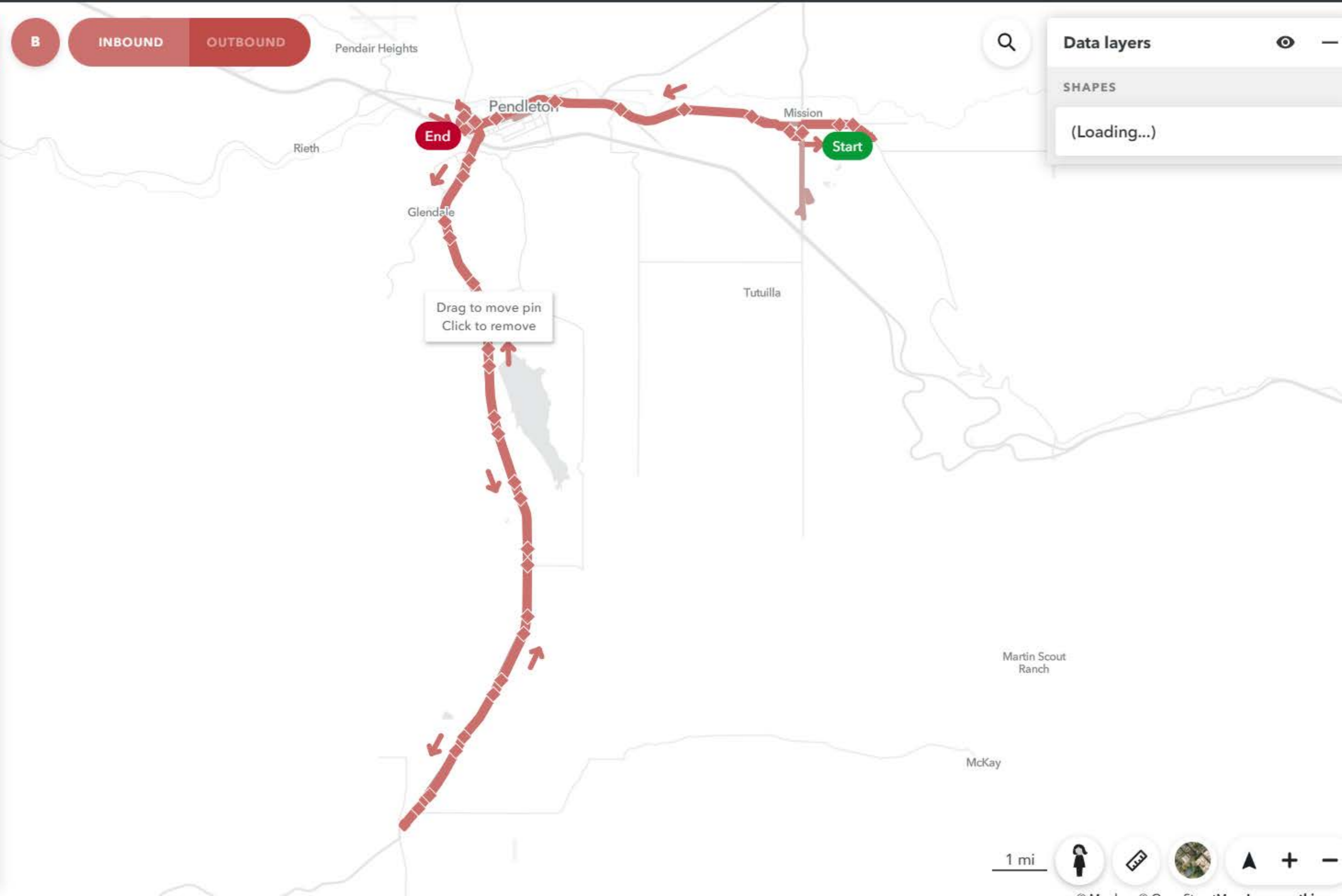
FROM	TO	EVERY	RUNTIME
00:00	00:00	0 min	0.0 min

**FAVORITE STATS**

40.39 miles  
 1 vehicle - Bus  
 \$106.6k / year

Within 0.25 mi of stops:

- ~1,900 population
- ~22% % of people in poverty
- ~28% % of people who are non-White or of Hispanic / Latino origin



**Data layers**

SHAPES

(Loading...)