

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM #2: EXISTING OPERATIONS

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Project #: 27091

To: Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Project Management Team

From: Kathy Fitzpatrick, MCEDD Mobility Manager

Project: Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase II

Subject: Existing Framework Memo
Operations (Partner Agency Information) and the Planning Context

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Strategy Area.....	3
The Gorge TransLink Alliance	4
The Mt Hood Transportation Alliance	5
Key Milestones for the Transportation Providers	5
Skamania County Transit (Skamania County Senior Services)	5
Mt. Adams Transportation Service (Klickitat County Senior Services)	5
The Link Public Transit (Wasco County)	6
Columbia Area Transit (Hood River County Transportation District)	7
Columbia Gorge Express (ODOT and CAT)	8
Clackamas County: Mt Hood Express.....	9
Regional Public Transportation Projects	10
Gorge Pass.....	10
Gorge Pass Marketing Project.....	10
Gorge Transit Connect -	11
Waterfall Corridor Pilot Project (ODOT)	12
Go Vets: Columbia Gorge-	13
Mobility Manager -	13
Commute Options Employee Benefit Program -	13
Travel Trainer -	13
Columbia Area Transit Medical Van - Provides	13
Gorge TransLink.com website - This	13
Dog Mountain USFS Permit and Shuttle System -	13
Transportation Provider Operations Summary	15

Ridership Overview	20
Transportation Options	23
Planning Context.....	25
Summary of Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase I Plan Review	25
Statewide Plans.....	25
Oregon Public Transportation Plan (2018)—.....	25
Washington State Public Transportation Plan (2016)—	25
Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program Study (2019)	26
Regional Plans.....	26
Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (revised 2020)	26
Climate Change Action Plan	28
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MCEDD, 2022-2027) -.....	29
Connect Mid-Columbia (MCEDD, 2021)	29
SR 14 and Dog Mountain Congestion and Safety Study (2022)	30
Nch'i Wana Housing Columbia River Gorge Native American Needs Study (ongoing)	31
Farmworker Needs Assessment (2022)	31
Vision Around the Mountain (2021)	32
Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH) Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan (2019)-.....	33
Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment (2019) -.....	33
Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact (2019)	34
Rural Transportation Options in Klickitat County (MCEDD 2019)	35
Columbia River Gorge Transit Study (2016).....	35
Columbia River Gorge Tourism Studio Program Summary (2017)	35
Mt Hood Multimodal Plan (2014, with update scheduled for 2023)	36
Gorge TransLink: Transportation Provider Transit Plans	36
Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (2020)	36
Sherman County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (2020)	36
Hood River County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (2020)	37
SW Washington Coordinated Human Transportation Services Plan (2018)	37
Wasco County Transit Development Plan	37
Columbia Area Transit Master Plan (ongoing)-	37
Oregon State Parks Columbia River Gorge Management Units Plan, 2015-.....	37
Case Studies Explored	37
King County Metro and King County Parks	37
Walla Walla Metropolitan Planning Organization and Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SRTPO)	38
Kayak Public Transit	38
Tahoe Transportation District	38

Explore Washington Park (Washington Park Transportation Management Association)39

NorthWest Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA).....39

North Central RTD and City of Santa Fe: Transit System Consolidation Analysis-201740

Greater Yellowstone Regional Transportation Cooperative 2010 Feasibility Study40

Tax assessor and Land Use Data40

Washington State Public Transportation Benefit Areas and Sales Taxes41

Washington State Transit Agency Governance Structures41

Oregon Public Transportation Funding and Structures42

INTRODUCTION

The Existing Framework Memo for the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase II includes an overview of the planning area, a summary of existing services, and summaries of the local, regional, and statewide public transportation plans that serve as a foundation for the work of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy.

The operational summary describes existing public transportation services within Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Klickitat, and Skamania counties. The information was obtained and assembled from data sources provided by the five transportation providers, the Washington State Department of Transportation, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

During Phase I of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy, local, regional, and statewide public transportation plans were reviewed with a focus on identifying common and conflicting goals, policies, and strategies. This memo will give a summary of each plan and highlight information that is critical or foundational to an implementation strategy.

The Phase I materials, including the Phase I Existing Conditions memo, the Plan and Studies Summary spreadsheet, and the final Foundations Memo can be accessed at <https://gorgetranslink.com/gorge-transit-strategy/>.

STRATEGY AREA

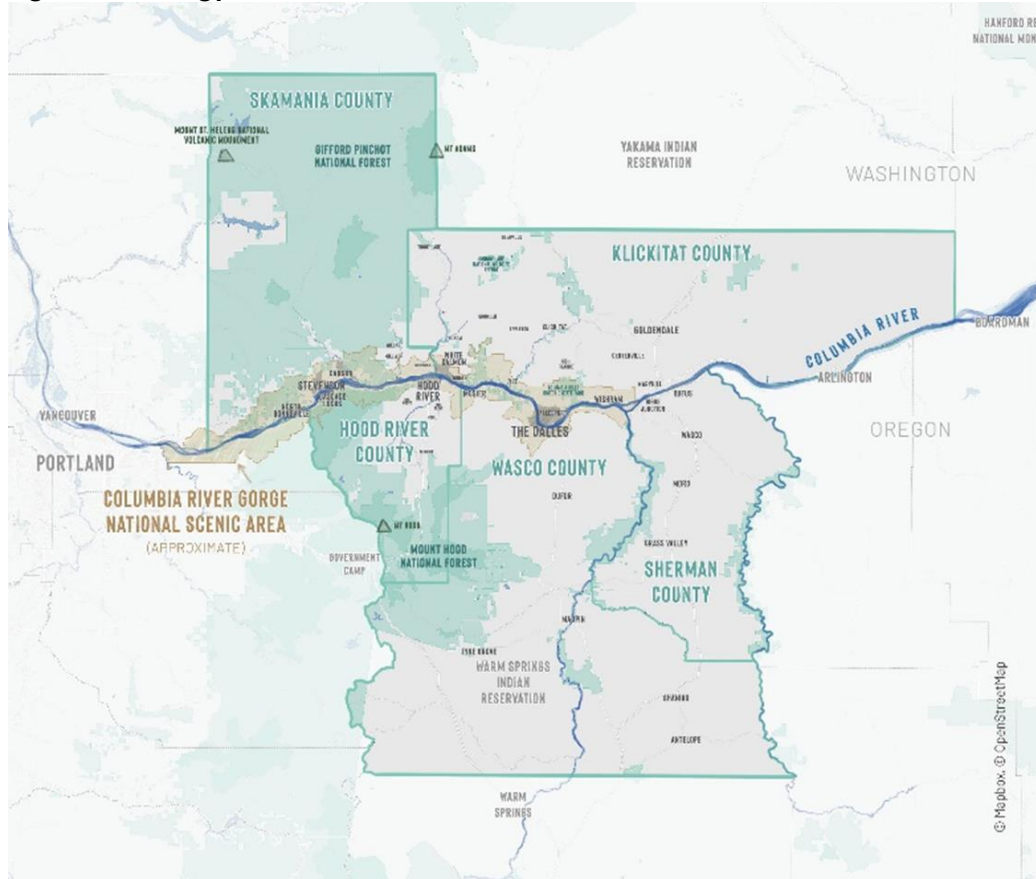
The strategy area is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the five transportation providers whose partnership forms the Gorge TransLink Alliance. Providers include Mt Adams Transportation Service (Klickitat County), Skamania County Transit, Columbia Area Transit (Hood River County), the Link (Wasco County), and Sherman County Community Transit.

Although the authorities of the transportation providers end at each of their county lines, transit connections made outside of these borders are important. These counties share a common workforce and a common geography. Residents may cross jurisdictional borders daily to meet multiple needs. While most of the communities have some basic amenities, residents must access the larger metropolitan areas of Portland/Vancouver for specialized services (medical, higher education, shopping) that might not be available in the small towns of the Gorge.

It is important to also recognize that residents of the metropolitan areas travel east into the Columbia Gorge for both work and recreation. The Columbia River Gorge's unique attributes and recreational

opportunities attract more than 2 million visitors a year.¹ According to the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area 2011 Visitor Use Report, over 40% of visitors come from the Portland Metro area. The same report notes that a full 60% of those visiting the Gorge National Scenic Area come from less than 50 miles away.

Figure 1: Strategy Area



THE GORGE TRANSLINK ALLIANCE

In 2001, the transportation providers of the five Gorge counties (Sherman, Wasco, Hood River, Klickitat, and Skamania) recognized that individually they had limited resources to meet the significant transportation needs of their communities and of the region, but that collectively they could accomplish regional transportation goals by pooling resources, leveraging public and private partnerships, and implementing shared transportation services and connections. As a single organization, this coalition of five transportation service providers would develop a website providing a single source for information, conduct a regional needs assessment, develop a marketing package, and create a shared identity for local providers. This informal organization met regularly with the intention of creating a more official partnership.

In 2003 the partnership hired FLT Consulting to create a marketing plan. As a part of this 2003 marketing plan, the Gorge transportation providers participated in a workshop session to select a regional name and a logo for their coalition. After much discussion about a wide variety of terms and name options, the group came to consensus with the name: Gorge TransLink.

¹ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/crgnsa/home/?cid=STELPRDB5385766>

The Gorge TransLink Coordinated Plan was completed in June 2007. It highlighted the need for the group to become a more formal organization in order to achieve the goals of increasing connectivity between counties, developing a common fare structure, coordinating marketing efforts, and securing a Mobility Manager.

In 2008 each of the counties adopted a resolution and signed a Memorandum of Understanding that designated the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) as the lead agency to provide technical and administrative support. Each transportation provider committed to providing ongoing match funding for the Mobility Management project and staff position. Over the past fourteen years, MCEDD's Mobility Manager work plan has included facilitation of the Gorge TransLink Alliance meetings, preparation of biennial work plans to identify and prioritize coordination strategies, expansion of the Alliance partnerships, identification of new funding opportunities for transportation providers, and implementation of work plan activities.

The Mt Hood Transportation Alliance

The Mt Hood Transportation Alliance (MHTA) is a working group formed during the Mt Hood Multimodal project which has continued to meet to support transit options. Partners include the financial partners supporting the Mt Hood Express as well as the City of Sandy, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Mt Hood Meadows, Columbia Area Transit, Mid-Columbia Economic Development (representing the Gorge TransLink Alliance), Rhododendron CPO and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

KEY MILESTONES FOR THE TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS

Skamania County Transit (Skamania County Senior Services)

1970's-Skamania County Senior Services (SCSS) was developed as a county department.

1978 – SCSS launched transportation services for older adults.

1983 - Purchased first wheelchair accessible bus.

1990 – Services expanded to include providing Medicaid Transportation (Non-Emergent Medical Transportation)

2004 - Initiated the Stevenson to Vancouver deviated fixed route on a 3 days / week schedule.

2011 – The first bus shelter was installed in downtown Stevenson.

2016-17 – Secured a Federal Lands Access grant for the West End Transit (WET) weekend Bus that stopped at trailheads along SR 14 along the established deviated fixed route, including a weekend Dog Mountain Shuttle. The match funds were provided by the Friends of the Columbia Gorge and transient lodging tax funds from Skamania County Chamber and the Stevenson Downtown Association.

2018 – Launched the Dog Mountain shuttle and permit system with partners USFS, WSDOT, Skamania County. More details about this project are in the Regional Transportation System Project section. (Also see the Dog Mountain shuttle folder)

2021-22 – Joined the 4-provider annual universal GOrge Pass fare system.

2021 (November) – After receiving a Regional Mobility Grant, SCSS launched an extended SR14 route that provides service into both Klickitat and Hood River counties to Bingen and to Cascade Locks.

Mt. Adams Transportation Service (Klickitat County Senior Services)

1970's--Klickitat County Senior Services was developed as a county department.

1980's --KCSS launched transportation Services for older adults and people with disabilities with one wheelchair Accessible bus.

1987--applied for WSDOT transportation funding. This allowed KCSS to provide more transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities.

1997-1998 - The Klickitat County Commissioners and representatives from each city within Klickitat County convened a public transportation improvement conference in September of 1997. Through the

transportation improvement conference process, the Public Transportation Benefit Area Board established boundaries and decided to move forward with the consideration for a public transit system within Klickitat County. The boundary included most of Klickitat County, but not all of the County. In November 1998 the voters narrowly defeated a vote to fund the PTBA with a Sales Tax. In summary, a PTBA Board was formed in 1997, but since the PTBA was not funded, an actual PTBA was never formed. In 2019 Director Sharon Carter went to the County Commission to ask if they were interested in starting the process again, but they declined, not wanting to increase taxes for their constituents.

2001 – The first deviated fixed route established connections with Lyle-Bingen-White Salmon with a Rural Mobility Demonstration Project grant. Residents were supportive of the service and ridership started off with strong numbers, but the frequency was not sufficient to maintain the ridership.

2014- MATS partnered with the Port of Hood River to purchase bike racks for buses, as this was the only public access across the bridge for people on bikes.

2018 (September) – Launched 2 fixed route services: White Salmon to Hood River and Goldendale to The Dalles. Both routes showed a strong increase in ridership through 2019. The fixed route services were suspended March 2020 during the COVID-19 response but have been gaining back ridership since relaunching in XXXXX.

2019 – MOU with the Port of Hood River to receive Bridge Toll waivers for all public transit vehicles.

2019 – Partnered with MCEDD and Columbia Area Transit to offer a Gorge Commuter Pass to employers. Insitu, a large employer with 1,000 employees and two campuses (one at the Port of Klickitat and the other in Hood River), bought passes for all fulltime employees. MCEDD administered the agreement and the finances.

2020 – Partnered with the Port of Klickitat on a successful grant to install a Bus Shelter and amenities at the Port of Klickitat near the Insitu Bingen campus.

2021 – Partnered with Columbia Area Transit, Skamania County Transit, and The Link Public Transit to form the 4-provider annual Gorge Pass.

The Link Public Transit (Wasco County)

1997 – This county transportation program was launched to provide medical rides and soon also began to provide dial-a-ride and shopping bus services. The Mid-Columbia Council of Governments provided administration for the county's transportation program. MCCOG also managed the Medicaid Transportation Brokerage services starting in 2002, which included five counties initially (Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Gilliam, Wheeler) and in 2006 added Umatilla and Morrow. Previously the only transportation services in Wasco County for those needing to access medical appointments or other essential services were offered by the Mid-Columbia Medical Center through a volunteer driver program and through senior services like Meals on Wheels.

2015- The Coordinated Care Organization (CCO) system was developed in Oregon and the responsibility and management of the Medicaid Transportation Brokerage system was transferred to the CCOs. The nonprofit Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc assumed the responsibility for the regional Transportation Brokerage and contracted with MCCOG to continue to manage and operate the service.

2016

- The Dalles Transit Center was built and opened in 2016.
- The 2016 The Dalles Transportation System Plan update included a Transit Feasibility Study. The consultant, Kittelson, used the transit software program Remix to develop deviated fixed route alternatives and calculate costs.

2018 - Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) took over operation of The Link.

2019 – The Link continued its existing services and launched a number of new services with Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund revenue:

- Launched a deviated fixed route in The Dalles.
- Launched weekly service to Celilo Village and Lone Pine.
- Launched weekly shopping bus to The Dalles from Maupin, Tygh Valley and Dufur.
- Expanded the service schedule to include Saturdays.

- Began free rides for high school students.
- Added bike racks to all vehicles.
- Began constructing passenger shelters around The Dalles.
- Increased vehicle replacement purchases and expanded the fleet.

2020 – Launched a second deviated fixed route.

2021 - The Link began sharing operations of the Hood River-The Dalles route with partner agency Columbia Area Transit and joined partnering agencies in sponsoring a multi-provider universal pass system, the annual GORge Pass.

2022

- Completed the Wasco County Transit Master Plan.
- Launched summer shuttle with service to The Dalles Aquatic Center and The Dalles Farmers Market on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

Columbia Area Transit (Hood River County Transportation District)

1993 – The district was formed by a vote of the Hood River County residents in 1992 and took effect on July 1, 1993, organized under Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 267. The Hood River County Transportation District does business under the name of Columbia Area Transit (CAT). Columbia Area Transit is administered by a public board which hires an Executive Director to manage operations.

1998 – CAT launched the first fixed route service that included 3-4 different routes and hourly service. CAT purchased 20 vehicles for the service, but there were ADA compliance and financing challenges and the service was terminated after 6 months.

2003 –CAT contracted out .5 FTE of the administrative services of CAT's Executive Director to The Mid-Columbia Council of Governments (MCCOG) for The Transportation Network (now The Link Public Transit) in Wasco County. At this time MCCOG was also managing the Medicaid Transportation Brokerage services for the Oregon Health Authority, so the Executive Director also assumed the management of that program.

2005- CAT established the first intercity route with stops in The Dalles, Hood River, and Portland. The Portland stops included Clackamas Town Center, OHSU, City Center, and the Gateway Transit Center. This service eventually expanded from one to two times a week, coordinating with The Link that brought riders from The Dalles to Hood River.

2010 – The CAT Transit Center was built at the Wasco Loop Rd. location in Hood River.

2017 –

- CAT bus drivers joined the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 757 and approved the first union contract in 2018.
- Launched Upper Valley Deviated Fixed-Route service.

2018

- The Hood River City fixed route service was introduced.
- Operation of the Columbia Gorge Express was transitioned to CAT from ODOT including service to The Dalles.
- The Columbia Gorge Express became a year round service.

2019

- Partnered with MCEDD to offer the Gorge Commuter Pass to employers. Insitu, a large employer with 1,000 employees and two campuses (one in Bingen and one in Hood River), bought passes for all full time employees. MCEDD administered the agreement, the online platform, and the finances.
- Expanded the Columbia Gorge Express to include the commuter service between Gorge Communities and Portland.
- Introduced the summer pink trolley service on weekends in the City of Hood River and the Gorge-To-Mountain Service which connects Mt. Hood Meadows and Hood River.
- Operated the Columbia Gorge Express Intercity service (Portland to Hood River) through a contract with ODOT.

- Launched the seasonal Gorge to Mountain Express with FLAP funds (contracted with Mt. Hood Meadows for the 2019 and 2020 seasons)

2020

- CAT launched the low-cost annual transit GORge Pass, a \$30 pass for unlimited fixed route rides and \$60 for unlimited Dial-A-Rides in Hood River County.
- Created the student free fare program for all Hood River County Public School District Middle and High School Students.
- Worked with local social service organizations during the pandemic to meet the needs of Hood River County members (rides to food bank, testing, and vaccinations).

2021

- Provided seasonal weekend service to Stevenson and White Salmon.
- Hood River City Route was extended to 7 days/week year round.
- Worked with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to establish a bus stop at the Wyeth In-lieu site for residents.
- Operated the seasonal Dog Mnt. Shuttle.
- Partnership with USFS and ODOT to address congestion and safety concerns at the Multnomah Falls parking area.
- Launched the Downtown Employee Pass with City of Hood River
- Launched the Gorge Transit Connect, the low-income pass program
- Launched the Cascade Locks Shuttle
- Partnered with Skamania County Transit, The Link Public Transit, and Mt. Adams Transportation Services to expand the CAT GORge Pass program and offer a regional low-cost annual transit pass to residents and visitors.

2022

- Increased bike capacity on Columbia Gorge Express to 8 bikes total per one bus.
- Participated in the Waterfall Corridor Pilot Project, working with private shuttle operators, ODOT, USFS, OPRD, City of Troutdale.
- CAT facilitated the agreements for the 2022 multiprovider GORge Pass and administered the program.
- Launched the summer seasonal Falls-To Locks Service Increasing service between Portland Multnomah Falls, and Cascade Locks.
- Operated Dog Mountain Shuttle.

Columbia Gorge Express (ODOT and CAT)

2016 – ODOT launched seasonal (May – September) weekend only bus service between Portland, Rooster Rock State Park, and Multnomah Falls. ODOT piloted park & ride at Rooster Rock State Park. Western Federal Lands awarded ODOT Federal Lands Access Program funding to maintain and expand the seasonal service to year-round, intercity service through 2020.

2017 – ODOT continued seasonal weekend service (May – September); planned for service expansion to Cascade Locks and Hood River, 7 days a week.

2018 – ODOT expanded service to year-round 7 days a week, and to Cascade Locks and Hood River. ODOT continued seasonal service with Rooster Rock Park & Ride.

2019 - ODOT continued annual intercity service and seasonal Rooster Rock shuttle service for the summer season. Columbia Area Transit was awarded a STIF Discretionary grant to operate the CGE intercity service; service transitioned to CAT in November 2019 with 6-8 daily trips and connection to The Dalles.

2020 – CAT continued operating intercity service between Portland and The Dalles, with some service suspensions due to the pandemic. ODOT suspended the seasonal Rooster Rock shuttle service due to the pandemic.

2021 – CAT continued operating intercity service between Portland and The Dalles. ODOT suspended the seasonal Rooster Rock shuttle service a second year due to the pandemic.

2022 – CAT continued operating intercity service between Portland and The Dalles. CAT piloted a seasonal Falls to Locks shuttle, with added service 7 days a week between Portland, Troutdale, Multnomah Falls, and Cascade Locks (May – September).

Clackamas County: Mt Hood Express

2014 - The Mt. Hood Express was launched to serve the communities along Highway 26, running from the city of Sandy to Government Camp and Timberline, operating 7 days a week (6 runs a day with additional runs in peak season) as a limited stop commuter service between the City of Sandy and Timberline. Seasonal service currently includes bike trailers and ski boxes. Partners include financial partners Oregon Department of Transportation’s Rail and Public Transit Division, Western Federal Lands, Timberline Lodge and Mt. Hood Skibowl, as well as the City of Sandy, Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Mt Hood Meadows, Columbia Area Transit, Mid-Columbia Economic Development, Rhododendron CPO and Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

2017-18 – Purchased two bike trailers for summer use.

2018-19 – Overview of Fares

Total cost of operations: \$581,061

Cost per ride: \$8.67

Cost per mile: \$2.52

Fares collected: \$122,665. MHX collects 21% of the cost of operations. This is very high for a rural service which typically only collects about 10-15% of the cost of operations through fares. In a group of 131 surveyed riders, 58.12% of them were riding to get to work.

More information about this service can be found in the 2018 Mt Hood Express Annual Report.

Figure 2: Existing Fixed/Deviated Fixed Transit Services and Sherman County Shopping Shuttle.



REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS

This is a description of current regionally significant public transportation and Mobility Management projects.

Gorge Pass - Identified as a high priority for stakeholders in Phase I, the GORge Pass is an annual, low-cost, fixed route service pass that is accepted by the four transportation providers who offer fixed-route services. The 4-provider GORge Pass was launched in CAT offers variations of the GORge Pass that include Dial-A-Ride service within Hood River County. Currently CAT manages the fare program and enters into an annual agreement with the three other providers.

Gorge Pass Marketing Project - Funded by the ODOT STIF Discretionary grant program, the GORge Pass Marketing Project is managed by MCEDD and promotes the GORge Pass locally and to the Portland-Vancouver Metropolitan area. This project develops and implements a two-year campaign sales strategy, including outreach, branding, messaging via social media/newspaper/radio, printed collateral, an Equity Fund, a website Gorgepass.com, and special events. Rack cards were designed and printed for the four transit providers that have fixed route services. These rack cards can be accessed in the Collateral folder.

Overview of the GORge Pass Marketing Project from the consultant: The Annual Gorge Pass connects all four Gorge transit providers to create a seamless system for the rider. Our media buy focused heavily in the Spring/Summer targeting various types of visitors from the Portland area. Smaller efforts were also made to winter rec and local users. Outreach was made to employers in both the Gorge and Portland to very little success (COVID numbers were up and most employers did not return to the office, including front desk reception). We were able recently to include the bike market due to an increase in service which better assured enough space for the numbers using the bike racks. In situ paid for passes for their employees with the caveat that each employee sign up for the pass through a portal on their employee site. To date, 122 have been purchased by employees. As of 7/15/2022, we have sold 1080 passes via Token Transit (which gives us \$1080 for the Equity Fund) with total sales of \$34,390. This does not yet include the 18 just sold to North Wasco County School District nor does it include the physical REI sales, Visitor Center Sales or the Provider Sales which will be gathered at the end of the year.

Gorge Pass

Your ticket to unlimited rides to and from Portland/Vancouver and around the Gorge.

2022 ANNUAL PASS

- \$40 Adults
- \$20 Kids

Download to your phone or carry in your wallet.

GOOD FOR YOU

- Avoid parking hassles
- Hike without permits
- Use it to commute
- Connect to Portland & the airport
- Stress less, enjoy the views

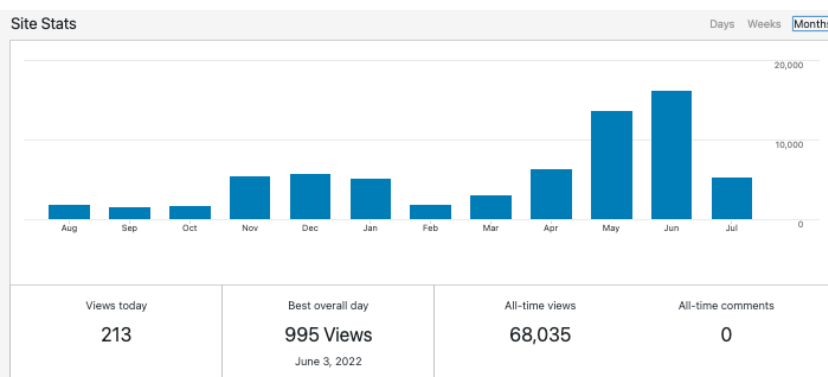
GOOD FOR THE GORGE

- Reduce congestion
- Give equitable access to the outdoors
- Connect affordable housing, healthcare, & jobs
- Fewer visitors in cars
- Preserve the beauty of the region

Help build a stronger future system—the more passes purchased, the more routes and times can be added.

\$1 of every pass goes to the Gorge Equity Fund to support search & rescue, outdoor access, and low-income passes.

gorgepass.com



The GOrge Pass Equity Fund provides three different ways for individuals, organizations, or employers to invest in providing access for all to public transit in the Gorge.

- One dollar of every pass sold goes directly to the fund.
- Employer Buy One, Give One program
- Direct cash donation to the fund.

GORGE PASS
\$40 Adult | \$20 Youth

Annual pass for unlimited car-free trips anywhere in the Gorge
 Monthly trip ideas + Gorge deals
 \$1 of each pass donated to Gorge Equity Fund

GORGE EQUITY FUND

- Passes for Outdoor Equity Organizations
- Donations to Search & Rescue Efforts
- Passes for Low Income Programs

**EMPLOYER SALES:
BUY ONE, GIVE ONE**

After 10 purchased, 1 pass will be donated for every pass purchased by or for an employee.



Gorge Transit Connect - This program is funded by the GOrge Pass Equity fund, the Rural Veterans Health Transportation grant, and grant funds from other partners like the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. This program distributes free GOrge Passes to low-income residents. The program provides a Travel Trainer who works directly with the representatives of local organizations to train staff to become "Travel Ambassadors" for their organization.

Gorge Transit Connect

Providence Oregon Department of Human Services Dethman House Gorge Grown Bridges to Health HR Shelter Services HR Veterans Service Office Wasco Co Veterans Service Office NORCOR	One Community Health-HR Columbia Gorge Community College Community Corrections Age + MCMC HR Shelter Services TD Shelter Services and MCCAC Mid-Columbia Housing Mid-Columbia Center for Living	The Next Door CAPECO Bridges to Change GOHBI Hood River Valley Adult Center WAGAP
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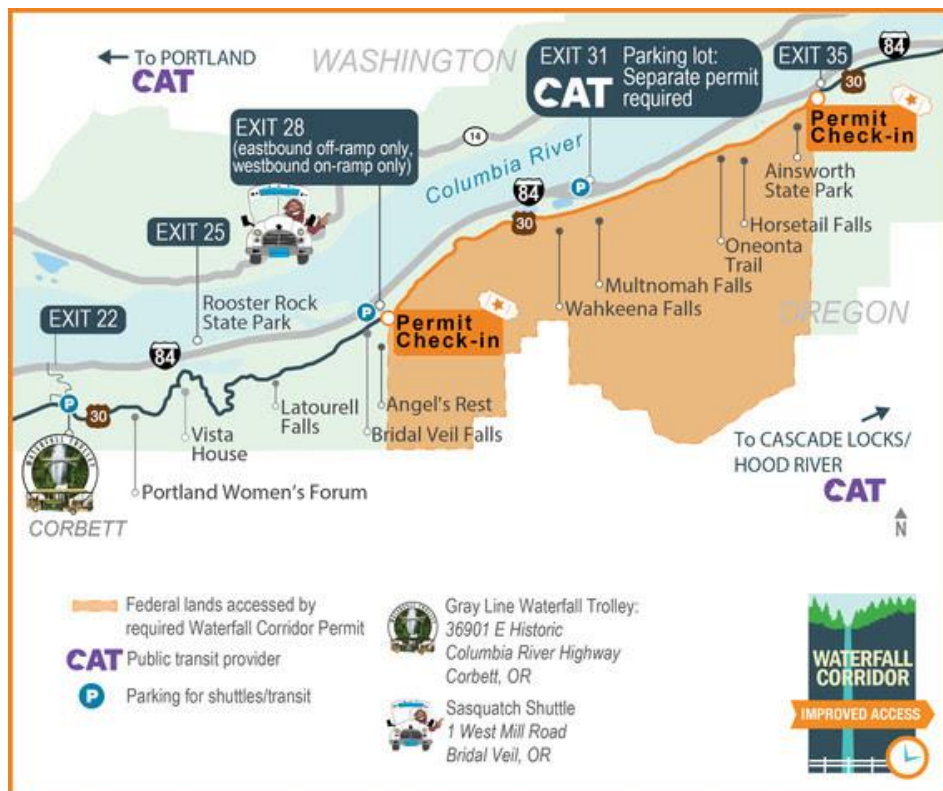
Waterfall Corridor Pilot Project (ODOT) - Multnomah County, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the Oregon Department of Transportation and the U.S. Forest Service launched a joint project in May of 2022 to create a more reliable, safe, predictable and enjoyable experience for all users visiting trailheads, waterfalls and viewpoints. Between May 24 and Sept. 5, 2022, the Timed Use Permit will be required for personal vehicles to access federal lands adjacent to the Waterfall Corridor between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., seven days a week, between the Bridal Veil off-ramp (I-84 Exit 28) and Ainsworth State Park (Exit 35).

In addition to the Waterfall Corridor Timed Use Permits, the USFS will reinstate Multnomah Falls Timed Use Permits for visitors using the I-84 (Exit 31) parking lot during the same time period. The permits are two separate systems and are not interchangeable.

These partners worked closely with Columbia Area Transit to ensure equitable access to Multnomah Falls. Columbia Area Transit is also working closely with the private transportation providers Grey Line and Sasquatch, both of which run a Waterfall Corridor shuttle from Portland and with stops in Troutdale.

This project is a good example of a multi-organizational strategy that combines public transit, permitting, and parking management.

CAT Visitor Passes - CAT offers single fare tickets (\$10) between Portland, Multnomah Falls, Cascade Locks, and Hood River. CAT also offers a \$15 Gorge Transit One-Day Pass (hop on, hop off) for all CAT services that includes fares for one adult and one child and the entry permit for Multnomah Falls for one adult and one child. These pass options have been very popular with visitors coming from the Portland area as they are more cost effective than the GORge Pass for those who want to visit Multnomah Falls and Hood River County for only one day.



Go Vets: Columbia Gorge- Columbia Area Transit received a Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation grant from ODOT to provide Veterans' outreach and free fares on Columbia Area Transit and The Link transit services including the Hospital Van and Dial a Ride services, including those that connect Veterans to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Gorge regional van.



Mobility Manager - MCEDD provides a Mobility Manager who assists regional public transportation coordination and staffs the Gorge TransLink Alliance through grants from both WSDOT and ODOT and other grants that fund Gorge TransLink Alliance projects. The Mobility Manager is also a member of the Mt Hood Transportation Alliance. The Mobility Manager provides transportation options programming and support for ODOT's Get There Oregon rideshare platform to Hood River County through an ODOT formula grant program.

Commute Options Employee Benefit Program - MCEDD subcontracts with Commute Options, a nonprofit that serves Eastern Oregon, to promote the Get There Rewards program in Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties. Get There Rewards is the Commute Options' employee benefit program that rewards employees who choose commute options like transit or walking/biking.

Travel Trainer - MCEDD provides a Travel Training Program Manager that assists The LINK and CAT in teaching local, rural, and underserved populations how to use available public transit services in Wasco and Hood River counties. The Travel Trainer develops programs to teach both agency staff and riders how to use public transit (travel training and travel ambassadors). These programs need bicultural messaging and need to be carefully designed to support veteran, Native Americans, older adults and elders, youth, and people with developmental disabilities. The programs are intended to also engage people from these groups who are already using the bus system as travel trainers. The Travel Trainer also manages the Gorge Transit Connect and the Go Vets: Columbia Gorge project.

Columbia Area Transit Medical Van - Provides access to medical facilities in the Portland area for all regional residents. Cost: \$20 one way (free for Veterans through the Go Vets grant). Fixed pick up and drop off stops in The Dalles and Hood River.

Gorge TransLink.com website - This website provides a central place for schedule and general information for the five Gorge TransLink providers. Features include a Trip Planning tool and maps and schedules produced using GTFS data. A recently installed feature is the SMS Alert System, which allows riders to sign up to receive texts for service alerts.

Dog Mountain USFS Permit and Shuttle System - This combined permitting and shuttle system program was launched in 2018 in response to serious safety incidents and concerns along the SR 14 corridor. When the parking area at the Dog Mountain trailhead overflows with personal vehicles as springtime crowds arrive to hike the famous wildflower trail, hikers begin to park along SR14 and along the BNSF railroad tracks, often walking on the highway and the tracks to get to the trailhead and causing vehicle congestion and backups. The USFS convened a large group of stakeholders in 2017 to develop a plan and get partner buy-in for resources, support, and enforcement. The permit and shuttle system has been funded each year with different grants and match funding.

2018 and 2019: shuttles were funded through the WSDOT Regional Mobility Grant program, using Skamania County Transient Tax and County funding for match. Downtown businesses offered discounts to shuttle riders who showed their shuttle bracelets to staff.

2020: The shuttle was canceled due to COVID-19 restrictions.

2021: The shuttle system received funding from the Federal Lands Access Program (through a USFS request for a fund extension), and the BNSF Railway Foundation. Columbia Area Transit provided support with buses and drivers on the weekends.

2022: Columbia Area Transit provided the shuttle services using a combination of grants.

Partners have included Skamania County Senior Services, Skamania County Board of Commissioners, Skamania County Chamber of Commerce, Skamania County Sheriff's Dept and EMS, Washington State Police, WSDOT, USFS, MCEDD, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance, Columbia Area Transit, Greyline of Portland (see 2019 proposal), City of Stevenson.

Schedules and detailed explanation of how the system has worked can be found in the Dog Mountain Permit/Shuttle system folder.

In preparation for the 2023 season, WSDOT has suggested applying for funding through the Consolidated Grant program, which has additional funds this year thanks to the Move Ahead Washington transportation funding package. The RMG grant program funds projects only one time.



Dog Mountain Parking Lot and Trailhead area.

Draft Legislative Proposal: Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Recreation Enhancement and Conservation Act - This bill's transportation section would create Access Committees for the Mt. Hood National Forest and the Columbia River Gorge. The Committees would develop comprehensive, coordinated, multi-jurisdictional plans to improve safe, equitable, and ecologically sustainable access to Mt. Hood and the Gorge. These plans would prioritize reliable and user-friendly transportation and transit options; reduction of congestion on roadways; improvement for recreational access, public safety, and emergency personnel access; and sustainable funding.

TRANSPORTATION PROVIDER OPERATIONS SUMMARY

The following tables give an overview of the basic operations details of each public transportation provider. Table X describes the type of entity, services provided, demographics of ridership, office hours, fares, key connections, and funding sources. Table Y describes staffing capacity, technologies used, electrification progress, vehicles, and intergovernmental agency agreements.

Transportation Provider	Entity Type	Services	Ridership	Office Days/ Hours	Fares	Connections	Funding sources
<p>Klickitat County Senior Services: Mt. Adams Transportation Service</p> <p>Sharon Carter, Director Offices in Goldendale and White Salmon, WA</p>	<p>Community Transportation Provider operated by a County Department</p> <p><u>Governing Body:</u> County Board of Commissioners</p>	<p>Dial-a-Ride, Fixed route, Non-Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT)</p> <p><u>Service Area:</u> Klickitat County with adjacent destinations in the Columbia River Gorge, Tri-Cities and Yakima. Also serving Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA for medical appointments.</p>	<p>DAR: seniors, persons with disabilities, general public.</p> <p>Priority for medical and essential needs purposes.</p> <p>Fixed: general public</p>	<p>M-F 8-5pm</p>	<p>Fixed: \$1 each way Dial-a-Ride (DAR): depending on location. Free fare for Goldendale Shuttle.</p> <p>Cash, Mobile App, GORge Pass, tokens</p>	<p>Amtrak, Greyhound, CAT, the Link</p>	<p>FTA 5311, 5310, 5339, 5317 Klickitat County funds State/Fed Senior Funds Fare Revenue Foundation Grants United Way Donations NEMT contract revenue</p>
<p>Skamania County Senior Services: Skamania County Transit</p> <p>Sophie Miller Program Manager Stevenson, WA</p>	<p>Community Transportation Provider operated by a County Department</p> <p><u>Governing Body:</u> County Board of Commissioners</p>	<p>Dial-a-Ride, Fixed route (deviated), NEMT</p> <p><u>Service Area:</u> Skamania County and a 50-mile radius outside the county borders.</p>	<p><u>DAR:</u> seniors, persons with disabilities, low income, Veterans</p> <p><u>Fixed:</u> general public</p>	<p>M-F 8am-4:30 pm</p>	<p>Zone 1-2: \$1-2 each way</p> <p>DAR: varies, depending on age/zones</p> <p>Cash GORge Pass</p>	<p>C-TRAN MATS CAT</p>	<p>FTA 5311, 5310, 5339 Rural Mobility Grant Local funds State grants Fare Revenue Highly Rural Veterans grant United Way and other foundation grants NEMT contract revenue</p>
<p>Hood River County Transportation District HRCTD): Columbia Area Transit</p> <p>Amy Schlappi, Executive Director</p>	<p>Transportation District (Special District)</p> <p><u>Governing Body:</u> HRCTD Board of Directors</p>	<p>Fixed Route, Deviated Fixed Route, Dial-a-Ride, Paratransit</p> <p><u>Service Area:</u> Hood River, Wasco, Multnomah counties</p>	<p>Seniors, persons with disabilities, Veterans, general public</p>	<p>M-Sun 7:30 am-5:30 pm</p>	<p>GORge Pass DAR with GORge Pass: \$60 Local: \$1 DAR: \$2 Student Free Fare program</p> <p>Cash, Mobile App, GORge Pass CGE Day Pass Downtown Pass Program</p>	<p>MATS, The Link, TriMet</p>	<p>FTA 5311, 5310, 5339 Local property Tax State grants Fare Revenue Partner grants and funds Rural Veterans Transportation grant FHWA FLAP</p>

<p>The Link Public Transit</p> <p>Kate Drennan, Deputy Director of Transportation</p>	<p>Wasco County department operated by MCEDD</p> <p><u>Governing Body:</u> County Board of Commissioners</p>	<p>Dial-a-Ride, Shopping shuttle, Fixed Route (Deviated), NEMT</p> <p><u>Service Area:</u> Wasco and Hood River counties</p>	<p>Seniors, persons with disabilities, general public</p>	<p>M-F 6 am-6pm Sat 9-4 pm</p>	<p>Fixed: \$1.50 GOrg Pass DAR: \$1.50</p> <p>Cash, Tickets, Mobile App, GOrg Pass</p>	<p>CAT, MATS, Greyhound</p>	<p>FTA 5311, 5310, 5339 State grants Fare Revenue Local grants and City funds</p>
<p>Sherman County Community Transit</p> <p>Marnene Benson-Wood, Community Transit Coordinator</p>	<p>Sherman County department</p> <p><u>Governing Body:</u> County Court</p>	<p>Dial-a-Ride, Shopping shuttle, NEMT</p> <p><u>Service Area:</u> Sherman, Wasco, Portland area, Bend area</p>	<p>Seniors, persons with disabilities, Veterans, general public</p>	<p>M-Thurs 8 am-5 pm</p>	<p>Donation-Based</p> <p>Cash</p>	<p>The Link, MATS</p>	<p>FTA 5311, 5310, 5339 State grants Donations Highly rural and Rural Veterans grants</p>

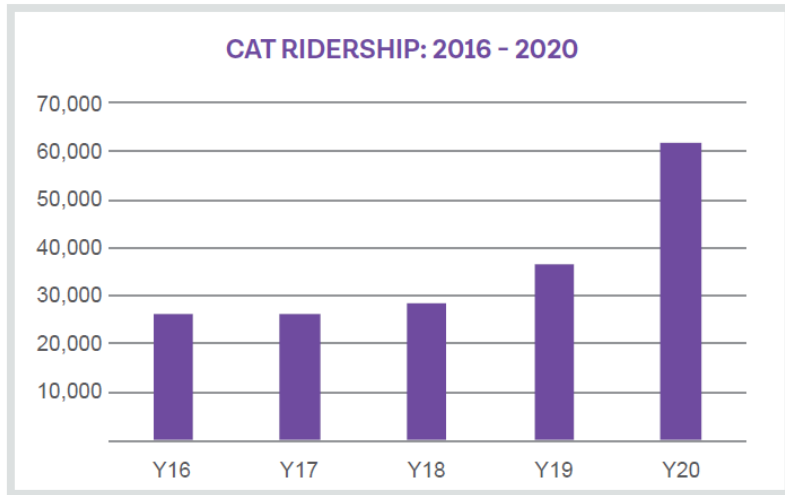
Transportation Provider	Staffing	Technologies	Electrification	Transit Infrastructure	Vehicles/Bike accommodations	Interagency Agreements
<p>Klickitat County Senior Services: Mt. Adams Transportation Service</p>	<p>Director--1 Operations Manager-1 Dispatchers—2.5 FT <u>Drivers</u> Fulltime-7 Parttime-2 Substitutes-6 Volunteer-3 (receive mileage)</p>	<p><u>Dispatch:</u> <u>Efare:</u> Token Transit for GOrge Pass, Passage Transit Ticketing for single tickets Vehicles: Electronic bus and route GTFS (WSDOT through a contract with Trillium) Location: Samsara (4 month test)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Housed in the Senior Services section of the White Salmon County Bldg. Temporary signs (sandwich boards): 25</p>	<p>6 14-passenger, ADA-accessible cutaways (minibuses) 1 16-passenger, ADA-accessible, tall van 8 six- passenger, ADA-accessible minivans Two four-passenger, ADA-accessible specialty vehicles Bike Racks</p>	<p>MCEDD MOU for Gorge TransLink staffing NEMT contract with Community in Motion GOrge Pass IGA IGA with the Port of Hood River for a toll waiver.</p>
<p>Skamania County Senior Services: Skamania County Transit</p>	<p>Program Manager-1 .75 Assistant Manager-1.25 Dispatchers-1 Drivers-15 total Full-time: 3 .80 FTE: 3 .75 FTE: 1 Part time: 8 Volunteer: 2 to deliver lunches only</p>	<p>Dispatch: TripMaster No software for fixed route—pencil count. GTFS (WSDOT through a contract with Trillium)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Housed in the Senior Services section of the Hegewald Center 3 bus shelters</p>	<p>One (1) 20-passenger bus Two (2) 18-passenger buses One (1) 15 -passenger cutaway (minibus) One (1) seven-passenger van One (1) six-passenger van Six (6) five-passenger minivans</p>	<p>MCEDD MOU for Gorge TransLink staffing NEMT contract with Community in Motion GOrge Pass IGA</p>

<p>Hood River County Transportation District: Columbia Area Transit</p>	<p>Executive Director-1 Office Manager/HR-1 Accountant (contracted) Operations Manager-1 Operations Assistant-1 Field Supervisors-3 Dispatchers-2 Drivers Fulltime-13 Part-time-2 Seasonal-2 Website Contractor/PR and Marketing/Graphics contractor</p>	<p>Dispatch: Unite Fleet Management: Fleetio Automatic Vehicle Location: Samsara Efare: Token Transit Bus info Board: Visionetc GTFS Route Planner: Via</p>	<p>EVs 2 on order (Ford Transit Connect) 4 level 2 charging stations installed 2020 Funds to order more.</p>	<p>Transit Center Building, 2 bus barns, park n ride lot. Bus Shelters: 7 Bus poles and signs: 13 formal 11 temporary</p>	<p>1 x 6=Minivan DAR 1 x 12/2=Cutaway 1 x 14 3 x 16/2=cutaway 2 x 12+3=cutaway 3 x 28 + 2=Gilligs (old Trimet) 3 x 36 + 2=Gilligs (old Trimet)Used for Multnomah Falls to Cascade Locks 2 x 35+2=Internationals (CGE) Bike Racks</p>	<p>MCEDD MOU for Gorge TransLink staffing GOrge Pass IGA with Skamania, Klickitat, The Link. IGA with MCEDD for weekday service to The Dalles IGA with MCEDD for the GOrge Pass Marketing project IGA with MCEDD for a 2-county Travel Trainer Contract with ODOT to provide the Multnomah Falls to Cascade Locks Shuttle (in process)</p>
<p>The Link Public Transit</p>	<p>Deputy Director Operations Manager-1 2 Dispatchers 10 Full-time Drivers 3 part-time</p>	<p>Dispatch: Ecolane GTFS Route Planner: Via</p>	<p>2 EV cutaways ordered (12+2)</p>	<p>Transit Center and bus barn. Bus Shelters: 5 Poles and Signs: 0</p>	<p>3 Minivans 8 Cutaway buses Bike Racks</p>	<p>MCEDD MOU for Gorge TransLink staffing GOrge Pass IGA NEMT contract with ModivCare IGA with CAT to provide The Dalles to Hood River weekday service. IGA with CAT for the GOrge Pass Marketing project. IGA with CAT for 2-county Travel Trainer</p>

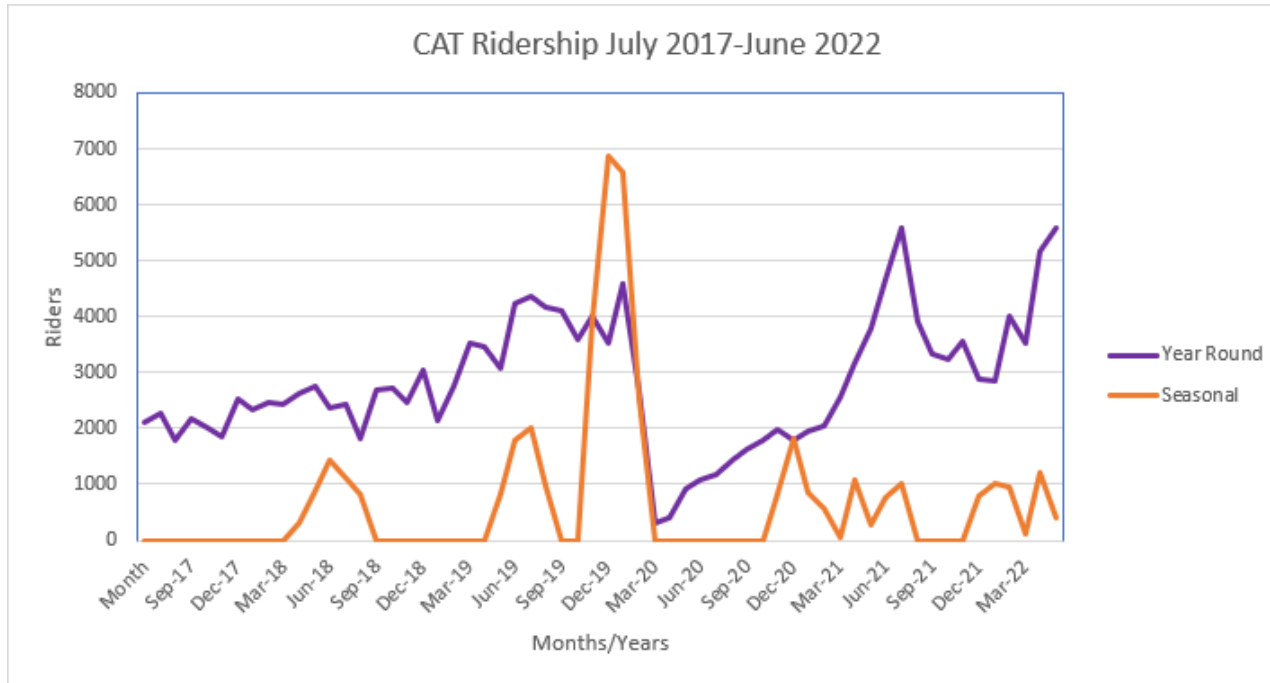
Sherman County Community Transit	Community Transit Coordinator--.5 FTE Dispatcher-1 Drivers—6 parttime	Dispatch System: Manual Trip Sheets Access to online Ecolane for GOBHI's NEMT contract	None	1 Bus Barn 2 nd Bus Barn (extension) in construction	2 cutaways 2 vans 2 4wd passenger vehicles 2 minivans	MCEDD MOU for Gorge TransLink staffing
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Ridership Overview

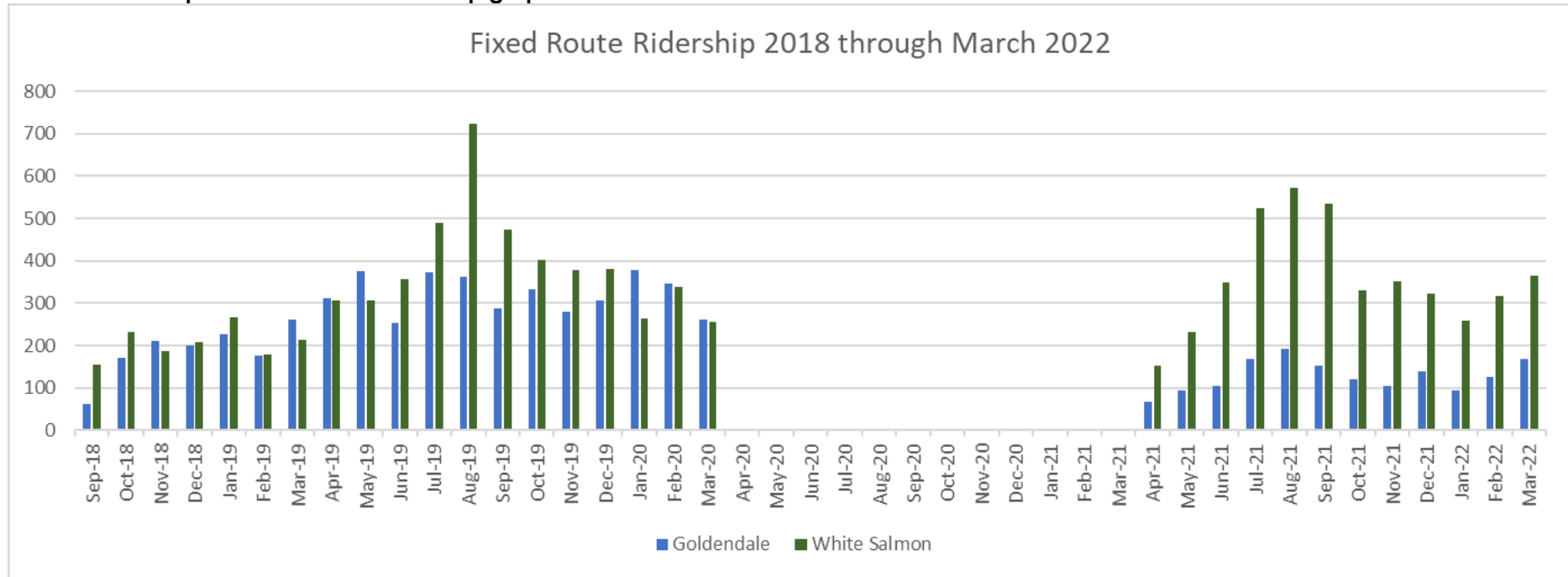
CAT Ridership Total (all services)



Cat Fixed Route Ridership



Mt. Adams Transportation Services Ridership graphs



Skamania County Ridership:

Typically, Spring and Summer are the highest ridership months.

2019 = Total of 2,836 riders used the fixed route service.

2021 = 14,224 DAR trips

2,011 Fixed Route

1,021 Dog Mnt. Shuttle

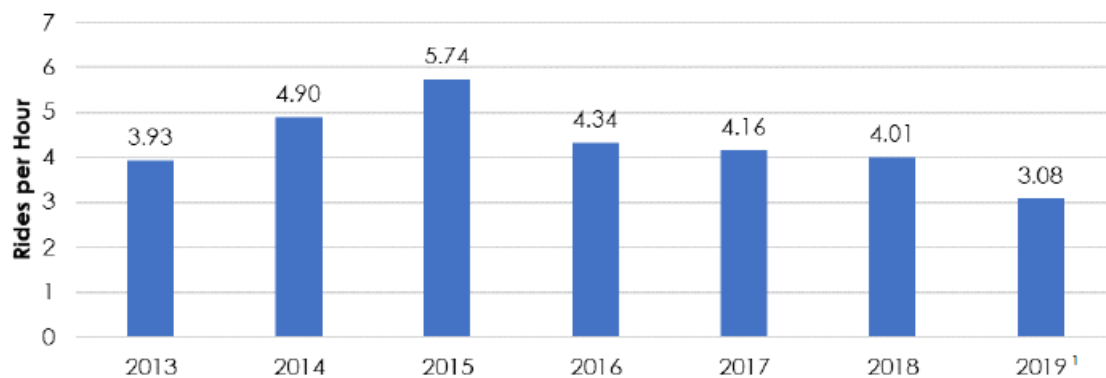
From March 1, 2022-May 2022, 152 riders used the new transit stop in Cascade Locks and 76 riders used the new stop at the Park and Ride near the Hood River bridge just outside of Bingen. Most riders who get off at this stop transfer to MATS to get to shopping in Hood River (Walmart).

The Link Public Transit Ridership

Table 1 Summarized by Fiscal Year

Dial-a-Ride	FY20	FY21	FY22** (3 quarters only)
Total Passenger Trips	18,149	12,077	8,829**
Elderly/ Disabled Trips	9,193	7,693	5,141
Revenue Service Hours	6,157	5,952	4,072
Revenue Service Miles	85,805	53,894	46,688
Deviated Fixed Route	FY20	FY21	FY22** (3 quarters only)
Total Passenger Trips	4,087	3,787	6,308
Revenue Service Hours	2,305	5,568	6,581
Revenue Service Miles	22,232	50,342	75,723

Figure 21. The LINK Rides per Hour



¹The LINK began offering deviated fixed-route service in April 2019. The number of rides per hour on the LINK’s transit services decreased in 2019, which likely is due to the novelty of the new service.

Source: NTD

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS

Transportation Options programs connect people to transportation choices, allowing them to bike, walk, take transit, drive, share rides, and telecommute. TO programs do not address capital infrastructure or service investments – like sidewalks, bike lanes, and transit service. Rather, they provide information and resources to help people learn about their travel options for all types of trips. Transportation Options is also sometimes referred to Transportation Demand Management.

The following table describes the current regionally significant transportation options programming.

Transportation Provider or Organization	Transportation Options Programs
<p>MCEDD</p>	<p>Contracts with Commute Options to provide the Get There Rewards program, an employee benefit program, to employers in Sherman, Wasco, and Hood River counties.</p> <p>Staffs a Mobility Management position. This position's roles and responsibilities includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff for the Gorge TransLink Alliance with WSDOT 5310 funds and currently, ODOT STIF Intercommunity Discretionary Funds. • Supports ODOT's Transportation Options programming and promotes the Get There Oregon annual ODOT challenge for Hood River County through an ODOT Transportation Options formula grant. • Promotes the Get There Rewards employee benefit program for Commute Options that uses the Get There Oregon platform. • Develops and implements special projects as grant and contract funds allow. <p>Staffs a Travel Trainer position in partnership with CAT with ODOT STIF Intercommunity Discretionary funds.</p> <p>Manages the GOrge Pass Marketing program, which includes an Employer Equity Fund program that provides a donated transit pass for every GOrge Pass purchased by the employer or the employees after the first 10 are purchased.</p>
<p>The Link</p>	<p>Exploring STIF options to provide subsidies for Van Pool programs. Contracting available with Commute Options to reduce administration burden.</p>
<p>Columbia Area Transit</p>	<p>Staffs a Travel Trainer in partnership with MCEDD.</p> <p>Exploring STIF and ODOT Transportation Options Investment in Infrastructure and Jobs Act funds to subsidize a vanpool program. Contracting available with Commute Options to reduce the administration burden.</p>
<p>ODOT</p>	<p>ODOT manages the Get There Oregon ride-sharing platform that helps people find carpools for commute or single event rides.</p>

PLANNING CONTEXT

Summary of Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase I Plan Review

One of the objectives of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase 1 was to combine the goals, policies, and prioritizations of local transportation planning efforts in the Columbia Gorge in order to establish a foundation for a regional strategy and vision for public transportation. Relevant local, regional, and state plans and studies were assessed to identify common or conflicting transportation goals, policies, and strategies.

Although the plans reviewed were all geographically restricted to jurisdictional boundaries, a key finding was that the goals and strategies of each plan support the goals identified by the Working Group with no notable conflicts.

One of the most consistent themes repeated throughout the plans reviewed was the importance of coordination between stakeholders, which was one of the core takeaways from the first three Working Group sessions. Stakeholders believe that transit can be a successful tool to address regional challenges when there is strong coordination between transit providers and between transit providers and their partners, which include local, state, and regional organizations.

The spreadsheet highlighting the goals and policies of each document can be accessed at <https://gorgetranslink.com/gorge-transit-strategy/> (or Appendix X).

Note that the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy also builds on the in-depth needs assessments and rider engagement and input recently compiled by partners in their planning work including each county's Human Services Transportation Plans and Transit Master Plans and the comprehensive Community Health Assessment updated by the Columbia Gorge Health Council every 3 years. The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy plan review also includes the comprehensive needs assessments done by community-based organizations like Nch'I Wana Housing and the Oregon Human Development Corporation.

Statewide Plans

Oregon Public Transportation Plan (2018)—The OPTP sets out a long-term vision for how Oregonians expect public transportation to contribute to their communities and to the transportation system statewide. The plan provides a policy foundation and articulates strategies to guide transportation agency actions and investments to further the OPTP vision, which describes public transportation as convenient, affordable, and efficient, contributing to the state's quality of life and economic vitality and the health and safety of all residents while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Relevant policies and strategies include:

- Providing for coordinated and seamless transit services to enable trips for commuting and recreation, and to assist rural residents to access services in larger communities.
- Increasing the use of public transportation by fully integrating public transportation with other community plans including transportation, land use, and economic development plans.
- Foster partnerships between public and private services to leverage private investment, including public transportation agencies, health service providers, and TNCs.

Washington State Public Transportation Plan (2016)— This statewide plan offers a 20-year blueprint to improve transportation options and to further integrate all modes of transportation to meet the needs of Washington's people and communities.

Relevant goals include:

- Providing everyone access to healthcare, education, social services, recreation, and community groups.
- Working with a broad range of partners to plan and invest based on systemwide needs, priorities, and performance.
- Protecting the environment and addressing climate change.

Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program Study (2019) – The Travel Washington Intercity Bus service connects rural communities to major transportation hubs and urban centers, filling gaps in the public transportation network and making travel more reliable, accessible, and convenient. This study included a chapter on potential expansion of routes. The Yakima to Goldendale to Vancouver/Portland proposed route scored in the top three during the study, and after the study was prioritized as the number one route alternative. When the pandemic halted transit services in March of 2020, the project was put on hold.

The Yakima to Goldendale to Vancouver/Portland route, the top recommendation of the Intercity Bus Program Study, currently remains on hold until more stable recovery from the pandemic is seen for the private intercity bus industry.

However, WSDOT is moving forward with a grant opportunity to award funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) that any qualified intercity bus provider can apply for. Award notices are expected in July 2022. WSDOT is trying to encourage project scopes for the grant that make meaningful connections to the existing network across Washington state and the Yakima Valley is still high on the priority list.

Regional Plans

Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (revised 2020)

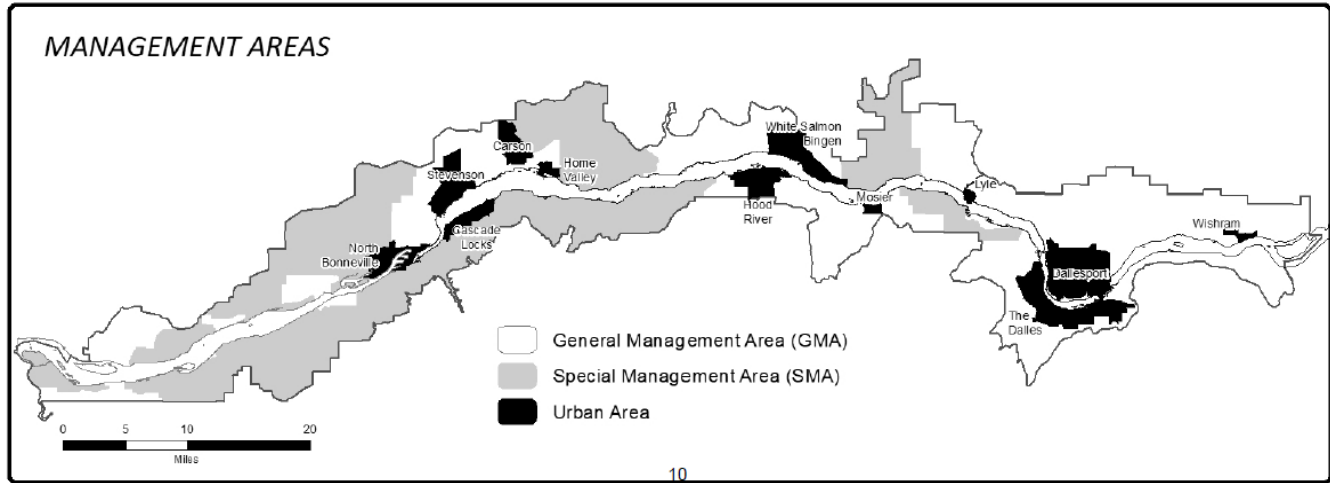
The National Scenic Area lies to the east of Portland, Oregon and Vancouver, Washington. It stretches about 83 miles from the Sandy River on the west to the Deschutes River on the east in Oregon and from Gibbons Creek in Clark County to a line 4 miles east of Wishram in Washington. The National Scenic Area covers portions of six counties: Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat counties in Washington, and Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco counties in Oregon. The National Scenic Area Act identifies two purposes:

1. To establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and
2. To protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph 1.

The management plan contains the land use and resource protection standards, non-regulatory programs, and actions for protecting and enhancing Columbia River Gorge resources, as well as a description of roles and relationships of governments and agencies responsible for implementation of the National Scenic Area Act. The Forest Service develops the land use regulations for federal land and land in the "special management areas." The Gorge Commission develops the land use regulations for the general management area. The management plan does not directly apply to the 13 urban areas. The Management Plan was created to ensure that the land in the CRGNSA is used consistently with the purposes and standards of the National Scenic Area Act. There are policy and regulations related to transportation facilities that are dictated by land use designations, landscape settings and recreation intensity classes. Any strategies identified for Gorge Regional Transit Strategy project development would need to meet the requirements of the Management Plan or highlight any conflicts that would need to be resolved before implementation.

Goals and objectives that address transportation include:

- Promoting alternative modes of transportation to improve safety and enjoyment of the traveling public.
- Accommodation of facilities for mass transportation at new high-intensity recreation sites to help alleviate future traffic demand.



There are four "Recreation Intensity Classes" (RIC) in General Management Area and Special Management Area lands. The RIC dictates the allowable recreation uses. See table below. A detailed map of the RICs can be found [HERE](#).

	RIC 1 Very Low Intensity	RIC 2 Low Intensity	RIC 3 Moderate Intensity	RIC 4 High Intensity
General Management Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 10 vehicles • Mass transit accommodations should be considered (e.g., bus parking, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 25 vehicles • Mass transit accommodations should be considered (e.g., bus parking, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 75 vehicles. • Mass transit accommodations should be considered (e.g., bus parking, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 250 vehicles. • Mass transit accommodations should be considered (e.g., bus parking, etc)
Special Management Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 10 vehicles. • Accommodations for mass transportation facilities should be considered where compatible with the social and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 25 vehicles. • Accommodations for mass transportation facilities should be considered where compatible with the social and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 50 vehicles (parking for maximum of 75 vehicles may be provided if enhanced mitigation is approved for at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking for maximum of 200 vehicles (parking for maximum of 250 vehicles may be provided if enhanced mitigation is approved for at

	physical settings.	physical settings.	least 10% of the site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass transit accommodations is required (e.g., bus parking, etc). 	least 20% of the site. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass transit accommodations is required (e.g., bus parking, etc).
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The language about compatibility with "social and physical settings" is part of the changes made to the Plan, and they apply to all RICs, not just the SMAs. Essentially, that language limits "mass transit accommodations" at a RIC 1 or RIC 2 site to vehicles like 15-passenger vans, or a cutaway, and would likely prevent larger tour buses from getting to those sites.

The four levels of Recreation Intensity Classes describe the expected intensity of allowable recreation uses and whatever development might be associated with that (trails, parking lots, campsites, etc.).

The big change made to the RICs in the Management Plan in 2020 was to include descriptions of the social, physical, and managerial settings for each of them. They are defined in the Management Plan as:

- Social Settings: identifies the opportunities for solitude as well as quantity and type of encounters visitors could experience when visiting a recreation site or area.
- Physical Settings: the physical quality of the landscape at a recreation site, and how rustic recreation facilities may appear. Physical setting is distinct and not to be confused with landscape settings and landscape setting character descriptions.
- Managerial Settings: the on-site controls (signs, regulations, or other regimentation) and types of facilities recreationists could expect when visiting recreation sites.

At RIC 1 and RIC 2, in both the SMAs and the GMA, the Management Plan states that "Accommodations for mass transportation facilities should be considered where compatible with the social and physical settings." In RICs 1 and 2, the design of the transit facilities needs to match the social settings. Both RIC 1 and RIC 2 are focused on solitude, so the allowable transit facilities would need to reflect that. This doesn't preclude a trailhead from developing for a larger vehicle like a tour bus, but the applicant would need to make a good argument for why it's necessary.

At RIC 3 and RIC 4, in both the SMAs and the GMA, mass transit facilities are required, and while they still need to comply with the social settings, the focus of those sites is on high degrees of interaction with other visitors. There would probably not be any kind of limitation to the transit facilities that would be approved at those sites. Most of the existing trailheads and other parking areas are in RIC 3 and 4 areas, so for the most part accommodation for higher-capacity vehicles like tour buses would be allowed almost anywhere they are needed.

Climate Change Action Plan - During the "Gorge 2020" Management Plan Review and Update process, the Commission recognized the need to address climate change in the revised plan. The Climate Change Action Plan draft is currently out for public comment, but the core goals and objectives are summarized here.

One of the two overarching objectives is to mitigate climate change by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and protecting and enhancing carbon storage in the NSA. Two of the four mitigation priorities for reducing GHG are regional transportation and EV infrastructure, with a specific goal to increase the ridership on public transportation.

As the land use authority for the National Scenic Area outside of the urban areas, the Gorge Commission is a key partner in the success of a regional public transportation system with a focus on the two main corridors of I-84 and SR 14.

Goals for Regional Transportation to Reduce Single Occupancy Vehicle Miles

1. By 2025, the number of gas-powered single occupancy vehicle trips across the Gorge decreases from 2022 level. This goal will be supported by transit, shuttle, and parking solutions.
2. From 2022-2025, transit ridership increases each year.

Strategy 1: Leverage and build partnerships to reduce transportation-related emissions.

Strategy 2: Reduce congestion and improve traffic efficiency.

Strategy 3: Promote regional connected bike/pedestrian/multi-modal transportation.

Action Outcomes:

- Regional partners collaborate, bringing solutions, funding, and resources to the Gorge.

Action Outcomes:

- Collaboration and implementation of regional plans relieve congestion on I-84 and SR-14.

Action Outcomes:

- Recreation developments increase multimodal connections.

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MCEDD, 2022-2027) - Every five years the MCEDD region develops the comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) as a guide to understanding the regional economy and crafting goals, strategies and actions to create jobs, raise income levels, diversify the economy, and improve the quality of life.

The transportation goal is to provide a safe, efficient, equitable and accessible regional transportation system to enhance the livability, resilience, and economic vitality of the Mid-Columbia region. Strategies include:

- Improve safety for all users of regional and local transportation networks.
- Increase capacity of regional transportation network with efficient and accessible bi-state transit options.
- Increase equitable access to transit options among underserved populations, including to Native American in-lieu sites.
- Provide safe and complete facilities for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Connect Mid-Columbia (MCEDD, 2021) - MCEDD convenes regional transportation partners through Connect Mid-Columbia to better inform and elevate regional transportation priorities in the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This initiative first gathered in 2016 and again in 2021.

Connect Mid-Columbia's goal is to provide a safe, efficient, equitable and accessible regional transportation system to enhance the livability, resilience and economic vitality of the Mid-Columbia region. Stakeholders include state departments of transportation; regional transportation partners; city, county and port officials; and representatives from private businesses. The final document is a prioritized transportation project list. Public transportation fleet electrification is one of the project priorities.

SR 14 and Dog Mountain Congestion and Safety Study (2022) – This study focused on developing strategies to improve safety and manage congestion to scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources in Washington's Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area along an 80-mile stretch of the SR 14 corridor beginning at mile post 18 near the eastern boundary of the city of Washougal in Clark County, and extending east through Skamania County to mile post 98 in Klickitat County, just west of the unincorporated community of Maryhill. Focus was given to sites along the corridor providing access to public lands (such as recreation areas). The study highlights the 8 most heavily used sites and provides details of the existing conditions and challenges.

- Cape Horn Viewpoint
- Cape Horn Trailhead / Salmon Falls Park and Ride
- Beacon Rock State Park
- Dog Mountain Trailhead
- Drano Lake Boat Ramp
- Swell City
- Coyote Wall Trailhead (Courtney Road and SR 14) / East Syncline (Old Hwy 8 and SR 14)
- Catherine Creek Trailhead



Figure 1. Study Area

The purpose of the plan is to provide a strategy toolkit with a menu of options to address the congestion, traffic, and crowding issues at trailheads and recreation sites along SR 14, issues that worsen every year due to the growing populations in the metropolitan areas.

The Strategy Toolkit includes a category for transit and shuttle services, both public and private, and details the tools necessary for successful implementation, which include coordination with other systems (parking, permitting, public/private partnerships). The management strategies are organized by the following categories:

- Transit and Shuttle Services
- Technology Systems

- Demand Management and Enforcement
- Public Information Campaigns

The study acknowledges the challenges of implementing projects in a multi-jurisdictional area and highlights the need for strategies like public transit to be combined with other tools like parking management and permitting.

Nch'i Wana Housing Columbia River Gorge Native American Needs Study (ongoing)

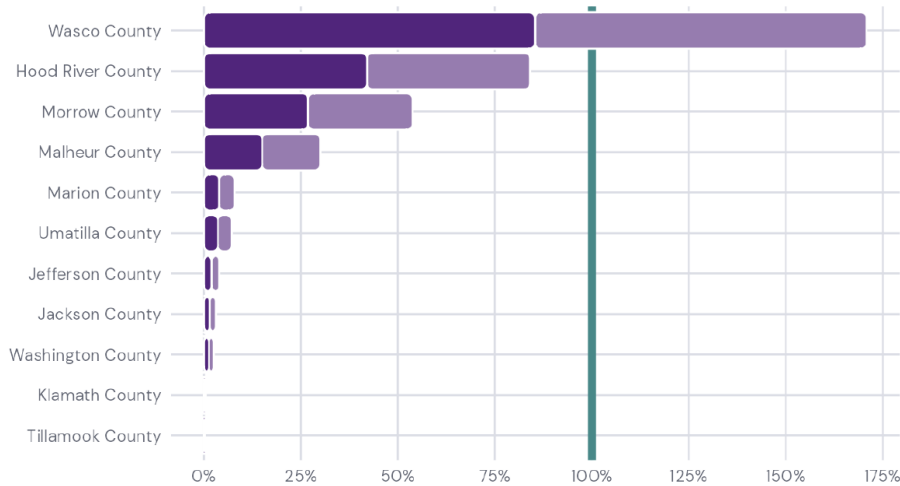
This study is the first in-depth study of the needs and challenges of the Native American Tribal people living in the Columbia River Gorge and at in-lieu sites, Treaty Fishing Access sites, and villages within the 7- county Mid-Columbia region. The study process includes hand-fielded surveys of each family and resident with a focus on those living on the Columbia River. The transportation needs and barriers questions were developed with input from MCEDD's Mobility Manager, The Link, and CAT. This data will be analyzed and presented in a final written report in late summer. The transportation needs of the Native American population in the region were highlighted as a priority concern during the Working Group sessions of Phase I and this study will be used as a reference for the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase II process.

Farmworker Needs Assessment (2022)

The Oregon Human Development Corporation commissioned Colibri Consulting to conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of the migrant and season farmworkers in Oregon. 1,000 farmworkers were surveyed and interviewed in 11 counties, including Wasco and Hood River counties. The study highlights the high poverty rates of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and the high level of basic unmet needs like access to food, housing, and transportation. Among the relevant findings were that farmworkers and their families represent a significant percent of the population of Wasco and Hood River counties and that service providers ranked transportation as a high need in a prioritized survey, at a similar needs level with access to healthy food and translation services. Transportation costs or availability were the second highest resource need to be discussed in the Farmworker Forums. Key transportation needs were listed as safe ride-share coordination, driver's license attainment assistance, and expanded public transportation with schedules in Spanish and Indigenous languages. Barriers to accessing transportation include the cost of gasoline, the cost of gas and buying/maintaining a car, insurance rates, limited public transportation, schedules not in the riders' language, cost of car seats for kids.

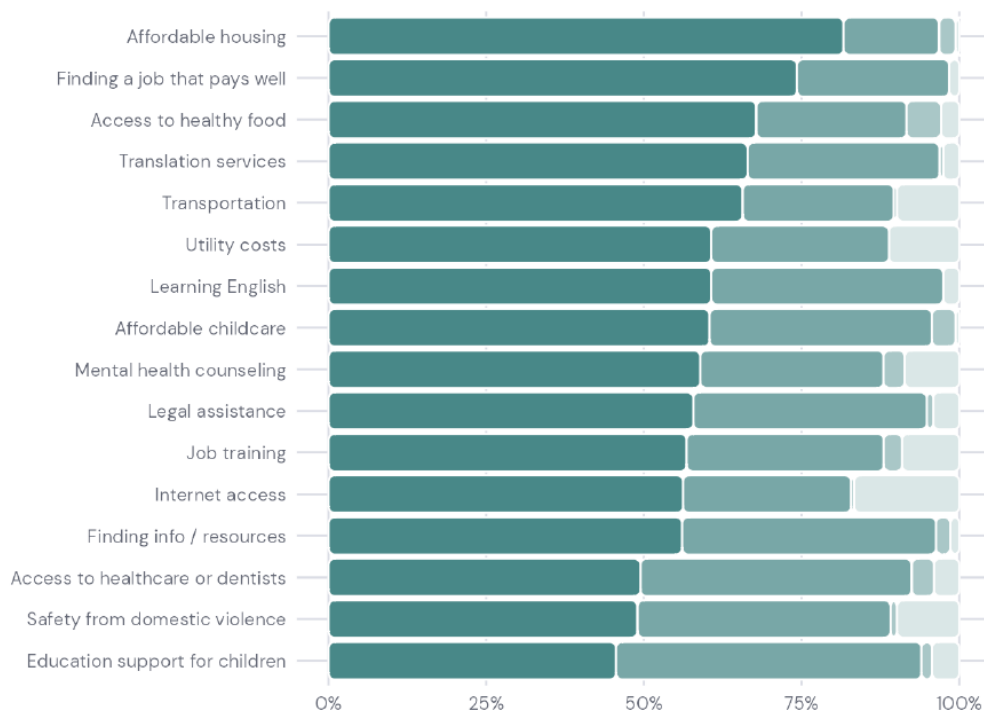
Noteworthy is a finding that for many Farmworkers in Oregon, Spanish is a common first language, but there are many Indigenous workers who do not speak Spanish or English and many Indigenous languages have no written method.

The table below shows the estimated number of farmworkers and their dependents in each Oregon county shown as a percentage of the total county population.



Service providers ranked Farmworker challenges

- This is a big need for many farmworker families
- This is a need for some farmworker families
- This is not a need for most farmworker families
- I don't know if farmworkers need help with this



Vision Around the Mountain (2021) - Vision Around the Mountain (VAM) seeks to establish a long-term, regional transit vision for public transportation serving Mt. Hood via OR 35, US 26, and I-84. Similar to the purpose of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy, VAM creates strategies and actions to support the regional vision. The plan houses the strategies within a “Framework for Action”. The actions relevant to the Columbia Gorge include transit service and infrastructure enhancements along Hwy 35; connections between Hood River and Government Camp, and coordination on transit access,

strategy, and infrastructure on the Mountain. This plan will form the basis for an update to the 2014 Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan.

Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH) Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan (2019)

-This plan developed strategies and action items for ODOT and partner agencies, including Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, the US Forest Service, the Federal Highway Administration, and Multnomah County, to reduce congestion, improve safety, and foster a better experience and improve access for residents and visitors. Goals included enhancing safe and convenient biking and public transit opportunities. The project team developed a toolkit with potential tools and strategies to address congestion and safety and improve the user experience. The toolkit drew upon national best practices, technical expertise, and examples from other recreational or scenic areas across the country. Implementation strategies and actions include parking management and public and private transit and shuttle services.

Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment (2019) -The Columbia Gorge Health Council (CGHC) is a 501 (c)3 non-profit focused on healthcare delivery for the Medicaid population in Hood River and Wasco Counties and improving the health of the Columbia Gorge 7-county region overall. CGHC works in partnership with the regional Coordinated Care Organization, PacificSource Community Solutions (Columbia Gorge Region) and consists of local leaders in health care along with county and community members, providers, and agencies to serve the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Every three years CGHC convenes multiple regional organizations to complete a regional Community Health Assessment (CHA).

The 2019 CHA found that transportation is the highest unmet need in the Columbia Gorge Region, which includes Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, Wasco, and the tri-county area of Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties. Survey responses described that a lack of transportation impacted the ability to access health care, food, childcare, social activities, and exercise. Of low-income households, 26% report going without transportation, an increase of 4.3% since the 2016 update.

The 2019 Community Health Assessment found that transportation issues are not experienced equally across all groups of populations in the region. A household of four people in the region living on a total of \$49,200 a year (or 200% Federal Poverty Level) is 15 times more likely to struggle with transportation needs than households earning more than 200% FPL.

On the county level, the 2019 Community Health Assessment found that people in Wasco County have a higher degree of transportation issues than any of the other Columbia Gorge counties studied. 1 in 4 residents are on Medicaid (20.1%) or are uninsured (9.37%)⁷, and of those, 25% are struggling with unmet transportation needs. This means that an estimated 1 in 8 residents in Wasco County do not have the transportation that they need to access health care, food, childcare, social activities, or exercise.

The 2021 Regional Community Health Improvement Plan (developed from the needs assessed in the CHA) highlighted Transportation and Mobility as a priority. Goal #1 is focused on improving public transportation services for older adults, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, and people with limited English. Transportation goal #2 the development of a Gorge Regional Transit Strategy.

Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact

(2019) - In 2019, Providence Health & Services and PacificSource Community Solutions, the Coordinated Care Organization of the Columbia Gorge Region, awarded a grant to the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District to convene transportation provider and health and wellness organizations in the Gorge to engage in a collaborative process with the goal of identifying key regional transportation gaps and innovative transportation solutions. Over 57 organizations from both Washington State and Oregon were invited and over 40 representatives attended four group sessions to discuss improved mobility access to essential services that would help to increase the quality of life in the Columbia Gorge, especially for vulnerable populations, including rural, low income, elderly, young, disabled, undocumented, and low English proficiency residents and actual or potential users of public transportation.

Critical Barriers to Service

- Navigation
- Geography
- Availability of service
- Financial cost
- Limit to door-through-door
- Eligibility for service
- Language/
Literacy
- Disability
- Culture
- Stigma

Mobility Barriers Identified	
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of First mile/last mile/bus stop infrastructure • Riders have difficulty making transfers from one bus or service to the next • Lack of Education, Training, Confidence of the Rider • Extended Service hours needed: weekends, early or late hours, holidays • Fare transactions are difficult to manage
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gorge residents need a “hospital van”: a vehicle that provides direct medical trips from Gorge region to Portland hospital facilities • Intercity Medical Trips (focus between The Dalles and Hood River) • Providers have difficulty serving people who live in remote rural areas • Vehicles have great difficulty accessing higher elevations in poor weather conditions
Communication and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to make transfers from one bus or service to the next • Poor hospital staff to transportation staff discharge communication after medical appointments and hospitalization • Riders have difficulty with information discovery and use (website, paper schedules) • Language and literacy, cultural differences are significant barriers • Better Transportation and Health Agency coordination and communication needed
Door Through Door Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique challenges in Oregon to serve those who need door through door service • Institutional barriers include Oregon Health Authority policies and liability challenges • Transit drivers are not trained or provided liability coverage to serve clients inside the home (door through door).

Prioritized Strategies	
Better Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a system of communication and accountability between transportation agencies and health agencies. • Transportation agencies will continue to work together on a regional system • Coordinate a special service to Portland for medical appointments.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen health and wellness partnerships through the Gorge TransLink Alliance.
Travel Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop programs to teach both agency staff and riders how to use public transit (travel training and travel ambassadors). Develop volunteer champion programs.
Fare System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a universal fare system for all transportation providers. Develop fare mechanisms that can be purchased by social service or other organizations for their clients.
Door Through Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support a third-party system for door through door assistance, using existing volunteer and human service programs. Coordinate “travel assistant” program with the transit providers.

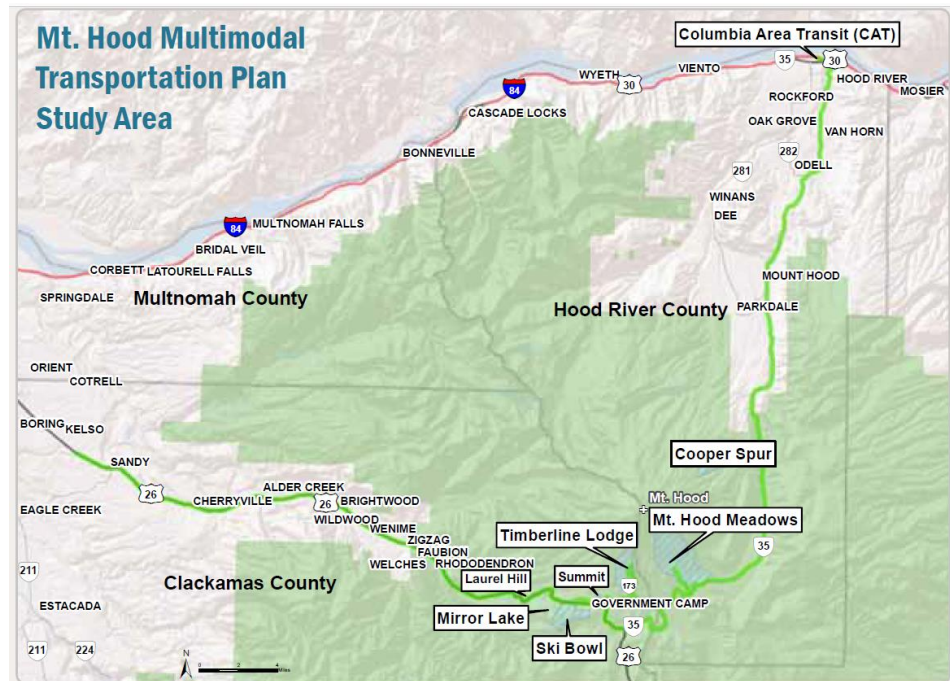
Rural Transportation Options in Klickitat County (MCEDD 2019) - Eastern Klickitat County is a highly rural area where most work is in the agricultural industry. Transportation is a significant expense for employees, and distance and costs are contributing factors to challenges with employee recruitment and retention. The area is too sparsely populated to support transit, although there are some long-distance transit options. This study looked at what transportation solutions might help with retaining the employees who are well suited with the jobs available. Options to improve employees' commutes included vanpooling or carpooling, with a variety of roles for workers themselves in finding and sharing rides and assistance that might be provided by area employers, public sector partners, or third-party private sector mobility services for vanpooling or carpooling. Attention to rural transportation safety was also an important factor in improving workers' commutes.

Columbia River Gorge Transit Study (2016) - The Columbia River Gorge Transit Study examined existing transportation conditions in the Columbia River Gorge area, assessed transit's ability to serve visitors and residents, and developed and recommended transit service options in the I-84 corridor. While several years old, the study continues to have relevance as a policy guideline for the western Gorge. Columbia Area Transit continues to work with Oregon Department of Transportation, US Forest Service, Oregon Parks & Recreation, and other public and private partners to address the growing congestion and safety challenges at the Multnomah Falls waterfall corridor.

Columbia River Gorge Tourism Studio Program Summary (2017) - The Gorge Tourism Studio was designed to help public agencies, private enterprise, community leaders, and youth work together for a healthy tourism economy in the Columbia River Gorge. The assessment includes qualitative and quantitative baseline information about the Columbia Gorge region including residents, the economy, and visitors who come to the area. The key objective was to ensure that the Gorge continue to offer high-quality experiences while protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources. A major outcome of the Tourism Studio was the formation of the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance and committees called Action Teams. One of the Action Teams is the Gorge Car-Free Team that is focused on creating tools for residents and visitors to discover car-free ways to explore the Gorge.

Mt Hood Multimodal Plan (2014, with update scheduled for 2023)

The Mt. Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan built on previous planning efforts to identify ways to enhance traveler access and help reduce congestion in the short-term (five years), as well as long-term (15 years) from 2014. It's a multimodal, multi-jurisdictional plan created to improve safety for all highway users and expand travel options along the Mt. Hood Highway corridor, which includes Hwy 35 south of Hood River and US 26 east of Sandy. The outcome of the project was a set of recommended programs and projects, along with an implementation/action and funding strategy. The plan included a memo and case study on Transportation Management Associations.



Transportation demand management programs included in the plan:

- Increased transit
- Transportation Management Association
- Parking management
- Intelligent transportation systems
- Carpooling
- "One stop" traveler information
- Cell coverage expansion
- On-going transit-recreation provider coordination

Gorge TransLink: Transportation Provider Transit Plans

Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (2020) - The Wasco County Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan provides a framework for the coordination of transportation services within Wasco County for aging adults, persons with disabilities, and individuals with economic disadvantages. The policy focus is on coordinated service delivery enhanced transportation access, and expanded outreach to meet the growing need for transportation services among these populations. Coordination with other transportation providers is a key strategy.

Sherman County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (2020)

The Sherman County Coordinated Transportation Plan was prepared by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) to meet state and federal requirements for Special Transportation Fund (STF) agencies and the State of Oregon's requirements for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Qualified Entities. The Coordinated Plan focuses on addressing the transportation needs of three target populations residing in Sherman County: Older Adults, Low-income individuals, Individuals with disabilities.

The plan identifies the need for service expansion to meet these objectives:

- Identify resources to serve the broader transportation needs of people with low incomes (youth events, court appointments, work sites).
- Identify funding to support older adults' socialization needs and enhance quality of life.
- Identify additional transportation services or options for those needing to travel to Portland for medical services.
- Include trips or stops at the Sherman County or The Dalles food pantries and locations where Veggie RX and Pantry Gift Certificates can be redeemed.
- Increase service days/hours
- Provide transportation for students to access afterschool activities.

Hood River County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (2020)

Adopted in 2020 the Hood River County Coordinated Transportation Plan focuses on the transportation needs of seniors, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities, and Limited English Proficiency individual. Information from this plan will be integrated into the Transit Master Plan Update.

SW Washington Coordinated Human Transportation Services Plan (2018) - The Human Services Transportation Plan for Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council provides a framework for the coordination of transportation services for aging adults, persons with disabilities, and individuals with economic disadvantages within the SW Washington region, which includes Skamania, Klickitat, and Clark counties. The policy focus is on enhanced transportation access, minimizing duplication of services, and encouraging coordination between neighboring providers. This plan is currently being updated and the update should be completed by November 2022.

Wasco County Transit Development Plan - Wasco County is currently undertaking a Transit Development Plan focused on improving public transit service for Wasco County residents and visitors. The purpose of the plan is to examine how the County can enhance and improve transit service in The Dalles and surrounding communities both in the near and long term. Recommendations include service increases to Hood River with connections to the Columbia Gorge Community College campuses and downtown The Dalles and a South County shuttle expansion.

Columbia Area Transit Master Plan (ongoing)- The Hood River County Transportation District, operating as Columbia Area Transit (CAT), is the primary transit provider in the Hood River County area. CAT is undertaking a Transit Master Plan (TMP) update to identify opportunities for transit service expansion and detail short-term strategy for service development over the next five years. A key goal of the TMP update is to develop a fully integrated approach – one that ensures transit investments are supportive of the broader economic, environmental, and mobility goals of the County and the region.

Oregon State Parks Columbia River Gorge Management Units Plan, 2015- One section highlights transportation and congestion issues and describes a strategy of partnering with other Gorge stakeholders and organizations on a Gorge-wide alternative transportation study, including a potential for ferries and shuttles using National Park Service models.

CASE STUDIES EXPLORED

The Gorge TransLink Alliance has explored these programs and organizational structures as models of interest.

King County Metro and King County Parks

Trailhead Direct is a pilot project co-led by King County Metro and King County Parks. This project seeks to ease vehicle congestion, reduce safety hazards and expand access to hiking destinations along I-90. Trailhead Direct was launched in 2019 to help reduce overcrowding at popular trailhead parking lots,

and is a partnership between King County, Sound Transit, Washington Trails Association and the Washington State Department of Natural Resources. In 2021, riders used the service to access 5,000 hikes. The service operates on weekends and designated holidays and in 2022 will run through Sunday, September 11. Riders pay regular Metro fares and can use ORCA cards, cash or the Transit Go mobile ticketing app to pay for rides. Learn more at [Trailhead Direct](#).

Walla Walla Metropolitan Planning Organization and Sub-Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SRTPO)

Established on March 27, 2013, the Walla Walla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (WWVMPO) is a bi-state transportation planning agency located in the Walla Walla Valley region. As the federally designated MPO for an urbanized area with a population greater than 50,000, the WWVMPO carries out the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C) multimodal transportation planning process that encourages and promotes the safe and efficient development, management, and operation of surface transportation systems to serve the mobility needs of people and freight, and to foster economic growth and development, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution ([23 USC 134](#)). The majority of funding for the WWVMPO is provided through transportation planning grants from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA), administered and supported by the Oregon and Washington State Departments of Transportation (ODOT and WSDOT). The SRTPO includes representation from Oregon and Washington State, Valley Transit, the Port of Walla Walla, as well as the cities and counties in the region. In addition to city, county and state agencies and local transit providers, representatives in the RTPO can include ports, tribes, transportation service providers and private employers. Funding is provided through state transportation planning money to cover both urban and rural areas.

This link (<https://itransitnw.com/RTT/Public/?page=map>) takes you to an interactive map of all of the different services, including:

Valley Transit, WA
Columbia County, WA
Grapeline (WSDOT), WA
Ben Franklin, WA
Kayak (OR),
People Mover (OR),
City of Milton-Freewater (OR)

Kayak Public Transit

Kayak Public Transit provides community and economic support by managing a rural regional transportation system reaching into southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon. Kayak currently operates 3 fixed routes and 4 commuter bus services. The transit program is funded through a combination of Federal grants, State grants, and CTUIR general funds. All bus services are currently free to the general public.

During an interview in 2019, Kayak Public Transit staff said that in 2010 Kayak applied for a WSDOT grant to fund their bistate services, but because they weren't participating in the RTPO and because the Ben Franklin transit plans did not include their services, they were denied a grant award. They cited as another barrier that their services are not part of the RTPO prioritization process. They still hold securing WSDOT funding as a goal.

Tahoe Transportation District (<https://www.tahoetransportation.org/about/>)

In response to increasing urbanization threatening the ecological values of the region and threatening the public opportunities for use of public lands, California and Nevada legislators agreed to a unique Compact for sharing Lake Tahoe resources/responsibilities, oversee development, and to protect and preserve the natural resources of the Lake Tahoe region. In 1969 the United States Congress ratified the

agreement and created the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). TRPA was the first bi-state regional environmental planning agency in the country.

The two states and the U.S. Congress amended the Compact in 1980, with public law 96-551, which also established the Tahoe Transportation District (TTD). TTD is responsible for facilitating and implementing safe, environmentally positive, multi-modal transportation plans, programs and projects for the Lake Tahoe Basin, including transit operations. Specific tax revenue to support transit and transportation facilities can be allotted to the District. TTD may also acquire, own and operate public transportation systems and parking facilities serving the Tahoe region and provide access to convenient transportation terminals outside of the region.

Transportation Management Authorities

1. The Truckee North Tahoe Transportation Management Association (TNT/TMA) is dedicated to fostering public-private partnerships and resources for advocacy and the promotion of innovative solutions to the unique transportation challenges of the North Lake Tahoe-Truckee Resort Triangle. The TNT/TMA is a public/private partnership that provides a forum for discussion, consensus, advocacy and action in support of transit, pedestrian, biking, and environmentally sound roadway infrastructure designed to increase access and reduce congestion throughout the Resort Triangle.
2. South Shore Transportation Management Association advocates for and promotes transportation system and demand management strategies on the South Shore of Lake Tahoe. SSTMA creates a central, public/private partnership to provide a forum for ridesharing, public transportation and other transportation-related subjects.

Explore Washington Park (Washington Park Transportation Management Association)

The goal of the Washington Park Transportation Management Association (WPTMA) is to implement a diverse and innovative package of access management tools that maximize safe and convenient access to and from the Park, its institutions and the adjacent neighborhoods. Washington Park is one of Oregon's top tourist destinations. At 410 acres, it is home to the Hoyt Arboretum, Portland Japanese Garden, World Forestry Center, Oregon Zoo, and the International Rose Test Garden, as well as memorials, an archery range, playgrounds, tennis courts, and 15+ miles of trails.

The goal is to improve Park access and the overall visitor experience. Programs include a parkwide free shuttle system, traffic management and offsite parking services, visitor information services, as well as Park planning. Explore Washington Park was established in 2013 and is primarily funded through Washington Park's parking meter revenue in partnership with Portland Parks & Recreation. 100% of parking proceeds support the Park.

NorthWest Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA)

The NorthWest Oregon Transit Alliance is an alliance of five public transportation providers in the NW corner of Oregon: Tillamook County Transportation District, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Lincoln County Transit, Columbia County Rider, and Benton Area Transit. The Gorge TransLink Alliance has reviewed their planning documents, including their 2012 Fare Policy Memo and 2018 Amended IGA to study the progress of this very similar Alliance. The Gorgetranslink.com was built using the Wordpress template for the NW Connector website (Trillium Solutions) and some of the website plugins. Recently the Trillium Solutions white paper regarding an enhanced Trip Planner for NWOTA (Open StreetMap: quality, usage, verification) has been helpful to understand the Trip Planner options for the Gorgetranslink.com website. The NW Transit Feasibility Study of 2018 evaluates several future organizational scenarios and examines potential new districting alternatives for two transit systems.

North Central RTD and City of Santa Fe: Transit System Consolidation Analysis-2017

This is a consolidation study of two transit agencies in the Santa Fe area of New Mexico that gives a general idea of the level of effort involved at the financial feasibility stage if two or more transit agencies are interested in merging.

Greater Yellowstone Regional Transportation Cooperative 2010 Feasibility Study

This study was a proposal to develop a transit co-op for the greater Yellowstone area. Section 3.5 describes different types of business ownership structures including Joint Ventures, Strategic Alliances, Corporation, and Cooperative. Section 3.5.5 has a good overview of a co-op model, which is a business owned and controlled by those who use its services. Key to the concept, however, is an identifiable economic need which participants recognize and are willing to support financially and with their patronage. Underlying any co-op is the shared recognition of a common economic need. Cooperatives can meet that need if their members are willing to participate, patronize/utilize the business, and provide financial support.

TAX ASSESSOR AND LAND USE DATA

The following table includes tax assessed/real market values for land and improvements and existing land use and zoning.

County	Tax Assessed/Real Market Values	Existing Land Use and Maps	County Population*
Klickitat County	Total County Value: \$4,175,702,293 Total County Tax: \$41,027,447.09 Average County Tax Rate: \$9.82528069 per \$1000	Zoning map in folder. Webmap link	23,118
Skamania County	Total County Valuation: \$1,801,150,440 Collection: \$2,258,668 Average County Tax Rate: 1.254014	Zoning map in folder. Webmap link	12,170
Hood River County	Assessed: \$3,037,742,498 Total: \$2,860,784,184 Property Tax Rate: .7% Hood River County Transportation District rate: .007% <u>In Hood River County, the average tax rate is \$12.87 per \$1,000 of assessed value, but the average homeowner is taxed \$7.64 per \$1,000 of real market value.</u>	Zoning map in folder. Webmap link	24,057
Wasco County	Total Taxable Assessed Value: \$2,622,806,634 Gross Assessed County Value: \$4,663,433,414 Average Property Tax Rate: 1.16% <u>In Wasco County, the average tax rate is \$15.63 per \$1,000 of assessed value, but the average homeowner is taxed \$11.80 per \$1,000 of real market value.</u>	Zoning map in folder. Webmap link	26,726
Sherman County	RMV: 1,676,343,124 Assessed Value: 564,352,027 Average Property Tax Rate: .82% <u>In Sherman County, the average tax rate is \$15.77 per \$1,000 of assessed value, but the average homeowner is taxed \$9.10 per \$1,000 of real market value.</u>	Zoning map in folder. Webmap Link	1,907
Columbia River Gorge NSA	N/A	Webmap link	~75,000**

*Population estimates, July 1, 2021, census.gov

**Population Demographics of Columbia River Gorge, Sept 8, 2020

Washington State Public Transportation Benefit Areas and Sales Taxes

In Washington State, Public Transit Agencies may impose a sales tax up to 0.9% for public transportation purposes, with voter approval ([RCW 82.14.045](#)). This tax is typically imposed by Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBAs) and other transit districts, as very few cities or counties provide their own transit service directly. [MRSC - Sales and Use Taxes in Washington State](#).

The State of Washington imposes a 6.5% sales tax on all retail sales as defined by statute ([RCW 82.08.020](#)). Cities, towns, counties, transit districts, and public facilities districts may impose additional local sales taxes. Cities and counties can impose "unrestricted" sales taxes totaling a maximum of 1.0% on top of the 6.5% state sales tax. These revenues may be used for any lawful governmental purpose, including Public Transportation.

Klickitat County's current local sales tax rate is .010 county-wide.
Skamania County's current local sales tax rate is .012 county-wide.
[LSUFlyer 22 Q3.pdf \(wa.gov\)](#)

Previous taxable sales by county, annually, can be found here: [Retail sales for cities and counties | Washington Department of Revenue](#).

The annual report for 2020 can be found here: [allCal2020.xlsx \(live.com\)](#).

Washington State Transit Agency Governance Structures

Washington state created several governance structures under which public transportation services are funded and operated. The following are descriptions of the basic elements for each one, taken from Appendix 1 of the 2020 Summary of Public Transportation ([2020 Summary of Public Transportation M 3079 \(wa.gov\)](#))

1. Public Transportation Benefit Area

PTBAs are created pursuant to RCW 36.57A. PTBAs are the most common form of transit agency, offering a great deal of flexibility in funding mechanisms and service area. PTBAs may be composed of a service area that is smaller than county-wide, county-wide, or multi-county.

To establish a PTBA and its boundaries, county governing bodies convene a public transportation improvement conference. The conference includes elected representatives from the county and every city or town within that county or counties that are to be a part of a PTBA.

Once a the public transportation improvement conference has established the boundary for a PTBA, a board of directors is selected. Single-county PTBAs are allowed to have up to nine board members, and multi-county PTBAs up to 13 board members. If employees of the PTBA are represented by a union, the union may appoint one nonvoting member to the board. The composition of the PTBA's board is reviewed every four years.

2. City Transit System

City transit systems are created pursuant to RCW 35.95. A city transit system's governing body is the council or legislative body of the municipality.

While city transit systems are not required to develop comprehensive transit plans, their overall comprehensive plan must address public transportation. Additionally, city transit systems must develop six-year transit development plans. Once developed, transit development plans must be updated annually.

Municipalities are authorized to appropriate general funds for the operation, maintenance, and capital needs of a city transit system subject to the right of referendum as provided by statute or charter. City transit systems also have the authority to ask voters to approve a sales, business and occupation tax, or a \$1 per month household excise tax to support services.

All city transit systems provide fixed route and demand response services. Some city transit systems operate vanpool programs.

A city transit system's boundaries are the same as those of the municipality. Service is determined by the council or legislative body of the municipality.

3. County Public Transportation Authority

County public transportation authorities are created pursuant to RCW 36.57. Generally, county public transportation authorities must be composed of a service area that is countywide, and no portion of the county or any city within a county may be excluded from the authority. The authorities may also be formed to only provide services to persons with special needs, those that because of age, ability, and income have barriers to transportation. Finally, the authorities may be formed to include only the unincorporated areas of a county. A county's governing body is authorized to create a county public transportation authority by resolution.

4. Regional Transit Authority

Sound Transit is the only example of this type of system. The RTA structure was created in 1992 to provide regional, high-capacity transportation with its own voter-approved taxing authority. The RTA structure allows King, Pierce, and Snohomish counties to create a single agency: the Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority, now known as Sound Transit.

Oregon Public Transportation Funding and Structures

Public Transportation Funding by Fund Source

There are four major funding sources including:

- Federal: Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- State: ODOT Special Transportation Fund (STF) - composed of cigarette gas tax, non-highway use gas tax, and ID card revenues.
- State: State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) - a statewide employee payroll tax
- State: other State programs/sources
- Local sources, which vary by jurisdictional authority exercised
- Fares that are paid by users

Property Tax

Cities and counties may levy property taxes in support of transit. Seven transit districts in the state receive dedicated local revenue from a tax on real property including Salem-Keizer Transit, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Tillamook County Transportation District, Lincoln County Transportation Service District, Rogue Valley Transportation District, Hood River County Transportation District, and Basin Transit Service Transportation District.

Earned Revenues and Fares

Earned revenue is revenue generated by a transit provider through the provision of public transportation and related services, such as paid advertising on buses and shelters, service contracts with private facilities, fares, and donations. With the exception of passenger fares, earned revenue may be used to match federal and state funds.

Local Funding

City and county general funds can be used to help fund transit service, which typically pays for only a small percentage of the service cost. Some local governments may, at their discretion, also use such revenues as local general funds, transportation impact fees, system development charges, special assessments, and transportation utility fees. For example, the City of Corvallis collects a monthly utility fee that is indexed to the average price of a gallon of gas. The City pays this fee to the transit provider for the City, who does not collect passenger fares in the City.

Public / Private Funding Partnerships

Several transit agencies receive local funding through public and private partnerships, such as Cascades East Transit, who receives funding from Mount Bachelor, Central Oregon Community College, and several cities and counties.

Transit Structure

Oregon's locally operated public transportation systems include mass transit districts, transportation districts, city and county providers, and over 100 other transportation providers. Many are senior centers and other small, private, non-profit entities serving seniors and persons with disabilities. In some rural areas of the state, a regional agency operates the system on behalf of the county or counties. For example, the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District operates The Link on behalf of Wasco County. The nine Indian Tribal governments in Oregon have developed or are in the process of developing transit services, frequently in coordination with other local transit agencies. In many areas of Oregon, public transit services are supplemented by the efforts of non-profit and human service agencies offering volunteer driver programs, such as to enable veterans to get to health care.