



### Why Kayak service is so vital

*Kayak Public Transit is a Rural Regional Public Transport Service provider that covers 18 cities and counties located in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington.*

*Rural Free Transit is highly popular, with ridership that has increased tenfold.*

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*Aspen lives in Milton-Freewater and is a single mom with an ill child. She has been a Kayak rider for seven years to shop and go to doctors. She appreciates Kayak because it is easy to navigate.*

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*Kayak celebrated its Millionth Rider for an entire month with gifts and a fan-fare at Kayak Transit Hub.*

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*When Donald Williams of the Marigold Hotel asked for a bus stop, Kayak said 'Yes'.*

Kayak Public Transit was founded in 2001 and achieved full fixed route services to Pendleton, Weston, Athena, Adams, Pilot Rock and La Grande in 2008. The following year service was expanded to Hermiston, Milton-Freewater and College Place, Walla Walla and Kennewick in Washington. Kayak completed construction of a transit center and bus barn in 2014. Drivers became regular employees in 2015. Three years later, Kayak celebrated its one millionth rider while incorporating Hermiston Area Rural Transit (HART).

In the face of COVID lockdowns, Kayak moved to disinfect vehicles up to five times daily with extensive night bus cleaning. With safety protocols in place, Kayak set up essential service rides so riders could shop for food and keep medical appointments. Kayak became the lifeline for rural residents.

Even with COVID still circulating, Kayak celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2021 with appreciative passengers in masks riding in frequently disinfected buses.

Kayak's goal in 2022 has been to rebuild passenger ridership by reinforcing public transit is a safe, inexpensive way to travel. Kayak wants to expand transit services via the Hermiston-Boardman Connector. Plans include expanding Kayak's primary facility and adding a bus barn, office and shop in Hermiston. Kayak also plans to add two electric vehicles for the upcoming Nixyaawii Campus route after construction of new housing and apartment neighborhoods, which are scheduled to be finished next year.

Key stops include St. Anthony' Hospital, Eastern Oregon University, Blume Mountain Community College, Good Shepherd Medical Center, St. Mary Hospital in Walla Walla, the Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation and Wildhorse Casino. Kayak expands service options by connecting with Let'er Bus in Pendleton, Grape Line and Valley Transit in Walla Walla, Community Connection in La Grande and Milton-Freewater City Bus.

	Annual Ridership by Route			
	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022 (7/31)
<b>Hopper</b>	32,035	7,724	11,413	8,414
<b>Arrow</b>	10,668	3,354	4,435	2,936
<b>Metro</b>	22,719	11,326	13,606	10,242
<b>Rocket</b>	5,642	1,840	2,401	1,647
<b>Tripper</b>	2,950	1,652	1,811	1,359
<b>Whistler</b>	23,652	6,956	10,098	7,163
<b>Hart</b>	5,978	2,729	2,305	1,724
<b>Milton-Freewater</b>				921
<b>Total</b>	<b>103,644</b>	<b>35,581</b>	<b>46,070</b>	<b>34,406</b>



*Because of the pandemic, Kayak was unable to celebrate its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary in person. Instead, staff handed out Kayak-logo masks, hand sanitizers and gloves to riders.*

### Key priorities for making service route decisions?

Kayak reviews routes every three months, taking into consideration complaints, compliments, driver input and data from computer tracking. The goal is to find the fastest, safest, and best routes possible.

### How has Kayak applied its funding from the STIF?

STIF enabled Kayak to keep its "Free" Public Transit in rural communities.

Kayak used STIF funds to buy three new buses to replace old and malfunctioning vehicles. Kayak increased its service area to include stops in Irrigon and Umatilla. A connector to Boardman is in the works.

Kayak uses STIF money to cover costs to maintain new and aging buses, repair shelters, waste containers and install plexiglass in shelters to limit breakage and counter a rise in vandalism.

### How would Kayak apply additional STIF funding?

*Jim Youngman has ridden Kayak's AM Whistler route to and from Walla Walla everyday for eight years.*

*An optician who owns a car prefers to ride the bus.*

*"The route is convenient my work and my home. The drivers are friendly. The buses are clean and comfortable. And it's stress-free and free."*

*Jim figures he saves up to \$200 per month on gas by not driving.*

- Purchase electric vehicles to work toward an eco-friendly transit system and the infrastructure to support them.
- Establish the Boardman Connector with a transit center in the Hermiston area for maintenance, fueling and staffing to support new and existing Hermiston/Umatilla routes.
- Expand routes to smaller Columbia River communities.
- Connect with other transit agencies to complete a transit route from Portland to La Grande and beyond.
- Enlarge facilities to facilitate a growing staff, including mechanic shops, a larger bus barn and parking for drivers.
- Enhance security with fencing and camera coverage.
- Enhance plumbing to ensure safe wastewater usage and disposal for a larger facility and bus barn.
- Create a new campus route to serve a new housing and apartment complex nearing completion.
- Improve connectivity of routes to support ridership inside or outside Kayak's service area.

*"As our communities grow, we will grow with them striving to make our public transit service a sustainable modernized agency, capable of the eco-friendly, quality service our public demands and deserves."*

**Susan Johnson**  
**Kayak Public Transit Program Manager**



The Kayak Team

# Taking People for a Ride 1 Million Times

Hart (Hermiston)

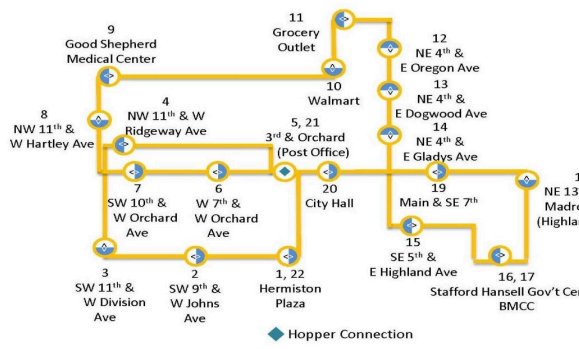
Servicio de autobús gratuito

Modificado 7/25/22 - Indefinido



Ubicación	AM	REGRESO AM	Mediodía	REGRESO Noon	PM	REGRESO PM	Noche
1 Hermiston Plaza (Near Main)	9:12	11:12	12:05	2:05	2:55	4:55	5:05
2 SW 9th & W. Johns Ave.	9:17	11:08	12:10	2:01	3:00	4:51	5:10
3 SW 11th & W. Division Ave.	9:20	11:05	12:13	1:58	3:03	4:48	5:13
4 NW 11th & W. Ridgeway Ave.	9:22	11:02	12:15	1:55	3:05	4:45	5:15
5 SW 3rd & W. Orchard Ave.	<b>*9:26</b>	10:59	12:19	<b>*1:52</b>	3:09	4:42	5:19
6 SW 7th & W Orchard Ave.	9:28	10:57	12:21	1:50	3:11	4:40	5:21
7 SW 10th & W. Orchard Ave.	9:29	10:56	12:22	1:49	3:12	4:39	5:22
8 NW 11th & W. Hartley Ave.	9:31	10:53	12:24	1:46	3:14	4:36	5:24
9 Good Shepherd Medical Center	9:33	10:51	12:26	1:44	3:16	4:34	5:26
10 Walmart (south side of building/next to recycle area)	9:39	<b>*10:45</b>	12:32	1:38	3:22	4:28	5:32
11 Grocery Outlet	9:44	10:40	12:37	1:33	3:27	4:23	5:37
12 4th & NE Oregon	9:47	10:37	12:40	1:30	3:30	4:20	5:40
13 NE 4th & E. Dogwood Ave.	9:49	10:35	12:42	1:28	3:32	4:18	5:42
14 NE 4th & Gladys	9:51	10:33	12:44	1:26	3:34	4:16	5:44
15 SE 5th & E. Highland Ave.	9:53	10:31	12:46	1:24	3:36	4:14	5:46
16 Stafford Hansell Gov't Center (915 SE Columbia Dr.)	9:57	10:28	12:49	1:21	3:39	4:11	5:49
17 BMCC (Bus Shelter at 989 SE Columbia Dr.)	9:58	10:27	12:50	1:20	3:40	4:10	5:50
18 NE 13th & NE Madrona Dr. (Highland Park)	10:01	10:24	12:54	1:16	3:44	4:06	5:54
19 Main & SE 7th	10:04	10:20	12:57	1:13	3:47	4:03	5:57
20 City Hall	10:05	10:18	12:59	1:11	3:49	4:00	5:58
21 SW 3rd & W. Orchard Ave.	10:09	10:16	1:02	1:09	3:52	3:58	6:03
22 Hermiston Plaza (Near Main)	10:12	10:12	1:05	1:05	3:55	3:55	6:05

La programación de retorno se lee desde abajo hacia arriba (sigla las flechas)  
 Horario de regreso paradas de autobuses en las áreas residenciales estarán en el lado opuesto de la calle  
 Todos los horarios programados son horarios de llegada y salida  
 \* Conexiones norte a Umatilla, McNary, & Irrigon y sur a Stanfield, Echo, & Pendleton a las 9:26 AM y 1:58 PM  
 \* Conectar con tolva en 10:45



Congratulations!

Michelle Grove - Winner of the 20th Anniversary Contest!  
 She won an Indian Print Pillow and a clutch purse, made by Pendleton Woolen Mills, purchased at Tamastlisk Cultural Institute.

