Wasco County

Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan

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Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

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Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan

Executive Summary

The Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan was prepared by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) to meet the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) requirements and the State of Oregon's requirements for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Qualified Entities. MCEDD has operated The Link Public Transportation for Wasco County since 2018, providing operational, management, and administrative services.

The Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan will be referred to as the Coordinated Plan in this document.

Target Populations

The Coordinated Plan focuses on addressing the transportation needs of four target populations residing in Wasco County:

1. Older Adults and Native American Elders
2. Individuals with low incomes
3. Individuals with disabilities
4. Individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

Older Adult and Elder Population

Wasco County residents are older and more likely to have a disability than the statewide average. One-fifth of the population of the County (20.7%) is over the age of 65, which represents a higher proportion when compared to the State at 19.3%.[1] And although Wasco County's population is forecasted to remain relatively stable, Wasco County's population is aging, which means the County's older age cohorts are growing as a share of the County's total population. There will be a growing number of older adults needing to access the transportation programs in the County.[2]

Individuals with Low Incomes

The Wasco County STIF Plan defines all of Wasco County as an area with a high percentage of low-income households: 1) "Low Income Household" is a household the total income of which does not

[1] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2018-2022
[2] https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/opfp/66/

exceed 200% of the federal poverty level. 2) "High Percentage of Low-Income Households" is defined as higher than the Oregon state average. Data from the American Community Survey 2018-22 5-year estimate was used to calculate the percentage of low-income households in Wasco County at 35% (3788 households) by using the dataset for individuals and converting it to households using the average household size of 2.41 for Wasco County.[3]

The Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee reviewed but rejected census tract-level data, feeling that the low-income Latino population of the County was underrepresented at that geography. All of Wasco County is designated as an area with a high percentage of low-income households in The Link Public Transportation's STIF Plan. More than 1 in 3 residents of Wasco County (35%) live with incomes below 200% of the 2022 federal poverty threshold, or $27,180. For a family of four, the threshold is a total income of $55,500.[4]

Residents with low incomes struggle to meet basic needs, including food, clothing, housing, and transportation. Public transportation can be a lifeline to these families and individuals, giving them access to critical resources and services and allowing access to opportunity by providing affordable transportation to jobs and higher education.

Individuals with Disabilities

The American Community Survey defines an individual with disabilities as a person who has serious difficulty with four basic areas of functioning – hearing, vision, cognition, and ambulation. At 18%, the percentage of people with a disability living in Wasco County is higher than the State's average of 14.9%.[5] Both fixed route and demand-response public transportation services can provide these residents with the ability to live with more independence and to participate more fully in community life.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Individuals

This fourth focal point targets the needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals and was added at the recommendation of the 2016 Association of Oregon Counties/ODOT Pilot Project that focused on better coordinating the transportation needs of LEP individuals in Hood River, Wasco and Sherman Counties. This work was first incorporated into the 2016-2020 Coordinated Plan.

Individuals with limited English language skills face many barriers when accessing public services like transportation. With thoughtful planning and outreach efforts and policies, a transportation provider can help to mitigate these difficulties and can create a more accessible system for all residents.

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[3] U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2018-2022

[4] https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines

[5] https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2022.S1810?q=disabilities%20in%20Oregon

What is a Coordinated Plan?

A Coordinated Plan is developed as a tool to help local transportation providers and communities improve transportation services, increase efficiency of service delivery, and expand outreach to meet growing needs. It provides a framework to guide the investment of transportation resources.
As such a resource, this plan will evaluate the community resources and identify strategies to address gaps in transportation services as well as in efficiencies of service delivery.

This document is an update to the 2020-2024 Wasco County Coordinated Transportation Plan. It was updated using information collected from the previous coordinated transportation plan and other relevant planning efforts, demographic sources, new surveys and outreach efforts, and current service resources. The Coordinated Plan includes relevant information from these local and regional planning efforts:

- 2022 Wasco County Transit Development Plan
- 2023 Wasco County Rural Transportation Equity Project
- 2023 Gorge Regional Transit Strategy
- 2023 Nch'i Wana Housing Community Needs Assessment

Coordinated Plan Priorities

A Coordinated Plan is intended to define and prioritize general strategies that the transit service providers can use to address gaps and barriers. High priority strategies to address gaps and barriers, as recommended by the Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee, fell under six categories. Performance measures linked to the below strategies were created to help the public transportation provider assess how it is meeting these strategies over time.

Sustain Existing Transportation Services	• Maintain dial-a-ride transportation operations. • Maintain shopping bus programs. • Maintain deviated fixed route services. • Maintain intercity service from The Dalles to Hood River. • Maintain MCEDD's Travel Training program.

Service Expansion	• Expand service hours, service area, and frequencies as funding becomes available. • Improve efficiencies of deviated-fixed route services. • Address employment transportation needs with fixed routes, increased frequencies, and vanpools. • Improve bus stop amenities. • Explore multi-modal options such as bike share, car share, and vanpool.
Operations	• Provide for replacement of vehicles that have exceeded their useful life. • Provide funding for vehicle repair and preventative maintenance for safe and reliable transport. • Continue to support fleet electrification development and infrastructure or other options that reduce transportation emissions. • Improve dispatching technology and data reporting tools. • Maintain affordable fares. • Address staff language and cultural training skills to meet the needs of those with Limited English Proficiency. • Adopt strategies to diversify transit staff and hire Spanish speaking drivers and dispatchers. • Adopt appropriate technologies to enhance rider facing tools. • Adopt technology that will enhance coordination with other transportation providers.
Stable funding	• Continue to leverage match against state and federal grants. • Identify and utilize potential additional sources/partners to support local operational funding or local match. • Work with Medicaid partners to increase The Link's share of Non-Emergency Medical

	Transportation rides and to secure contracts with a rate methodology that accurately reflects the true cost of services. • Continue to work with ODOT to identify stable funding sources to maintain services.
Marketing/Education/Outreach	• Improve bilingual marketing and public awareness of the County's transportation services and how to access them. • Address safety and security concerns and needs of a diverse population. • Address the ease of using the system for target populations with better connections to natural community points. • Market and promote the system to ensure target populations are aware of the services available. • Develop targeted needs assessments and outreach and travel training programs for specific populations including Veterans, Native Americans, and people with disabilities.
Planning and Coordination	• Strengthen partnerships with the regional public transportation providers through the Gorge TransLink Alliance. • Attend the regular meetings of organizations representative of the target populations. • Leverage stronger partnerships with human service agencies. • Leverage partnerships with the Columbia Gorge Community College, large employers and businesses, local government leaders and staff.

The Link Public Transportation: Staff and families at The Dalles' Starlight Parade 2023

The Link Public Transportation bus pulling into The Dalles Transit Center

Introduction

Federal and State Requirements

This Coordinated Plan meets both federal and state requirements for preparation and adoption of a Coordinated Plan. Projects submitted for FTA and State funding must be included in the Coordinated Plan or similarly acceptable adopted plan.

Federal

With the passage of Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation authorization in 2005, Congress required a "locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" intended to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, individuals who are elderly, and individuals with lower incomes. Plans must be updated every 5 years.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires recipients of FTA Section 5310 program funds to engage in a coordinated planning process to broaden the dialogue and support coordination between public transportation and human services agencies to address the needs of key target populations. These funds are administered by the states.

State

Consolidation of the Special Transportation Fund (STF) and Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) public transportation funding programs was directed by Senate Bill 1601 in 2020. The purpose of the merger was to increase efficiency and funding reliability for public transportation providers throughout Oregon.

The STF was created in 1985 by the Oregon Legislature to provide transportation services needed to access health, education, work, social, and recreational opportunities so that seniors and people with disabilities may live as independently and productively as possible. The STF received funds from cigarette tax revenue, excess revenue earned from the sales of photo ID Cards, and other funds for the Oregon Department of Transportation. The STIF was established in Section 122 of House Bill 2017 (also known as Keep Oregon Moving) to provide a dedicated source of funding for improving, maintaining, or expanding public transportation for all users. The STIF was created through a new state payroll tax of one-tenth of 1 percent that is dedicated to funding transportation improvements in Oregon.
Wasco County is the STIF Qualified Entity that receives these state transportation funds. The Wasco County STIF Advisory Committee was established by the Wasco County Board of County Commissioners on August 1, 2018, in accordance with the state rules for receiving the STIF dollars for Wasco County. In June 2020, the Wasco County STF and STIF Advisory Committees were merged into one committee called the Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC). As operator of The Link

Public Transportation, MCEDD serves as staff to this committee and helps the PTAC to develop a STIF Plan that includes a list of projects required to address the transportation needs of people residing in or traveling into and out of the Qualified Entity's area of responsibility.

The State of Oregon also requires Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Qualified Entities to have a current approved Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan in order to receive STIF funds. These plans must be updated every 3 years. The Federal Transit Administration requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 program to improve transportation programs and services for seniors and people with disabilities are included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, updated every 5 years.

Plan Purpose and Intent

The purpose of the plan is to meet federal and state requirements and to provide a framework for transportation providers and Wasco County to maximize transportation investments to assist four target populations: seniors, individuals with low incomes, individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency individuals. It covers a four-year planning horizon (2024-2028) and should be reviewed at least every three years or as conditions change.

The Coordinated Plan addresses the existing transportation services and needs of residents in Wasco County, Oregon, and identifies available resources and strategies to create efficiencies, reduce redundancy, and continue to enable high-quality public transportation services. The Coordinated Plan seeks to improve the mobility of all Wasco County residents, focusing on the target populations and ensuring that those who rely on public transportation have access to medical care, jobs, higher education, social connectivity, recreation, and other basic services to maintain quality of life.

Planning Area

The planning area covered under this Coordinated Plan is Wasco County, Oregon, established in 1854. Wasco County is located on the northern border of Oregon between Hood River and Sherman counties. The County covers 2,381 square miles with an average of approximately 11 people per square mile.[6] It is bordered by the Columbia River to the north, Deschutes River to the east, Warm Springs Reservation to the south, and Mt. Hood National Forest to the west. Incorporated cities include The Dalles, Dufur, Maupin, Mosier, Antelope, and Shaniko. Antelope (37 people) and Shaniko (30 people)[7] however, are smaller than many CDP's and unincorporated areas. The nearest metropolitan area is Portland, Oregon, 80 miles to the west.

[6]www.opendatanetwork.com/entity/0500000US41065/Wasco_County_OR/geographic.population.density?year=2018

[7] 2020 Decennial Census

The most northern section of Wasco County is within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area which encompasses six counties across two states, Oregon and Washington, along the Columbia River. This federal designation ties the region together. Residents, including those in the four special populations of this Coordinated Plan, cross jurisdictional borders daily to meet multiple needs.

Planning Process

Public Involvement and Outreach

This Coordinated Plan was updated based on input from the local transit provider, the Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and interested members of the public. Stakeholders include the target populations, agencies with significant contact with the four special needs populations, and entities providing transportation services, human service agencies, community organizations, medical facilities, and the public. Stakeholders were involved in identifying transportation needs of the target populations, the transportation resources available, and strategies to address the needs.

The following public outreach efforts have informed the 2024 update to the Coordinated Plan:

1. Wasco County 2022 Transit Development Plan
2. Wasco County Planning's 2022-23 Rural Transportation Equity Outreach
3. The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy (2023)
4. 2023 Nch'i Wana Housing Community Needs Assessment
5. The Link's 2023-24 Innovative Mobility Program Community Outreach
6. Onboard surveys and public comment collected in 2024 through the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Implementation Project

Public Transportation Advisory Committee

The Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) is appointed by the Wasco County Board of County Commissioners to provide recommendations on funding priorities consistent with the state or federal program guidance for each public transportation fund source and in the best interest of the citizens of Wasco County. The PTAC specifically advises and assists Wasco County in carrying out the requirements of two funding programs: the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310). As such, the PTAC serves as the STIF Advisory Committee for Wasco County and the Wasco County Board of County Commissioners.

The Public Transportation Advisory Committee members reflect the County's diverse interests, perspectives, geography, and the demographics. The committee includes at least one member each who is a member of or represents the following three groups:
(a) Low-income individuals
(b) Older adults or people with disabilities
(c) Public Transportation Service Providers or non-profit entities which provide public transportation service.

Additionally, the PTAC includes up to four (4) additional members may be representatives from any of the following groups:

- Local governments, including land use planners
- Non-profit public transportation service providers
- Neighboring public transportation service providers
- Employers
- Social and human service providers
- Transit dependent users
- Social equity advocates
- Environmental advocates
- Bicycle and pedestrian advocates
- People with limited-English proficiency
- Educational institutions
- Major destinations

Current Public Transportation Advisory Committee members:

- Committee Chair Louise Sargent, representing individuals aged 65 or older
- Melissa Napoli, representing residents of South Wasco County
- Vice-chair Lee Bryant, representing individuals aged 65 or older
- Rita Rathkey, AGE+, representing individuals aged 65 or older and people with disabilities
- Christopher Howell, representing people with disabilities
- Celeste Peralta, The Next Door, Inc. representing low-income individuals and people with Limited English Proficiency
- Jesus Mendoza, The Link Public Transportation, representing public transportation service providers and the Latino community

Public Meetings

Public meetings were held on the following dates for the 2024 plan update:

- Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee, The Dalles Transit Center Conference Room, The Dalles: April 2024, October 2024
- Wasco County Board of Commissioners, County Building, The Dalles: November 6, 2024

Regional Planning Efforts and Needs Assessments

2022 Wasco County Transit Development Plan

Completed in 2022, the Wasco County Transit Development Plan outlined strategies and recommendations to enhance transit services throughout the County and improve transit accessibility, connectivity, and sustainability throughout the region. By expanding service hours, enhancing route coverage, and upgrading transit infrastructure, the plan was designed to meet the diverse needs of residents and visitors alike. Through strategic policy recommendations and development requirements, the plan also sought to integrate transit considerations into local planning efforts, fostering a more connected and transit-supportive community. Overall, the plan aimed to create a more robust and integrated transit system in Wasco County.

Overview and Key Challenges: The Transit Development Plan (TDP) for Wasco County assessed the existing transit system, highlighting its strengths and areas needing improvement. It identified key challenges such as limited-service hours, insufficient route coverage, and the need for better infrastructure at transit stops.

Goals and Objectives: The TDP set ambitious goals to enhance transit services across the County. These goals include improving service accessibility, increasing connectivity between communities, and promoting environmental sustainability through transit investments. The objectives aimed to achieve these goals by expanding service coverage, enhancing service frequency, and improving the quality of transit amenities.

Strategies for Service Expansion: To meet the identified goals, the plan proposed several strategic actions:

- **Service Enhancement**: Increasing the frequency of dial-a-ride services and extending service hours, particularly on weekends and evenings.
- **Route Expansion**: Introducing new transit routes to connect underserved areas and improving connections between existing routes.
- **Infrastructure Upgrades**: Installing benches, signage, and shelters at transit stops to improve comfort and accessibility for riders.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation: A critical aspect of the TDP is the establishment of performance metrics to track the effectiveness of implemented strategies. Metrics include service frequency, on-time performance, ridership levels, and customer satisfaction. This data-driven approach allows for adjustments and improvements to be made based on real-time feedback and evaluation.

Policy and Development Recommendations: The plan recommended integrating transit-supportive policies into local comprehensive plans and development ordinances. This includes:

- **Policy Amendments**: Adopting transit-supportive policy statements to guide future transit investments and land use decisions.
- **Development Requirements**: Updating zoning ordinances to ensure new developments support transit use, including provisions for adequate access to transit stops and minimizing parking requirements to encourage transit ridership.

Integration with Local Plans: Encouraging local jurisdictions within Wasco County to align their planning efforts with the TDP's goals. This involves incorporating transit considerations into comprehensive plans and development codes to foster a more transit-friendly environment.

Future Planning Considerations: The TDP emphasizes the importance of integrating transit stops with existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. This includes coordinating improvements such as bike lanes and pedestrian pathways with transit stop locations to enhance multimodal connectivity.

Public Involvement
The project process included several touchpoints where stakeholders and the public could provide input, including a project webpage, stakeholder outreach events, an online/on-board survey, and an open house.

2023 Wasco County Rural Transportation Equity Project

The Wasco County Rural Transportation Equity project was an outreach project lead by Wasco County and MCEDD to learn more about the transportation needs of South Wasco County residents and seasonal agricultural employees around The Dalles. The project activities included interviewing employers and agencies who support seasonal workers, conducting transportation surveys at two events in Wamic and Maupin, working with The Next Door Inc to host a Spanish-language focus group, and promoting transit services at events.

Key Takeaways:

- Ski resorts are diversifying into summer recreational activities.
- Reliable transportation is a challenge for South County employees who don’t have many travel options.
- There is interest in employee vanpools.
- More Spanish-language outreach about Dial-a-Ride and bus routes is needed.

2023 Gorge Regional Transit Strategy

Formalized in 2010, Gorge TransLink Alliance is a partnership of the five rural public transportation providers in the Mid-Columbia region. The purpose of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy was to develop a roadmap for a regionally coordinated and integrated public transportation system in a rural five-county, bi-state region adjacent to the large metropolitan areas of Portland/Vancouver.

Stakeholder Advisory Group

Public and Private Transit Providers
Tribal Representatives
Local Governments and Ports
Land Managers
Veterans Services Organizations
Hood River County Energy Council
State and Federal Government and Agencies
Health and Wellness Organizations
Higher Education
Local Employers
Local, Regional, and Federal Planning
Tourism and Outdoor Recreation
Historic Columbia River Highway
USDA Forest Service
Active Transportation Liaisons
Nonprofits and Community Based Organizations

Phase 1 concluded in Winter 2021 and focused on strengthening partnerships, analyzing local transportation plans in the Columbia Gorge, and developing a collective regional vision. The main objective of Phase 1 was to combine the goals, policies, and priorities of local transportation planning efforts to provide a foundation for the work of the regional stakeholders to develop the vision and goals that would guide the implementation strategies of the next phase. Phase 2 work focused on a more comprehensive implementation strategy including further data analysis, funding and financial planning, assessment of potential regional organizational structures, and operational and policy strategies.

The final document was adopted by each of the five counties with prioritized and actionable strategies and recommendations, including a transit map that clearly articulates the Region's vision of a successful regional transit system.

Public Outreach included an online survey and open house.

- Increased transit service (i.e., increased service hours, higher frequency) in the Gorge was ranked as the highest priority to help people access places they need to go.
- Increasing first-mile / last-mile access, addressing geographical constraints (more stops, trips, and connections), and smoother transfers were also high priorities for respondents.
- People mentioned the need for transit service across the region where communities like Lyle are currently not served by transit.

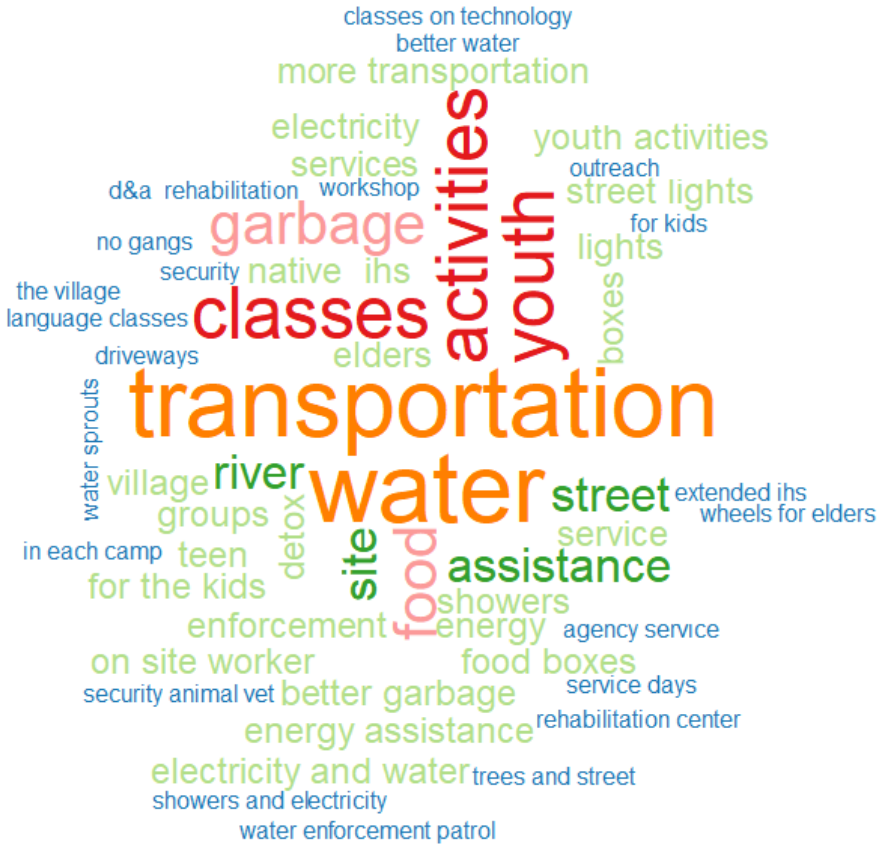
VISION: *Public transit supports thriving Columbia River Gorge communities by providing access to critical services, higher education, jobs, and outdoor recreation while protecting the natural wonders of the Gorge.*

2023 Nch'i Wana Housing Community Needs Assessment

The Nch'i Wana Housing Community Needs Assessment was initiated by Nch'i Wana Housing to determine the level of housing instability experienced by residents of Columbia River Treaty and In-lieu fishing sites and adjacent communities and to understand and address other community needs. The assessment also collected information on respondent characteristics such as employment and income, ability to access needs like healthcare, and on respondents' interest in other potential programs, including employment training, transportation, cultural programs, and support for small businesses. MCEDD and The Link Public Transportation were invited to submit a transportation needs section for the Needs Survey. The survey received responses from 87% of the target population, with most respondents completing the survey in person with field staff.

Lack of transportation was cited as a major barrier to accessing needed healthcare services, obtaining new employment, and pursuing continuing education, and 41.3% of respondents worried about having transportation in the past year, meaning that improving transportation accessibility in the Gorge area for this community must be a priority.

What kinds of new services would you like to see in your community?



Demographic Profiles and Analysis

Population Data

Wasco County, established in 1854, is home to six cities and five census-designated places (CDPs) with small population concentrations. Wasco County is also home to Celilo Village, the site of one of the oldest continually inhabited tribal centers in the world, and Lone Pine, a Tribal In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Site with permanent residents.[8]

Wasco County Total Population	26,639

Cities	Population[9]
Antelope	37
Dufur	632
Maupin	427
Mosier	468
Shaniko	30
The Dalles	16,010
Census-Designated Places (CDPs)	
Pine Grove	142
Pine Hollow	531
Rowena	192
Tygh Valley	236
Wamic	123
Tribal Communities	
Celilo Village	85[10]
Lone Pine In-lieu Site	40[11]
Simnasho (Warm Springs Reservation)	No census data

In addition to the U.S. Census data estimates noted above, recent population data is also available from the Portland State University (PSU) Population Research Center and the State of Oregon's Office of

[8] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/wasco-county-or#economy

[9] 2020 Decennial Census

[10] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/wasco-county-or#economy

[11] 2023 Nch'I Wana Housing Community Needs Assessment

Economic Analysis. The 2024-2074 Coordinated Population Forecast by the PSU Population Research Center shows that the 10-year Compound Annual Growth Rate of Wasco County at .55% is slower than that of the state as a whole, which has seen a CAGR of .69% over the last decade.[12]

The City of The Dalles is the County Seat and the largest population center in the County and serves as a hub for healthcare, commerce, legal services, human services, education, transportation and employment. The top three industries in Wasco County are 1) Health Care & Social Assistance, 2) Retail Trade, and 3) Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting.[13]

Demographic Data Overview

Planning for special transportation services is contingent upon the need for the service, thus understanding County population demographics and future population projections are important. Data from the American Community Survey 2018-2022, 5-year estimates, were used to provide a fuller snapshot of Wasco County's special needs populations.

Population	Wasco County	Oregon
Total population	26,639	4,233,358
Population 65 years and over	20.7%	18.3%
Individuals with a disability	18.5%	14.9%
Individuals living below the federal poverty level	11.7%	11.9%
individuals living below 200% federal poverty level	35%	33%
Hispanic or Latino individuals	19.9%	14.9%
Native American	2.6%	1.1%
Veterans	10.5%	7.8%
Individuals who speak a language other than English at home	17.2%	15.4%
Limited English—Spanish Speaker (by Household)	2.7%	2.5%

Older Adults

Individuals aged 65 and over comprise 1 in 5 people in Wasco County and this ratio is projected to remain steady in the next 45 years. Wasco County's proportion of adults aged 65 and older is higher than the state's and with overall steady population growth, these numbers will increase.

The expected population changes will intensify demands on the transportation system, requiring more responsive services and additional replacement vehicles to meet the needs of a larger and more

[12] Oregon Population Forecast Program, Population Research Center, Portland State University, 2024.

[13] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/wasco-county-or

complex transit dependent population. Many older adults rely upon public transportation for frequent medical appointments and to safely meet the necessities of life such as access to shopping for food and medicines. Wheelchair-accessible public transportation service is paramount for older adults.

Total and Older Adult Projected Population Growth, 2020-2045

Populations at the state and county level are projected to grow over the next 25 years. The state's and Wasco County's aging population is projected to increase in proportion to the total population. In the future, the County's aging population will make up a higher proportion of its population compared to the state[14].

Low Income and Poverty

Statistically, 11.7% of the County population lives below the poverty level – more than 1 in 10. A full 35%, or more than a third of Wasco County residents live below the 200% poverty level. A household of four people in the Columbia Gorge region living on a total of $49,200 a year (or 200% Federal Poverty Level) is 15 times more likely to struggle with transportation needs than households earning more than 200% FPL.

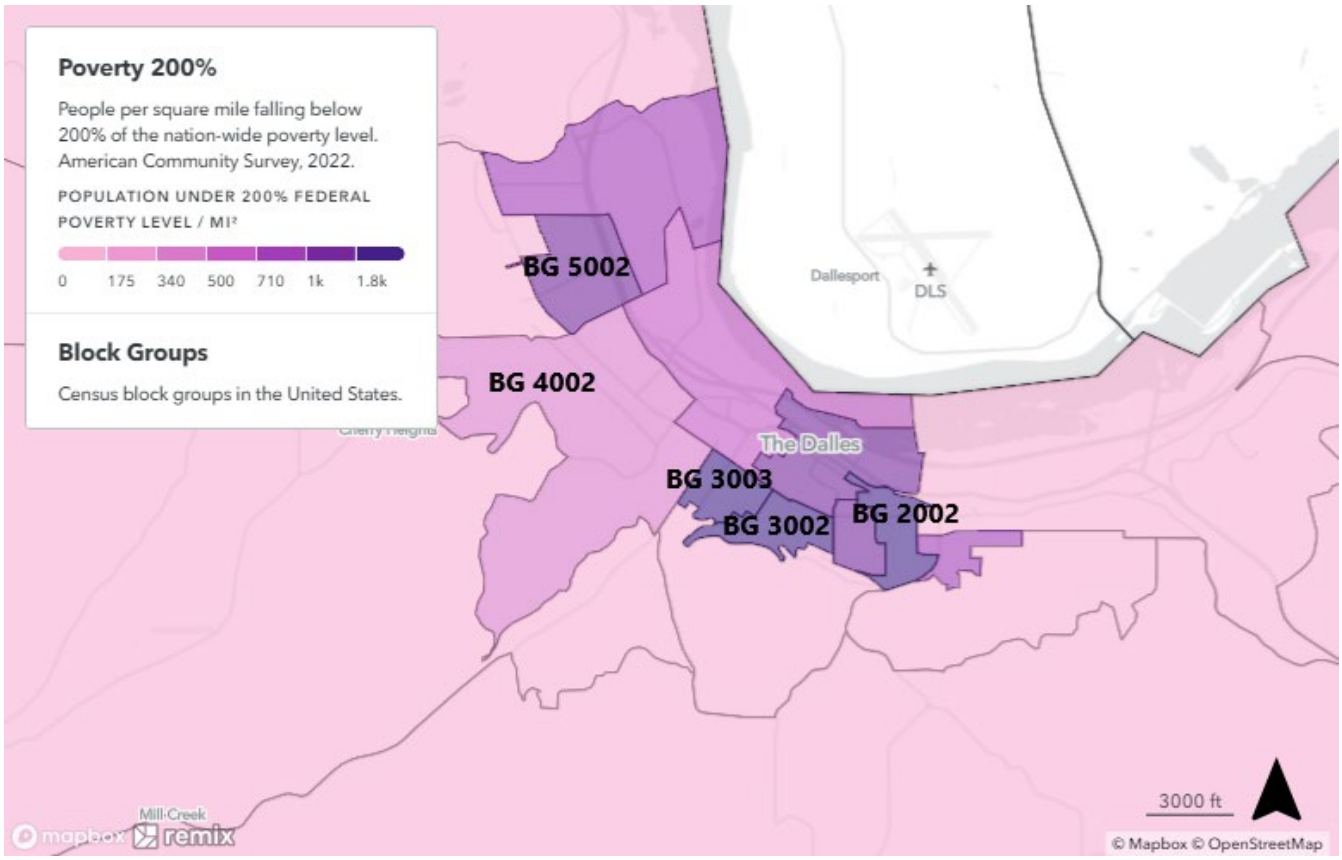
Celilo Village is an unincorporated Native American community on the Columbia River. Of all the population groups (cities, CDPs, Census Tracts), Celilo Village experiences the highest poverty rate. Fully half of Celilo Village's population lives below the federal poverty rate.

Of the cities, both Shaniko and Antelope also have high rates of residents living in poverty.

Place	Percent of population living below 100% of the federal poverty level
Dufur	1.4
Maupin	4.9
Tygh Valley	34.8
Celilo Village	50.8
Antelope	44.6
Shaniko	42.9
Pine Grove	10.8
Pine Hollow	9.1
Wamic	8.1
Mosier	6.5
Warm Springs	27.6[15]

[14] *Oregon Population Forecast Program, Population Research Center, Portland State University.*

[15] https://datausa.io/profile/geo/warm-springs-or#housing



Knowing where there are concentrations of populations most likely to need public transportation is important data for a public transportation agency when planning fixed route services. The map above shows the census block groups in the City of The Dalles by people living under the 200% of the federal poverty level. Darker purple signifies more people of that designation per square mile. The Remix tool uses the American Community Survey (2018-2022 estimates) data to calculate demographic information within the block groups.

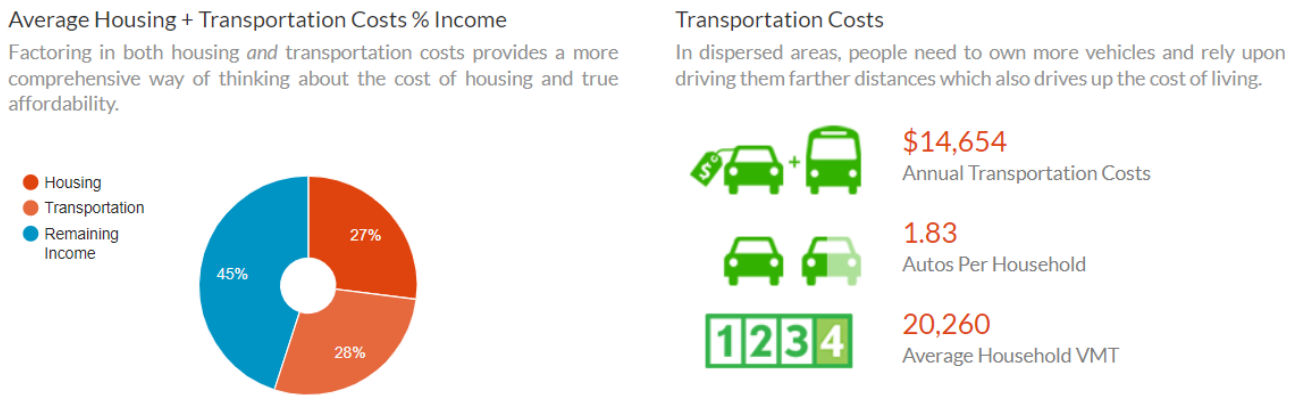
Census Block Group/GEOID	BG 2002	BG 3002	BG 3003	BG4002	BG 5002
Population	1,100	1,100	1,200	2,400	1,200
Non-White or of Hispanic/Latino origin	33%	30%	30%	33%	45%
People living under 200% of FPL	48.1%	62.7%	35%	30%	50%
Car free households	14%	7%	7%	10%	7%
Households with one car	33%	23%	23%	28%	39%

Transportation and Housing Costs

Individuals with lower incomes may not be able to afford to purchase or maintain a car or a family may only have one vehicle for multiple transportation needs. Public transportation is an important link to vital destinations such as workplaces and human service agencies for seniors, low income, disabled and Limited English Proficiency individuals. Public transportation is crucial to those who most need access to jobs, education, groceries, medical care and social services. Without reliable transportation, these individuals are, in every sense of the word, stranded. The 2019 Community Health Assessment of the Columbia Gorge Health Council found that an estimated 1 in 8 residents in Wasco County do not have the transportation that they need to access health care, food, childcare, social activities, or exercise.

Typically, a household's second-largest expense is transportation. Factoring in both housing and transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability. The H+T Affordability Index tool (https://htaindex.cnt.org/) uses American Community Survey data from 2023 for Wasco County to show that the average housing plus transportation costs is 54% of Wasco County residents' income. A 2017 Housing and Residential Land Needs Assessment prepared by the State of Oregon for The Dalles highlighted that 33% of renters in the City are "severely rent burdened", or paying more than 50% of their household income on rent alone.

Owning a car costs an average of $12,182 per year or $1,015 monthly. The cost of owning and maintaining a car increased 13% from 2022 to 2023 (MoneyGeek.com, Sept 2024). In the past year, fuel prices have declined, but the other costs related to ownership of a private vehicle are continually increasing. A robust public transportation system allows residents to decrease their dependence on ownership of a private vehicle, thus reducing overall household costs significantly. For low-income Americans, the high cost of car ownership means less money is available for housing, food, healthcare, or other things that improve health and quality of life.



Source: https://htaindex.cnt.org/)

Individuals with Disabilities

The American Community Survey 2018-2022 five-year estimates indicate the percent of Wasco County individuals aged 65 and older who are disabled is staying steady at around 20%. An older and disabled Wasco County population puts significant demands on transportation resources such as the need for ADA accessible vehicles in good repair and a capacity to transport individuals who need help. The table below shows population projections for disabled residents for Wasco County.

Population Estimate, Wasco County Disabled Individuals.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018-2022 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Wasco County	Total Population Estimate	Percent With a Disability Estimate
Total civilian noninstitutionalized population	26,178	18.5%
Population 65 years and over	5,192	20.0%

There are many organizations serving people with physical and developmental disabilities in Wasco County, including the Community Developmental Disabilities Program provider, Community Access Services, Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage, and the Oregon Department of Human Services: Aging and People with Physical Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Developmental Disabilities sections.

Some of these organizations have access to transportation funding and contract with transportation providers to provide rides for their clients. These potential partnerships are discussed further in the Improving Coordination Chapter.

Many people with disabilities already use Wasco County's public transportation system to access medical services, employment, and other services. These transit-experienced individuals could become the transit champions needed to staff a robust travel training program.

Residents Without Shelter

The rate for people experiencing homelessness in Wasco County is 5.94 per 1,000 people or 158 total, according to the Oregon Health Authority's 2023 estimate. Data from the Oregon Department of Education and the Oregon Health Authority shows that 3% of K-12 students in Wasco County are homeless, or a total of 90 out of the 2,957 registered in the school year of 2022-2023.[16]

[16] https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/ABOUT/Documents/indicators/homeless-county.pdf

County residents without shelter are more likely to need public transportation to access basic resources like food at food pantries, free congregant meals, and warming shelters in the winter. The Hood River Shelter Services has reported that sixty percent of the region's homeless have part time or full-time jobs, mainly at local gas stations and local fast-food restaurants. The Link Public Transportation could work with organizations serving these residents to assess their needs and to provide access to public transportation resources and to provide information to frontline staff and clients about how to use the public transit system.

Residents of both Wasco and Hood River counties living without shelter typically move between the two counties to access services.

Mid-Columbia Community Action Council (MCCAC) has spearheaded the effort to address reducing houselessness through a housing first model in recent years to great success. In 2021, MCCAC provided 1,300 people with housing assistance to help prevent and end houselessness and in 2022, they helped 1,000 people navigate housing stabilization with caseworkers. In addition, thanks to MCCAC 's rent assistance program, 140 community members at risk of eviction did not lose their housing in 2022 and 115 people were transitioned from houselessness into long term, stable housing, including 17 seniors over the age of 62 and 10 veterans.

MCCAC's 54-room Annex, formerly operated as a 54-room motel, has been fully renovated and converted to transitional housing and shelter for families, couples, and individuals in need of stability while they seek long-term permanent housing. MCCAC and its core partner organizations provide 24/7 oversight and services on the Annex site. A security guard watches over the premises during nighttime hours.

MCCAC has also built a navigation center to help people access housing and stabilization services, called the Gloria Center. These services include housing case management, Veterans services, physical health, behavioral health, youth and family services, and Native and Latinx-specific services. They also coordinate services with other local service providers such as Mid-Columbia Center for Living, One Community Health, the Oregon Human Development Corporation, Nch'i Wana Housing, the Department of Human Services, the Youth Empowerment Shelter (YES House), The Next Door Inc, Worksource Oregon, Bridges to Health and the Columbia Gorge Food Bank.

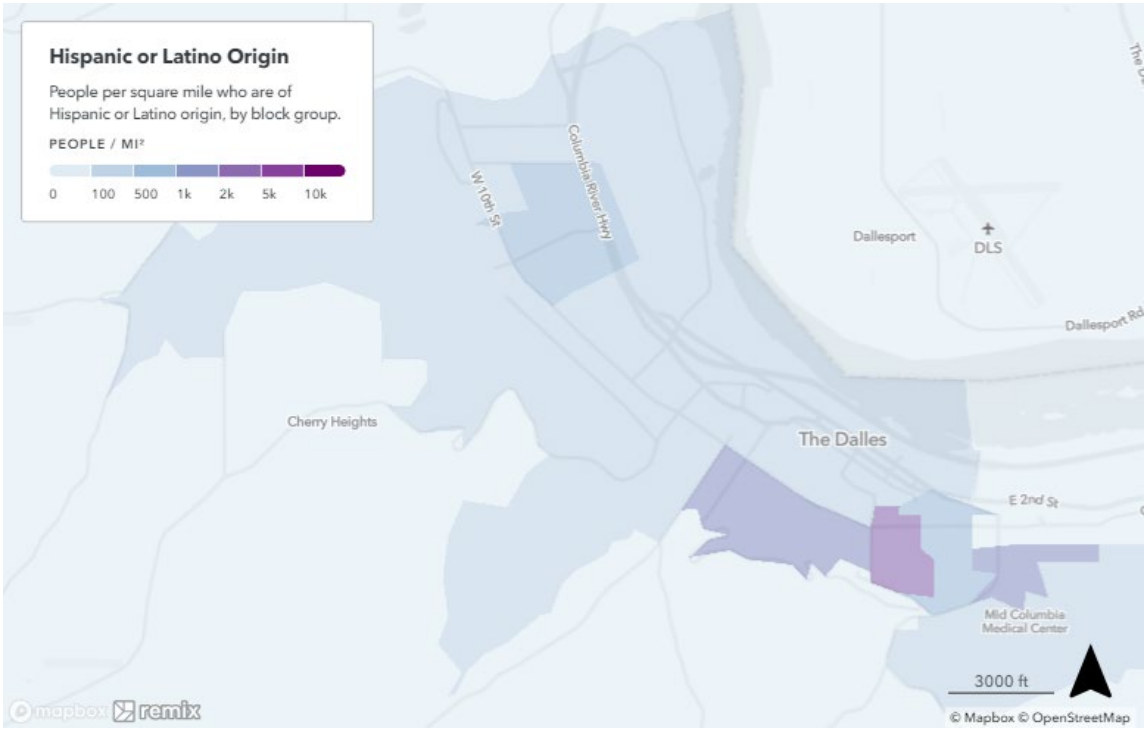
Individuals with Limited English Proficiency

Because the primary language spoken in Wasco County other than English is Spanish, outreach to people with Limited English Proficiency have focused mainly on the Spanish-speaking communities. This is a population that culturally may look to public transportation as a viable means of mobility, but also might have concerns about using the system. The number of Hispanic and Latino individuals also continues to grow and represents a higher percentage in the County as compared to the state average.

Wasco County has the 7th highest population of Hispanic or Latino residents of all counties in the State. Wasco County's Hispanic or Latino resident population at 19.9% is also almost 6% higher than the State

of Oregon at 14.9%. Per the ACS 2018-2022 5-yr estimate, Wasco County's percent of individuals Limited English Proficiency is 6%, rising to 8-10% in specific Census Tracts. However, a more accurate estimate can be found by studying the Wasco County School Districts Annual Report Cards (reviewed in this document).

Using the Remix mapping program, the block groups and tracts that show a density of Hispanic or Latino residents are presented in darker purple. The percentages shown reflect data from the American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-yr Estimates.



Native American Population

Wasco County is home to the 5th largest population of Native Americans of all Oregon counties. 3.6% of Wasco County residents identify as Native American, more than three times the state's average of 1.1%. Celilo Village is an unincorporated Native American community located 13 miles east of downtown The Dalles along the Columbia River. Native Americans also live at the Lone Pine In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Site located on 9 acres overlooking The Dalles Dam about 3.5 miles from downtown The Dalles. Simnasho is a small community on the Warm Springs Reservation just within the Wasco County southern boundary.

The Columbia Plateau is home to four major tribes that share similar languages, cultures, religions, and diets: the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and

Bands of the Yakama Nation. These four tribes have a long history of interaction, including intermarriage, shared use of common resources like Celilo Falls, and extensive trade.[17]

In Wasco County, only block group 1 and three tracts (9701, 9707, 9708) show a Native American percentage of the population using data from the American Community Survey 2018-2022 5-year Estimates. These three tracts are the eastern-most tracts of the County and include the Lone Pine In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Site and Celilo Village.

The Nch'i Wana Community Survey indicates that approximately 40 people reside at the Lone Pine In-lieu/ Treaty Fishing Access Site full-time, including children. The homes are informal shelters (boats, trailers, and cars) with no mailing addresses, which makes it difficult for residents to have representation in the Census or other population counts.

Block group 1 tract 9708 that includes Celilo Village shows the highest percent of Native American residents at 5.3% of the total population of the block group, or 79 people.

In July 2020, the MCEDD Mobility Manager began to participate in weekly meetings of the Gorge Native American Collaborative, which regularly includes representatives from Tribal Leadership, the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), nonprofits like Nch'i Wana Housing, and state and federal agencies responsible for serving the Native American people in both states. The immediate focus of the meetings was to mitigate the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 has had on these communities, but with the long-term goal addressing the chronic and historic housing, transportation, health, and education needs. Many of the immediate transportation issues faced by the Native American community in the Columbia River Gorge are historic gaps that were exacerbated by the pandemic.

Since 2020, MCEDD and The Link Public Transportation have secured grants to provide travel training, Gorge Transit Passes, and specific operational support to serve the Native American people living along the Columbia River. In 2024, The Link Public Transportation provided a shuttle for Native American students to attend a 2-week Culture Camp event hosted by The Next Door Inc in The Dalles. Only a few students got on the bus the first day, but by the end of the week word had spread and students filled

[17] https://www.critfc.org/member_tribes_overview/

the bus for the duration of the event. Building relationships with these communities will take time and a sustained effort. There are deep-seated trust issues that can only be resolved with slow and persistent relationship-building efforts while working alongside long-standing partners like CRITFC, Nch'i Wana Housing, and The Next Door Inc.

Understanding Wasco County's Families

A good way to understand the challenges that many of Wasco County's families are facing is to look at the school grades K-12 demographic data. Data from the Oregon Department of Education's 2022-23 report card (https://www.ode.state.or.us) were used to detail the demographics of two of Wasco County's school districts, North Wasco County School District #21, and Dufur SD #29.

North Wasco School District #21 serves most of northern Wasco County with 4 elementary schools, a middle school, and one high school with a total student enrollment of 2,738 students. The Oregon Department of Education Report Card website data shows that of those students, 43% identify as Hispanic/Latino, and 27% are Ever English Learners. North Wasco County SD #21 has almost twice the percentage of Hispanic or Latino students when compared to the State of Oregon for grades K-12. The school district report card also reports that students speak a total of 15 different languages. The Dufur School District #29 includes both the Lone Pine In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Site and Celilo Village and reports that 4% of enrolled students are Native Americans, almost 4 times higher than the percentage state-wide.

Wasco County's school districts have a high rate of students who qualify for free and reduced-price lunches, almost twice the state percentage. Wasco County also has a total of 90 students enrolled that are homeless. The Oregon Department of Education defines a homeless student or youth as "lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence."

Wasco County School Districts' Demographics	N. W. County SD #21	South Wasco County SD #29	Oregon
Total student enrollment	2,738	219	552,358
Percentage of Hispanic or Latino students	43.0%	10%	25%
Percentage of Native American students	2.0%	8.0%	1.18%
Ever English Learners	25.0%	<10 students	15.4% (Spanish)
Percentage of Students that qualify for free/reduced price lunch	>95%	>95%	71.0%
Students with Disabilities	17%	18%	15%

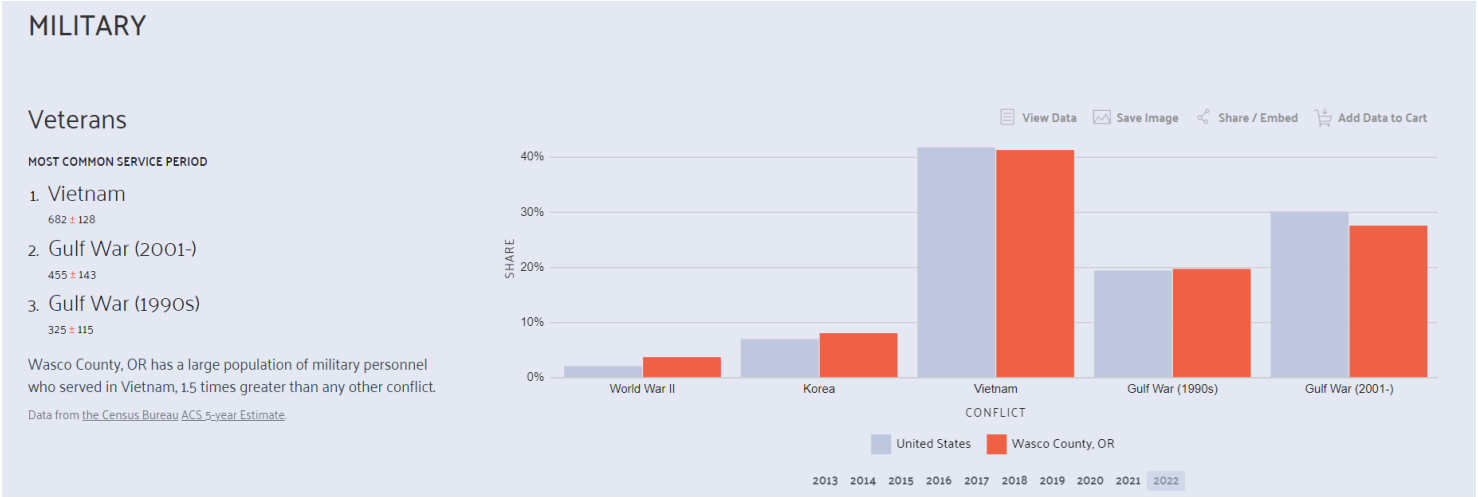
Veterans

There are 2,189 Veterans living in Wasco County, almost 10.5% of the total population. Over 25% of those Wasco County Veterans are disabled and may need transportation services. The largest percentage of Wasco County Veterans served in Vietnam, 3.18 times greater than any other conflict, which means that Wasco County Veterans are older and thus more likely to need transportation services. See graph below.

The Hood River Shelter Services reports that up to 25% of the people they serve from the Wasco and Hood River County area self-identify as Veterans. St. Vincent de Paul in The Dalles reports an estimated 20% of the people that they serve are Veterans.

The MCEDD Travel Trainer works closely with the Veterans Service Officers in Wasco and Hood River counties.

County or State	Veteran Percentage of Population
Wasco County	10.5%
Hood River County	5.3%
Sherman County	13.2%
Gilliam County	13.7%
Wheeler County	15%
Klickitat County	12%
Skamania County	9.7%
Oregon	7.8%
Washington	7.7%



Source: datausa.io using data from the ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimates

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Van

Background: In response to government cuts to Veterans travel benefits in 1987, the Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization, created a national network of volunteer drivers administered by the DAV at VA facilities nationwide. DAV Van Transportation takes veterans to and from VA Hospitals and clinics. The DAV donates vans where needed for DAV and Axillary volunteers to drive the veterans where they need to go. There is one staff person in Washington DC who manages the nation-wide program. The program was suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Service: All rides must be scheduled at least four days in advance by calling (503) 721-7804. The DAV transportation schedule can be found online.

DAV Vans are NOT Wheelchair Accessible and are not equipped to carry oxygen canisters larger than can be carried in a sling or backpack. DAV riders must be able to access/egress vehicles without any assistance.

Counties served by the Mid-Columbia area DAV van: Sherman, Klickitat, Gilliam, Wheeler, Skamania, Hood River, Wasco

Summary of Veterans transportation program opportunities and challenges

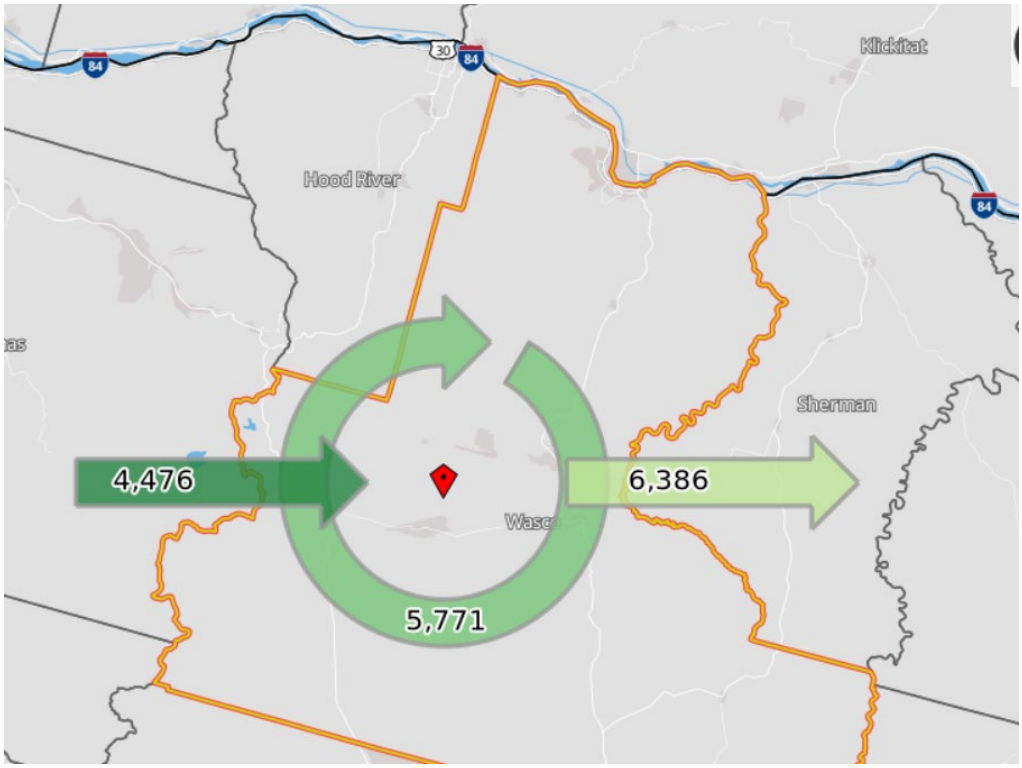
The general view of transportation providers and Veterans Service Officers interviewed is that the DAV Van program does not work well in the Columbia Gorge region.

DAV Van Limitations	• Does not serve Veterans in wheelchairs or those needing assistance. • Veteran needs to find a ride to the pickup/ drop-off points at the scheduled times. • Schedule is inconsistent and depends on volunteer drivers. • Service to areas outside of the stop in The Dalles and the stop in Hood River depends on the willingness of the driver to leave earlier and return later and drive further.
Challenges	• Many Veterans are unaware of existing transportation services, both public and Veterans. • Many VSOs are unaware of or not familiar with public or Veterans transportation services. • It is difficult to reach Veterans with information about services.

	▪ Many Veterans would be very uncomfortable in the same vehicle with civilians without individualized training and support tools and techniques (using noise-blocking headsets, sitting in the back of the bus). ▪ One-call, one-click resources are not successful without individualized training
Opportunities	• Successful outreach is done by forming strong partnerships with other institutions and organizations who serve Veterans (fraternity clubs, Housing Authority, Community College, EasterSeals, VSO). • Younger Veterans aren't joiners, but you can reach them through email. • Older Veterans are harder to reach through email, but many are on Facebook. • Travel Training programs can be successful when planned and implemented thoughtfully. A highly successful program, RVTD's Go Vets, has a toolkit available that Go Vets Columbia Gorge is modeled after.

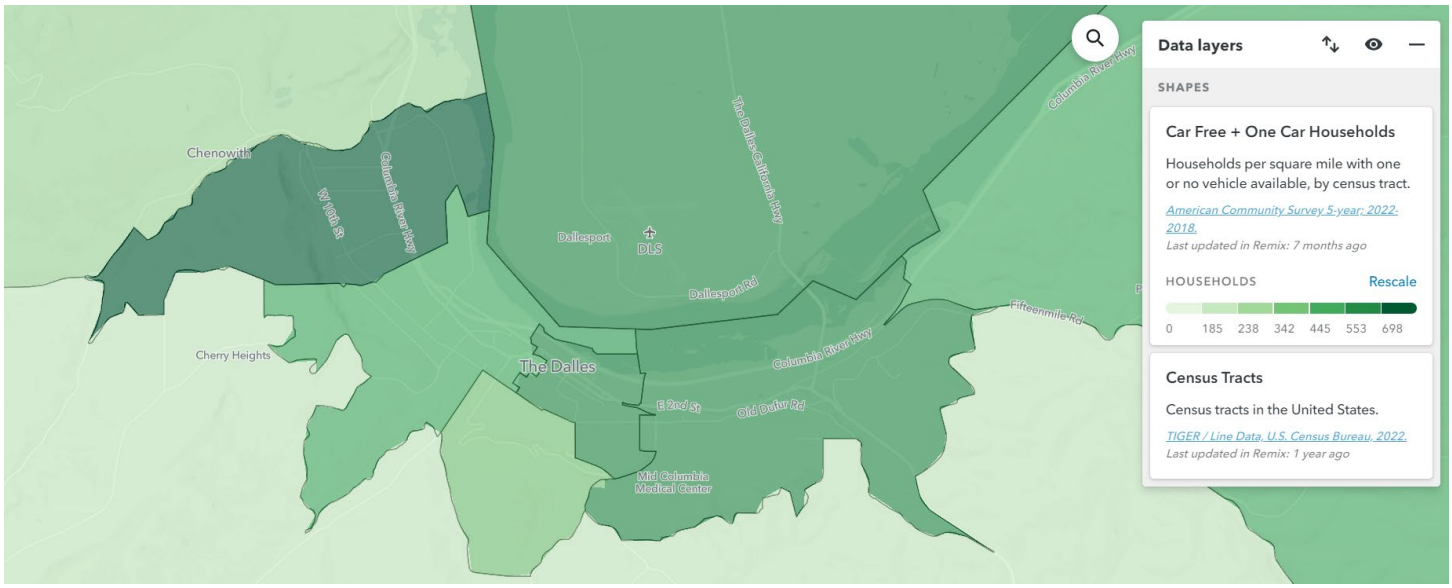
Commute Data

The map below illustrates that over 5,771 residents live and work in Wasco County, while 6,386 live in Wasco County but work in another County. The breakdown shows the largest percentages of workers traveling outside the County for work are headed for Hood River and Portland.



Data from the American Community Survey 2018-22 5-yr Estimates indicates that the average travel time to work (17.6 minutes) is still well below the national average (26.7 minutes). However, the percentage of "super commutes" over 90 minutes is above the State percentage and most likely reflects the number of people traveling to the Portland or Salem areas to work.

The map below was created on Remix's Explore program, which uses American Community Survey 2018-22 5-yr Estimates data. The map shows that census tract 9702 in The Dalles has the highest percent of one- or no- car households at 46.9%, followed by tract 9705 at 45.1%. Households with one or no cars are likely to use fixed route transit service.



Columbia Gorge Community College Students

The Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) has two campuses, one in The Dalles and the other in Hood River. This community college draws students from throughout the Columbia Gorge region, including from Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington, and is preparing to launch a nursing internship at the Klickitat Valley Hospital in Goldendale, WA. The college opened its first on-campus residence unit, Chinook Hall, in the fall of 2021.

Over one third of CGCC students are considered low-income or dependents of low-income families. In the school year of 2022/2023, 48% of CGCC students received financial aid through grants.

Public Transportation Programs and Services

Since the last update of Wasco County's Coordinated Plan in 2020, many accomplishments have been achieved that improve access and transportation services in Wasco County and within the Mid-Columbia region. This section gives a summary of these new local and regional services, programs, and projects.

The Link Public Transportation: New Programs and Services

Deviated Fixed Route Service: The Link Public Transportation launched the first deviated fixed route service in April 2019 and expanded that service in 2020 to include 2 routes that serve the residences and most popular destinations in The Dalles. The Link Public Transportation is currently improving the design and timetables of these local routes to provide more coordinated frequencies and reduce travel times.

Intercity Service: The Link Public Transportation secured a Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund Statewide Transit Network discretionary funds to launch The Dalles to Hood River corridor service in July of 2023. The service provides 5 round trips Monday – Friday and 3 round trips on Saturday - Sunday. The service includes a stop in Mosier.

Bus Stop Amenities: The Link received several grants to purchase and install bus shelters and developed a bus stop request and installation process with the City of The Dalles.

Dial a Ride services: Expanded hours (6 am to 7 p m) and days (Saturday and Sunday).

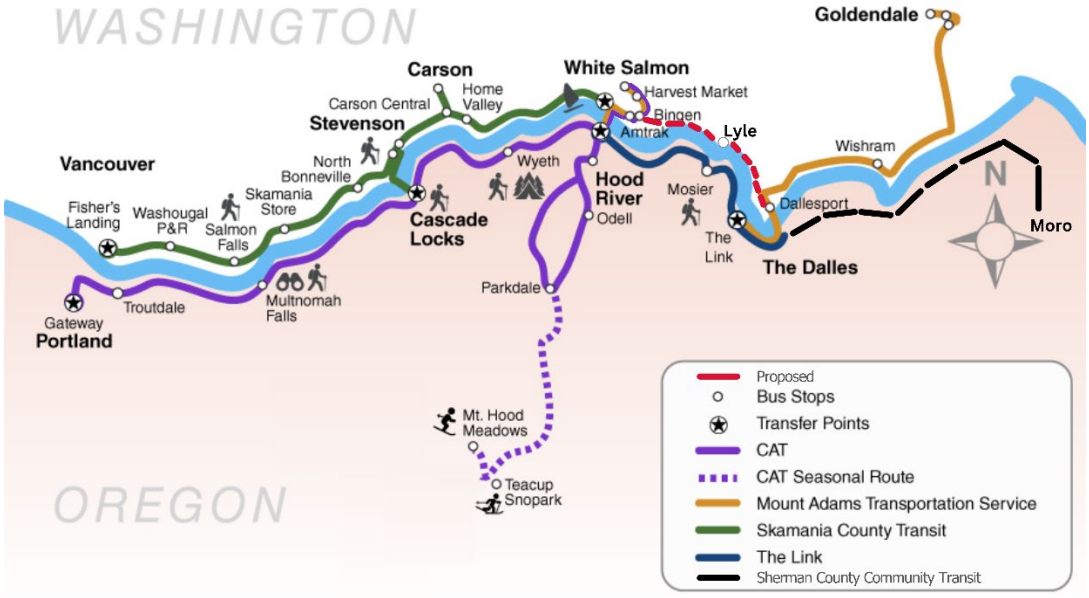
High School/Middle School Transit Program: The Link provides free rides on fixed route services to high school and middle school students and launched a Gorge Transit Pass and Travel Training program for high school students in 2024.

The Dalles Downtown Pass Program: MCEDD and the City of The Dalles have partnered to offer employees of downtown businesses and residents living in the downtown zone a free 2024-2025 12-month Gorge Transit Pass through The Dalles Downtown Pass Program. This program offers free transit passes to eligible employees and residents, encouraging the use of public transit and contributing to a more sustainable and livable community.

Gorge Translink Alliance: Regional Programs and Services

Since 2019, Columbia Area Transit, Mt Adams Transportation Service, Skamania County Transit, and The Link Public Transportation have significantly expanded the regional fixed route services and have

partnered to develop programs that support communities, organizations, and special needs and underserved populations.

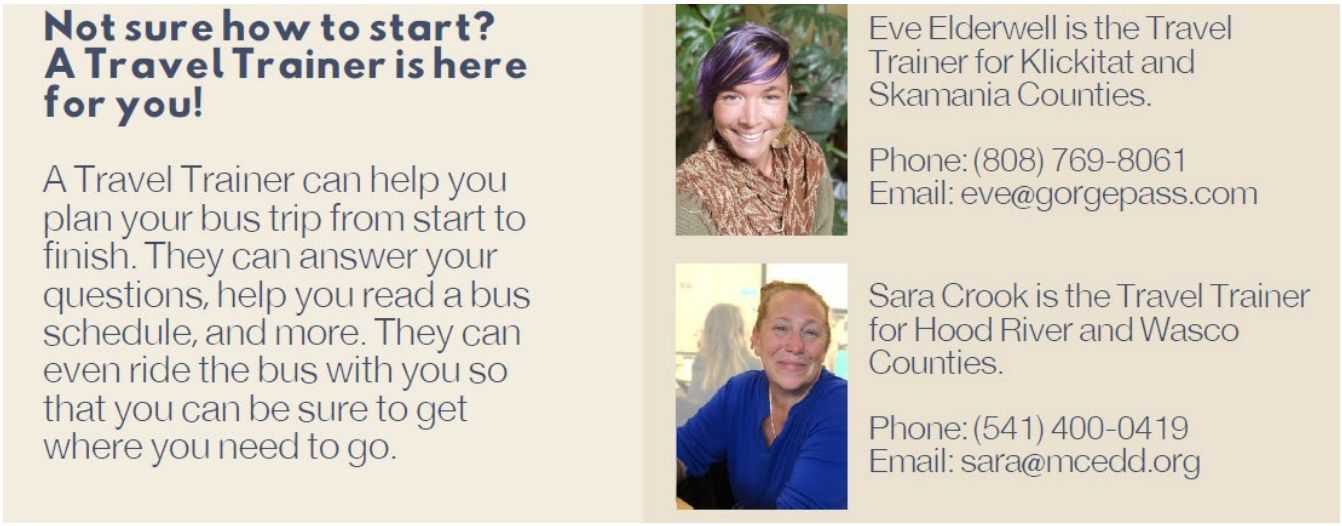


Gorge Transit Pass: Launched in 2021 as a 4-provider, universal transit pass, the Gorge Transit Pass has seen a 20% increase in sales year after year. Once purchased, the Gorge Transit Pass is valid for a 365-day period. The Gorge Transit Pass can be purchased online and used as an app on a smartphone and is also available as a physical pass. Gorge Transit Pass proceeds are distributed by formula to each of the 4 providers, with $ 1.00 of each pass going directly to the Gorge Equity Fund. A Buy-One, Give-One employee pass program for businesses or organizations who purchase more than 10 passes provides a matching number of passes to the Gorge Transit Connect program that provides free passes to people with low incomes.

GorgeTransit.com Website
The redeveloped GorgeTransit.com (formerly Gorgetranslink.com) website was launched in 2019 and continues to be improved with new technology tools. One popular tool for riders is the Transit Alert SMS system. Riders can sign up to receive transit alerts via texts to their cell phones. Transit providers have access to the system and can send out an alert text when there are service disruptions like road closures due to weather or accidents.

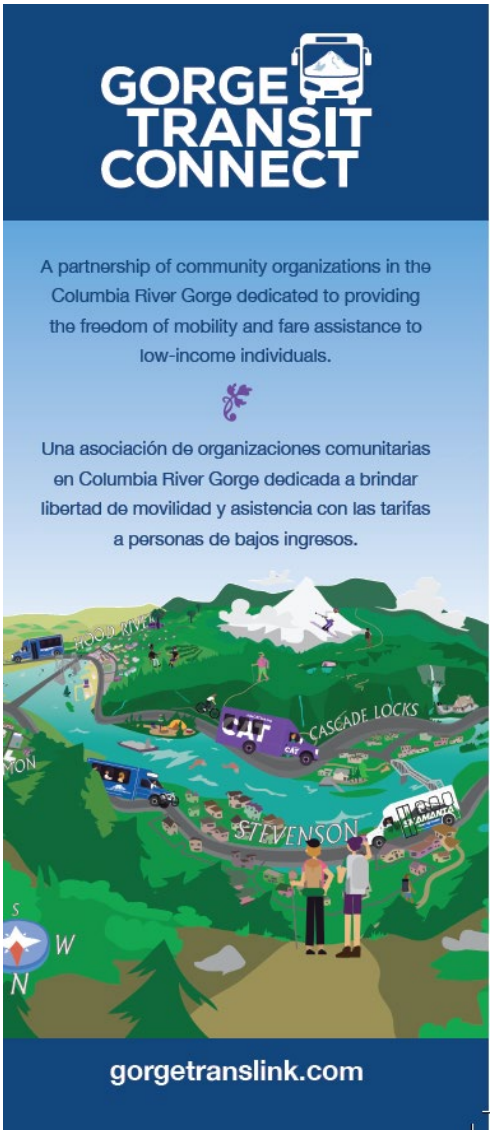
Gorge Pass Marketing and Local Outreach and Education Campaigns
Designed to provide enhanced awareness of available public transportation resources throughout the five-County region, these public outreach campaigns engage Gorge communities by using creative and innovative public outreach techniques. The Gorge Pass Marketing project uses the gorgepass.com website, social media, printed materials, and videos to market the Gorge Transit Pass locally and to the Portland-Vancouver metro area. MCEDD contracts with the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance to produce the marketing products and to conduct marketing strategies.

Travel Training Program
MCEDD manages a regional travel training program, providing a part-time travel trainer for Klickitat and Skamania counties and coordinating with Columbia Area Transit to provide a full-time travel trainer for Wasco and Hood River counties. The travel trainers assist individuals and groups with travel training education and transit field trips and regularly attend community meetings and events to expand public awareness of regional public transportation resources. The travel trainers work with community partners to identify groups and individuals who need their assistance, reaching out regularly to senior centers, agencies working with people with disabilities, high schools and middle schools, the community college, Veterans Service Offices, and social service agencies. Recent projects have included producing a series of travel training videos which can be accessed on the travel training page of the gorgetransit.com website.



Gorge Transit Connect

The Gorge Transit Connect program is a collaborative initiative between local transit providers and community partners with the goal of reducing transportation barriers for community members experiencing low incomes by connecting them to fare assistance and travel training services. Financial support for the program comes from the Hood River County Transportation District, The Link Public Transportation, the Gorge Pass Equity Fund, and local partners such as community-based organizations, state agencies, and health care institutions. Fare assistance includes the purchase of the annual regional transit pass (Gorge Pass) and access to other fixed route or dial a ride services, depending on the individual need. Partner organizations designate a Travel Ambassador representative who attends regular Gorge Transit Connect meetings to learn more about the regional public transportation system. The Travel Ambassadors serve as a liaison between their clients and the resources provided by the Gorge Transit Connect program.



This program strengthens the partnership between service-focused community organizations and public transportation providers by creating public transportation advocates and travel trainers within each organization. As a result, there has been a significant increase in funding for the program from these community partners, further enhancing its impact and effectiveness.

The Gorge Transit Connect program tackles the issue of transportation barriers faced by community members with limited financial resources through a partnership with local organizations. The program's success lies in its collaborative approach that has not only improved the quality of life for individuals but has also fostered stronger community relationships, a broader recognition of the importance of public transportation, and more local investment.

Transportation Resources in Wasco County

Vehicle-Based Transportation Service Options

Wasco County has several vehicle-based transportation options for residents. Included in this list are both private and public transportation providers. Some services are only accessible if the person meets specific eligibility requirements. Some services have geographical limitations or are not ADA accessible.

Transportation Provider	Public/ Private	Service Type	Hours	Days	Service Area
The Link Public Transportation, Wasco County	Public	Dial-a-Ride, Deviated Fixed and Intercity fixed route, Shopping bus, NEMT	Office: 6 am to 6 pm Operational hours: 6 am to 8pm (M-F)	Monday-Friday Saturdays (9 am-4 pm)	Wasco County, Hood River County
Mt. Adams Transportation District, Klickitat County	Public	Deviated Fixed Route, Dial-A-Ride	8-5 pm	Monday-Friday	Klickitat County, Hood River County, Wasco County, Multnomah County, Yakima County.
PacificSource, CCO Non-emergent medical transportation (for Medicaid clients)	Must meet eligibility requirements	Non-Emergent Medical Transportation	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Monday - Friday	For Hood River and Wasco County residents
Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage	Eligible clients only	Client transportation reimbursement or contracts with public transit, Taxi	As needed	As needed	13 counties in Eastern Oregon including Wasco, Hood River counties

Transportation Provider	Public/ Private	Service Type	Hours	Days	Service Area
CAPECO/ The Dalles Senior Center - The Dalles Meals on Wheels	Public – serves eligible homebound seniors	Delivers home cooked meals, reducing or eliminating the need for transportation	Mon – Fri deliveries	Monday - Friday	Wasco County
Veterans Administration	Serves eligible Veterans only–	Medical Transportation – Reimbursement and Beneficiary Travel programs	As needed	As needed	Columbia Gorge and Portland/Vancouver Metro Area
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	Serves eligible Veterans. Only-- Not ADA accessible	Veterans Transportation Fixed route, no Door to Door.	As needed	Depends on volunteer driver availability	Columbia Gorge and Portland/Vancouver Metro area
Oregon Veterans Home	Serves eligible clients only	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	The Dalles/Portland
AGE+ Circles of Care Volunteers	Public	Volunteer-based organization	N/A	N/A	The Dalles Hood River
Oregon Project Independence	Serves income-qualified older adults.	Limited transportation benefits	N/A	N/A	Wasco County

Transportation Provider	Public/ Private	Service Type	Hours	Days	Service Area
Four Fifty Taxi	Private company	Taxi: door-to-door	24/7	Monday - Sunday	City of The Dalles
The Dalles Taxi, LLC	Private company serves the public	Taxi: door-to-door	24/7	Sunday and Monday: 6am to 6pm; Tuesday – Saturday operates 24/7	City of The Dalles; will negotiate long trips with interested individuals or under contract to area Human Services Agencies.
Gorge Taxi	Private-- Also contracts to provide NEMT rides	Taxi: Door to Door	Monday Sunday	Hours are changing due to COVID--19	The Dalles/Hood River
Flagstone Senior Living, The Dalles	Private	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	The Dalles
Cherry Heights Living, The Dalles	Private	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	The Dalles
The Springs at Mill Creek, The Dalles	Private	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	The Dalles
Nightingale Care Homes, The Dalles	Private	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	The Dalles
The Dalles Health and Rehabilitation Center	Private	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	The Dalles
Canyon Rim Manor, Maupin	Private	Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	Maupin, Hood River, The Dalles, Bend
Greyhound/Flix Bus Lines	Private with public subsidies	Bus- Fixed Route	By schedule	Monday-Sunday	I-84 corridor

Transportation Provider	Public/ Private	Service Type	Hours	Days	Service Area
Amtrak	Quasi-public	Train- Fixed Route	By schedule	Monday-Sunday	Stations in Wishram and Bingen
Get There Oregon	Public – Free to participate	Carpool/Ride Share/Trip Planner	As arranged	As arranged	State of Oregon (ODOT)
Commute with Enterprise	Private with state and transit subsidies available	Vanpool	As arranged	As arranged	Throughout Oregon/Washington

Active Transportation

A car-dependent community leaves many people without access to basic resources like food, medical services, higher education, jobs, and social and civic opportunities. One third of people living in Oregon do not drive. Seven percent of households in the Wasco County do not own a vehicle and 27% of households own only one vehicle to share between multiple members of the household.[18]

Children, the elderly, the visually impaired or otherwise physically challenged, those with lower incomes, or those who simply choose to not have access to a car, are among the groups that benefit most when opportunities to safely walk or bicycle are improved. Active transportation modes include walking, biking, wheelchair rolling, and transit.

The walk score of the area around The Dalles Transit Center is 39 points out of 100[19], which means that the neighborhood is car-dependent and that most errands require a car. In a one-mile radius around The Dalles Transit Center, only 50% of the roadways have sidewalks (per City Engineer). The first part of any transit trip usually requires walking, biking, or rolling to the bus stop, which is why transit is usually included in a discussion about Active Transportation needs.

Many community partners from The Dalles Senior Center, Northern Wasco County Parks and Recreation District, and North Central Public Health District have noted that safer walking and biking infrastructure would provide more freedom and independence to youth, older adults, those with low incomes, and

[18] ACS 2018-2022 5-year estimate

[19] https://www.walkscore.com/score/802-chenowith-loop-rd-the-dalles-or-97058

others who do not or cannot drive. They also pointed out that if more residents could walk or bike to their destinations, they would not be dependent on a bus schedule but would have the power to meet their own mobility needs. Lack of safe active transportation infrastructure impacts their ability to access resources, including public transportation services.

ODOT's Transportation Options

The Transportation Options, or TO, program focuses on implementation of the Oregon Transportation Options Plan, including: managing demand across the transportation system; educating students and the public on travel options and how to safely use them; connecting veterans, low-income populations, communities of color, and others with ways to get to and from work or school; supporting vanpooling; and more.

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

Investments in transportation options can provide numerous benefits to the existing transportation system including cost savings, improved health, congestion mitigation, and safety.

While ODOT leads several statewide efforts to support and encourage transportation options, local partners across the state work on the ground to implement programs. Each local partner customizes their programs to meet the unique needs of the local population, the geography of the community, and the transportation services and infrastructure available.

ODOT partners with MCEDD to support Transportation Options programs in the counties of Wasco, Sherman, and Hood River.

Ride Share

In the more remote and rural areas of Wasco County, community leaders report that residents form natural support systems for those who have transportation needs. A trip to the grocery store in The Dalles from some locations in South Wasco County can take up to an hour by car one way, so residents carpool or take on a neighbor's grocery list.

ODOT provides a free ridesharing tool and database called Get There (https://getthereoregon.org) that allows residents to find carpool options for their commute, to get to school, or to find a ride to a posted event. The website includes a trip planner which allows people to find information about using other modes like walking or biking. MCEDD's Mobility Manager works with both ODOT and Commute Options to promote this tool in the counties of Wasco, Sherman, and Hood River.

Vanpool

Vanpools are a flexible, comfortable, cost-effective way for small to medium size groups of up to 15 commuters to share rides to and from work. Vanpooling can reduce stress, shorten the commute time, and save annual commuting costs. Participants share expenses for fuel and for a vehicle, which can be provided by an employer, a third-party administrator, or the vanpoolers themselves. The Link Public Transportation offers a monthly subsidy to help cover the cost of a vanpool. The vanpool must start or end in Wasco County in order to be eligible for the subsidy.

The Link Public Transportation

Service Description

- **Deviated Fixed Routes in The Dalles:** The Dalles Deviated Fixed Red and Blue Routes operate on loops to key destinations in The Dalles on Monday through Friday, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM. There is a special Blue Route that operates on Saturdays from 9:15 to 3:45 pm. Rides are $1.00 each or riders can use the Gorge Transit Pass.
- **The Dalles to Hood River Route** – Intercity Express, Monday-Sunday. The Link operates this service 5 trips per day on Monday through Friday, and 3 trips per day on Saturday and Sunday. The 8 am route offers a direct connection from The Dalles to Portland via the Columbia Gorge Express.
- **Dial-a-Ride**: The dial-a-ride, door-to-door public transportation operates Monday through Friday, 6:00 AM – 7:00 PM and on Saturday/Sunday from 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM. Trips are $2.00 each way, scheduled in advance and may include other passengers going to different destinations. Riders can be picked up in the communities of The Dalles, Dufur, Mosier, Celilo and points between in unincorporated Wasco County.
- **The Dalles Shopping Bus:** The shopping bus offers door-to-door service to grocery stores and shopping centers in The Dalles on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Cost is $3.00 for unlimited stops with no shopping bag limit. Drivers will help load and unload riders' bags (bags must be under 25 pounds). On the 3rd Wednesday of each month, the bus visits Hood River.
- **South County Shuttle:** The Link has a shuttle every Tuesday and Thursday that picks up riders in Maupin, Wamic, Pine Hollow, Tygh Valley, and Dufur for a few hours of shopping and appointments in The Dalles. This service is $5.00 round trip for pickups in Maupin and Tygh Valley and $3.00 round trip for pickups in Dufur.
- **Bike Capacity:** Almost all The Link's cut-away buses have bike racks.

Service Changes and Ridership 2019-2024

Service changes and ridership can also be seen in the graphs following the narrative.

2019

- First Deviated-Fixed Route is launched in April. Ridership slowly increases despite the impact of COVID.
- South County Shuttle is launched.
- Service expanded to include Saturdays.
- Bike racks added to vehicles.
- Bus stop amenities added, including shelters and signage.

2020--Red Route is launched. Ridership remains low until the Red Route is modified in 2023, when ridership becomes more equally split between the Blue and Red Routes.

2021

- The Link joins partner agencies Mt Adams Transportation Services, Columbia Area Transit, and Skamania County Transit in sponsoring a multi-provider universal transit pass system, the annual Gorge Transit Pass.
- The Link and Columbia Area Transit launch a travel training program with a full-time shared travel trainer.

2022

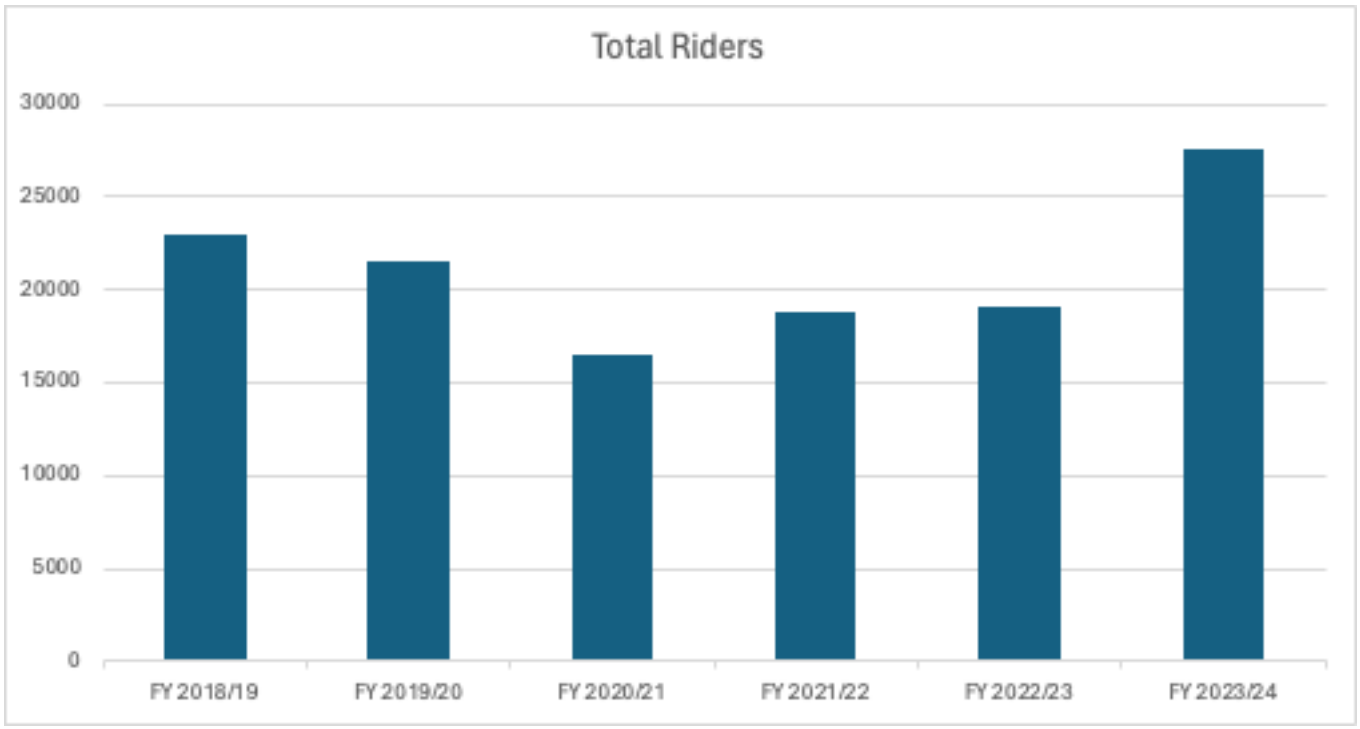
- The Link completes the Wasco County Transit Development Plan.
- Summer shuttle service is launched that includes The Dalles Aquatic Center and The Dalles Farmers' Market. This service is ended when the Blue and Red Route stops meet the need.

2023

- The Link Public Transportation takes over The Dalles to Hood River intercity express service (formerly operated by Columbia Area Transit) in July. Ridership starts high but quickly decreases because of the earlier start in The Dalles.
- The Red Route is modified and ridership increases significantly, while pulling ridership from the Blue Route.
- Dial a Ride ridership decreases because driver availability decreases from 4 FT to 2.5 PT drivers.
- The Link discontinues subscription dial a ride service except for ongoing critical medical trip purposes like chemotherapy and dialysis. Former subscription riders like middle school and elementary school students are moved to the deviated-fixed route service. The Link dispatchers begin to encourage all dial a ride riders to ride the deviate fixed routes if they are able.

2024

- Frequencies increased on The Dalles to Hood River intercity express in February from 4 to 5 per day, M-F, thanks to CARES Act funds. The additional run allows riders to leave The Dalles in the mornings at a later time that suits their work and school schedules better. Ridership increases, but due to dispatch software malfunction, the ridership count at the end of July 2024 could reflect more passenger trips than actual.
- High School Transit Program is expanded to offer a limited number of Gorge Transit Passes per school year as well as continuing to allow High School students to use The Link's services when they show their student ID. Free access to dial a ride service is discontinued.
- The Link proposes launching a program to target frequent dial a ride usesr who are capable of using the fixed route services and to provide those riders with appropriate travel training services to understand their needs and abilities.


Total Riders
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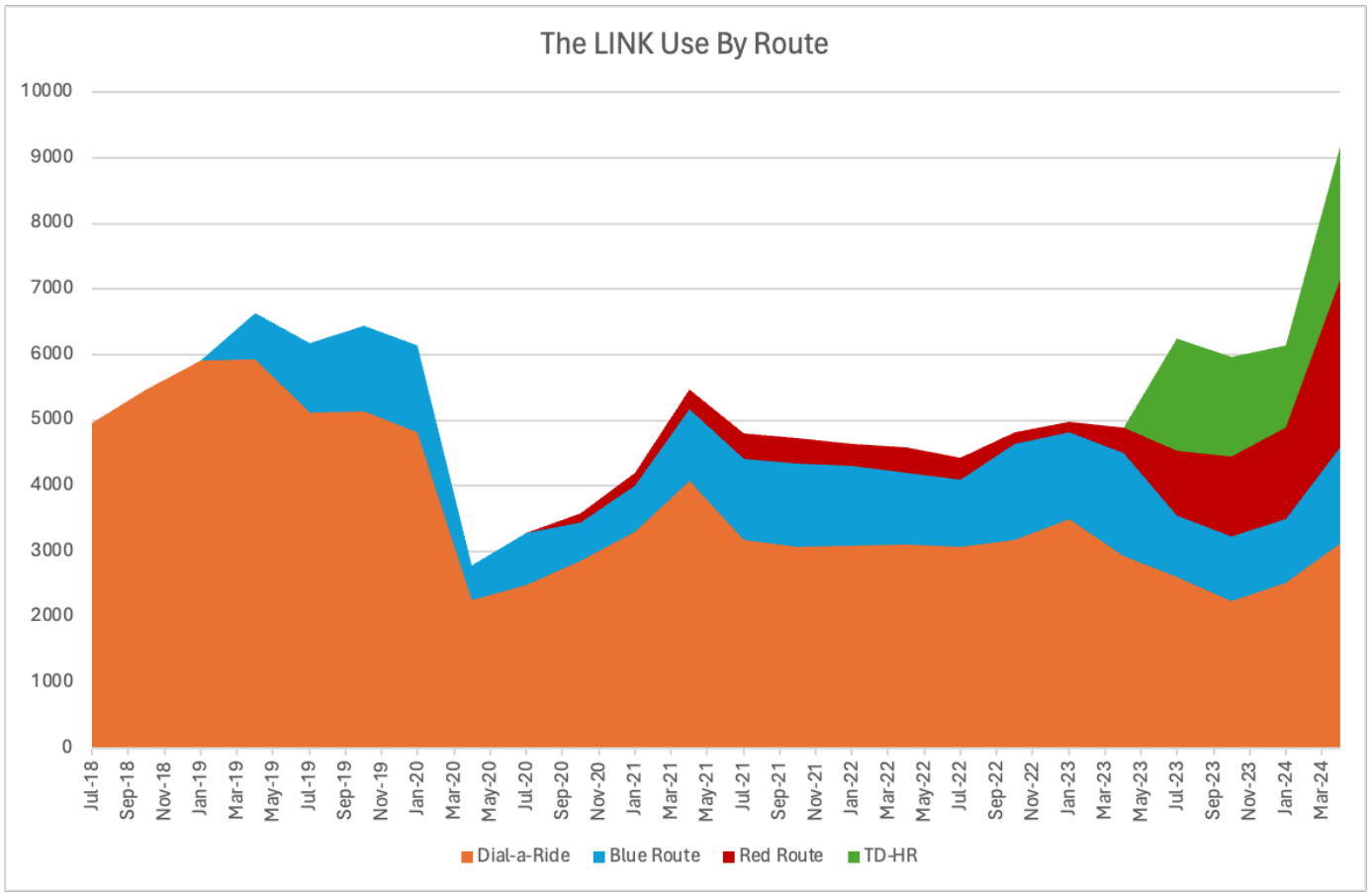
FY 2018/19
FY 2019/20
FY 2020/21
FY 2021/22
FY 2022/23
FY 2023/24


The LINK Use By Route
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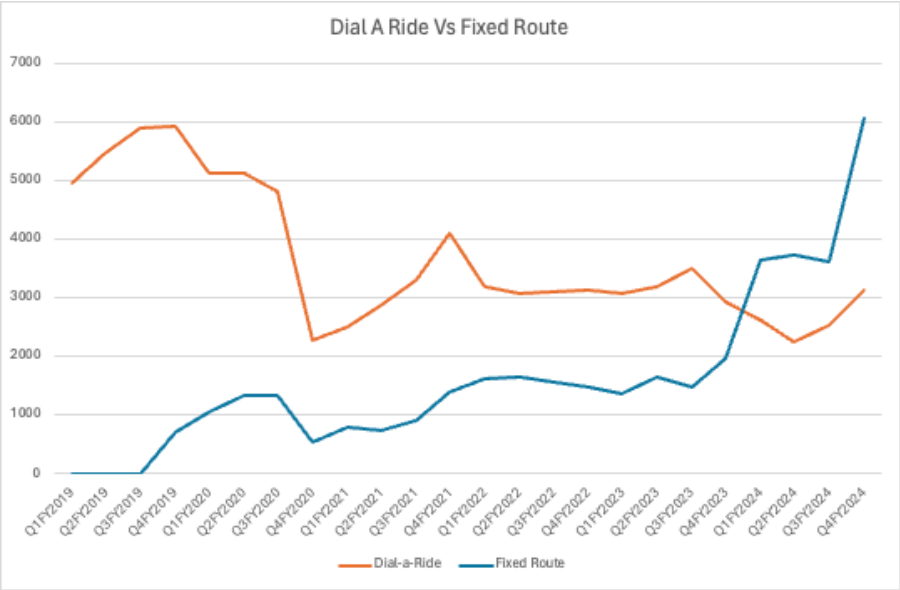
Dial-a-Ride
Blue Route
Red Route
TD-HR



Common Origins and Destinations

As the major population center and because the public transportation provider currently serves primarily the City of The Dalles, a majority of transportation needs originate within the city.

Wasco County residents often require transportation traveling to and from and within The Dalles as it is a major destination for accessing human service agencies, shopping centers, and medical facilities. Human Service agency staff note that Hood River as the second highest priority destination city, especially for residents who live in or near Mosier, located on the western edge of the County.

A map of common destinations may be found in Appendix D. Common destinations concentrated in The Dalles include the following:

- Medical Care: Adventist Health Columbia Gorge, Mid-Columbia Center for Living, Fresenius Kidney Care (dialysis).
- Work: various locations, no specific location.
- Shopping and Pharmacy: Safeway, Fred Meyer, Grocery Outlet/Cascade Square, BiMart
- Schools: elementary and middle school primarily, Columbia Gorge Community College
- Veterinarians and Dog Groomers
- Wasco County Library
- Community Action Program (during winter months)
- Post Office
- Mid-Columbia Senior Center (congregant meals)
- Marijuana Dispensaries
- Social visits to other residences

Public Transportation Funding

Program	Purpose	Recipients	Eligible Uses & Match
Formula Funds *Typically awarded for odd-number biennia. Funds that rural counties typically receive are in **bold.***			
5310	Seniors and individuals with disabilities	STF Agencies	• **Capital** (10.27% match) – vehicles, bus stop improvements, facilities (NEPA environmental documentation required) • **Mobility Management** (10.27% match) – Travel training, outreach, coordination work, more than dispatch & admin • **Purchased Service** (10.27%)– Contract for service • **Preventive Maintenance** (10.27%) – maintenance of vehicles & facilities • **Operating (50-56%)** - Small urban areas can use for Operations (Driver salaries, fuel, staff & dispatch salaries, all other uses)
STIF Formula	General public service with emphasis on low-income populations & student transportation. Seniors and individuals with disabilities	Qualified Entities	• Great source of match for FTA 5310 & 5311 • All project types eligible. Good source for capital projects because lower environmental documentation • *No match* • Submit 'STIF Plan' as the application
5311	General public rural transit	Cities, counties, districts, tribes, nonprofits that meet	• Operations (50% match) • Capital (10.27%) • Administration (10.27%)

		FTA requirements for D&A and other reporting	• Preventive Maintenance (10.27%) • Planning (10.27%) • Mobility Management (10.27%)
Discretionary Funds *Sometimes awarded for even-number biennia. Funds that rural counties typically receive are in **bold.***			
5310 Discretionary	Seniors & individuals with disabilities		• Operations (50%) • Mobility management • Purchased service • Preventive maintenance (20% match)
STBG	ODOT provides flex funds for vehicle replacements	Urban, Small Urban, and Rural public transportation agencies	• Vehicle replacements (10.27% match)
5339	Capital projects	Small urban & rural service providers that meet FTA requirements for D&A and reporting	• Vehicles (15% match) • Equipment & facilities (20% match)
5307	Capital projects	Urbanized areas (larger cities with MPOs)	• Vehicle replacement & rightsizing (10.27% match)
STIF Discretionary	All public transportation projects except ongoing operations	Cities, counties, tribes, districts, governmental entities	• **Capital - Good source for capital projects because lower environmental documentation** • Mobility management • Planning • Pilot operations. • Match rate varies between 10-20%
5311(f)	Longer-distance intercity services	Cities, counties, tribes, districts, governmental entities, private companies, and non-profits that meet FTA requirements for D&A and other reporting	• Capital • Equipment • Mobility management • Planning • Operations
STIF Intercommunity Discretionary	Longer-distance intercommunity services	Cities, counties, tribes, districts, governmental entities	• Capital • Equipment • Mobility management • Planning

			• Operations
Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation (RVHT)	Healthcare related transportation for Veterans	Rural & Highly Rural STF Agencies	• Operations • Contracted/Purchased services • Mobility management • Planning
5304	Transit planning	Cities, counties, tribes, districts, MPOs, ODOT, other governmental entities	• Planning • (20% match)
ODOT Innovative Mobility Program	Focus on underserved communities and shared mobility	Cities, counties, tribes, districts, governmental entities	• Planning and feasibility • Pilot Projects • Shared Mobility • Microgrants
ODOT Transportation Options	Focus on multimodal and active transportation	Cities, counties, tribes, districts, governmental entities	• Sponsorship Program Events and marketing for a new service or to promote service options

Income from "Eligibility Programs" Program/Source	Purpose
PacificSource NEMT benefit (Medicaid clients only)	Qualified Medical

Local sources Program/Source	Purpose
City of The Dalles	Local Assessment
Farebox Revenue—Dial A Ride	Farebox
Farebox Revenue-Deviated Fixed Route	Farebox
Gorge Transit Pass	Universal annual fare instrument
Greyhound Line	Bus stop
Greyhound Line	Ticket Sales Commission
Lobby Vending Machine	Sales percent
Northern Wasco County People's Utility District	Economic Development

<u>Local Grant Opportunities</u>

- Google Community Grant

- Joan Birchell Grant Program: Applicants must be a nonprofit. MCEDD has 501 (c) 3 status with the Four Rivers Community Corporation
- AARP Community Challenge
- Transportation Growth Management Program (DLCD and ODOT)
- Columbia Gorge Health Council Community Grant programs
- PacificSource Foundation

Other Local Public Transportation Funding Options:

- Advertising
- Local general funds (City, County)
- Transportation Impact Fees
- Transportation Utility Fees
- System Development Charges
- Special Assessments
- Other nonprofit or private grant programs
- Partner investments in pass purchases (Community College, employers, health care organizations)
- Donations
- Local grants

Improving Coordination

As The Link's city-wide fixed-route services and the regional public transit system expands, there are new opportunities to partner with other organizations to meet their client's transportation needs.

The Gorge TransLink Alliance

Wasco County enjoys a well-established level of coordination between the area's transportation providers through The Link's participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance, a bi-state coalition of five County's transportation providers, state transportation officials and local agency partners in the Mid-Columbia region. The Alliance is facilitated by MCEDD's Mobility Manager. This individual works closely with Alliance members and other partners to consider local and regional transportation services, service gaps, costs, funding needs, available funding streams, innovative and appropriate technologies. The Mobility Manager is also responsible for identifying opportunities for collaboration and coordination and convening and facilitating these potential partnerships.

To help promote existing transportation services, MCEDD's Mobility Manager conducts community outreach to area organizations serving the needs of vulnerable and special needs populations, as well as to employers and the general public. Gorge TransLink Alliance meetings and projects are organized and facilitated by the Mobility Manager to aid communication and build partnerships, thus fostering an environment where regional transportation concerns can be addressed.

The Mobility Manager position is grant-funded. Gorge TransLink Alliance members support the Mobility Manager position through agency resolutions and Memorandums of Understanding, along with match and in-kind assistance.

Organizations serving Target Populations

The Community Developmental Disabilities Program
CDDP services include eligibility determination, case management, licensure of Foster Homes and protective service investigations for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities for Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties.

Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage (EOSSB)
The Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage provides services to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in 13 counties including Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties. Eligibility is determined through the CDDP. EOSSB also has transportation funds that can be used to provide transportation services to their clients, whether dial-a-ride or a bus pass on the fixed route system.

EOSSB contracts with both public and private transportation providers to provide for their clients' varying needs.

The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)
ODHS has many programs that assist older adults and people with disabilities, including Aging and People with Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities, and Self Sufficiency. Staff also participate in the East Cascades Workforce Board Local Leadership Team that includes the Oregon Human Development Corporation and meets at the Columbia Gorge Community College once a month. This Leadership Team has access to transportation funds for the people that they serve and would be interested in purchasing bus passes or participating in an ongoing travel training program.

Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO)
CAPECO serves Gilliam, Hood River, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Wasco, and Wheeler counties and focuses on four key social service needs in east central Oregon. Services include the Area Agency on Aging, Oregon Project Independence, Congregant and Meal Delivery, Food Pantries, and the Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon (ADRC). ADRC staff connect their clients to local resources like public transportation services. CAPECO's Senior Advisory Council meets once a quarter in The Dalles and would be an excellent meeting for The Link staff to attend on a regular basis.

The Gorge Native American Collaboration
Facilitated and convened by the Next Door Inc, this bi-state collaborative includes representatives from tribal and community leadership, state agencies, non-profits, health care organizations, and other tribal agencies, with a focus on serving the tribal people who live and work along the Columbia River. Initially the project efforts focused on addressing the severe impacts of COVID-19 on these communities, but project goals have expanded to addressing the chronic needs that were exacerbated by the pandemic. These needs include transportation, housing, education, healthy food access and medical. These meetings represent a rare opportunity for transit agencies to learn more about these communities and to identify ways that public transportation can serve them.

The Next Door, Inc (TNDI)
The Next Door, Inc operates many programs that are community- and advocacy based. These programs empower and create leadership within historically underserved communities like Native Americans, migrant workers, and Latino and Hispanic populations. TNDI also operates a consulting service that gives other organizations access to the communities that TNDI serves by contracting to conduct in-depth needs assessments, extensive survey work, and focus groups.

Nch'i Wana Housing
Nch'i Wana Housing was established to empower the Nch'i Wana Pum, or People of the Big River, by ensuring they have safe and sufficient housing, economic opportunities along the Columbia River, and other programs and services to make the Columbia River a great place to live, all rooted in Native culture. In 2022 Nch'i Wana Housing worked with Big Water Consulting to conduct a Community Needs Assessment of people living along the Columbia River at Treaty and in-lieu fishing sites and adjacent

communities. The Community Needs Assessment collected actionable data that Nch'i Wana Housing and its partners used to plan for future housing and community development projects and to strengthen their programs and services.

Circles of Care
The Circles of Care program operates under AGE+, a statewide nonprofit created to support successful aging for all Oregonians. Circles of Care intends to address the challenge that the US has a rapidly growing aging population and not enough resources to meet the needs of older adults, especially those living in rural areas. The mission of this program is to develop solutions within the community to improve the lives of older adults, their families and the communities that they live in. Circles of Care is a volunteer-based program supporting older adults in The Dalles and Hood River to age in place and to feel more connected to their community. Volunteers help with yard work, transportation, light housecleaning, meal preparation and companionship. Volunteers provide door through door assistance with transportation needs.

Resiliency: Emergency Management Partnership

Long before disasters and other events hit, local communities must continually reassess plans and responses to all kinds of emergencies. Transportation is a critical component of these efforts, particularly for non-drivers and people who need mobility assistance during emergency situations or require other means to have access to essentials such as food, medical care, and prescriptions.

Strategies to become a key stakeholder in Wasco County's Emergency Management planning, response, recovery, and mitigation activities include building relationships with the key emergency management officials, identifying capabilities and limitations of services and resources, inventorying residents and pockets of populations with special needs (physical disabilities, low income, LEP), and engaging the organizations who serve those people with emergency planning efforts. Participating in County-led emergency management planning and tabletop exercises is a good way to become integrated into the emergency management systems planning for Wasco County.

MCEDD and Wasco County have approved a Memorandum of Understanding outlining an agreement that in the event of an emergency or disaster MCEDD would provide buses and drivers if available to Wasco County for assistance in transporting threatened citizens.

Coordinated Care Organizations and Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

A **Coordinated Care Organization** is a network of all types of health care providers (physical health care, addictions and mental health care and dental care providers) who work together in their local communities to serve people who receive health care coverage under the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid). CCOs focus on prevention and helping people manage chronic conditions, like diabetes. This helps reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and gives people support to be healthy.

The CCOs contract with transportation brokerages to provide non-emergency medical transportation, a Medicaid benefit. The largest share of federal transportation funding for human services comes from Medicaid-funded NEMT benefits.

Conflicting goals are a fundamental challenge to human services and public transportation coordination. Public transportation goals involve transporting as many people as possible in the most cost-effective way possible. Public transportation goals include serving the entire community. For the CCO, transportation is a benefit provided only to eligible clients, with a focus on individual needs, not general public or community needs.

As was noted in the 2013 ODOT Transportation-Human Services Coordination Study, better coordination and communication between DHS, OHA, the CCOs, Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, and public transportation providers should be established to create a coordinated, efficient, and effective transportation system that serves the entire community. The study recommended establishing a Statewide Transportation-Human Services Coordination Initiative to accomplish these objectives:

1. Identify actions to overcome regulatory, jurisdictional, geographic and cultural barriers to coordination.
2. Identify opportunities to improve regional and out-of-region connectivity in public transportation and human services.
3. Identify opportunities to leverage public transportation funding and resources at the state and local levels to achieve cost efficiencies and strengthen the public transportation system.
4. Engage service providers, including Coordinated Care Organizations, to increase their awareness about the most efficient and effective transportation service options.
5. Identify opportunities for interagency coordination with Veterans' programs and public transportation services, barriers to veterans' transportation and strategies to address them, and opportunities to improve coordination with brokerages for veterans' transportation.

Federal transportation policy calls for coordination of public transportation with human services transportation to avoid duplicative and overlapping services and to achieve cost savings for all federally funded programs. The Medicaid program is the largest federal program for human services transportation, spending approximately $3 billion annually on Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT). The successful coordination of transportation services is affected by the extent to which resources for NEMT are coordinated with and complement public transportation and other human services transportation programs. Because the Medicaid program is administered by states, which can set their own rules within federal regulations and guidelines set by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, coordination of

NEMT with public transit and human services transportation is highly dependent on each state Medicaid agency's policies and priorities.[20]

On September 28, 2023, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued new, comprehensive guidance on NEMT benefits. In areas where public transportation is generally absent or difficult to access, transportation providers must travel for longer distances to help beneficiaries reach covered services and medical providers. As a result, individual transportation providers may be limited in how many beneficiaries they are able to accommodate in each day. In such instances, CMS gives states the flexibility to set higher base rates or establish supplemental payments to recognize the higher cost of doing business in rural areas. Within the guidance, these are the points that should benefit rural public transportation providers:

- More flexibility to set higher base rates and alternative rate methodologies in rural areas.
- Public transit is often the most appropriate option.
- Transit passes can be paid for to cover NEMT rides and used for other non-Medicaid trips.
- States given flexibility to explore innovative payment models.
- Costs that cannot be paid as a direct activity can be built into a payment methodology which address deadhead miles, no-shows, long wait times.
- A new cost allocation tool developed by RLS and Associates and approved by FTA and CMS will be launched in the fall of 2024.

[20] Handbook for Examining the Effects of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Brokerages on Transportation Coordination (National Academies of Sciences, Transportation Research Board, 2018)

Transportation Needs and Barriers

Across the target populations, there was great consistency in the identified service needs, gaps, and barriers with a few exceptions for special groups of residents. The list was developed through the analysis of the survey responses and stakeholder meetings and interviews.

Mobility Barriers	
Service Expansion	• Expanded Dial-a-ride service throughout the entire County: South Wasco County, Dufur and Mosier. • Consistent fixed route service between The Dalles and Hood River that includes a stop in Mosier. • Weekends and later evenings. • Regular service that is dedicated to providing medical trips from Gorge region to Portland Medical Centers.
Dial-A-Ride	• Reservations must be made in advance (ability to pre-plan required). • Riders would like to schedule and receive real-time information about their ride from their phones.
Geography	• Intercity Medical Trips (from The Dalles to Hood River) • Expanded service throughout the entire County: South Wasco County, Dufur and Mosier.
Transit Information	• No real-time information available. • Most riders have difficulty reading a bus schedule. • Riders need transit information at the bus stops.
Fares	• Single fare transactions are difficult to understand and to manage: exact change, paper tickets, cash only, electronic single tickets. • Tickets only available for purchase at the Transit Center. • Cost: $2.00 or $4.00 dial a ride roundtrip is out of reach for some, especially older adults without Medicaid (NEMT) transportation benefits. • $5.00 for the South County Shopping Bus is out of reach for some. • People transferring from one provider to another must pay for each leg of the trip unless they have a Gorge Transit Pass.

Regional Provider Coordination	• Transfers from one bus service to the next can be difficult to make. • Dispatchers aren't familiar with other providers' updated schedules and policies. • Some service and operational procedures are not consistent, although providers have improved policy alignment.
Organizational Coordination	• Human Service Organizations, front line staff, and case workers do not know what public transportation resources exist and do not know how to use them, although this has improved with the Gorge Transit Connect program. • Emergency Management preparations for mass evacuations or other needs for public transit.
Targeted Needs Assessments	• Targeted transportation needs assessments for Veterans, Native Americans, Migrant Workers, Latino and Hispanic Communities, Work Force (commuters), South Wasco County.
Outreach	• Some populations need carefully designed outreach programs. • More general outreach needed.
Travel Training	• Some populations need carefully designed travel training programs (Veterans, Native Americans, older adults and elders, youth, people with disabilities). • Ongoing Train the Trainer program needed for Human Service agencies.
Language and Culture	• Drivers and dispatchers need more training in language and cultural differences • Bilingual staff • Bilingual and culturally appropriate transit informational products. • LEP-appropriate or Plain Language for public-facing materials.
Families	• Fare costs for multiple family members traveling at the same time can be prohibitively expensive. • Confusion over car seat requirements.
Door Through Door Service	• There are unique challenges in Oregon to serve those who need door through door service. • Institutional barriers include Oregon Health Authority policies and liability challenges. • Transit drivers are not trained or provided liability coverage to serve clients inside the home (door through door). • Most in-home health care programs don't provide enough hours per week to include transportation assistance.
Safety	• Minority and marginalized communities concerned about racism or discrimination on the bus or in the public space. • Fears that the bus driver will call policing authorities, resulting in arrest, deportation, or removal of their children (Latino and Hispanic, Native American communities).
Rider Engagement	• More opportunities for riders to participate in service design. • More opportunities for riders to give feedback about existing services.

Funding	• Limited local funding: a significant issue for Wasco County, and relevant mainly to The Link, is the limited amount of local funding that can be used to leverage state and federal funding sources. The Link has no taxing authority to supplement for local match. The City of The Dalles provides annual funds, but Wasco County does not. Local general fund contributions are a common source of local match for non-district providers.
NEMT	• Many Medicaid recipients lose their transportation benefits when they turn 65 yrs old and are transferred to Medicare • NEMT ride bookings have decreased significantly over the last decade. NEMT revenue was an important source of revenue for The Link, providing match for state and federal funding,

Strategies to Address Needs, Barriers and Gaps

Based upon information gathered from public meetings, surveys, and stakeholder interviews the following are strategies to address Wasco County's transportation needs, barriers and gaps. Strategies affecting seniors are marked by an S, those affecting individuals with disabilities are marked by a D, those affecting low-income individuals are marked by an LI and those affecting Limited English Proficiency individuals are marked LEP.

Category: Sustain Existing Transportation Services

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Continue to provide the current dial-a-ride transportation service which is vital to special needs populations.	• Maintain dial-a-ride transportation operations. • Consider developing eligibility criteria for Dial-a-Ride services to ensure that special needs populations are served.	S, D, LI, LEP	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources available through FTA and STIF to fund operations.
Continue to provide current shopping buses which are very popular and highly utilized.	• Maintain shopping bus service. • Conduct regularly scheduled review of service to ensure target populations needs are being met.	S, D, LI, LEP	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources available through FTA and STIF to fund operations.

Maintain intercity service to Hood River to connect with regional public transit services.	• Conduct regularly scheduled review of service to ensure target populations needs are being met. • Coordinate routes with Gorge Transit providers. • Coordinate with ODOT to seek a sustainable funding source for intercity services of statewide significance.	S, D, LI, LEP	Administration capacity exists. Coordinate with ODOT to seek a sustainable funding source for intercity services of statewide significance.
Maintain Red/Blue route services.	• Seek sustainable funding source. • Modify city routes to reduce travel times, costs, and to better serve existing travel patterns.	S, D, LI, LEP	Administration capacity exists.

Category: Operations

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Fleet Management	• Provide for replacement of vehicles that have exceeded their useful life. • Provide funding for ongoing and timely preventative vehicle maintenance to ensure the safety and reliability of the transportation services. • Seek funding for additional vehicles required for any service expansion. • Continue to explore and support fleet electrification and infrastructure.	S, D, LI, LEP	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources likely available through STF funding for operations as well as through other state transportation grants, e.g. 5310.
Maintain affordable fares as cost is an issue for the target populations.	• Continue to secure state, Federal and local funding to keep fares minimal. • Explore other fare options and mechanisms, pass systems, and partnerships.	S, D, LI, LEP	Administration capacity exists.
Address scheduling difficulties presented by the need for 24-hour advance notice for dial-a-ride services.	• Better educate target populations about how the transportation system operates and encourage people to use the fixed route service when possible. • Travel training services can help more people to use the fixed route service. • Explore new technologies that can track the bus in real time and allow online or mobile scheduling.	S, D, LI, LEP	• Continue to support and expand the Travel Training program.

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Expand current payment options. Maintain and expand the Gorge Transit Pass and the Gorge Equity Fund programs.	• The Link has already adopted a mobile ticket app for single fares, but riders might need outreach and training for higher adoption rate. • Continue to monitor and explore new fare payment systems and technologies. • Review locations and distribution options for purchase of tickets.	S, D, LI, LEP	• Administrative capacity exists. • Special foundation or local/regional grant money may be available for start-up costs when a viable option is identified. • Continue to apply for funding to cover the costs of the Gorge Transit Pass for special needs populations.
Address staff language and cultural training skills to meet the needs of those with Limited English Proficiency.	• Establish a regular Staff language and cultural training program. • Work with community-based partners to train and hire bilingual staff.	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities.

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Adopt new technologies to address riders' needs and realize more efficiencies.	• Explore and adopt new technologies to help overcome rider barriers like dispatching software and rider-facing tools. • Coordinate with the Gorge TransLink Alliance so that tools are used across the system and enable transfers.	S, D, LI, LIP	Administrative capacity exists. Apply for grants that will fund these activities.
Continue to implement the Transit Development Plan to enhance service delivery and better serve the transportation needs of the City of The Dalles.	• Use the Transit Development Plan's recommendations as a guide to next steps. • Improve efficiencies of the Red and Blue Routes. • Add a new downtown express service in The Dalles or accomplish via The Dalles to Hood River extension.	S, D, LI, LEP	May require additional financial and staff resources. Some financial resources are likely available through STF & 5310 funding as well as through other state and Federal transportation grants, e.g. discretionary funds; local funds will be necessary as will be fares; private partners may be interested in supporting.
Continue to improve rider experience at bus stops.	• Rider information tools • Benches/seating • Shelters	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities.
Continue to expand organizational capacity and seek opportunities to create efficiencies with regional coordination	Work with the Gorge TransLink Alliance to create a more streamlined, efficient, and coordinated regional public transit system.	S, D, LI, LEP	The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy can guide this process. Apply for grants that will fund these activities.

Category: Service Expansion

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Expand dial-a-ride service area coverage inclusive of the entire County.	• Analyze operations to see if efficiencies would provide greater ability to offer more reliable service to outlying areas of the County. • Consider public/private partnership to expand services throughout the County. • Continue to seek state/federal and private grant funding to support expanded service.	S, D, LI, LEP	• Administration capacity exists. • Would require additional financial and staff resources. • Financial resources are likely available through STF funding as well as through other state and Federal transportation grants, e.g. discretionary funds; local funds would be needed; private partners may be interested in supporting.

Employment transportation: improve access for individuals in the target populations needing regular public transportation to/from work. Increase frequencies on the fixed and deviated-fixed routes.	• Seek state/federal/local and private grant funding to support service expansion to meet workers' needs. • Consider cooperative partnership with employers to help fund service expansion. • Conduct a survey of employers to clarify needs, identify partners and define potential contributions. • Explore incentives for employers to participate. • Continue to support Vanpool program.	D, LI, LEP	• Administration capacity exists. • Would require additional financial and staff resources. • Discretionary funding; local funding would be needed; private partners may be interested in supporting. • Foundation funds for needs assessment. • Apply for grants that address employee transportation needs.
Continue to develop a more robust regional transit network, especially to regional destinations.	Discuss connections through the Gorge TransLink Alliance.	S, D, LI, LEP	Would require additional financial and staff resources.
Expansion of service hours. Expansion to include weekends. Increase frequencies.	Seek state/federal and private grant funding to support expanded service hours.	D, LI, LEP	Would require additional financial and staff resources.
Expansion to provide a regional van system that goes directly to OHSU, the VA, and other major medical facilities in Portland.	• Seek state/federal funding. • Partner with health care organizations, the DAV van program or Veterans Service Officers, and nonprofits.	S, D, LI, LEP	Would require additional financial and staff resources.

Category: Stable Funding

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Address limited local funding that can be used to leverage state and federal funding sources.	• Continue to seek all Federal and state transportation grants that The Link is eligible for. • Leverage all match against Federal and state grants. • Engage local groups to advocate for increase in public transportation funds. • Advocate for increase in STIF funding. • Identify potential additional sources/partners to support local operational funding or local match, such as support from the Chamber, the City, Community College etc. • Identify and secure nontraditional sources of local funding, such as support from the business community. • Develop a strategy to discuss the feasibility of establishing a taxing authority through referral to voters to establish a Public Transit District. • Work with PacificSource and OHA to develop NEMT policies that create a stronger partnership with public transit.	S, D, LI, LEP	The Link currently seeks out and applies for eligible grants. Working with local groups to develop advocates for public transportation requires additional administrative capacity. Work to identify and build collaborative operational support from potential additional sources/partners.

Category: Marketing/Education/Outreach

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Improve bilingual marketing and public awareness of the County's transportation services and how to access them.	Work with community-based partners on marketing and outreach.	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities.
Continue general outreach to highlight new services available to all. Market and promote the system to ensure target populations are aware of the services available.	• Continue the work of the "Everybody Rides" campaign for outreach. • Distribute material about the transportation system at key sites. • Maintain existing promotion routes, including website, Radio and print. • Explore effective opportunities to better promote the services offered.	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities.
Address safety and security concerns voiced by Limited English Proficiency stakeholders, Native Americans, older adults and elders, and other target populations.	• Develop a strong agency statement of support for marginalized groups. • Understand a riders' civil rights. • Engage in the outreach necessary to learn how to address fears. • Partner with community-based organizations to foster trust. • Provide cultural awareness training for drivers.	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities.

Needs Assessments	Engage community-based organizations to conduct an in-depth needs assessment for underserved communities like Veterans, Native Americans, migrant workers, individuals without shelter.	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities.
Travel Training	• Continue to support and expand the Travel Training program and coordinate with other transit agencies and community partners. • Continue to support and expand the Gorge Transit Connect program, which fosters connections to Community Health Workers (CHW) and other frontline staff who work directly with clients. Provide marketing materials and information; provide education at training events. • Address the ease of using the system for target populations with better connections to the natural communication points, such as Community Health Workers, the Next Door Inc's Advocacy groups, Veterans' organizations, and service providers for older adults and individuals with developmental disabilities.	S, D, LI, LEP	Apply for grants that will fund these activities. Work with community partners who can lead the program. Apply for grants to fund these activities.

Category: Planning and Coordination

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Population Affected (S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
Increase options for regional travel in the Mid-Columbia area.	Continue participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance to network and collaborate with the Mid-Columbia transportation service providers. Gorge TransLink Alliance members continue to identify and apply to funding opportunities to support regional transportation connections.	S, D, LI, LEP	Capacity currently exists through the Administrators' regular participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance.
Continued collaboration with Human Services providers in essential to meet the needs of the target population.	Attend regular public Human Service organization meetings to maintain strong working relationships and bolster the ability to respond collaboratively to emerging needs or changing conditions. Many of these organizations have their own transportation budgets that could be used to expand services or leverage grant funds. Continue to support the Gorge Transit Connect program.	S, D, LI, LEP	Capacity exists within the current Administration.
Coordinate with local and regional planning processes to develop more transit-supportive land use policies, infrastructure, and communities.	Establish regular communication channels with local and regional planning departments including emergency management. Establish the public transit agency as a key stakeholder in all planning efforts.	S, D, LI, LEP	Capacity exists within the current Administration.

Performance Measures

Identified high priority strategies are linked to performance measures in the coordinated transportation plan to help determine their efficacy in addressing service needs, gaps and barriers. The performance measures were developed in concert with the transportation providers to measure success of the high priority strategies. Performance measures were designed to capitalize on current tracking methods or otherwise be easy to track so they are not burdensome. The performance measures are listed below. Progress will be reviewed regularly with the Public Transportation Advisory Committee. The Link staff will provide regular committee ridership reports and updates.

Transportation Need	Strategies	Performance Measure
Sustain existing transportation services	• Maintain dial-a-ride transportation operations. • Maintain shopping bus service. • Maintain the Deviated Fixed Service. • Maintain intercity service to Hood River to connect with other regional public transit services.	• Track ridership for dial-a- ride services. • Track ridership boarding at the fixed stops. • Track ridership for shopping bus. • Track ridership for intercity service to Hood River.
Operations	• Provide for replacement of vehicles that have exceeded their useful life. • Seek funding for vehicle repair and preventative maintenance for safe and reliable transport. • Maintain affordable fares. • Address staff language and cultural skills to meet the needs of those with Limited English Proficiency. • Hire bilingual staff. • Adopt new technologies that improve rider experience and operations.	• Track vehicle mileage. • and vehicle replacement. • Track complaints about fares quarterly and report to STF Committee. • Track % staff attendance at LEP language and cultural training sessions. • Assess operations at regular monthly staff meetings.

Service Expansion	• Address employment transportation needs: identify funding and establish cooperative partnerships with employers. • Identify resources to provide access to transportation service in the early morning hours, evenings and weekends.	• New services established
Stable Funding	• Continue to seek to leverage all match against state and federal grants. • Identify and utilize potential additional sources/partners to support local operational funding or local match.	• Amount of federal/state funding secured. • All match for state and • federal funds met. • Amount local funding contributions increase.
Marketing / Education/ Outreach	• Improve bilingual marketing and public awareness of the County's transportation services and how to access them. • Address stigma and negative perceptions of the transportation system through additional outreach and education. • Address safety and security concerns. • Address the ease of using the system for target populations with better connections to natural community points, such as Community Health Workers and Social Service agencies. • Market/promote the system to ensure target populations are aware of services available. • Sustain the travel training program with partners.	• Track ridership counts at stops and for each route. • Use community-based organizations to lead needs assessments. • Measure use of services by target populations and the effectiveness of the transportation program changes. • Number of connection points and partners established.
Planning and Coordination	• Continue participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance. • Participate in the regular meetings of human services agencies.	• Attend regular Gorge TransLink Alliance meetings. • Attend regular human service agency meetings.

Plan Review and Adoption

2007-2010 Coordinated Transportation Plan Adoption

The first draft of this coordinated transportation plan was presented to the Wasco County STF committee on January 11, 2007, and to the Wasco County Board of County Commissioners on January 17, 2007. It was discussed at both of these meetings. The draft plan was approved for submission to the Oregon Department of Transportation with the applications to the Public Transit Division Discretionary Grant Program. The final plan was completed in April 2007.

2009-2011 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update

Under contract with Association of Oregon Counties, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District began updating the plan for 2009-2011. A draft was presented to the Wasco County STF committee in January and March 2009. The draft plan was also posted on MCEDD's website (http://www.mcedd.org) for public review between February 2009 and March 2009. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback. The final plan was approved by the Wasco County STF committee and the Wasco County Court in April 2009.

2016-2020 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update

Under an ODOT subcontract with the Hood River County Transportation District, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District began updating the plan for 2016-2019. A draft was presented to MCCOG's Transportation Network's STF Committee on September 21 and October 24, 2016. The draft plan was also posted on MCEDD's website (http://www.mcedd.org) for public review between September and October 2016. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback. The final plan was approved by the Wasco County STF committee on October 24, 2016, and by the Wasco County Commissioners on November 2, 2016, and extended through 2020 on August 1, 2018.

2020-2023 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update

Using STIF funding, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District completed the Wasco County Coordinated Transportation Plan update in 2020. A draft was presented to the Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee on October 29, 2020. The Wasco County PTAC approved the draft for recommendation to the Wasco County Board of Commissioners on December 3, 2020. The public comment period was open from November 6-20, 2020. The draft plan was posted on MCEDD's website (http://www.mcedd.org), the Gorge TransLink.com, and The Link's and the Gorge TransLink's social media platforms and was sent as a public notice to the Columbia Gorge News. The final plan was approved by the Wasco County Board of Commissioners on December 16, 2020.

2024-2028 Coordinated Transportation Plan Update

Using STIF funding, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District completed the Wasco County Coordinated Transportation Plan update in 2024. The Wasco County PTAC approved the draft for recommendation to the Wasco County Board of Commissioners on October 14, 2024. The public comment period was open from October 15-28, 2024. The draft plan was posted on MCEDD's website (http://www.mcedd.org), the Gorge TransLink's website (gorgetransit.com), and The Link's and the Gorge TransLink's social media platforms and was sent as a public notice to the media. The final plan was approved by the Wasco County Board of Commissioners on November 6, 2024.

Future Plan Reviews

This plan is designed to be reviewed and updated at least once every three years. It should be reviewed and updated in 2028 at the latest.

Appendices

Appendix A: Updated Fleet Inventory for The Link Public Transportation

Operator	Model/ Year	Mileage Estimate	ADA Accessible	Remaining Useful Life* (Years)	Seating Capacity
The Link	2011 Toyota Van	125,941	No	0	6
The Link	2012 Toyota van	154,802	no	0	6
The Link	2018 Dodge Van	55,357	Yes	3	5-1
The Link	2011 Ford Glaval	139,640	Yes	0	16-2
The Link	2014 Ford Elkhart	174,407	Yes	0	12-2
The Link	2020 Ford Starcraft	101,913	Yes	1	12-2
The Link	2021 Ford Starcraft	74,619	Yes	2	12-2
The Link	2020 Ford Starcraft	74,330	Yes	2	12-2
The Link	2021 Ford Metro Link	68,453	Yes	2	12-2
The Link	2021 Ford Metro link	84,964	Yes	2	12-2
The Link	2021 Ford Metro Link	76,050	Yes	2	12-2
The Link	2021 Ford Metro Link	86,998	Yes	2	12-2
The Link	2021 Ford Metro Link	57,523	Yes	2	12-2

*Note: Useful life is defined as 5 years or 150,000 miles.

Appendix B: Veterans Transportation Needs and Services

Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA): Veterans Transportation Programs
Counties served within this region: Sherman, Klickitat, Gilliam, Wheeler, Crook, Deschutes, Skamania, Cowlitz, Hood River, Wasco.

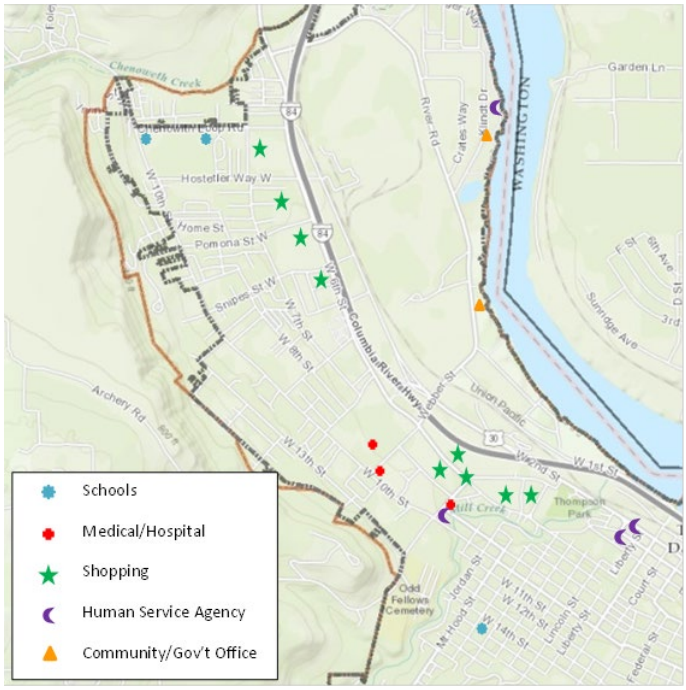
Beneficiary Travel: Reimbursement program for mileage and/or costs incurred while traveling to and from VA health care facilities, to include special modes of transportation and some common carrier transportation, such as bus, taxi, airline, or train travel.

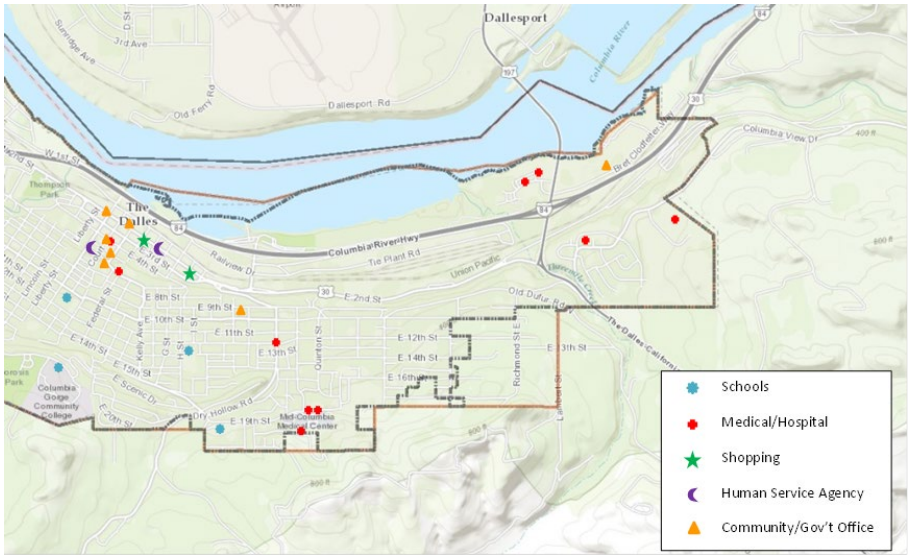
Veterans Transportation Service (VTS): A transportation program for non-ambulatory and remote VA patients that provides transport to VA Medical Centers within a 20-mile radius only. Currently only serving Veterans with dialysis or chemotherapy needs (essential medical). All Veterans with federal VA-funded medical appointments are eligible to ride VTS, but first priority is given to wheelchair-bound patients with no other transportation alternatives.

Special Mode Transportation: Service is contracted out with private providers such as Metro West and American Medical Response (AMR). Veterans must be eligible for this service by meeting criteria including:

- 30%+ disability rating
- The disability itself must require the specific service
- Must be medically necessary and the physician must place the transportation request
- Poverty level
- Transportation benefit cannot be placed through Medicare/Medicaid.

Appendix C: Primary Destinations Maps

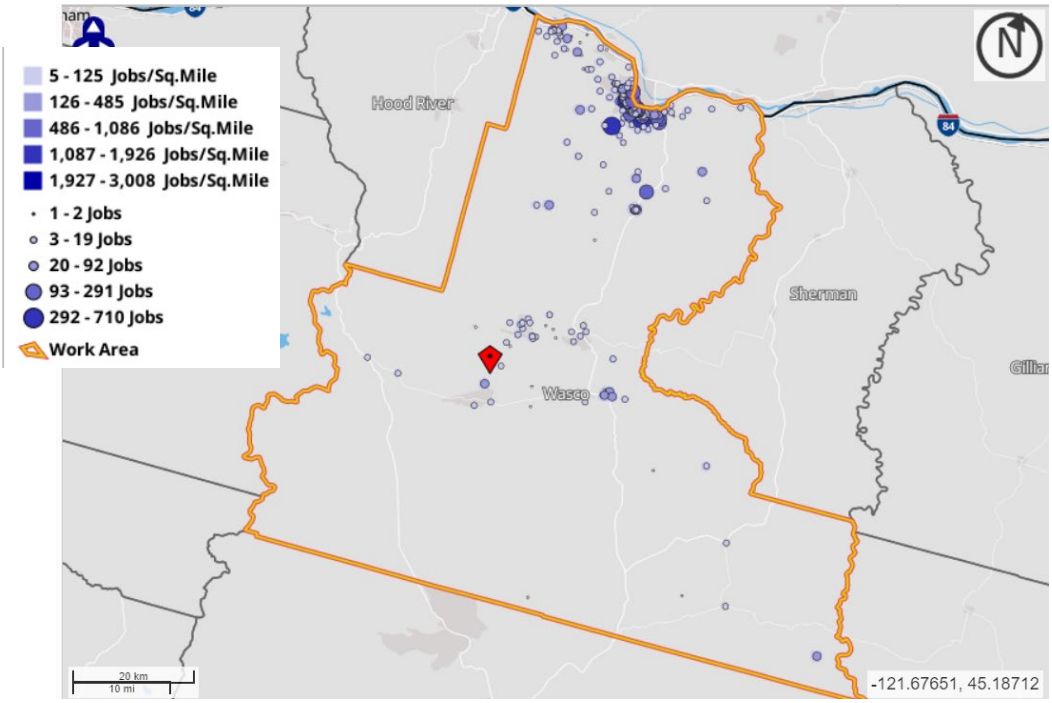




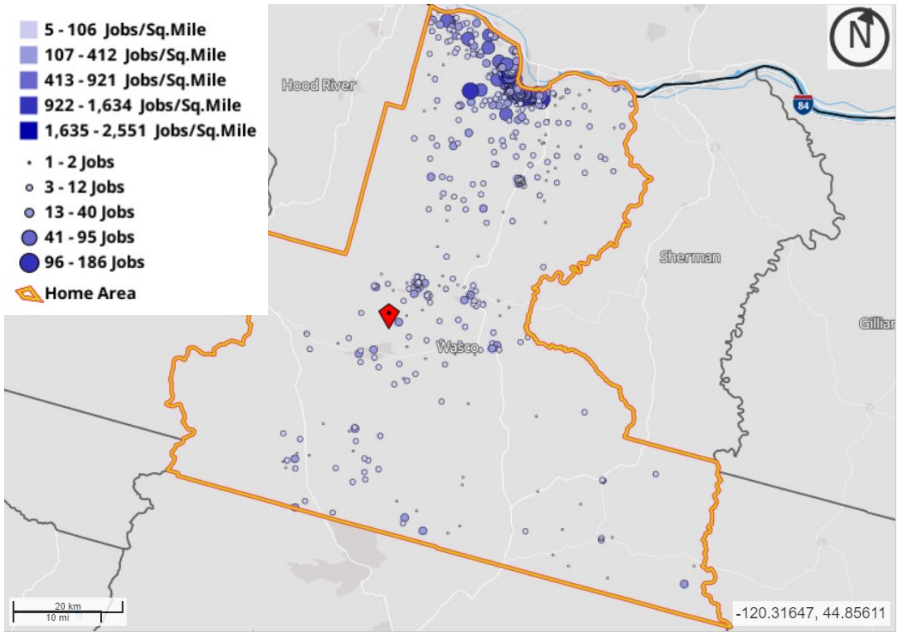
Appendix D: Distribution of Work Areas

(Data: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics, 2021; Universe: Counts and Densities of all jobs and all workers)

Distribution of Work Areas for Workers in Wasco County



Distribution of Home Areas for Workers in Wasco County



Appendix E: Rural Transportation Equity Grant Survey Results

Summary Maupin (Redsides Pow Wow) Transportation Survey Results, April 2023

Summary Wamic Transportation Survey Results, April 2023

Summary Report on Focus Group with Agricultural Workers, June 2023

Appendix F: 2024 Onboard Rider Interviews

The Link Public Transportation Rider Interviews 2024

Appendix G: Gorge TransLink and Gorge Transit Connect Partnership List

Organization	GTC Partner	Name	Phone number
Mid-Columbia Community Action Programs	2020	Mitzi Mason, Cara Mendoza Robert Mendoza, Marie Parker	The Dalles 541.298.5131 Hood River 541.298.5131
DHS-Family and child welfare	2022	Renee Enriquez	541-490-2171
Columbia Gorge Community College	2020	Marco Beitl	541-993-4302
Hood River Community Corrections Department	2021	Cassandra Raffa	541-387-6862
Providence Memorial Hospital-BOB program	2020	Rena George	
Providence Memorial Hospital	2020	Richelle Wihite	541-386-3911
One Community Health-Hood River	2020	Jose Morales	541-386-6380
One Community Health-The Dalles	2020	Ian Schurr	541-296-4610
Bridges 2 Health	2020	Lissette Rivera	direct/text-971-323-0231

NORCOR	2022	Joyce Orendorff	541-298-1576
Mid-Columbia Center for Living	2020	Kristen Anders	541-296-5452
Bridges to Change	2021	Brandon Johnson	971-570-2729
The Next Door-The Dalles	2020	Victor Lua	Main Line 541-296-8118
The Next Door Hood River	2020	Cristal Hernandaz -Office manager	541-386-6665
Veterans Service Office-Hood River	2020	Lynetta Hickman Wanda	541-386-1080
Veterans Service Office -The Dalles	2020	Russell Jones Chelsea Perritt	541-506-2502
Mid-Columbia Housing Authority	2020	Sonia Chavez	direct line 541.370.2291
Nch'i Wana Housing	2020	Debra Whitefoot sofie.larsen-teskey@nchiwana.org	
DHS-Aging and Disabilities	2021	Tama Bolton	541-298-4114
Circles of Care/Age +	2021	Rita Rathkey & Scott McKay	541-397-0724
Haven	2020	Jennifer Lopez	5412961662
The Dethman House	2020	Kate Garrison	541-387-8278
CAPECO	2021	Jarred Jarrett	541-969-6864
Worksource Oregon	2022	Manual Rincon	541-791-5850
Columbia Gorge Food Bank	2024	Scott Radford	541-370-2333
Helping Hands	2020	Serra Perino	541-386-4808
WAGAP	2020		509-493-2662
SEAMAR	2024	Tera Yano	

Appendix H: 2024-2028 Plan Adoption

The 2024-28 Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan was presented to the Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee on October 14, 2024 and to the Wasco County Commission on November 6, 2024.

Notice of plan availability was also noted on the MCEDD and Gorge TransLink websites and was available in hard copy or electronic (PDF) form.

Recommended by the Wasco County Public Transportation Advisory Committee:

Chair _____ October 14, 2024
Chair Date

Adopted by the Wasco County Board of Commissioners:

S D Kramer 11/6/2024
Chair Date