



PRESS RELEASE

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**Columbia Area Transit
Launches Transit Planning Process**

The Hood River County Transportation District, operating as Columbia Area Transit and locally known as the “CAT,” is in the process of updating their 2017 Transit Master Plan (TMP)—a key guiding document that outlines the delivery of community and regional transit services, and asks the community and regional residents for input to help shape its future delivery of services. Hood River County is experiencing a growing population, an increasing draw for recreation and tourism, and expanding local and regional employment opportunities. Hearing from the community about how transit can address these changing conditions and include supportive transportation options (e.g., bike share, vanpools, ridesharing) is a critical part of the CAT Transit Master Plan’s development.

CAT invites local and regional residents to weigh in early in the planning process and take a brief online survey—available in English and Spanish—at **engagecatbus.org**.

Visit **engagecatbus.org** for full details, timelines, public event schedules, informational materials, and to take the survey.

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Hood River County Transportation District provides public transportation in Hood River County under the name of Columbia Area Transit (CAT). We are a Special District organized under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 267. Our major sources of funding include grants from the Federal Transit Administration, diverse sources from the State of Oregon, local property tax, and user fees.

The District was formed by a vote of Hood River County Residents in 1993.

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Additional Background

Planning Approach

The overall planning approach for the TMP process contains six core operating principles:

- Put the passenger first
- Make participation easy and meaningful
- Engage partnerships with reciprocity
- Integrate regional opportunities
- Identify short-term improvements that reflect long-term vision
- Focus on implementation

Five local areas and associated regional corridors will be the areas of focus for the TMP:

- Odell & Lower Hwy. 35
- Upper Valley & Upper Hwy. 35
- Cascade Locks
- City of Hood River East
- City of Hood River West (including unincorporated areas)
- Regional Corridor: Portland - Multnomah Falls – The Dalles – Hood River Cascade Locks

How to Get Involved

CAT will be engaging in a variety of tailored outreach methods to ensure that all members of the community are given a chance to get involved in the conversation. The goal of the TMP's public involvement plan is to provide Hood River County stakeholders with meaningful and easily accessible input opportunities throughout the TMP process. There will be an intentional focus on gathering input from historically marginalized groups, including but not limited to low-income individuals, youth, people with disabilities, seniors, immigrants, and Limited English Proficiency individuals.

Following are ways Hood River County and regional residents can participate*:

- Attend scheduled public presentations
- Take the CAT TMP survey online at engagecatbus.org
- Event attendance
- Outreach displays at local businesses
- Attend scheduled online community forums
- Pick up printed materials at local destinations and help spread the word
- Visit engagecatbus.org to for details covering all the above

Note: Bilingual materials will be available and Spanish-speaking staff and translators will on hand at specific events.



The TMP Process

The process for completing the new TMP begins with a period of public outreach to individuals, community groups and organizations, stakeholders, and government entities which entails group meetings, a presence at public events, interviews with stakeholders, and a community survey. A Technical Advisory Committee and a TMP Board Advisory Committee will help to steer the process. Once all input is reviewed and a plan is formulated, public hearings and a comment period will follow. Adoption of the final TMP is under the authority CAT's Board of Directors. The TMP timeline runs through 2023, with final adoption of the new plan scheduled for the end of 2023.

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