

TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM #4

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Project: Gorge Regional Transit Strategy (GRTS) Phase 2

Subject: Regional Transit Service Vision and Funding Opportunities

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum builds on the existing transit operations documented in *Memo #2: Existing Operations* and the travel patterns, gaps, and service opportunities identified in *Memo #3 Regional Travel Patterns, Transit Gaps, and Opportunities Analysis* to produce a regional transit service vision. It documents governance models and decision-making structures, additional funding opportunities, and ways to utilize existing funding more efficiently.

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REGIONAL TRANSIT SERVICE VISION

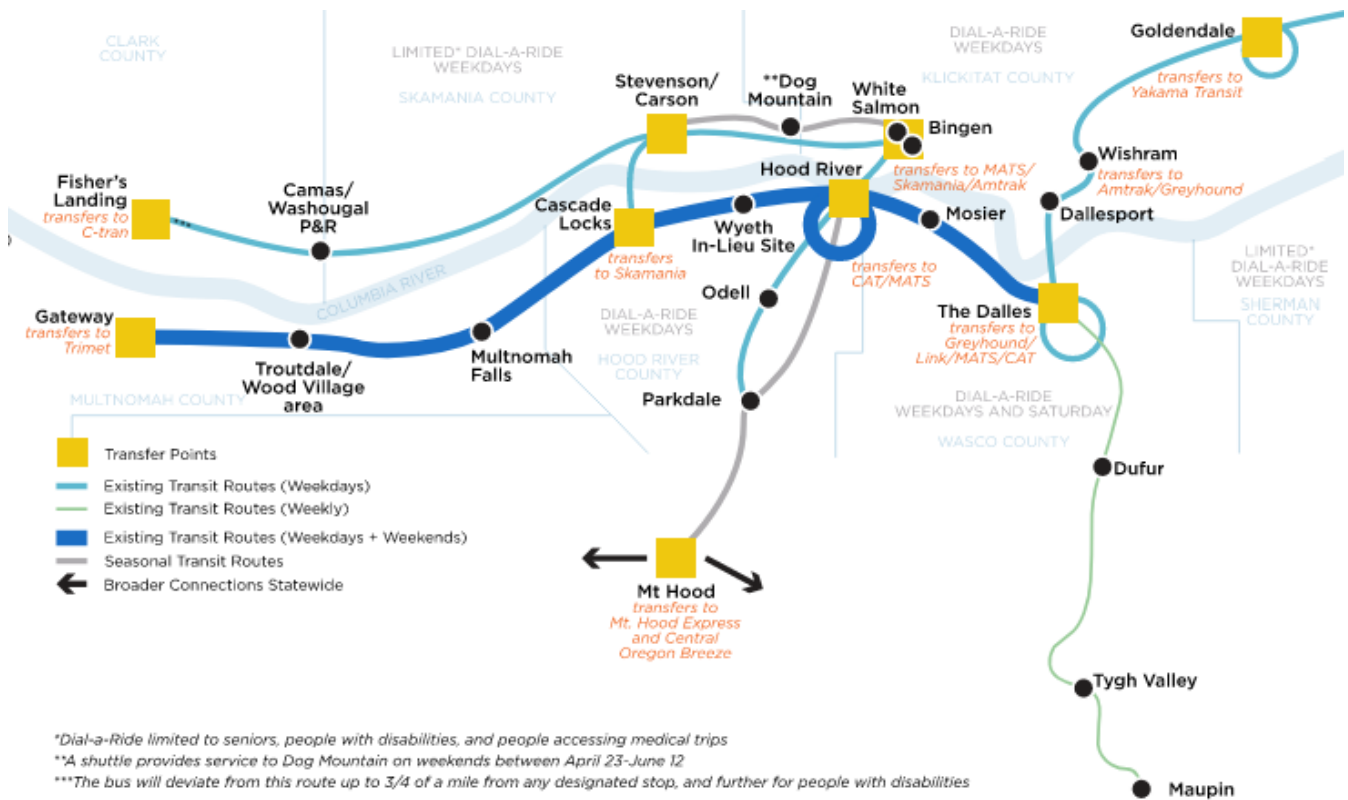
This section summarizes existing transit services, provides a preferred vision map, and discusses constraints and opportunities to implementing the mapped vision that relates to land use patterns, areas planned for growth, and key origins and destinations.



Existing Transit Service

Figure 1 summarizes existing transit service in the study area.

Figure 1. Existing Transit Service



Preferred Vision Map

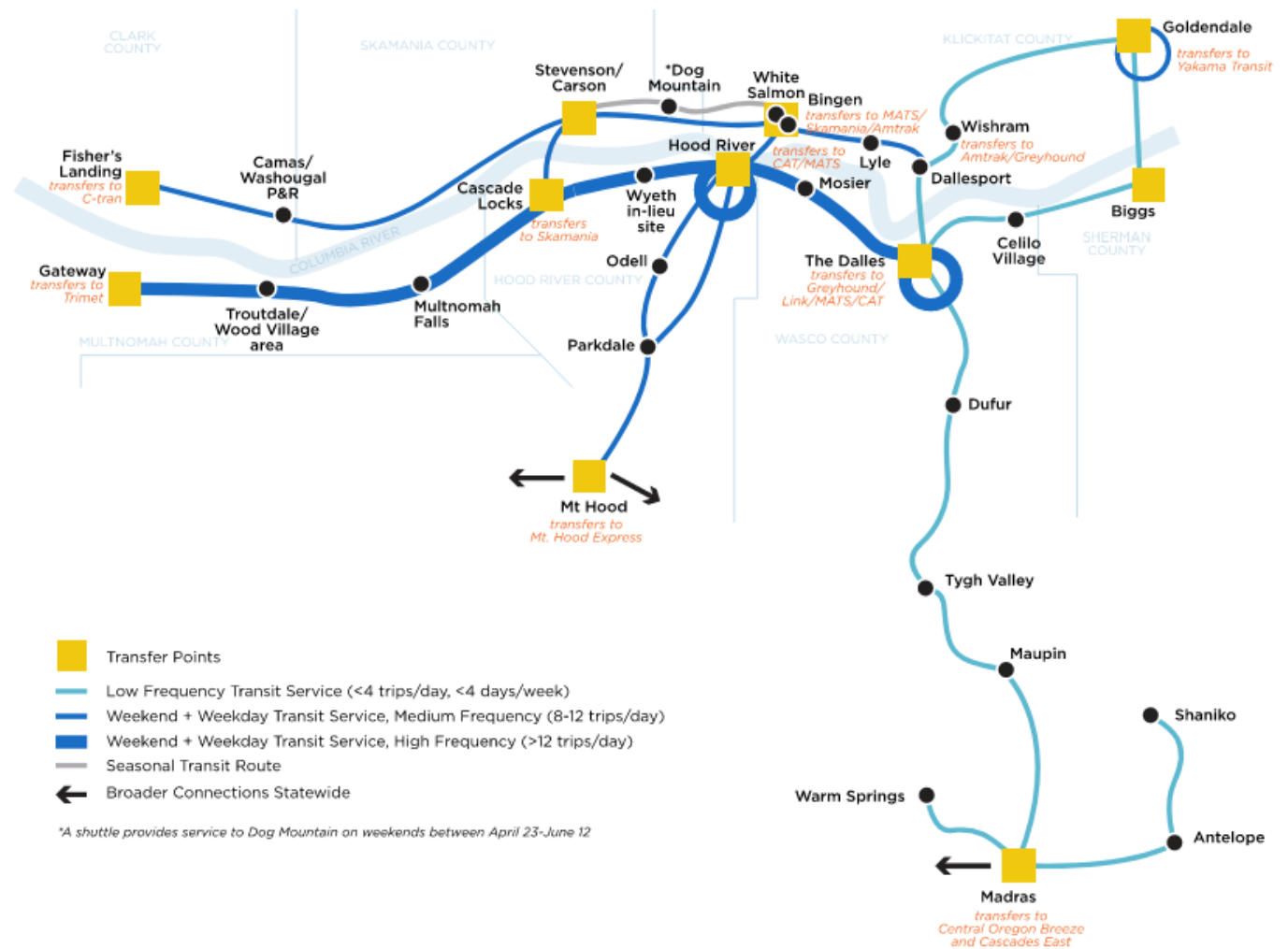
The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase 1 developed a collective vision statement and goal areas that reflect the needs and values of the bistate region. That vision statement is as follows:

Public transit supports thriving Columbia River Gorge communities by providing access to critical services, higher education, jobs, and outdoor recreation while protecting the natural wonders of the Gorge.

Figure 2 illustrates the preferred vision map developed based on an analysis of gaps and opportunities and discussions with the project advisory committee and stakeholder advisory groups. Cities and communities that are already served by transit or that were included in adopted planning documents were included on the map. Additional key stop locations/communities to serve will be added through the vision refinement process conducted with advisory groups.

This preferred vision map includes service seven days a week on most routes, with 60-90 minute service desirable along each route as well as a new direct connection from White Salmon to Dallesport. The increase to service seven days per week is a change for services in Washington, to Mt. Hood, and also to stops in Mosier and Wyeth. In order to best support the regional vision, expand local transit routes, coordinate timetables with local providers, increase area that can be reached by carshare, vanshare, carpools, and expand access to transportation network companies (like Uber, Lyft, and local taxis) to provide connections to/from regional transit.

Figure 2. Preferred Regional Transit Vision Map



Key Corridors

As shown in Figure 1, weekend service is only provided along inter-city routes between The Dalles and Portland. The Preferred Regional Transit Vision map in Figure 2 includes reliable evening and weekend service with smooth transfer times along all routes supports local and regional access to all destinations. The following sections and maps identify key origins and destinations that will be critical to refining route alignments and cities and communities to provide regional stops in.

Key Origins and Destinations – Cultural, Educational, and Recreational

Figure 3 maps includes key regional recreation destinations, including:

- Columbia Gorge Community College campuses
- Native American In-lieu and Fishing Access Treaty Sites
- Healthcare facilities in the Portland Metro Area
- Skamania Lodge
- High-use Trailheads
- High-use Parks, Recreation Destinations
- Museums

In addition to mapped recreation locations, residents and tourists visit breweries, wineries, restaurants, and small farms which could be served by private shuttles¹, carshares, or local transit. Providing access to the airport in Portland is needed to help residents and tourists with connections to and from the area.

Key Origins and Destinations – Employment

- There are high volumes of commuters traveling between the City of Hood River and the City of The Dalles that could benefit from increased frequency in inter-city transit
- Commuters, particularly those with shifts starting or ending outside of typical service hours, would also benefit from enhanced carpool and vanpool opportunities
- There are relatively high volumes of commuters travelling between the City of White Salmon and the City of Hood River that could benefit from increased fixed route transit or increased vanpool/carpool opportunities
- There are moderate volumes of commuters travelling between the City of Goldendale and The Dalles and the City of White Salmon and The Dalles that could benefit from enhanced carpool and vanpool options

Table 1 shows the largest employers in Skamania County, Klickitat County, Hood River County, Wasco County, and Sherman County. This list should be referenced when considering stop locations and considering opportunities for coordination with employers on carpooling, vanpooling, and marketing.

¹ Service to some locations could be seasonal, or increased during peak-season or to correspond with major events like the Hood River Fruit Loop.

Table 1. Largest Employers

County	Employer Size	Employer
Hood River County	Over 500 Employees	Hood River County School District, Providence Health
	251 to 500 Employees	Insitu, Cardinal IG Company
	101 to 250 Employees	Best Western-Hood River and Cascade Locks, Full Sail Brewing Co, Hood River County, Hood River Juice Company/Ryan's Juice, Hood Technology Corporation, Mt. Hood Meadows Ski Resort, One Community Health, Rosauers, Safeway, Turtle Island Foods, Inc./Tofurkey, USACE Bonneville Dam
	51 to 100 Employees	City of Hood River, Diamond Fruit Growers, Duckwall-Pooley Fruit Co, Hood River Distillers, Pfriem Brewing, The Next Door, Inc, Walmart, Hood River Care Center
Wasco County	Over 500 Employees	Mid-Columbia Medical Center
	251-500 Employees	Northern Wasco County School District 21, Oregon Cherry Growers, Fred Meyer
	101-250 Employees	Oregon Veteran's Home, Columbia Gorge Community College, Azure Standard, Google, Wasco County, City of The Dalles
	51 to 100 Employees	Cousin's Country Inn, Orchard View Farms, Columbia Basin Care Facility, Powder Pure, Mill Creek Point Assisted Living, Crestline Construction, Northwest Aluminum Specialties-Hydro, Bonneville Power Administration, One Community Health, Columbia Gorge Toyota/Honda Motors, Northern Wasco PUD
Sherman County	50-200 Employees	Azure Standard, Mid-Columbia Producers, Evergreen
	20 to 49 Employees	Sherman County School District, Sherman County
Klickitat County	Over 250	Insitu, K-12 Schools, Local Government
	101-250 Employees	Underwood Fruit Packaging, White Salmon School District, Goldendale School District, Klickitat Valley Hospital, Wind Power Companies, Roosevelt Landfill
	51 to 100 Employees	Innovative Composite Engineering, Custom Interface, Sagetech, County PUD, Mercer Canyon, Everybody's Brewing
Skamania County	Over 50 Employees	Skamania Lodge, Stevenson Carson School Districts, Skamania School, WKO
	21-50 Employees	A&J Market, Silverstar, Backwoods Brewing Company, Columbia River Realty ERA Powered, PD No.1 of Skamania County, Slingshot Sports, Waste Management, Windermere Real Estate, Rock Cove Assisted Living, City of Stevenson, Mill A School System

Figure 3A. Map of Trailheads and Key Destinations

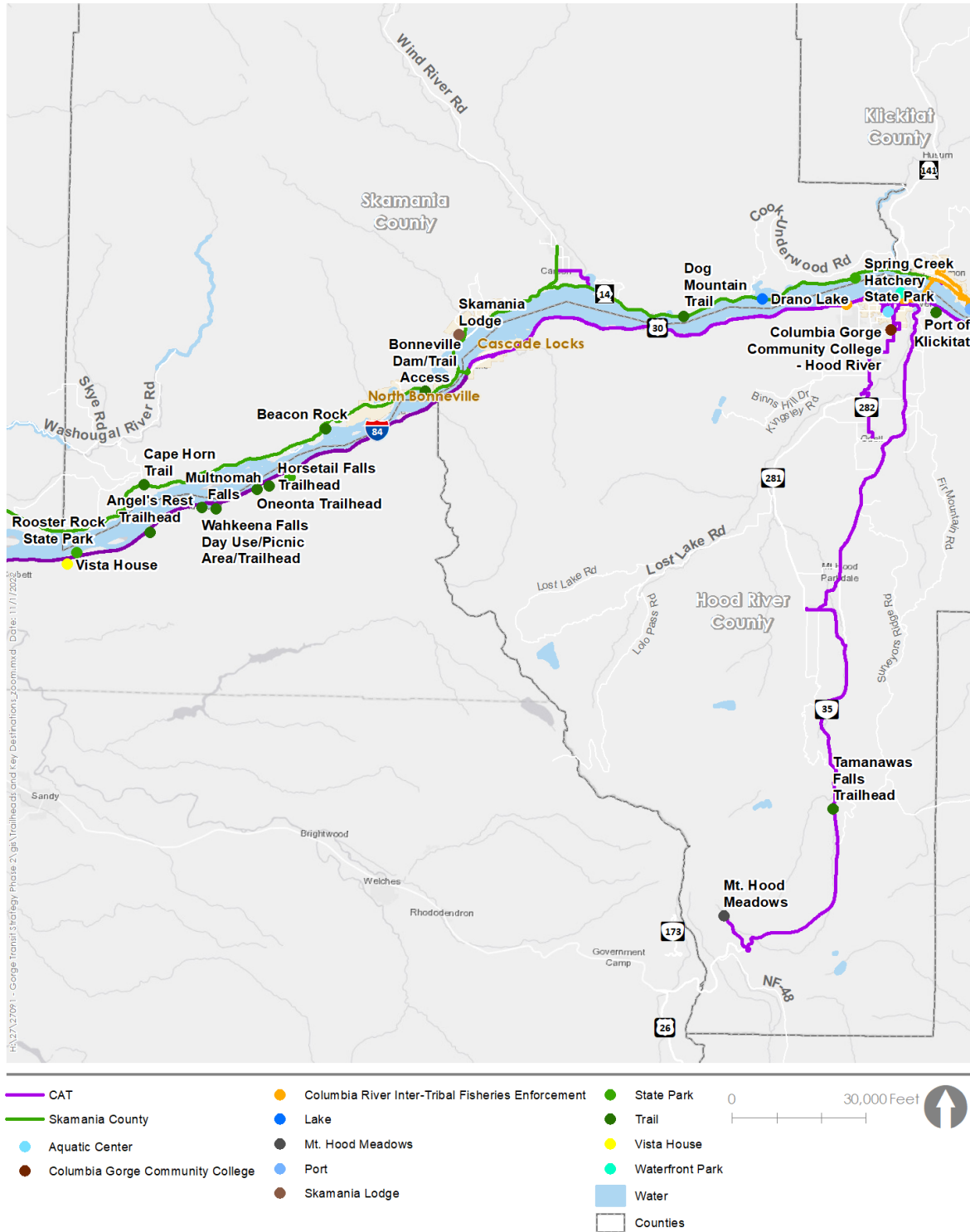
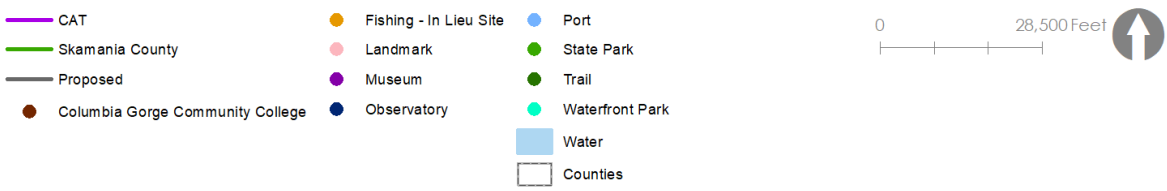
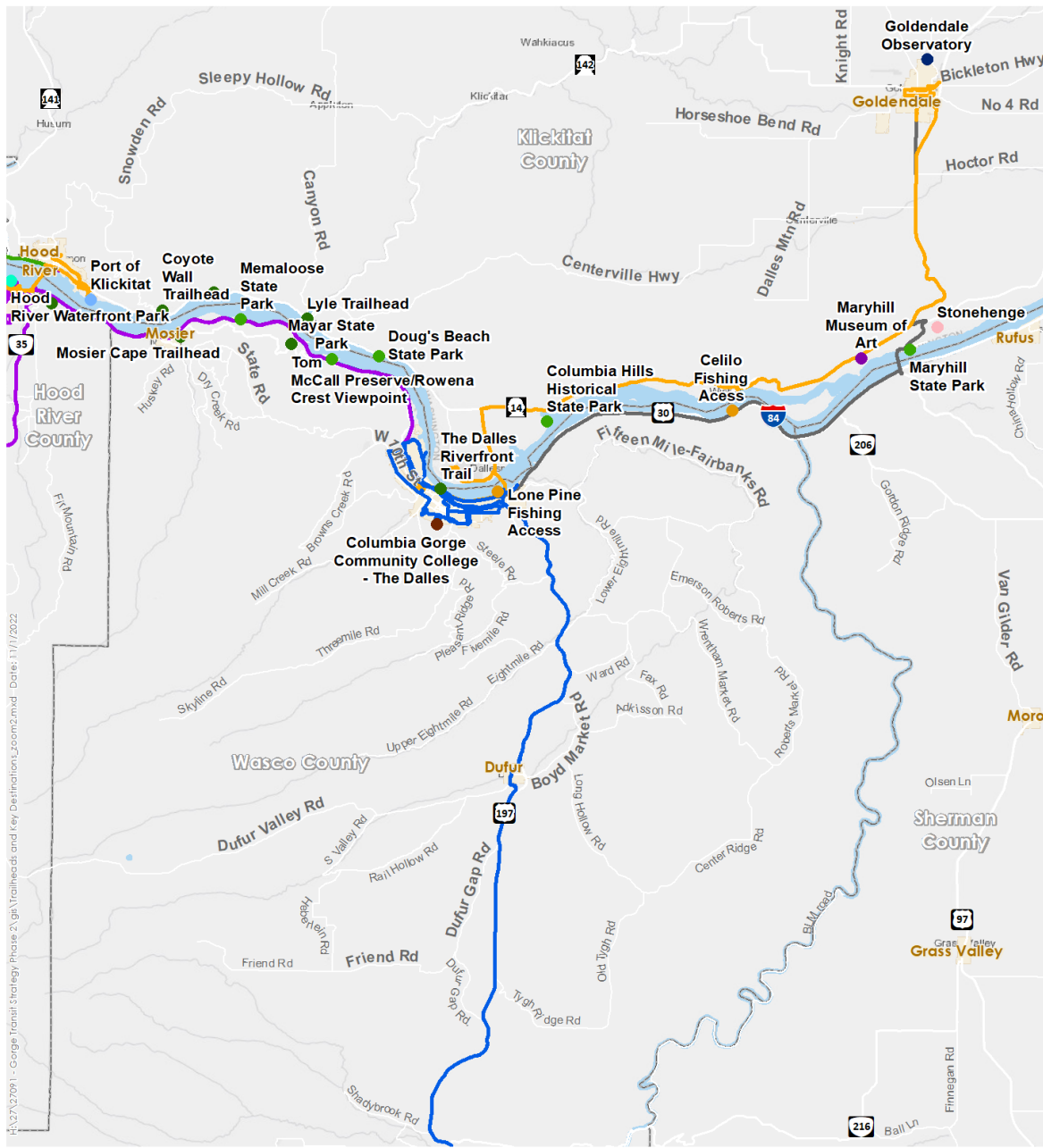


Figure 3B. Map of Trailheads and Key Destinations



Constraints and Opportunities

The following section outlines the constraints and opportunities to implementing the mapped vision as it relates to land use patterns, areas planned for growth, key origins and destinations, recreational areas within and adjacent to the Project Area, and the trip purpose and travel patterns related to these characteristics.

Table 2 summarizes the gaps and opportunities identified in Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase 1 and as part of Memo 3.

Table 2. Gaps and Opportunities

Gap or Opportunity	Explanation	Opportunity
<p>First-Mile Last-Mile Access</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is limited local transit and active transportation infrastructure supporting connections to regional transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dial-a-ride, park-and-rides, mobility hubs, electric bikes, electric carshares, transportation network companies, and carpools can help provide these connections and serve rural areas Improve active transportation infrastructure so that it is comfortable for people of all ages and abilities and meets Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility standards
<p>Timed Transfers to Columbia Gorge Express</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfers to/from the Columbia Gorge Express without excessive delays are critical to having a usable transit system providing access throughout the Gorge It is challenging to provide timed transfers when there is limited frequency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate transit timetables to maximize the efficiency of transfers for all providers to/from the Columbia Gorge Express
<p>Population Density</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is low population density in rural areas of the region that is difficult to efficiently provide fixed-route transit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on providing dial-a-ride, supporting carpools and vanpools, and supporting first-mile last-mile connections to fixed-route transit
<p>Geography</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the denser cities and recreation destinations are located along the SR-14 and I-84 corridor; however, many destinations are located off of these facilities and have safety, topographical, or ownership constraints Drive times along SR-14 and I-84 can vary significantly due to congestion and construction The Columbia River Gorge Natural Scenic Area is a protected area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase stops along existing inter-city transit routes, and at the beginning and ends including stops in downtowns, to provide access to more communities and recreational destinations Add a connection between White Salmon and Dallesport serving Lyle and other destinations

Gap or Opportunity	Explanation	Opportunity
Seasonality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tourism and recreation volumes and destinations differ between seasons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase services or provide additional services during peak season for different destinations Provide service at peak season could support mode shift and reduce congestion at these times
Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transit service would benefit from increased marketing, branding, and public awareness of existing services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage information sharing with Community-Based Partners, Employers, and continue building on recent marketing efforts from the Gorge TransLink Alliance In more rural areas where public transit may not be as prominent, clear marketing is important to increase ridership
Service Hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited evening and weekend services are provided 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide weekend fixed-route transit services across the network allowing residents and visitors in Wasco County, Klickitat County, and Skamania County to connect inter-city routes with access to recreation, jobs and shopping on weekends. Weekend connections for cities in Washington, Mosier, and to Mt. Hood will greatly increase access to recreation for residents and visitors Expand evening service on both weekdays and weekends (stakeholder advisory group members particularly emphasized the need to expand evening and weekend service between the Cities of Hood River, Bingen, and White Salmon)
Medical rides that not reimbursable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers in various counties provide medical rides that do not qualify as reimbursable non-emergency medical rides (NEMT) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partner between agencies to provide these rides and support long-haul rides to Portland
Private Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate between public and private providers to serve congested tourism areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build on partnerships with existing private shuttles to continue serving, or expand, access to popular destinations

Productivity and Coverage

Service types that focus on 'productivity' include local fixed-route service, rural inter-city or commuter service, and express service along key corridors between major origins and destinations. Service types that focus on 'coverage' include demand-response service, shuttles, and other lifeline services for people living in rural areas or accessing destinations with infrequent demand. Population density, the location of key origins and destinations, and the dispersion of vulnerable and transit-dependent groups throughout the region is considered when making tradeoffs between transit productivity and coverage.

There are approximately 90,000 people living within the five counties. A majority of the people live in dispersed area: approximately 60% of people live in block groups with population densities less than 500 people per square mile. The City of Hood River, City of The Dalles, Goldendale, and White Salmon all have higher population densities, with block population densities up to 6,475 people per square mile. Based on the demographic analysis conducted in *Memo #3: Regional Travel Patterns, Transit Gaps, and Opportunities Analysis* low-income, senior, and populations, people of color, people with disabilities, tribal communities, and other potentially vulnerable and transit-dependent groups are largely concentrated in the cities of The Dalles, Hood River, Stevenson, and Goldendale. However, there are concentrations of potentially vulnerable and transit-dependent groups in the more rural block groups throughout the five counties.

More 'productive' transit services generally serve a higher number of rides per hour and per service mile with a lower cost per hour of providing service. Greater 'coverage' can be provided through demand response service and can provide access to essential care like medical trips and shopping.

The City of The Dalles and the City of Hood River have approximately 800 people traveling between them for work. Approximately 85 people travel between the City of Goldendale and the City of The Dalles for work. Inter-city transit service can help employees travel to and from work between cities with high volumes of commuters traveling between them for work. Areas with lower volumes of commuters traveling between them for work could still benefit from organized carpools and vanpools.

Inter-city Routes

Along inter-city routes, there is a need to balance route coverage and productivity as well. The coverage of an inter-city route is increased through adding stops along the route as well as at its origin and destination cities, but this also adds to the total travel time. As evident in Figure 3, there is a high density of recreational destinations located in proximity to existing inter-city routes. Stopping at every destination along the route would maximize access to destinations, however it also makes the route less attractive for all types of trips as the travel time increases and becomes substantially longer than it would be by driving. Refinement of the Regional Vision Map should include a determination on key stop locations that should be added along the route and at the ends of routes to maximize ridership while keeping the travel times competitive. Implementing the Regional Transit Vision will require additional funds and is not meant to redirect funds from dial-a-ride services unless some of the additional inter-city route stops reduce the need and demand for dial-a-ride.

Table 3 summarizes existing recreational access along transit routes in the Gorge and provides additional potential stops that could expand access to recreation, education, and jobs with minor deviations. These are example potential additional stops; other stops could be selected by local providers.

Table 3. Existing and Potential Additional Stops to Expand Access to Recreation, Education and Jobs

Route	Existing Recreation Access/ Potential Additional Stop	Estimated Increase in Travel Time ¹
Skamania County Bingen – Vancouver²	Bonneville Dam/Trail Access	5-10 minutes
	Skamania Lodge	5-10 minutes
	Beacon Rock Trailhead	5-10 minutes
	Cape Horn Trailhead	Already accessible at Salmon Falls Park-n-Ride stop
The Dalles – Hood River	CGCC College Campuses	15 minutes
	Mosier (add weekend stop)	10 minutes
White Salmon to Hood River Loop	Hood River Aquatics Center	5-10 minutes
Cascade Locks	Bridge of the Gods Trail	Already accessible at Bridge of the Gods Trail stop
	Wyeth State Park	Already accessible at Wyeth State Park stop
Columbia Gorge Express	Multnomah Falls ²	Already accessible at Multnomah Falls stop
Gorge-to-Mountain Express	Mt. Hood Meadows	Already accessible in the winter at Mt. Hood Meadows stop
Mt. Adams Red Route	Maryhill Museum	5-10 minutes

¹Stops located immediately along the state route are assumed to add approximately 5-10 minutes of travel time. Travel time may vary and depend on the position of the stop at the location.

²Buses along this route will deviate ¼ mile from any designated stop. For persons with disabilities the bus will deviate ¼ mile from Wind River Highway and SR-14. Deviation requests must be made one day in advance. Flag Stops are available along the transit route.

³From Multnomah Falls or Corbett, the Waterfall Trolley provides hop-on hop-off access to Crown Point, Latourell Falls, Bridal Veil Falls, Angels Rest Trailhead, Wahkeena Falls, Triple Falls, Horsetail Falls, and Ainsworth State Park.

Inter-city express routes do not trigger complementary ADA paratransit requirements, however if there are too many stops along a route the route then it may no longer be classified as an inter-city route and complementary ADA paratransit is required².

GOVERNANCE/REGIONAL DECISION-MAKING SCENARIOS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

The following describes the spectrum of governance and partnering concepts that could support implementation of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy. Principal considerations are described for selecting a governance structure and several scenarios are described for discussion.

Spectrum of Governance/Partnering Concepts

Figure 4 describes a spectrum of concepts for different governance and partnering options. Concepts can range from an informal communication framework with all decisions made at the individual

² FTA defines intercity bus service as regularly scheduled bus service for the general public which operates with limited stops over fixed routes connecting two or more urban areas not in close proximity. Typically, limited stops means up to approximately three stops in an urban area.

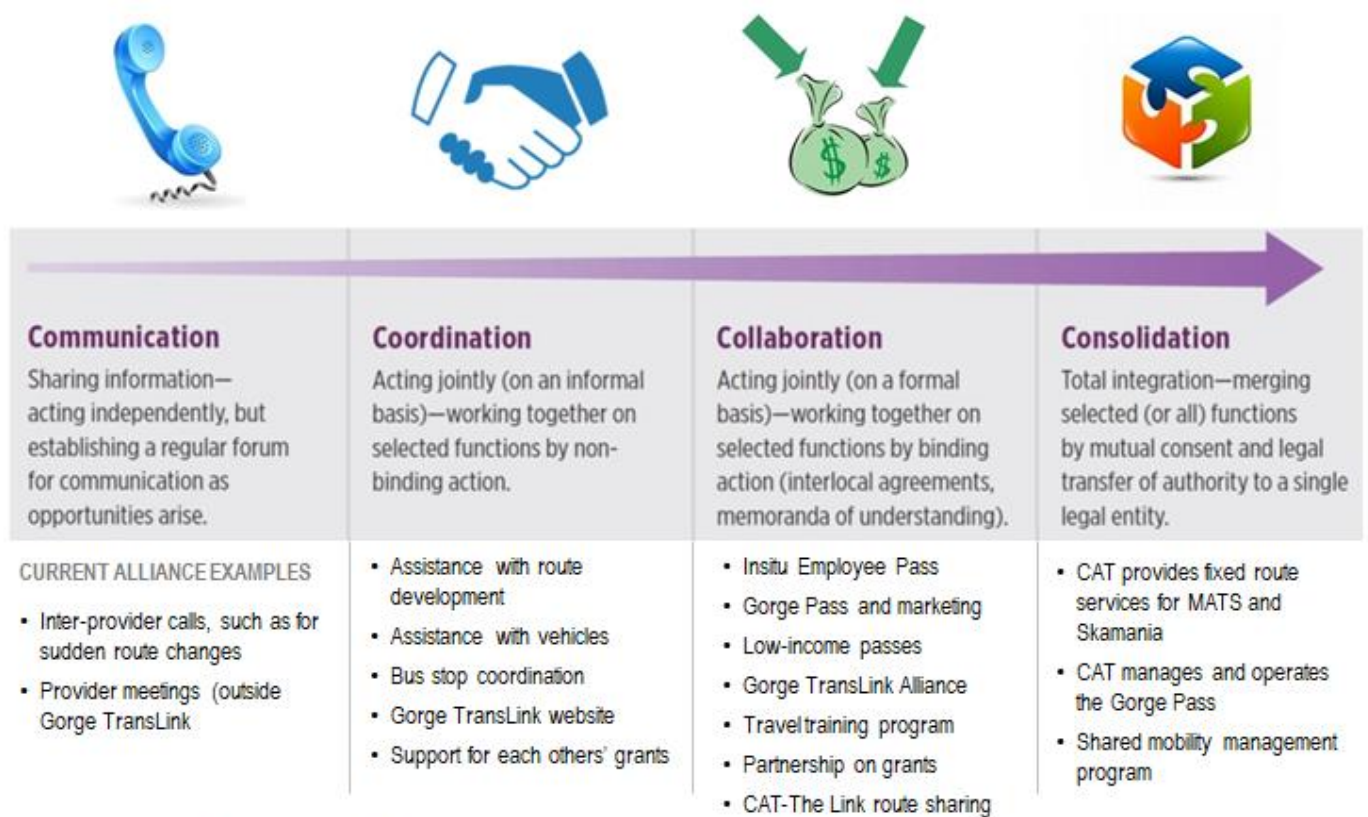
agency or county level, to integration of some or all functions requiring a more regionalized decision-making framework.

The current Gorge TransLink Alliance is currently at various places on this spectrum for different activities. For example:

- Day-to-day operational decisions are in the hands of individual service providers, so we would say that partnering on operational matters is mostly at the “communication” level.
- The Gorge TransLink website is a good example of partnering at the “collaboration” level. Partners act jointly to provide public information about transit services in the region, but each partner still maintains its own separate website.

Moving from left to right across the spectrum, the level of interaction between partners needed for decision-making increases. Often, but not always, the resources that must be devoted to the decision-making process can increase as well.

Figure 4 Spectrum of Governance/Partnering Concepts



Adapted and modified from North Carolina Department of Transportation 2012 Statewide Regionalization Study Final Report, KFH Group, Inc.

Principal Considerations

Elected Oversight and Policymaking

The oversight of elected officials in programs and projects that use public funds and impact the lives of residents is a fundamental aspect of our country's democracy. However, elected officials are often asked to stay abreast of numerous diverse topics and issues. A single county commission agenda, for

example, may include topics ranging from land development, emergency management, noxious weeds, public health and safety, road conditions, parks and recreation, and many others.

Written documents and reports on regional transit matters can be made available, but there is only so much written material we can expect elected officials to absorb given the numerous competing demands on their time. Interactive meeting time is important for transparent communication with elected officials on any public issue. Given the complexity of transit needs and issues across the region, a designated forum for regional elected officials to stay updated on transit activities and develop a mutual understanding of regional transit priorities may be of interest to the alliance.

A related oversight consideration is the consistency of transit policies across the region. Customers making connections between service providers may encounter different policies for rider behavior, pets and service animals, bicycle transport, holiday service, etc. Differing contracting standards and purchasing requirements may inadvertently favor some transit providers over others in the marketplace. Differing wage scales and employee benefit programs can make it challenging for agencies with less favorable compensation packages to compete for qualified employees. Ideally a new regional decision-making framework could help to address and streamline these types of policy inconsistencies.

Operational Efficiency

Alternative governance structures for the regional transit program could improve regional efficiency on many fronts. Examples could include:

- Day-to-day route, stop, and schedule decisions
- General route and service planning
- Long-range transit development planning
- Data collection and performance reporting
- Fleet management
- Customer service standards
- Safety and security
- Emergency procedures
- Staff training
- Using volunteers
- Advertising and marketing
- Equipment sharing

A new decision-making framework could establish regional management systems that could be implemented either in addition to individual agency programs, or to replace current individual agency programs. There is a wide array of governance options that could be considered for operational decision-making, ranging from the current practice of collaboration between current agencies on one or two operational topics, to implementing a more centralized form of governance that could handle operational decision making across a variety of topics.

Governance vs. Funding

The following section of this memo explains current revenue streams and outlines opportunities for additional funding for regional transit programs and projects. In most cases, potential new revenue streams described could be pursued independent of any changes to the region's decision-making framework. Each of the governance scenarios we have outlined below would, at a minimum, preserve access to existing revenue streams.

Governance vs. Service Delivery

A distinction must also be made between governance concepts and service delivery concepts. The region's decision-making process need not limit the way transit service is provided. Most governance concepts presented in this memo would support multiple service delivery models such as continued operations by existing service providers, or nearly any form of contract for service.³

Fixed Route Focus

In this memo, we are limiting the regional governance discussion to frameworks for *fixed route service* in the region. This is necessary to make the initial exploratory process manageable. Also, early discussions with project advisory committee members indicated that maintaining local control at the county level for services such as dial-a-ride and medical transport for seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities may be important. A focus on fixed route service initially would not limit expansion of any governance model to include additional services later, if desired.⁴

Preliminary Governance Scenarios

Table 4 provides a matrix of governance concepts ranging from the status quo, to enhanced forums and protocols for decision-making by existing partners, to a fully integrated regional governance concept. Each scenario is briefly described in the narrative below. Table 4 provides preliminary information on potential advantages and challenges for regional decision-making, along with high level implementation considerations. Where available, links to real-world examples of each governance concept are also provided in Table 4.

Scenario 0: Status Quo

The "Status Quo" scenario would continue the current partnership unchanged. MOUs are in place between MCEDD and each county to promote regional transportation service in the Columbia River Gorge.⁵ These MOU's designate MCEDD as the lead agency for:

- Seeking funding for the purpose of hiring a mobility manager for Gorge TransLink coordination activities;
- Facilitating Gorge TransLink meetings, including preparing meeting materials;
- Preparing an annual work plan to identify and prioritize future coordination strategies;
- Assuming a lead role in assigning implementation tasks to carry out work plan activities;
- Identifying additional stakeholders and opportunities to expand membership within the region
- Researching funding availability, and serve as the legal sponsor (i.e. grant recipient) for consortium members when needed.

Individual agencies are responsible to support the effort to obtain mobility management services for Gorge TransLink by providing a small amount of matching funding.

All partners are responsible to:

³ A contract for service model could include one or more agencies separately or jointly contracting with an existing Alliance service provider. A contract for service model could also include separate contract with a third party, such as a nonprofit or for-profit transit provider that is not an alliance partner.

⁴ Although we are focusing on fixed route for preliminary governance discussions, in some cases dial-a-ride service budgets may be tied to fixed route funding. Additional analyses, beyond the scope of this planning study, may be needed to assess those budgetary connections as part of the implementation process for some of the governance concepts outlined in this memo.

⁵

- Meet regularly to review progress under the MOU and to update the plan for meeting its objectives;
- Jointly seek and support each others' efforts to identify fund sources to further TransLink's goals and objectives;
- Jointly explore broadening their collaboration to include other partners.

Beyond the high-level declarations in the MOUs, decisions between agencies are made on an ad hoc, topic-by-topic basis, without an overarching decision-making framework. Many varied interagency agreements (IGAs) have been executed between individual partners for select activities, including service agreements, marketing, mobility management, and fare reciprocity.

Interaction between partners is predominantly at the management staff level.

Scenario 1: Enhanced Status Quo

This scenario could include a variety of interim steps that the group could take in the near term, to position for improved organizational effectiveness over the long term. The Enhanced Status Quo scenario could be implemented through an updated MOU or interagency agreement, and the group could create an overarching charter or set of bylaws to formalize operating procedures and decision-making protocols. This scenario could also establish a more sustainable approach to funding the current regional mobility management program, such as through membership dues.

Scenario 1 could serve as a springboard to a more robust, formalized, and centralized decision-making framework later, or this scenario could stand alone as a long-term option for the group.

To increase engagement of elected officials and key stakeholders in regional transit issues, an annual "summit" could be convened under the Enhanced Status Quo option. This would allow the group to report on progress made over the past year and allow elected officials to interact with each other on regional transit issues as they provide input, feedback, or even direction, on upcoming initiatives.

Additional tools may be considered as part of this scenario, such as a process to convene subcommittees to tackle specific topics in an annual work plan. The group could consider creating opportunities for lower-tier staff to serve on subcommittees for work plan topics. Including lower tier staff in alliance business could strengthen inter-agency relationships, making it easier and more comfortable for staff to partner over time.

Under this scenario, alliance interaction would principally remain at the staff level, so group recommendations may still need to be carried back to each partner agency's elected body for action.

Scenario 2: Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) "Re-Boot"

A regional Transportation Advisory Board (TAB), a subcommittee of the MCEDD board, was previously established to help engage elected officials on transit issues, and to provide oversight of the Link service operated by MCEDD from a business versus service perspective. Disagreements between agencies unfortunately arose about the balance of representation on this board, which ultimately led to its dissolution. However, the general intent, which was to increase oversight by elected officials on regional transit matters, is an important consideration for the alliance.

Under Scenario 2, partners could build upon prior lessons learned to re-establish a regional TAB focused on fixed route transit matters. This scenario could be implemented through an interagency agreement. Each county could be asked to appoint an elected representative or two to the new board. The agreement could also address sustainable funding for providing administrative support for the new board and for the region's mobility management program, such as through membership dues.

As an advisory group, the TAB could make recommendations, which would then be carried back to the elected boards of each partner agency for action. Alternatively, partner agencies could vest their TAB representatives with decision-making authority for select topics, such as approving regional transit plans and determining priorities for multi-county projects.

This scenario could stand alone as a long-term decision-making structure for the region, or it could serve as a springboard for further regionalization in the future. For example, a regional board of elected officials would provide the region with an essential forum for discussing and evaluating concepts such as those outlined in Scenarios 4 or 5 below.

Scenarios 3A, 3B, and 3C: Single or Multi-County Districting

Table 4 includes scenarios for new service districts, including both joint and single county districting options. The intent of these scenarios would be to consolidate existing fixed route transit agencies to the extent possible. Consolidated districts spanning both sides of the state line are not possible because districting laws are different in each state.

Single county districts would not reduce the complexity of regional decision making, and joint districting options would have only slight regional decision-making benefits by reducing the total number of agencies represented on the alliance. As stand-alone options, new districts would not bring any practical efficiencies to the overall regional decision-making process; however, we include them here since they offer the potential to increase elected oversight and generate additional revenue at the individual county level. Any new districting option could be combined with other governance scenarios in Table 3.

3A: Joint Hood River/Wasco Service District

This concept would either expand the existing Hood River County Transportation District (HRCTD) (currently operating as Columbia Area Transit, or CAT) to annex Wasco County, or dissolve HRCTD and create a new two-county service district. This could streamline transit operations between the alliance's two most populated counties and create new options for local revenue generation in Wasco County. A vote of the people in both counties would be required.

3B: Joint Skamania/Klickitat Transportation Benefit District (TBD)

This concept would create a new two-county Transportation Benefit District for the Washington side of the alliance and create an opportunity for additional local revenue generation in both counties. A vote of the people in both counties would be required.

3C: Single-County Service Districts

The creation of new single-county districts or transportation authorities in Hood River, Wasco, Skamania and/or Klickitat counties could offer additional revenue opportunities and enhance elected oversight of transit services within those counties. Single-county districting would not require regional collaboration, and individual counties could pursue single-county districting options on their own, outside the alliance, at any time.

Scenario 4: Regional Co-Op or Transportation Management Organization

A fourth scenario is the creation of a regional transportation cooperative (co-op) or a non-profit organization such as a transportation management organization (TMO), as a separate legal entity in the region. In the case of the Gorge TransLink Alliance, a co-op or TMO could establish a single consolidated decision-making framework encompassing service areas on both sides of the state line.

Either option could be owned by, or have membership comprised of, the current governing bodies for transit in the region. A co-op or TMO would establish its own board and staff and could be set up to provide any or all transit services needed by its owners. If the owners wished, either a co-op or a TMO could operate as a new single fixed route service provider for the entire region. Additional services might include regional transit planning, grant writing and reporting, marketing, data collection, and other needs common to the owners or members.

Co-ops are age-old systems of centralizing decision-making and providing access to services for businesses or organizations with similar needs. People in the Gorge region may be familiar with co-ops created for farming, or utility service.

Co-ops are distinctly different from governmental groups formed through interagency agreements under ORS 190 in Oregon, or interlocal agreements under RCW 39.34 in Washington. A co-op is considered **a business entity**⁶; a TMO is **a private nonprofit entity**. Neither would be a new unit of government. A co-op or TMO could have the potential to assist with fundraising activities for regional transit. For example, by creating programs for regional businesses to purchase advertising or to financially sponsor certain transit activities or events.

There are two ways a co-op or TMO's activities could be funded:

- Existing alliance partners could use their current revenue sources to purchase services from the co-op or TMO. In this case, the partner agencies would still be the official applicants for state and federal grants and have ultimate responsibility for grant compliance.
- In some cases, it may be possible for the co-op itself to be a grant applicant. For example, the Federal Transit Administration's non-urbanized area formula program (5311 program) allows WSDOT or ODOT to award grant funds to subrecipients that are private operators of public transportation services.

Scenario 5: Bi-State Governmental Agency

Scenarios 1 through 4 above describe organizational concepts that are currently available to the Alliance within existing statutes. Alternatively, creating a new bi-state governmental agency would require new legislation in both states at a minimum to form it, and likely a congressional act at the federal level, to adequately fund it.

A new bi-state governmental agency would have its own board and staff. Board membership would be defined in the formational legislation. Since new legislation would be written specifically to define the new agency's purpose and governing structure, there is no prescribed organizational structure for this scenario. Perhaps the board could be comprised of representatives appointed by existing county commissions and transit district boards. Or perhaps the formational legislation would establish new publicly elected board positions to oversee the agency's activities.

A new bi-state agency could be vested with authority to make planning and funding decisions for regional transit service. The formational legislation could take things a step further, to designate the new agency as the region's principal transit service provider, thereby centralizing all planning and operating decisions.

⁶ Unlike a TMO, a co-op is not considered a nonprofit organization, but it is not intended to be a "for profit" entity either. Co-ops can make money, but any profits generated must be used for the benefit of the co-op owners or returned to the owners in the event of a surplus.

Recent federal legislation proposed by Oregon Senator Earl Blumenauer⁷ elevates the feasibility of this scenario, which, under normal circumstances would pose significant implementation hurdles. Senator Blumenauer's bill includes provisions for modernizing transit and transportation within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The current proposal includes creating a Columbia River Gorge Access Committee to oversee multi-jurisdictional transportation strategies and leaves the door open for the creation of a new transportation planning or management organization that could ultimately consolidate regional transit planning and operations.

Screening Considerations: How will we decide which options to move forward?

Detailed feasibility and benefit/cost analyses of potential organizational concepts are beyond the scope of the current GTS II study. So, criteria for evaluating scenarios at this stage will be necessarily subjective.

The next technical memo will include a screening evaluation of the scenarios described above, and a stakeholder work session is planned later in the study to discuss and evaluate potential governance options. Based on initial advisory group discussions, the following preliminary screening considerations and rating scales will be used.

A. Clarity for Customers and the General Public

- Could the concept help to clarify regional fixed route roles and responsibilities?
- Could the concept facilitate a more easily identifiable regional brand or naming convention for fixed route service?
- Could the concept promote consistent customer service standards?
- Could the concept support service for different types of users (commuters, residents, tourists)?

B. Government Accountability, Oversight, and Policymaking

- Could the concept increase elected official engagement on fixed route transit matters, improving their understanding of regional issues and needs?
- Could the concept help to address inconsistent rider policies in the region?
- Could the concept facilitate regionally consistent contracting standards?
- Could the concept help to address transit employee wage inequities in the region?
- Could the concept function well within the local, regional, state, and natural context?
- Could the concept support land use planning decisions in all counties?

C. Regional Equality

- Could the concept promote balanced and equitable decision-making that does not unduly favor the needs of some over others?
- Could each county's residents have an equal voice in decisions?
- Could the concept improve transit opportunities for each county?

⁷ *Legislative Concepts: Recreation Enhancement, wildfire resiliency, and conservation for Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge (2022) Congressman Earl Blumenauer*. Available at: <https://blumenauer.house.gov/issues/environment-and-energy/mt-hood-and-gorge> (Accessed: November 6, 2022).

- Could the concept help to emphasize and address the needs of Gorge region residents, avoiding a disproportionate focus on the needs of people outside the region?

D. Operational Efficiency

- Could the concept provide an economy of scale for major purchases, such as maintenance facilities, fleet, other equipment, stop furnishings, etc.?
- Could the concept consolidate administrative functions?
- Could the concept streamline maintenance activities?
- Could the concept streamline day to day route, stop, and schedule decisions?
- Could the concept streamline long-range transit development planning?
- Could the concept improve consistent data collection and performance reporting?
- Could the concept make it easier to access resources for emergencies?

E. Agency Staff Burden and Expertise

- Is the concept likely to relieve, or add to, the labor burden of existing agencies?
- If the labor burden is expected to be greater, does the concept provide increased revenue possibilities or other advantages to help offset the additional burden? Could the concept help to increase transit staff knowledge and skill across the region?

F. Funding

- Could the concept provide access to new revenue streams?
- Would there be any impact on current revenue streams (e.g. potential for less or more money)?
- Could the concept elevate the legitimacy of the Gorge TransLink partners in the eyes of legislators and potential funders?

Scale for Screening Considerations A-F:



Likely better than status quo.



No effective change expected.



Likely worse than status quo.

G. Implementation Complexity

- How realistic is the potential for implementing the concept?
- Are there any political hurdles that may be insurmountable?

Scale for Screening Consideration E:

1 – Minimal or no barriers to implementation

2 – A few factors complicating implementation

3 – Several factors complicating implementation

4 – Many factors complicating implementation

5 – Not feasible

Table 4. Preliminary Governance Scenarios

Governance Scenario	Fixed Route Service Models Supported	Advantages For Regional Decision-Making	Issues and Challenges For Regional Decision-Making	Implementation Considerations
<p>Scenario 0: Status Quo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No change to current Gorge TransLink Alliance. MOUs are in place between MCEDD and each county designating MCEDD as the lead agency for the Gorge TransLink Alliance and outlining each agency's broad intent to work with MCEDD. Regional communication and cooperation beyond these high-level statements is ad hoc, without an express regional decision-making process. Many agreements define the current partnering framework, including multiple agreements between individual partners, for service, marketing, mobility management, and fare reciprocity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued current agency operations Contract for service⁸ 		<p>Transit roles and responsibilities in the region are difficult for the average person to sort out, without wading through the numerous agreements that underpin the current alliance.</p> <p>Elected oversight on transit issues at the regional level appears to be somewhat lacking under the status quo. The MCEDD board has many competing responsibilities and priorities and does not currently have the authority to oversee regional transit operations.</p>	<p>The status quo is easy to implement.</p>
<p>Scenario 1: Enhanced Status Quo</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an umbrella charter for the Gorge TransLink Alliance to establish member expectations and decision-making protocols for the partnership. Form standing or ad-hoc subcommittees for staff-level interaction to tackle specific topics that may be identified in an annual or biennial work plan, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> consistent policies for riders ongoing route, schedule and stop adjustments regional data collection performance reporting, etc. <p>Example: Although not a transit group, the Oregon Modeling Statewide Collaborative is an example of a staff-level multi-agency group that is pursuing a joint work plan. Partners agree to abide by operating procedures outlined in their work plan. Each OMSC subcommittee has a charter outlining the subcommittee's purpose, tasks, deliverables, and timeline for their work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued current agency operations Contract for service 	<p>Providing a bit more structure for decision making on key topics, an annual check-in point for regional elected officials, and/or forums for lower tier staff to interact regularly could strengthen regional relationships and help head off conflicts.</p>	<p>Relies on perpetuating the numerous existing agreements.</p> <p>Much about the partnering structure could be clarified and documented through a chartering and work planning process but roles and responsibilities may still seem complex to the average person.</p> <p>Could improve engagement and awareness of elected officials, but does not resolve existing regional issues with elected oversight.</p>	<p>Straightforward to implement with informal charter, or one multi-agency MOU.</p>
<p>Scenario 2: TAB Re-Boot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCEDD could build on lessons learned from prior Transportation Advisory Board to try again. A subcommittee of the MCEDD board would serve as a central advisory board on transit matters. The regional decision-making process could be controlled by a new TAB IGA and bylaws. <p>Example: South Central Regional COG's Transportation Committee in Connecticut</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued current agency operations Contract for service 	<p>Could help to improve oversight and understanding of transit issues by partner agency elected officials.</p> <p>Could provide a central forum for prioritization of regional transit initiatives and projects.</p>	<p>Memories are long, and there may be a perception by some partners that this concept has been tried and does not work.</p>	<p>Straightforward to implement, but a post-mortem examination of the prior TAB initiative should be done to identify and head off prior issues that were problematic for the previous board.</p>

⁸ A contract for service model could include one or more agencies separately or jointly contracting with an existing Gorge alliance service provider for service within their county. The IGA between CAT and Skamania County for seasonal recreation service is one example. A contract for service model could also include separate or joint contracting with a third-party nonprofit or for-profit provider that is not an alliance partner.

Governance Scenario	Fixed Route Service Models Supported	Advantages For Regional Decision-Making	Issues and Challenges For Regional Decision-Making	Implementation Considerations
<p>Scenario 3A: Joint Hood River/Wasco Service District ⁹</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A joint service district could streamline transit operations between the Gorge alliance's two most populated counties. • This concept would either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expand the Hood River County Transportation District (Columbia Area Transit, CAT) to annex Wasco County ○ Dissolve HRCTD and create a new two-county service district.¹⁰ • This option would expand options for local revenue generation in Wasco county, including the potential for voter-approved property taxes, business license fees, income taxes or employer payroll/self-employment taxes. • A seven-member governing board would be elected from the district at large. <p>Example: None at this scale currently in Oregon. Tri-Met is a multi-county transit district in a much more urban region than the Gorge, and it was formed under the state's mass transit statutes, which are related but different from the transportation district statutes (ORS 267.510 to 267.650) that would apply in this case.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New two-county entity as service provider for Hood River and Wasco Counties • Contract for service 	<p>Could increase elected oversight in the two-county area with a separate board of elected officials with transit oversight responsibilities.</p> <p>Could slightly reduce current regional decision-making complexity since one district would represent two counties on the Oregon side.</p> <p>This option could be combined with other scenarios on the list.</p>	<p>A requirement in ORS 267.540 for transportation district board members to be elected "at large" means that representation across a two-county area may not always be as geographically equitable as desired.</p> <p>Citizens are generally less aware of, and have less understanding of, special districts than general purpose governmental agencies like cities and counties.</p> <p>State laws require cities and counties to work together but do not always put the same obligation on special districts. In some cases, creation of a special district can lead to "silo-ing" of transit topics and issues. District managers must be sensitive to this and work proactively to integrate transit with other governmental initiatives related to land use, housing, recreation, economic development, etc.</p>	<p>Challenging to implement. Requires a vote of the people in both Hood River and Wasco County to either expand the current service district in Hood River County or dissolve the current service district and create a new two-county district, then elect board members and establish a revenue structure.</p> <p>An extensive public information campaign would likely be needed to explain potential benefits and costs. Success may require multiple attempts over years.</p> <p>The joint district would have ongoing election expenses as board member terms expire.</p> <p>If there is interest in this concept, a detailed financial feasibility analysis should be done as a next step.</p>
<p>Scenario 3B: Joint Skamania/Klickitat Transportation Benefit District (TBD)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This concept would create a two-county Transportation Benefit District for the Washington side of the Gorge Alliance • With voter approval, a new TBD could levy a sales tax of up to 0.3%, establish a vehicle fee, levy property tax, or charge an impact fee on commercial/industrial development. • The district would have a governing body of at least five members, including at least one elected official from each participating jurisdiction. This would potentially include each county, and each city where transit service is provided. <p>Example: Douglas-Chelan is a two-county Public Transportation Benefit Area (Link Transit), which is similar to a TBD, but formed under an older law targeted at areas with populations over 40,000. The TBD statutes that would apply for Skamania and Klickitat can be found in RCW 36.73.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New two-county entity as service provider for Skamania and Klickitat counties • Contract for service 	<p>Could increase elected oversight in the two-county area with a separate governing board of elected officials to oversee TBD activities.</p> <p>Washington laws provide for geographically equitable representation on a TBD board.</p> <p>Could slightly reduce current regional decision-making complexity since one district would represent two counties on the Washington side.</p> <p>This option could be combined with other scenarios on the list.</p>	<p>Citizens are generally less aware of, and have less understanding of, special districts than general purpose governmental agencies like cities and counties.</p> <p>State laws require cities and counties to work together but do not always put the same obligation on special districts. In some cases, creation of a special district can lead to "silo-ing" of transit topics and issues. District managers must be sensitive to this and work proactively to integrate transit with other governmental initiatives related to land use, housing, recreation, economic development, etc.</p>	<p>Challenging to implement. Would require a vote of the people in both Skamania County and Klickitat County to create a new two-county TBD, elect initial board members, and establish a taxing rate.</p> <p>An extensive public information campaign would likely be needed to explain potential benefits and costs. Success may require multiple attempts over years.</p> <p>The joint district would have ongoing election expenses as board member terms expire.</p> <p>If there is interest in this concept, a detailed financial feasibility analysis should be done as a next step.</p>

⁹ While easier to form, we do not include options for single-county service districts in either Wasco County or Sherman County, nor have we included single-county transportation authorities or transportation benefit districts for either Skamania County or Klickitat County as potential governance options for the alliance. These single-county options could expand the potential for elected oversight and local revenue generation at the county level, but their creation would not substantially change the current regional partnership and decision-making process. If interested, individual counties could pursue these concepts on their own outside of the alliance.

¹⁰ A sub-option "C" could include Sherman County in the expanded service district.

Governance Scenario	Fixed Route Service Models Supported	Advantages For Regional Decision-Making	Issues and Challenges For Regional Decision-Making	Implementation Considerations
<p>Scenario 3C: Single-County Districts Creation of a new transportation service district in Wasco County, and separate transportation benefit districts (TBDs) in Skamania and Klickitat Counties</p> <p>This would expand options for local revenue generation in counties that currently do not have a designated transit district. New single county districts would expand elected oversight at the individual county level. There are multiple examples throughout Oregon and Washington. The Hood River County Transportation District, within the Gorge TransLink region, is the nearest Oregon example. On the Washington side, the <u>Municipal Research and Services Center</u> maintains a list of city and county TBDs.</p>	<p>New service providers in Wasco, Skamania and/or Klickitat counties Contract for service</p>	<p>Could increase elected oversight in each individual county but this option alone would not afford significant advantages for decision-making at the regional level.</p> <p>This option could be combined with other scenarios on the list.</p>	<p>Citizens are generally less aware of, and have less understanding of, special districts than general purpose governmental agencies like cities and counties.</p> <p>State laws require cities and counties to work together but do not always put the same obligation on special districts. In some cases, creation of a special district can lead to "silo-ing" of transit topics and issues. District managers must be sensitive to this and work proactively to integrate transit with other governmental initiatives related to land use, housing, recreation, economic development, etc.</p>	<p>Less challenging to implement than two-county districting scenarios described above (3A and 3B). But would still require a vote of the people in each individual county to establish the districts, elect initial board members, and establish a tax/fee structure. An extensive public information campaign would likely be needed to explain potential benefits and costs. Success may require multiple attempts over years.</p> <p>Each new district would have ongoing election expenses as board member terms expire.</p>
<p>Scenario 4: Regional Cooperative or Transportation Management Organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a regional transportation co-op as a separate legal business entity. • Co-op would have its own board and staff • A co-op could provide any or all transit services required by the five counties. • Current transit agencies could be owners of the co-op or members of the TMO. • Owners/members would elect the co-op board officers. • Except in rare cases, co-ops have a "one member, one vote" rule. • Owner/members' responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Select directors to serve on the co-op board ○ Provide necessary capital through membership fees and by purchasing the co-op's services • Board responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hire a manager ○ Adopt general policies ○ Develop and adopt long-range plans and business strategies ○ Oversee the operating budget ○ Establish institutional controls ○ Retain an auditor and legal counsel • Manager responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage capital and physical resources ○ Hire, train, supervise, and set compensation for employees ○ Oversee operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-op or TMO as single regional fixed route service provider • Continued current agency operations • Contract for service 	<p>Enhanced stewardship and oversight by regional elected officials in a single forum. Potential for improved public transparency on transit issues. Co-ops and TMOs have a democratic approach to ownership that allows the needs of all owners to be met without one member dominating the decision-making process.</p> <p>Citizens may be familiar with the co-op concept through experience with utility or farm co-ops in the region. Similarly, nonprofit groups are commonly understood by the general public.</p> <p>Could centralize many transit functions for the region to achieve an economy of scale and improved administrative/ operational efficiency.</p> <p>Centralized services could include (but need not be limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Grant writing/monitoring/reporting¹¹ 	<p>Co-op owners share the same prices for all co-op services. Some current partners may experience savings, others may not.</p> <p>Day to day operational and management decisions can be fast, but others requiring all owners to weigh in may take more time than individual agencies currently experience.</p>	<p>Moderately straightforward. (Easier than new districting concepts.)</p> <p>Although a public vote is not required to form a co-op or a TMO, the governing bodies for each agency partner would need to formally agree to form and own it.</p> <p>If partners wished to have the co-op or TMO operate a regional fixed-route system, the new co-op or TMO board and manager would need to secure equipment and facilities. At the outset, this could be done through an interagency transfer of existing assets (vehicles, maintenance facilities, etc.) from existing transit agencies to the co-op. However, special authorization may be needed from WSDOT and ODOT to transfer equipment and facilities originally purchased with state or federal grant funds.</p> <p>If there is interest in this concept, a detailed feasibility analysis should be done as a next step, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify the specific services the co-op or TMO would provide, • understand potential financial benefits and impacts for each potential owner, and

¹¹The co-op itself would not likely be a direct recipient of state and federal grant funding. For example, the co-op might help by providing grant writing services, but member agencies would still be the grant applicants and be responsible for grant compliance.

Governance Scenario	Fixed Route Service Models Supported	Advantages For Regional Decision-Making	Issues and Challenges For Regional Decision-Making	Implementation Considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Maintain books and accounting system o Furnish info needed for board decisions and planning o Existing revenue streams currently used by the partner agencies to fund transit services could be retained. The co-op could potentially assist with other regional fundraising strategies, such as providing opportunities for regional businesses to purchase advertising or sponsor certain transit activities or events. • Example: The Greater Yellowstone Regional Transportation Cooperative is an example of a transit partnership by governmental agencies and private business interests in three states: Idaho, Montana and Wyoming. It came together relatively quickly and provided transit service between the national park and surrounding gateway communities for three years, before being suspended in 2014 due to funding issues. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fixed route service¹² • Marketing • Data collection 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determine which state has the most advantageous laws for co-op formation and operation.
<p>5: Regional Bi-State Government Agency</p> <p>New governmental entity created through legislation, rather than by interagency agreement.</p> <p>New agency could have its own separate board and staff.</p> <p>In addition to planning responsibilities, formational legislation could designate the new agency as the region's service provider.</p> <p>Funding for the new agency would be addressed in the formational legislation.</p> <p>Example: Tahoe Transit District is a subunit of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency that was formed by an act of Congress and the state legislatures in California and Nevada. The district has the authority to own and operate the transit system. It can levy taxes and is a designated recipient for federal grants.</p>	<p>New Bi-State Agency as regional service provider</p> <p>Contract for service</p>	<p>Enhanced elected oversight at the regional level.</p> <p>Potential to centralize all planning and operating decisions.</p>	<p>Thoughtful attention to the makeup of the decision-making body is essential to ensure all constituents are represented and have a voice.</p>	<p>At minimum, would require legislation in both states to create the bi-state agency.</p> <p>May require Congressional Act to help fund it.</p> <p>Senator Blumenauer's proposed legislation for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area elevates the feasibility of implementing this option.</p>

¹² A co-op could also provide regional dial-a-ride style service focused on seniors, veterans, and people with disabilities; however, in initial discussions with the advisory committee, maintaining greater control of those services at the individual county level seems desirable.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The current landscape of funding sources for the transit providers within the Gorge Translink system include local and county funds, state and federal grants, and fare revenue.

Table 5: Summary of 2019 Gorge Translink Alliance Member Revenue Sources¹³

Funding Category	Value	Percent
State Government	\$1,504,836	42%
Local Government	\$897,541	25%
Federal Government	\$554,867	15%
Fares	\$421,569	12%
Other directly generated revenue	\$219,602	6%

Based on 2019 National Transit Data (Table 5), Gorge Translink partners receive most of their transit-operating budget from state and local funding, and federal grants. Other directly generated revenue including contracts and advertising.¹⁴ Compared with other rural transit providers, Gorge Translink partners have been able to leverage other direct revenue sources more and they receive less funding support from local government entities. The budgets of other rural transit providers are funded 26.5 percent by local governments on average, while Gorge Translink partners' budgets are only funded 25 percent from local governments.¹⁵ Additionally, Gorge Translink partners earn a higher farebox recovery rate, receiving 12 percent of their transit-operating budgets from fare revenues, compared with only 8.8 percent for other rural transit providers. Transit capital expenditures are funded mostly by federal grants with a small portion from other directly generated revenue.

Expansion and maintenance of a sustainable and efficient transportation service network will require bolstering of existing funding sources in conjunction with identifying and leveraging new sources. Strengthened regional partnerships between local governments and Gorge Translink partners would benefit the development and potential implementation of new revenue sources, given the significant organizational, legal, and political effort required to establish new funding sources.

We have identified three categories of funding mechanisms relevant to the scale and objectives of the transportation services overseen by Gorge Translink partners in addition to opportunities presented by becoming a Special Purpose District or Regional Transit Cooperative:

- Direct Revenue Generation** mechanisms derive revenue directly from users of the transportation services. Revenues from these sources could be used for a variety of operational expenses associated with expansion to Moderate or High Level of Service and Coordination Opportunities

¹³ National Transit Database. (2019) Annual Revenue Sources Database. Accessed at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/data-product/2019-annual-database-revenue-sources>

¹⁴ From NTD, GORGE TRANSLINK PARTNERS listed other direct revenue sources as "Contract Reimbursement: Greyhound Bus Stop, GOBHI Personal Svcs Contract, Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Svc Contract, Farmer's Market Svc, Facility Rent Contract, PUD Support. Investment Revenue (Bank Interest), Vending Svcs, Sponsor Donations (MCMC, Providence)"

¹⁵ National Transit Database. (2019) National Transit Data Trends and Summaries. Accessed at: https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-01/2019-NTST-1-2_0.pdf

(specifically extending weekend service and developing administrative systems for better trip planning). These tools are easy to justify and implement at the point of use. Another source of direct revenue relates to advertising and branding. Selling space or opportunities to promote businesses—most commonly on buses and station areas—is a common method of generating revenue for transit agencies; other creative options include digital advertising on the agency website, or branding/naming opportunities for stations or routes.

- **Value Capture** mechanisms operate under the assumption that the benefits from public transportation flow to the wider community, rather than just to those directly using the service. Revenues from these sources could support the broader planning and development for Gorge Translink partners' services - specifically land or capital expansion outlined in First-Mile Last-Mile and those needed to support Moderate or High Level of Service.
- **Grant Funding** mechanisms include grant programs sponsored by federal and state programs, and endowed regional and national foundations. Revenue from these sources target all identified gaps and opportunities due to the variation in grant programs. Oftentimes access to grant revenue requires local cost-sharing, which allows leverage of revenue directly generated.

Direct Revenue Generation

Direct revenue generation mechanisms align costs with those who most benefit from the service. Fare, advertising, revenues from sale or renting property, and donations would constitute as direct revenue generation mechanisms.

- **Fare revenues** allow the transit rider to pay for the service directly. For rural transit providers, fare box revenues contribute 10-15% of the total budget on average due to small ridership and providers ensuring accessibility of the service in the form of lower fees. Fare revenues could provide a larger portion of the budget if ticket prices are increased marginally, and ridership is increased. Mt. Hood Express, for example, covers a substantial portion of their operating costs with fare box revenues. If fares are increased, Gorge Translink partners could provide discounts to seniors and individuals with mobility needs to ensure transportation service remains equitable. Riders must feel that the transportation services provided are useful and efficient for demand to continue at similar levels after a fare increase. To promote the use of public transportation over personal vehicles, Gorge Translink partners should conduct targeted marketing showing their services safe, comfortable, and reliable access to destinations. Along with increasing fares, Gorge Translink partners could expand the GORge Pass program to service a broader geography. Partnering with the USFS or private businesses at recreational areas could create new opportunities for revenue through stimulating demand from visitors. For example, The Cascade East Transit (CET) services Mt. Bachelor Ski Area from Bend and was funded collaboratively by Mt. Bachelor Ski Area and public sources. CET has an average annual ridership of 65,000. This model is already being discussed by some partners. Columbia Area Transit (CAT) conducted a feasibility study for a new line servicing Government Camp from Hood River and Warm Springs in 2019 and applied for a Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant.
- **Advertising revenues** provide an opportunity for local businesses and institutions to collaborate with Gorge Translink partners by purchasing advertisements displayed on buses or at transit stops and sponsoring transit activities or events.
- **Property revenues** could be leveraged by selling or leasing any surplus properties that may be owned by Gorge Translink partners. Many rural transit services utilize revenue generated from

renting office space and renting or selling surplus buses.¹⁶ A survey of surplus properties and assets could help determine the degree to which these strategies can be utilized by Gorge Translink partners.

- **Donation revenues** raised through campaigns create awareness of services in addition to raising revenue. Campaigns targeted at residents, local businesses, and institutions build a better sense of a regional community. Looking beyond donation opportunities in the Gorge Translink direct service area, outreach could be conducted where most visitors reside. For example, marketing campaigns for donations could be conducted at local Portland, OR or Vancouver, WA outdoor recreation stores.

Value Capture

Public transportation access in the Columbia Gorge can help to decrease traffic congestion, alleviate the need to construct additional parking lots, improve safety on roadways by decreasing foot traffic walking to and from personal vehicles, and decrease greenhouse gas emissions. These benefits are captured by both direct and indirect users of Gorge Translink services. The beneficiaries of these amenities include tourists to the recreation areas and towns, residents of the Columbia Gorge, and those who value conservation in the Columbia Gorge. Value capture mechanisms are designed to recuperate the costs associated with running Gorge Translink services from all those who benefit from public transportation in this region.

Value capture allows the community to share the cost of operating the transit service in the region, even if every community member does not use the service. The implementation of this mechanism takes a variety of forms:

- **Fees:** Indirect users who benefit from the existent of Gorge Translink services can help generate revenue through additional fees added to parking in towns and cities, additional fees added to recreational passes, and taxes on the sale of recreational equipment sold in the Columbia Gorge. Revenue from these sources can be predictable and have potential to generate substantial funding. Fee-based revenue sources can be implemented through collaboration with state agencies. Note that tax-based revenue sources require public support.
- **Joint Development:** FTA defines a Joint Development (JD) project, in relation to transportation, as a “project that integrally relates to, and often co-locates with commercial, residential, mixed-use, or other non-transit development”.¹⁷ The concept of JD leverages private and public investments to develop and maintain land for transportation services with the goal of providing revenue for transit agencies and value for real estate partners. This type of funding mechanism has low legal and public obstacles; however, most JD projects have taken place in more urban areas with larger transportation ridership needs. FTA-assisted JDs are eligible for funding through Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities (FTA 5310), Formula Grants for Rural Areas (FTA 5311), and Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities (FTA 5339(a)). For example, the transit agency in the City of Tyler, TX acquired a building with FTA-assistance and when it was no longer needed, the transit department leased the space to the city's Innovation Pipeline Program which was backed

¹⁶ National Transit Database. (2019) Annual Revenue Sources Database. Accessed at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/data-product/2019-annual-database-revenue-sources>

¹⁷ Federal Transit Administration. (2014) Guidance on Joint Development. Accessed at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2020-08/Joint-Development-Circular-C-7050-1B.pdf>

by private investment. The building now serves as an Innovator's Lab for public and non-profit use through programs that support ingenuity in technology in addition to serving as a transit stop.¹⁸

- **Revenue Sharing Mechanisms:** Revenue sharing occurs when stakeholders enter into an agreement to share profits or losses of a specific activity. In this context, revenue sharing could take the form of Gorge Translink partners entering into an agreement with local businesses or government agencies to generate revenue that supports both parties. For example, a voluntary surcharge could be added to transactions at local businesses that is recovered by Gorge Translink partners, ensuring the benefits of transportation services are supported by those who value them.¹⁹ A voluntary surcharge is distinct from donations because it requires a contract with another entity and requires the customer to opt-out rather than opt-in to the additional charge. This mechanism is used widely by conservation agencies, such as 1 percent Open Space in Colorado or St. Simon's Land Trust in Georgia, and has application here given that Gorge Translink services the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.^{20 21} This tool's efficacy as a revenue source depends on the agreements between the local entities and Gorge Translink partners, and the rate at which customers choose to opt-out of the surcharge. Gorge Translink partners and the partnering entity must have clear communication to the customer about the importance of transit service in the Columbia Gorge and surrounding areas. Additionally, a voluntary surcharge could help raise awareness of Gorge Translink services, thus directly increasing revenue through increased ridership.

State and Federal Grant Funds

Gorge Translink partners must balance the transportation needs of the rural communities in the Columbia Gorge with those of the users of the recreational areas. Gorge Translink partners and other transit systems serving similar populations obtain most of their budgets through state, local, and federal government entities. Nationally, rural transit systems received 48.8% of their total operating budget from the federal government as of 2020 and 45 percent from state and local funding.²² Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) offer grant funding directly to transportation operators as well as to state or local government entities who then designate a sub-recipient for the grant. Gorge Translink partners have previously leveraged funding directly and through designation as a sub-recipient. In 2019, the FTA Formula Grants for Rural Areas (FTA 5311) disbursed \$228,557 to Gorge Translink partners.²³

18 Federal Transit Administration. (2017) Joint Development Brochure. Accessed at: <https://www.metrotransit.org/Data/Sites/1/media/tod/joint-development-brochure.pdf>

19 United States Forestry Service (USFS). (n.d.) Conservation Finance Toolkit: Voluntary Surcharge. Accessed at:

www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/Con-Fin-Example-Voluntary-Surcharge-Overview.pdf

20 Tamarisk Coalition Funding Webinar Series. (n.d.) Understanding Voluntary Surcharge Programs. Accessed at: riversedgewest.org/sites/default/files/resource-center-documents/Molly%20Presentation_01.17.14.pdf

21 St. Simon's Land Trust. (2017) Pennies for Preservation. Accessed at: www.sslt.org/donate/pennies-for-preservation/

22 Federal Transit Administration. (2020) National Transit Summaries and Trends. Accessed at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/2022-01/2020%20National%20Transit%20Summaries%20and%20Trends%201-1.pdf>

23 National Transit Database. (2019) Annual Revenue Sources Database. Accessed at: <https://www.transit.dot.gov/ntd/data-product/2019-annual-database-revenue-sources>

The Gorge Translink service to the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area presents new opportunities for grant funding that relate to how public transportation in the region helps to sustain and increase access to national forests. Some representative grant programs that could help move new funding systems forward include:

- **National Forest Foundation (Congressionally chartered):** the Foundation's Innovative Finance for National Forest Grant (IFNF) program aims to improve financial sustainability of the National Forest System to ensure its preservation and the benefits to visitors and communities. The 2021 IFNF grants were disbursed to a wide range of projects from researching finance opportunities for recreational areas to developing a resilience fund for wildfire damage.²⁴ One relevant example of the 2021 disbursements is the Financing Innovative Partnership for Rural Recreation Infrastructure. The award was given to Inyo National Forest in California and Mount Baker-Snoqualmine National Forest in Washington to develop plans for financing infrastructure improvements to increase tourist access. Project funding will be leveraged through permit negotiations and external sources, such as local recreation councils
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (Congressionally chartered):** NFWF grants aim to "sustain, restore, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats".²⁵ Grants are awarded on a competitive basis to federal, state, and local governments, and nonprofit organizations. The Foundation runs a wide-range of conservation programs with funding attached to them, with the most relevant being environmental sustainability related to emissions or waste-water run-off from structures. In 2016, the Pennsylvania Resource Council was awarded \$39,959 to create more green structures for public transit, reducing pollution to watersheds and increasing education around stormwater and watershed pollution.²⁶
- **Northwest Fund for the Environment:** NWFE is an endowed foundation which offers grants ranging from \$500 - \$20,000 that support preservation of Washington State's natural resources. The Friends of the Columbia Gorge were awarded \$10,000 to continue development of the Gorge Management Plan in 2021. The Management Plan covers a comprehensive list of topics related to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. In the 2020 Management Plan, the Gorge Commission specifically called out the need to "convene regional partners engaged with sustainable transportation planning and coordinate strategies on alternatives to automobile transit to achieve multiple objectives under the Act and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions".²⁷ Gorge Translink partners in Washington state are eligible to leverage these grants to support public transportation to the Columbia Gorge.
- **Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP):** FHWA provides funding for increasing access to the federal lands through improved road transportation and transit systems. \$270 million was allocated to this program in 2020. FLAP under the Infrastructure Investment Jobs Act allocates \$11.6 million to Washington and \$37.8 million to Oregon for 2022.

24 National Forest Foundation. (2021) IFNF Press Release. Accessed at:

https://www.nationalforests.org/assets/pdfs/IFNF-Press-Release_Rnd2Awards_2021.pdf

25 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. (n.d.) Apply for a Grant. Accessed at:

<https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant>

26 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. (2016) A Match for a Healthy Environment Utilizing Green Roofs and Public Transit (PA). Accessed at:

www.nfwf.org/grants/grants-library/profile?egid=51951

27 The Gorge Commission. (2020) Management Plan. Accessed at:

www.gorgecommission.org/images/uploads/pages/Revised_Management_Plan.pdf

There are also often various annual grant programs from state and federal agencies, depending on annual budget conditions and processes. These programs often require local cost-sharing or matches, particularly for capital projects. Locally generated funds can be used to leverage these state and federal opportunities. Gorge Translink partners and the Mobility Manager should track FTA and FHWA grant opportunities, such as 5311 and 5310, and explore other grant opportunities through foundations that promote access to the National Forest System.

Special Purpose District

A special purpose district in Oregon or Washington is a local government entity that serves a specific purpose and remains separate from a city or county government. These districts can provide services such as emergency response, fire and police, water and wastewater, libraries, parks and recreation, and transportation services. Often special districts can respond to the needs of the community more rapidly than other government entities, link benefits and costs of projects, and develop solutions to unique needs.

The relevant benefit to Gorge Translink partners establishing themselves as a special transportation district is the availability of funding through levying property taxes within the service area and accessing funding directly from the federal or state government and private sources. Additionally, the Special District Association of Oregon and Municipal Resource and Service Center in Washington support special purpose districts with grant writing, formation, and general trainings on operations.

- **Transportation benefit districts (TBD) in Washington.**²⁸ Formation of a TBD requires a petition to the county legislative authority followed by an election to determine if the majority of residents or landowners wish to form a district. Tax levies must be authorized by voters of the district. In Washington, a special purpose district is not necessarily a tax district and has to gain that authority before levying taxes. For a regular tax levy, the aggregate levy rate is limited to \$5.90 per one thousand dollars of assessed valuation of property within the boundaries of any city or county (RCW 84.52.043(2)). This implies that residents outside of the service area of the district but within the county or city limits would be subject to the tax and thus, the ballot would need their approval. For an excess tax levy for operations and maintenance, the aggregate rate limit is the same as for a regular levy and requires voter approval of 60 percent of 40 percent of those voting in the last general election (RCW 84.52.052).
- **Special Transportation District in Oregon.**²⁹ Formation of this type of district requires either a petition to the county board and subsequent approval (ORS 198.800) or consent from all owners of real property within the area of the proposed district (ORS 198.830). An election will be held if the petition is approved, and one is required if the district intends to impose a permanent tax. An election is not required if all landowners in the district have consented to the formation of the district or if the county board waves the election (except if it contains a permanent tax). Under ORS 198.750, tax rate limits should be calculated for the latest tax year that the value of the proposed district has been assessed for.

28 Municipal Research and Service Center (MRSC). (2003) Special Purpose Districts in Washington State. Accessed at:

mrsc.org/getmedia/f8cd14a6-1144-4aae-ba39-cda3be643db5/Special-Purpose-Districts-In-Washington-State.pdf.aspx?ext=.pdf

29 Special Districts Association of Oregon. (n.d.) Administrative Handbook. Accessed at: www.sdao.com/files/5affcd2e1/2022+SDAO+Administrative+Handbook.pdf

Regional Transit Cooperative

A regional transit cooperative (co-op) provides services directly to a community, like a local business. The difference between a co-op and a traditional business lies in the ownership structure. In the co-op, operations are financed by the community for mutual benefit and any earnings paid out equally across the members. In the case of Gorge Translink partners establishing themselves as a regional transit co-op, funding would be channeled to the co-op from the existing Gorge Translink partners.

The need for a regional transit system should be identifiable to the community in the service area to elicit their participation in providing financial and direct support to the transit system. As an example, the Greater Yellowstone regional transportation system, The Linx, was launched under a co-op model with the intent to gain funding from FTA grant programs (specifically, 5307, 5311, 5311(f)), medical non-emergency transportation funding, and general city, county, and state funding.³⁰ Other private and public transportation systems in the Greater Yellowstone region were funded through the same sources, with their fare box revenues ranging between 4-12% — similar to the levels achieved by partners within Gorge Translink partners. The Linx was suspended in March 2014 due to lack of continued funding.³¹ The majority of the ridership on the Linx was Yellowstone National Park Employees which disqualified the Greater Yellowstone Regional Transportation Co-op from receiving an FTA grant distributed through the state of Wyoming.

The co-op model would be feasible in an area with strong community ties and vested interest in governance of their area. The residents of Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Klickitat, and Skamania counties could have more awareness of and input on transit issues through the formation of a co-op. As identified in the Preliminary Governance Scenarios (Table 5), creating a co-op can improve likelihood of receiving grants by centralizing the grant writing and monitoring process for the member agencies. Gorge Translink partners are unlikely to face the same funding limitations as The Linx given that most of the ridership is visitors to the Columbia Gorge and senior residents. Additionally, the inherent coordination between community members in the co-op model could improve efforts to raise revenue through advertising, donations, and fundraising events, and garner more support from local governments.

30 Greater Yellowstone Regional Transportation Co-op. (2010) Feasibility Study. Accessed at: irp.idaho.gov/Documents%20and%20Settings/14/Site%20Documents/Linx%20Feasibility%20Study%20Exec%20Summary.pdf

31 Teton Valley News. (2014) "Linx to suspend routes in Yellowstone National Park". Accessed at: www.tetonvalleynews.net/page2/linx-to-suspend-routes-in-yellowstone-national-park/article_bdc3b676-bb7e-11e3-bbe0-001a4bcf887a.html

Table 6. Summary of Revenue Sources

Direct Use				
Funding source	Description	Benefits	Difficulties	Revenue Capacity
Fare Revenue	Gorge Translink partners can establish or raise fare fees.	Provides direct connection between cost of services and those who benefit.	Burdens low-income, and elderly individuals, and those with mobility needs. Less predictable funding source due to varying ridership.	Limited capacity due to scale of ridership.
Advertising Revenue	Gorge Translink partners sell space on capital resources or website for advertisement to local businesses and institutions.	Easy to implement and can be a consistent revenue source. Has not been leveraged yet by Gorge Translink partners.	Installation of structures that support advertising would need to be paid for by Gorge Translink partners, such as brackets for bus advertisements, or screens at bus stations.	Moderate revenue capacity as constrained by available space.
Donation Revenue	Gorge Translink partners with local businesses and Parks and Recreation Departments to collect donations; adds donation boxes to transit infrastructure; hosts events or activities (such as a raffle).	Increases community awareness of Gorge Translink services. Provides direct connection between cost of services and those who benefit. Applicable to funding specific projects associated with First-Mile Last-Mile gaps defined in Memo #3.	Inconsistent revenue stream as it depends on the public's willingness to contribute.	Limited revenue capacity as constrained by efforts from Gorge Translink partners to recuperate donations and the public's willingness to give.
Value Capture				
Funding source	Description	Benefits	Difficulties	Revenue Capacity

<p>Revenue Sharing</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners with local businesses to add an opt-out voluntary surcharge at point-of-sale.</p>	<p>Opt-out voluntary surcharges can be more effective than soliciting donations. Provides a direct connection between costs and those who benefit from Gorge Translink services.</p>	<p>Inconsistent revenue stream as it depends on the public's willingness to contribute.</p>	<p>Limited revenue capacity as constrained by efforts from Gorge Translink partners to gain support from businesses and the public's willingness to give.</p>
<p>Parking fee</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners with state park departments to raise day-use and annual parking pass fees.</p>	<p>Incentivizes use of transportation services thus decreasing dis-amenities from personal vehicle traffic. Predictable and stable in short-run.</p>	<p>Coordination and administrative oversight of criteria for transferring funds from state parks departments and city governments to Gorge Translink partners.</p>	<p>Substantial revenue capacity. (Washington State Discover Passes generated \$21 million in revenue in 2017)</p>
<p>Sales Tax</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners gain authority to levy an ad valorem sales tax in service area for a limited time.</p>	<p>Semi-fiscally stable and predictable.</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners would need to establish themselves as a special district, not necessarily a tax district. Requires voter approval.</p>	<p>Substantial revenue capacity. In Washington, TBDs can levy an additional sales tax up to 0.2% and Public Transportation Benefits Areas can levy up to 0.9%.</p>
<p>Property Tax</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners gain authority to levy an ad valorem property tax in the service area for a limited time.</p>	<p>Fiscally stable and predictable funding source.</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners would need to establish themselves as a tax district in Washington (per RCW 84.04.120) or as a special purpose district in Oregon (ORS 198.010 and ORS 198.335). Substantial government and public support. Requires voter approval.</p>	<p>Substantial revenue capacity.</p>

<p>Excise Tax</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners gain authority through local government entities to levy an excise tax on recreational equipment, recreation rentals, and/or recreational parking passes purchased in the services area.</p>	<p>Semi-fiscally stable and predictable. Ease of implementation and direct translation of tax dollars to tourism use of the transit system.</p>	<p>Gorge Translink Partners coordinate with local governments to implement an excise tax and divert funds to operate the Gorge Translink. Requires voter approval.</p>	<p>Revenue dependent on sale of recreational equipment in service area.</p>	
<p>State and Federal Grant Funds</p>					
<p>Funding source</p>	<p>Description</p>	<p>Benefits</p>	<p>Difficulties</p>	<p>Revenue Capacity</p>	<p>Grant Type</p>
<p>Diversion of Tax Revenue from Property, Income, Payroll, or Sales</p>	<p>Gorge Translink partners agree upon a fixed percentage range of tax revenue to be diverted to support Gorge Translink operation and capital expenditures for a short-term horizon from local governments' general funds.</p>	<p>Fiscally stable and predictable funding source.</p>	<p>Public support needed across the counties that Gorge Translink operates in. Higher level of cooperation between government entities. Does not require voter approval.</p>	<p>Substantial revenue capacity.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>FTA 5310 - Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities</p>	<p>Grant program aims to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation service and expanding transportation mobility options,</p>	<p>Flexible use cases and eligibility. Applicable to addressing the First-mile Last-mile gap identified in Memo #3.</p>	<p>Requires disbursement from local or state government entities.</p>	<p>Substantial revenue capacity.</p>	<p>Funds administered through state government to subrecipients including local government or operators of transit system.</p>

	including rural areas.				
FTA 5311 - Grants for Rural Areas	Grants within the 5311 section provide funds for operating, capital construction, and planning of transportation systems in rural areas.	Flexible use cases and eligibility. Applicable to helping bolster Gorge Translink partners' service to Moderate or High as defined in Memo #3.	Requires disbursement from local or state government entities.	Substantial revenue capacity.	Formula. Funds administered to state or local government.
FTA 5339(a) - Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities	Provides funding to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities.	Funding for new construction along expanded route. Applicable to increasing capital to address the First-mile Last-mile gap identified in Memo #3.	Requires disbursement from local or state government entities.	Substantial revenue capacity.	Formula. Funds administered through state or local government to subrecipients including public or non-profit entities that operate transit systems.
Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF)	Introduced in 2017, this program provides funding for the operation, administration, and planning of public transportation in Oregon fully funded with a payroll tax levy. For FY2021-23, the Public Transportation Advisory Committee allocated \$10.45 million in funding.	Specific funding for public transportation improvement. Focused on technology improvements for rural transit providers.	Only available for Oregon Gorge Translink partners.	Substantial revenue capacity.	90% of funds allocated by population formula; 4% for competitive intercommunity funds; 5% for competitive discretionary funds; 1% for resource centers.

<p>FHWA Fedel Lands Access Program (FLAP) Grants</p>	<p>Program encourages access to public lands through improved transportation systems. Funding is allocated to states based on the percentage of total U.S. public lands.</p>	<p>Broad usage of funding with an emphasis including construction or improvements of roadways, transit system upgrades or creation.</p>	<p>Requires disbursement from local or state government entities.</p>	<p>Substantial revenue capacity.</p>	<p>Competitive. Projects must be approved by state Programming Decision Committee (PDC).</p>
<p>National Forest Foundation – Innovative Finance for National Forest Grant</p>	<p>Program focuses on preservation and increasing access to the National Forestry System.</p>	<p>Funding for operations that encourage tourism to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area in alignment with Coordination Opportunities defined in Memo #3.</p>	<p>Narrower use case for funding.</p>	<p>Moderate revenue capacity.</p>	<p>Competitive.</p>
<p>National Fish and Wildlife Foundation</p>	<p>Grants are attached to conservation programs whose purpose is to sustain natural areas.</p>	<p>Funding for supporting emissions reduction measures or building/retrofitting capital for environmental sustainability.</p>	<p>Narrower use case for funding. This funding does not directly address the identified gaps in Gorge Translink partners' services.</p>	<p>Moderate revenue capacity.</p>	<p>Competitive and conservation program specific.</p>
<p>Northwest Foundation for the Environment</p>	<p>Grants are disbursed based on the project's ability to preserve natural resources.</p>	<p>Funding is awarded to a broad range of organizations and projects that support the environment or encourage engagement with natural resources.</p>	<p>Recipients must be in Washington State. Narrower use case for funding.</p>	<p>Limited revenue capacity.</p>	<p>Competitive.</p>