

Another point raised by the private carriers involves their desire to allow for flexibility of use for equipment that might be made available under a federal/state program—for example allowing usage for other (non-funded) services during off-peak hours.

The private carriers also made the point that the role of subrecipient to WSDOT and FTA programs creates many additional requirements that increase costs and are alien to a private firm, including the cost of carrying expenses while waiting for grant expense reimbursements to clear. This was contrasted with an alternative role as a contractor, which many of the private firms have experienced—where they can provide the service and bill for it. An arrangement in which another agency is the subrecipient and the private firm is a contractor would work better, according to some interviewees.

This input was valuable and will be considered in the policy development phase of the project, but it must be noted that if federal funds are used for operating or capital, all the federal requirements must be met one way or another. Most of these requirements must be passed on from the grantee to the subrecipient, and to any and all contractors—though there may be ways to make them easier to meet or document.

POTENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE INTERCITY PROGRAM

The WSDOT transit grant program basically classifies projects into three types: those that replace an existing service, those that sustain an existing service, and those that expand an existing service. This is a useful way in which to classify projects in a program, and it can be used to address the intercity and rural-to-urban elements of the State’s intercity program. In a general sense, the existing network to be considered in this case includes two classes of service. One is the larger class of scheduled services operated by private, for-profit firms without any operating assistance. This is basically the Greyhound intercity network, some routes operated by Northwestern Trailways, and the scheduled airporter services. In addition, in the analysis presented in Chapter 3, a number of services that receive federal and/or State operating assistance were included as part of the existing network. These include the services funded under the Section 5311(f) intercity program, which need to be considered for the future in terms of whether or not they should be “sustained” or continued, and if so, whether Section 5311(f) is the appropriate funding source.

Potential Service Expansion

Given the inventory of existing services, demographic analysis of unmet need, and all of the input from the web surveys, interviews, site visits and Medicaid survey, what routes or services should be added to the Washington State intercity bus network? Based on these assessments and the frequency with which service needs in particular areas were mentioned, there are a number of potential areas for intercity expansion. To begin to frame these for development as possible projects, they are presented here in three categories. The first group can

be identified as areas that represent network coverage expansion beyond the services currently provided by the marketplace or the existing S.5311(f) projects. A second group of potential projects includes services that might be characterized as rural feeders, additional services or linkages on existing routes, and potential intermodal facilities or improvements. A third group consists of services identified through the process as meeting some unmet need, but having very limited demand, or a more local focus, or the potential for using other sources of funding. These are potential projects that could involve an intercity connection or link, but likely will need some additional development for consideration in the future.

Sustain/Expand the Network

There are three corridors in this first category, and depending on the results of further project planning, they could involve planning funds, operating assistance, capital for vehicles and facilities, and marketing funds. To some extent they all build upon existing local services, but provide improved or expanded connections to the intercity market, combining that function/demand with identified potential markets for regional travel to medical facilities, educational institutions, etc. The three areas include:

(Yakima) Toppenish-Goldendale-Columbia River Valley—Network Expansion

This corridor was identified in several ways as one that needs expansion to link a number of towns with services in the region, with remaining Greyhound service on the Oregon side of the Columbia, and with services in Vancouver (WA) and Portland (OR). Greyhound once ran service from Seattle through Yakima, Toppenish, and Goldendale and onto Biggs, Oregon, where passengers could change to buses bound for Portland or Spokane. In 2001-2003 Greyhound applied for Rural Mobility Grant funding to operate in this corridor from Washougal to Goldendale along SR 14, with connections to Portland and Yakima. Greyhound has abandoned that service to focus on service using the interstate highways on the Oregon side as part of a route from Spokane to Portland. Remaining Greyhound service points are The Dalles and Hood River, and there are weekday peak hour transit services operated by C-Tran from Washougal and Camas into Vancouver. The primary connections needed here are from Goldendale to Toppenish (with either connections or service to Yakima) for medical trips, and from Goldendale and Klickitat to Hood River, Oregon, where a connection could be made to the east- and west-bound Greyhound intercity service. The potential also exists to connect with Amtrak services in White Salmon-Bingen. However, the ultimate service design for this region will need further development regarding frequency, route length, and connections. Greyhound dropped service in this corridor because of low ridership, and that is in large part a function of small populations along these routes—a condition that has not changed. The key will be combining markets to serve more than just intercity connecting passengers, and finding ways to operate at lower costs than those experienced by Greyhound.

Kettle Falls/Colville/Deer Park/Spokane—Network Expansion

The existing network does not provide service to any point within 25 miles of the three towns identified as having high or moderate need block groups, Kettle Falls, Colville, and Deer

Park. In addition, input from surveys and interviews with a number of sources in the region all identified a need for this rural to urban intercity connection. Rural Resources provides local service from Kettle Falls and Chewelah to Colville, but not to Spokane. An intercity connector from Kettle Falls to Spokane could include stops in Colville, Chewelah, and Deer Park on its way into Spokane. By stopping at key hospitals, the Spokane Airport, The Plaza transit hub, and the Intermodal Center, this service could combine several potential markets, serve a number of needs, and offer a meaningful connection to intercity services. Again, the issue is the limited potential ridership from the small towns and rural areas—the issues of the potential demand and the costs involved need to be addressed in project planning efforts. However, this corridor is likely to perform in a manner similar to the Omak-Wenatchee service—with the potential that the greater “attractiveness” of Spokane will offset the smaller population base of Colville-Kettle Falls.

Ellensburg/Yakima/Walla Walla/Connell—Sustain and Expand Existing Section 5311(f) Service

This route includes two segments that are already funded under S.5311(f), the Walla Walla to Pasco service operated by Genie Tours as the Grape Line, and the Yakima-Prosser Connector operated by People for People. In addition, there is Ben Franklin Transit service from Pasco to Prosser. However, a number of sources suggested that the connections between the various services could be improved, and more significantly, that there is an intercity market from the Yakima and points east to Ellensburg. People for People, operator of the Yakima-Prosser Connector, also received a Rural Mobility Grant for the 2001-2003 period that included funding for implementation of Yakima-Ellensburg service.

Ellensburg is the home of Central Washington University, potentially a significant regional market. It also offers significantly better intercity connections, with six Greyhound trips east and west every day. Central Washington Airporter offers service to Sea-Tac from both Yakima and Ellensburg, providing service on this corridor. As the existing Yakima-Prosser Connector does not currently offer a meaningful intercity connection (to Greyhound or Central Washington Airporter), but does exhibit high ridership, and previous incarnation of the GrapeLine exhibited meaningful intercity connections (to Greyhound) but low ridership, the opportunity exists to fill in the gaps in this corridor and provide better rural to urban connections restructuring the service to run the entire corridor. Potentially a regional intercity project could also add the extension from Pasco to Connell as part of a single operating contract, thereby addressing the identified gap to serve the employees, visitors, and released inmates of the correctional facility located there.

Populations in many of the individual towns along this route may be low, but taken together with the larger cities there is a significant potential ridership base. This project is likely to involve operating assistance, vehicle capital, and potentially an intermodal facility in Ellensburg that would serve Greyhound, Northwestern Trailways, Central Washington Airporter, the new regional intercity services, and local transportation.

Category Two: Network Improvement—Sustain Existing Services through Better Connections

This group of potential projects primarily concerns existing services, addressing both existing S.5311(f) projects, and the potential for using some funding to bolster or improve some existing market-based services. Potential concepts based on the analysis include:

Pullman-Spokane Corridor

Although Wheatland Express and Northwestern Trailways both serve this corridor without any form of capital or operating assistance, the potential exists to improve access and mobility through some limited reinforcement of services. At one level, improved information about the existing services, and development of some common stops would improve mobility. Wheatland Express recently dropped its early morning trip to Spokane International Airport, leaving a trip that departs Pullman at 9:45 a.m., returning at 3:35 p.m.; and a trip that departs at 4:25 p.m. returning to Pullman at 8:45 p.m. Northwestern Trailways has a bus leaving Pullman at 7:10 a.m., and another at 2:50 p.m. Thus there are four buses from Pullman to Spokane every day, leaving at 7:10 a.m., 9:45 a.m., 2:50 p.m., and 4:25 p.m. There is no single source of information in Pullman that would let a potential user know of these options—and Wheatland Express and Northwestern Trailways stop at different locations in both Pullman and Spokane. In this case some limited funding and coordination work could improve mobility—through joint timetables, and a few extra miles to allow either carrier to serve the hospital area.

An unserved expansion need identified in the outreach effort is the need for a commuter type of service from Clarkston/Lewiston to Pullman, though this may require some other source of funding as it really represents a commuter service (not fundable with S.5311(f)).

Finally, sustaining the existing service might also require some additional operating funding in the future. Northwestern Trailways is applying for funding in Idaho to maintain the Spokane-Pullman-Boise service (which could affect the Washington portion of the route if it is not forthcoming), and the Lewiston-Spokane service could potentially need Washington State assistance.

Intermodal Facilities

Even though Washington State has done a very good job developing transit centers that also are intermodal, the outreach effort identified several locations that should be the focus of programmatic efforts. Those identified include:

- **Seattle:** Although this is not a rural location, it is the central station for intercity bus services in Seattle, including those trips that originate in rural areas. The existing Greyhound station is surrounded by new downtown development, and the site is probably much more valuable for other uses. Greyhound, Northwestern Trailways, and Olympic Bus Lines service this station. However, it is located some distance from the Metro bus/light rail tunnel, and is across downtown from King Street Station, the rail hub. The scenario to avoid is one in which Greyhound and the

intercity carriers are evicted from the Greyhound station years before intermodal development at King Street can accommodate them. Plans should be made for a near-term accommodation for the intercity services at King Street, which would then be a truly intermodal facility.

- **Ellensburg:** This city has frequent Greyhound service, and is also served by the Central Washington Airporter and Northwestern Trailways. A possibility is additional service from Yakima. An intermodal facility would seem to make sense in this location, and should be studied. Airporter service would benefit from being able to offer secure long-term parking, and this should be included in the feasibility study.
- **Olympia:** The Greyhound station is up for sale, and there are plans to move Greyhound into the Intercity Transit facility. Earmark funds are now available for some of the costs. Linking Intercity Transit with the Pierce Transit, Mason Transit, Grays Harbor Transit, and Greyhound services at this facility makes sense, and should be a program priority.
- **Centralia:** The outreach effort identified a need for a better connection point with the Amtrak services and Greyhound. Additional study of the problem, the need and possible solutions is required.
- **Leavenworth:** There is no intercity bus stop or agent in this popular tourism destination. Currently Northwestern Trailways buses stop at WSDOT park and ride lot. Amtrak is seeking a station stop at Leavenworth. One option would be construction of a small terminal at the lot, which would then provide a location for a commission agent to sell tickets during limited hours around the bus schedules, or a combined Amtrak/intercity bus facility could be developed. Again, more research is needed—perhaps there is a local business that would take on the role of ticket agent.
- **Moses Lake:** With feeder services from Adams County bringing passengers into Moses Lake, a transfer point with waiting area is needed to improve this connection.

This study does not include the resources for a full assessment of intercity bus facilities, but the locations mentioned above are all potential candidates for additional assessment, and for potential feasibility studies to identify the needs, the likely participants, costs, possible sites, etc.

Sustain Existing S.5311(f) Services

As mentioned above, a number of the existing S.5311(f) funded services have been included as “existing services” in the evaluation of unmet need. If the funding were to end and the services disappear, the places served by those operations would have to be added to the list of points that have unmet service needs. For that reason, continued funding for operations of these services would make sense, to the extent that they are serving places that have been identified as having unmet need based on demographic characteristics or the outreach effort.

In the FY 2005-2007 biennium Public Transportation and Rail Division (PTRD) funded the following projects with S.5311(f) funds:

- Northwestern Trailways scheduled intercity services from Omak to Wenatchee, and Wenatchee to Ellensburg;
- GrapeLine service from Walla Walla to Pasco, operated by Genie Tours;
- People for People’s Yakima-Prosser Connector;
- People for People’s Adams and Lincoln County services linking Royal City, Othello and Warden service connecting at Moses Lake, and Grand Coulee to Spokane.
- Port Angeles-Seattle-Sea-Tac scheduled service operated by Olympic Bus Lines.
- White Pass Community Services Mountain Highway Transit service between Packwood, Morton, Chehalis, and Centralia.
- Washington-Oregon intermodal trip planning system--development.

These services are summarized in Table 4-17, which includes information from WSDOT grant files, and some limited performance information from the available quarterly reports. Figure 4-13 presents the existing network map, with the Section 5311(f) funded services shown as yellow routes, depicting their current role.

Although all of the services currently funded appear to meet S.5311(f) criteria in terms of length of route and serving two or more points with a population greater than 2,500, several of them are also potentially seen as regional or local routes. The FTA S.5311(f) circular calls for such services to have a meaningful connection with the national intercity bus network, but does not define “meaningful”. At a minimum, it would seem, such a connection would require the regional service to stop at the same location served by the intercity carrier, and to list that stop in its public information such as timetables, etc. On that basis, the Yakima-Prosser Connector does not currently have a “meaningful” connection, as it does not list the Yakima Greyhound station as a schedule point, and does not have a designated stop at the station. It does, however, pass directly by the station on its way into and out of Yakima, and has apparently stopped on request (though it is not clear how an incoming Greyhound passenger would know about or stop the Connector bus if they wanted a transfer). Similarly, the People to People Grand Coulee to Spokane service does not have a designated connection with Greyhound or Northwestern Trailways in Spokane, though it could be added to the route and to the public information. Jefferson Transit’s Forks to Amanda Park service may be technically intercity service, but it has no direct connection with Olympic Bus Lines service in Port Angeles, which is the nearest service that could be considered part of the national intercity bus network. The Mountain Highway Transit services operated by White Pass Community Services from Packwood to Chehalis and Centralia link an area not identified as a high or moderate need area (based on population density) –it is not identified as having a “meaningful” connection. It may be that the connection needs to be identified and developed, or it may be that this service should be funded with an alternative source.

Both the Olympic Bus Lines and Northwestern Trailways services are definite candidates for continued Section 5311(f) funding to “sustain” these services. As can be seen in Table 4-17 they are both doing relatively well by comparison with most rural public transit services, at least in terms of farebox recovery. Neither would be viable without operating assistance at this point,

Table 4-17: SUMMARY OF CURRENT SECTION 5311(F) PROJECTS

Grant	Type: Capital, Operating, or Other	Year Funded	Grant Year(s)	Grant Amount	Project Description	Intercity Connection	Ridership	Operating Revenue	Cost Per Trip	Farebox Recovery
Genie Services (1)	Operating	2005-2007	0P5813	150,000	Walla Walla/Pasco	Pasco Intermodal with Greyhound	524 (9/05 thru 12/05)	7,041 (same period)	28.62	47%
Jefferson Transit Authority	Operating	2005-2007	0P4813, 0P5813	118136 118136	Amanda Park/Forks Service	None	1,776	2,018	89.15	1.27%
Northwestern Stage Lines	Operating	2005-2007	0P4813, 0P5813, 0P6813	89,425 49,357 40,067	Omak/Wenatchee/Ellensburg	Wenatchee, Ellensburg	1,548 (qtr. Ending 12/05)	33,795	\$85.28	26%
Olympic Bus Lines	Operating	2005-2007	0P4813, 0P6813	81,285 81,285	Port Angeles/Seattle /Sea-Tac	Seattle Greyhound, King Street Station	3,670 3512	97,071 208,355	39.72 76.50	66.5% 77.5%
People for People	Operating	2005-2007	0P4813	6,548 114,502	Moses Lake/Othello/Royal City/Ephrata	Ephrata, Moses Lake				
People for People	Operating	2005-2007	0P4813, 0P6813	114,240 114,240	Prosser/Grandview /Sunnyside/Granger /Toppenish/Wapato Yakima	Yakima (does not serve intercity station)	6755 July-September 05	148.85	\$9.36	0.23 %
White Pass Community Service Center	Operating	2005-2007	0P4813, 0P5813, 0P6813	87,608+ 22,976 46,856 103,072	Route Dev. Service Packwood/Centralia	None	924 July-September 05	Not divided between programs	\$41	3.3 %

though the Port Angeles to Sea-Tac service operated by Olympic could potentially grow to be self-sustaining in operating terms, though it would still require capital. Both services make bonafide connections with the national intercity bus network, offer tickets as part of the national interline ticket system, and information on them is available in national intercity bus information sources (though they are not visible in the Greyhound on-line timetable). One lesson from the Olympic experience is that it may be necessary to combine several markets to make rural intercity bus service successful—this route serves Amtrak connections, Seattle hospitals, Greyhound, and the airport.

The GrapeLine service from Walla Walla to the Tri-Cities did not do as well as hoped, and the service contract was cancelled. There may be several reasons for this: One is that it had limited schedules—in part designed to mesh with the Greyhound schedules at Pasco, but also limiting the potential local/regional market. The fares were high, and so ridership suffered—one need only have looked at the fare free Yakima-Prosser Connector, which had capacity problems. Also, the previous operation did not become a Greyhound interline partner. Walla Walla was clearly identified as a significant high/moderate need location, and it probably has the highest population of any single point that is served only by subsidized service. Service should definitely be sustained in this corridor, but it will take renewed effort to combine markets, with lower fares, a full Greyhound interline partnership, new vehicles, and better marketing.

Category Three: Opportunities Needing Further Development

This category basically includes potential projects that were identified as part of the outreach effort, but that are not supported by the demographic analysis or intercity history as part of the current network. These are areas that could ripen into projects, probably as rural feeders, but they could also become rural transit projects with a more local or regional focus.

Mazama

Intercity connections are provided to this recreation/tourism area by non-scheduled van connections to Sea-Tac and Bellingham/Mount Vernon, operated by a local firm, Mountain Transporter. This same firm operates scheduled seasonal services carrying bicyclists and hikers up to mountain jump-off points. Further examination of the market could reveal a need for seasonal scheduled connections from the Mazama area to Sea-Tac. Route 20 west of Mazama is closed in the winter, which would limit the service. Another potential element of the market would involve scheduled service from Winthrop, perhaps connecting from Omak, with daily schedules designed to serve employees working in Mazama. Again, more feasibility analysis is required before any recommendations could be made regarding routes or schedules. Additional planning study is needed in this area.

Mount Rainier

A transit feasibility study is being conducted addressing the need to provide transit as a means of accessing Mt. Rainier National Park, while minimizing the impacts of vehicles. One element could well be scheduled intercity connections to the Park from Seattle, which could potentially be considered for S.5311(f) funding. This could also include or build upon the

Mountain Highway Transit service from Centralia to Packwood. Additional planning work could identify services in the Lewis County area that would address both tourism and local needs for connections to medical and other services.

Oroville

A need for service to Oroville was identified in the demographic analysis, but additional planning assessment will be needed to determine the potential demand and the best way to provide a linkage to the intercity system. The current S.5311(f) service from Ellensburg and Wenatchee to Omak is the nearest connection point, but would require a very early departure for either a rural feeder or if the service was extended. The population base is small, and the incremental mileage of an extension is significant.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The demographic analysis and the examination of unserved key destinations suggested a number of places in Washington that are not served by the current intercity bus network. These were assessed in terms of the availability of local public transit connections to the intercity network, and a number were found to have no options for access by transit either. These places include:

- Colville,
- Connell,
- Deer Park,
- Goldendale,
- Kettle Falls,
- Newport, and
- Oroville.

An extensive outreach effort involving a newsletter, written surveys, internet surveys, and telephone interviews validated the identification of these locations as having unmet need, and provided some additional insight as to local priorities. Based on the outreach input and the data, the most likely areas for potential projects to add to or develop the State's intercity network include:

1. Development of the Walla Walla-Tri-Cities-Yakima-Ellensburg corridor to enhance the intercity/regional link from Yakima to Ellensburg, and interconnect services in this entire corridor to serve multiple markets and provide intercity connections. This could include additional service between Connell and Tri-Cities.
2. New service connecting Goldendale and Klickitat to Greyhound/Amtrak connections at Hood River, with connections to/from Portland, Oregon. Rural to urban service from Goldendale to Toppenish and Yakima was also identified as a need.

3. New service from Kettle Falls and Colville to Spokane, via Chewelah and Deer Park, to serve both intercity connections and regional needs for medical and other trips.

Development of projects in these areas would be considered as a priority going forward in the development of the program. Further analysis of the potential market, service designs, costs, and likely operators is needed.

In addition, the input suggested that there are other areas in which currently operated or funded services could be sustained, either by continuing existing market services with supporting funding for marketing and limited service extensions, or by continuing existing S.5311(f) funding with improvements in the development of “meaningful” intercity connections, interline ticketing and schedule information, or the development of intermodal facilities. This includes the Clarkston-Lewiston/Pullman/Spokane corridor (for services) and the existing S.5311(f) services. In addition, intermodal facility needs identified include Seattle, Olympia, Centralia, Ellensburg, Leavenworth, and Moses Lake. Intermodal facilities are already planned in Seattle and Olympia—the Seattle situation may need to be addressed sooner than contemplated. In the other locations the outreach identified possible needs, with additional review and planning needed to determine the needs, opportunities, and likely actors.

A third category of needs identified in the outreach consisted of potential rural projects that need additional development, but represent potential future services. These included tourism oriented services to Mount Rainier, services to Mazama and other parts of Okanogon County, and additional services in Lewis County. These were mentioned as needs areas in the outreach, but the demographic analysis (which focuses on persons more likely to have transit dependency) did not identify them as high or moderate needs areas. More analysis and dialogue is needed in these areas.