

# Palouse RTP0 Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan





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# Executive Summary

The *Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* has been developed through the sponsorship of the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (the Palouse “RTPO”), which serves the four-county region of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties in southeastern Washington State. The initial *Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* was prepared in 2006 and adopted in June 2007. This project is an Update to the 2007 Plan.

## Project Goals

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) administers a coordinated grant program for State and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds comprised of state Rural Mobility and Paratransit/Special Needs Non-Profit grants, and federal Rural Mobility, Special Needs, Job Access and New Freedom grants. The goals of the *Palouse Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* are the following:

- Respond to federal planning requirements to access federal funds.
- Define service needs for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons of low-income status.
- Prioritize potential strategies to address service deficiencies.
- Update an inventory of human service transportation providers.
- Develop a Plan to be submitted by the Palouse RTPO to the Washington State Department of Transportation as the basis for funding applications by the transit operators.
- Document needs for future efforts.

## Project Methodology

A Steering Committee of 11 stakeholders directed the overall plan development and set priorities for funding applications to WSDOT. During the first week of May 2010, public workshops were conducted in each of the four counties to solicit stakeholder and general public involvement. Following the workshops and Steering Committee review, a list of 10 potential strategies was developed to address the unmet needs identified in the workshops. The definition of unmet transportation needs in the federal guidelines was used as prioritization criteria to evaluate the strategies.

The Steering Committee participated in a webinar with the project consultants to apply the prioritization criteria to the proposed projects for WSDOT funding. The projects selected by the Steering Committee were forwarded to the Policy Board of the RTPO for approval prior to submission to WSDOT in January 2011.

## Demographic Profile

The total population of the four counties in 2000 was 67,752, with Asotin and Whitman Counties being significantly more populated than Columbia and Garfield Counties. Since the 2010 Census was being conducted during the development of this plan, no updated demographic information beyond population estimates was available other than that contained in the 2000 Census.

All four counties are quite rural, with concentrations of population in several small cities and towns. The counties are characterized by a population that has a higher proportion of seniors, people with a disability, and people living in poverty, compared to the State of Washington. The rural character of these counties makes it difficult for people to get places without a vehicle.

Servicing the low density population is a distinct challenge for transportation service providers, who often must travel long distances to pick up and drop off single passengers.

## **Description of Existing Transit Services**

**Asotin County Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)** implemented its new fixed-route bus system in January 2010 with three new routes: Red route in Clarkston; Green route between Clarkston and Asotin; and Blue route between Clarkston and Lewiston in Idaho. It also operates a dial-a-ride service for people in the fixed-route service area but with mobility limitations that prevent them from using the regular fixed-route service. In addition, the PTBA provides a vanpool program, currently for six vanpool groups, and a Guaranteed Ride Home Program. The PTBA is funded with a county sales tax of 0.2%.

**Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT)** is the only public transportation provider in Columbia County, covering the entire county with general public dial-a-ride service. CCPT also provides scheduled service from Dayton to Waitsburg, Dixie, and Walla Walla in Walla Walla County. CCPT is under contract with a Medicaid broker, People for People, to provide Medicaid transportation, as well as with the Columbia County Public Hospital District to provide transportation for its patients and the residents of the Booker Rest Home. CCPT operates a self-sustaining vanpool program, currently with 10 vanpool groups. As the Countywide Transportation Authority, it successfully passed a sales tax of 4/10 of one percent in November 2005. CCPT receives \$3 per person for transportation provided to patients of the critical access hospital.

**Garfield County Transportation (GCT)**, an Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Area, operates a demand response service from Pomeroy to the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley, on Tuesdays and Thursdays with departure at 9 AM. A dial-a-ride service is available in Pomeroy from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday. Both services are fully ADA accessible and available for any county resident needing transportation. Garfield County Transportation carries Medicaid clients to medical appointments, supplementing the service provided by COAST.

**Pullman Transit** is the primary public transportation provider in Whitman County and is fully accessible; however, it only operates within the Pullman city limits. Pullman Transit operates eight fixed-routes on weekdays and two routes on Saturdays. In addition to people with mobility limitations, anyone over 65 years old is eligible to use the ADA paratransit system. Pullman Transit also operates a Senior Shuttle service, which is a deviated fixed-route paratransit service. Pullman Transit has provided contract services, also open to the public, for the Pullman Public Schools for 24 years and for Washington State University for 15 years.

**Wheatland Express** is a charter bus operator which provides two routes with scheduled stops in Whitman County. The Pullman / Moscow Commuter Bus (a public shuttle between the Washington State University and the University of Idaho campuses) operates on one-hour headways seven days a week. Wheatland Express also operates an airport shuttle service traveling to the Spokane airport once a day every day, except twice a day on Fridays.

**Northwestern Trailways** operates intercity routes. Two routes make scheduled stops in Whitman County, traveling between Boise, Idaho and Spokane, Washington. In the Whitman County area, the buses stop in Pullman and Colfax.

COAST serves eight counties in Washington and Idaho, including Whitman, Asotin, and Garfield counties in Washington. COAST is the designated Medicaid transportation broker of services using a number of contracted and private human service providers in Washington. COAST also uses those same providers to provide non-Medicaid services. COAST leases several of its vehicles to various programs in Whitman County including the Community Child Care Center, Palouse Industries, and the YMCA. COAST also provides technical assistance, risk management services, and certified driver training. COAST provides demand responsive, one-on-one services using agency vehicles and paid drivers, contracted providers and their drivers, and volunteers who drive their own cars.

**An Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Area** was established in September 2009 mainly to provide vanpool services in the unincorporated part of the county. COAST was contracted to be operator of the system.

**Human Service Providers**, such as churches, hospitals, child care facilities, and retirement homes, have 1-3 vehicles that they use for their own programs. A description by county of known providers is included in the full report.

## **Stakeholder Participation, Public Outreach, and Summary of Unmet Needs**

During the first week of May, 2010, public workshops were conducted in each of the four counties. According to federal guidelines, an unmet transportation need is defined as follows:

- Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds
- Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need
- New service established to meet an identified need

Transportation needs and gaps were identified in all three definition areas as described below.

### **Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds**

- The need to maintain existing service was universally identified as the top priority by workshop participants in all four counties. Grant funds are required to sustain operations in Columbia, Garfield and Whitman counties and to support capital programs in the entire region.

### **Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need**

Current service is limited in scope by constrained funding. The following needs expand upon existing service to meet unmet needs.

- Continuation of limited Saturday service available to the general public by Columbia County Public Transportation to Walla Walla.
- Expansion of current semi-weekly trips into daily service by Garfield County Transit to Clarkston.
- Extension of Garfield County Transit's local trips beyond 2 PM
- Maintenance of loading area for Garfield County Transit at the Senior Center for the safety of frail elderly riders.
- Extension of Pullman Transit's routes in the summer to meet senior citizens' needs.
- Additional information about how to use public transportation in all four counties.
- Further coordination between transit and human service providers through ongoing meetings.

### New service established to meet an identified need

Each County has needs for new service, above and beyond what exists today. These vary by community characteristics and geographic opportunities and constraints.

- Regularly-scheduled evening and weekend service in all four counties. (Some limited evening service exists in Garfield and Columbia Counties and Pullman Transit provides Saturday service.)
- A connection between Garfield and Columbia Counties.
- A small vehicle for Garfield County Transit to better provide long-distance trips and free up resources for local service requests.
- Elimination of regulatory restrictions between Washington and Idaho to allow for interstate medical trips by public transportation.
- Daily transportation for jobs and services from outlying communities into Pullman.
- Medical transportation for those who do not qualify for ADA or Medicaid transportation in Asotin and Whitman Counties, which do not provide public dial-a-ride service, and in all counties for trips outside the Palouse region.

### Region-wide Needs

Many of the needs are pervasive across all four counties. These include:

- Sustained existing service
- Ongoing coordination between transit and human service providers
- Information sharing and promotion both at the local and regional level
- Non-Medicaid long-distance medical trips
- Transit connections outside of the region, especially into Idaho

### Emergency Management and Technology

The full report describes coordination efforts between the transit providers and emergency management programs in each of the counties. The regional providers do not have technology needs, as each is employing technologies appropriate for the scale and nature of their operation.

### Potential Strategies To Address Unmet Needs

Ten strategies were developed to address the unmet needs based upon the public outreach workshops for this Plan. The strategies are grouped into three tiers.

**Figure ES-1 Tier Strategies**

Tiers	Timeframe	Feasibility
Tier 1	Immediate	WSDOT grants available for operating and capital funds to continue existing service
Tier 2	Near Term	Modest staffing resources needed; potential sources for projects needing funding are identified
Tier 3	Long Term	Implementation requires identifying significant new funding or staffing

The Tier 1 strategy is to apply for operating and capital funds from the Washington State Consolidated Grant Program. Through a formula developed by WSDOT, each region is allowed a set number of “A,” “B,” and “C” project applications, with “A” projects being the top priorities in the region. For the 2011-13 grant application period, the following are the priorities set by the transit providers in the Palouse RTPO:

### **Tier 1 Strategies**

Apply for operating and capital funds from the Washington State Consolidated Grant Program.

#### **“A” projects**

Asotin PTBA: 2 cutaways with cameras—one replacement and one expansion vehicle; Cameras for entire existing fleet

CCPT: Operating funds to sustain existing service

GCT: Operating funds to sustain existing service

COAST: Operating funds to sustain existing service

Pullman Transit: Operating funds to sustain existing service

#### **“B” projects**

CCPT: 2 cutaways—replacement vehicles

GCT: one cross-over vehicle—expansion vehicle

COAST: One minivan—replacement vehicle

Pullman Transit: One ADA accessible van and one cutaway van for Senior Center—replacement vehicles

#### **“C” projects**

Asotin County Community Services: one cutaway—replacement vehicle

COAST: Funding for new Mobility Management program

Figure ES-2 summarizes the 10 strategies, the required action items, and the parties responsible for implementation.

**Figure ES-2 Strategies to Address Identified Needs**

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Tier</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1. Apply for operating funds from WSDOT	1	Coordinated grant application from all transit providers	Asotin PTBA, Garfield County Transit (GCT), Columbia Public Transportation (CCPT), Pullman Transit, COAST
2. Increase transit information through website links	2	Update PRTPO website; Add links to all County websites; Add links to all Chamber of Commerce websites; Add links to all City websites, where needed; Add links to human service agencies websites; Maintain at least annually	PRTPO, Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
3. Promote ridership by broadening exposure to transit	2	Establish Travel Buddy program; Explore Ten Toes program and “try transit” tokens; Promote partnerships with affiliated public agencies, medical facilities, retailers	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
4. Expand coordination between human service agencies and transit providers	2	Attend human services coordinating councils and share information; Enhance coordination at State level	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST, WSDOT
5. Expand coordination among transit providers in region	2	Establish transit section on PRTPO website; meet biannually; attend SWEDA meeting in own county	PRTPO, Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
6. Apply for a grant to hire a Mobility Manager to implement regional needs	2	Use “C” designation in current grant cycle. Mobility Manager could establish one-stop call center; seek alternative funding sources; solicit retailer sponsors; coordinate inter-county and intra-state trips; coordinate 211 and 511 and local information sources; investigate telemedicine opportunities; propose strategies to relax interstate restrictions	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
7. Apply for infrastructure funds	2	Seek funds for repair of loading area at Senior Center	Senior Center in Pomeroy
8. Increase volunteer programs	3	Explore rental/donated cars for volunteers’ use; explore carsharing program; explore Exchange Program matching drivers with residents having other skills; Establish stipend for long-distance volunteer drivers	Asotin PTBA with Interlink; GCT, CCPT, COAST
9. Provide new services that increase mobility	3	Seek funding for daily service from Garfield County to Clarkston; extension of GCT hours; accessible taxis and subsidized taxi voucher program in Whitman County; delivery of basic needs to homebound residents	GCT, CCPT, COAST,
10. Determine market for increased transit services	3	Conduct survey to determine need for new services.	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT

# Chapter 1 Introduction/Background

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This *Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* has been developed through the sponsorship of the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (the Palouse “RTPO”), which serves the four-county region of Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties in southeastern Washington State. Figure 1-1 is a map of the region.

On August 10, 2005, President Bush signed into law the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, commonly referred to as SAFETEA-LU.

SAFETEA-LU authorized the provision of \$286.4 billion in guaranteed funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through Fiscal Year 2009, including \$52.6 billion for federal transit programs. Since then, the bill has received four extensions. A comprehensive transportation reauthorization bill is not expected to be passed by Congress until 2011.

Since Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs included in SAFETEA-LU—the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317), and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310)—are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) indicates that the plan should be a “unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.”<sup>1</sup>

The three funding programs focus on the needs of transportation disadvantaged persons, or those with special transportation needs that cannot be met through traditional means (access to automobile or public transportation). For the purposes of this plan, the State of Washington statutory definition of people with special transportation needs is used: “those people, including their attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation.”

## Project Goals

The overarching goal of this planning effort is to respond both to SAFETEA-LU and the State of Washington’s requirements for receiving these federal funds. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) serves as the designated recipient for these and other federal funds intended for non-urbanized portions of the state, and in turn distributes them to local entities through a competitive grant process. WSDOT also administers the Section 5311 Program throughout the state. WSDOT is requiring that projects funded through the next funding cycle, 2011-2013, be derived from a coordinated plan.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, a goal for this plan is to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders with a common interest in human service transportation to convene and collaborate on how best to provide transportation services for these targeted populations. Specifically, the stakeholders are called upon to identify service gaps and/or barriers, strategize on solutions most appropriate to meet these needs based on local circumstances, and prioritize these needs for inclusion in the plan.

Indeed, stakeholder outreach and participation is a key element to the development of this plan, and federal guidance issued by FTA specifically

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1 Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, page 13458)

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2 RCW 47.06B

requires this participation. FTA recommends that it come from a broad base of groups and organizations involved in the coordinated planning process, including (but not limited to): area transportation planning agencies; transit riders and potential riders; public transportation providers; private transportation providers; non-profit transportation providers; human service agencies funding and/or supporting access for human services, and other government agencies that administer programs for the targeted populations; advocacy organizations; community-based organizations; elected officials; and tribal representatives.<sup>3</sup>

Given this backdrop, the goals of the *Palouse Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* are the following:

- Respond to federal planning requirements to access federal funds.
- Define service needs for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons of low-income status.
- Prioritize potential strategies to address service deficiencies.
- Update an inventory of human service transportation providers.
- Develop a Plan to be submitted by the Palouse RTPPO to the Washington State Department of Transportation as the basis for funding applications by the transit operators.
- Document needs for future efforts.

## Federal and State Roles to Promote Human Service Transportation Coordination

The requirements of SAFETEA-LU build upon previous federal initiatives intended to enhance social service transportation coordination. Among these are:

<sup>3</sup> Federal Register: March 15, 2006 (Volume 71, Number 50, pages 13459-60)

- **Presidential Executive Order:** In February 2004, President Bush signed an Executive Order establishing an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility to focus 10 federal agencies on the coordination agenda. It may be found at [www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/02/20040224-9.html)

- **A Framework for Action:** The Framework for Action is a self-assessment tool that states and communities can use to identify areas of success and highlight the actions still needed to improve the coordination of human service transportation. This tool has been developed through the United We Ride initiative sponsored by FTA, and can be found on FTA's website: [www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/idnex.html](http://www.fta.dot.gov/CCAM/www/idnex.html)

- **Medicaid Transportation Initiatives:**

- *Transit Passes:* Federal regulations require that Medicaid eligible persons who need transportation for non-emergency medical care be provided transportation. For many people, the most cost-effective way to provide this transportation is with public transportation. Medicaid rules now allow the purchase of a monthly bus pass as an allowable Medicaid program expense.
- *Medicaid brokerages:* Some states, including Washington, provide transportation services for Medicaid eligible persons through a brokerage arrangement. Typically, the broker will confirm the passenger's eligibility status, arrange for the trip through an appropriate vendor, and manage the fiscal oversight for the program.

- **Previous research:** Numerous studies and reports have documented the benefits of enhanced coordination efforts among federal programs that fund or sponsor transportation for their clients.<sup>4</sup> Incentives to coordinate human

<sup>4</sup> Examples include United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reports to Congress titled *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations, Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation, but Obstacles Persist, (June 2003)* and *Transportation Disadvantaged Seniors—Efforts to Enhance Senior Mobility Could Benefit From Additional Guidance and Information, (August 2004)*.

services transportation programs are defined and elaborated upon in these documents. Coordination can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and facilitate cost-effective solutions with available resources. Enhanced coordination also results in joint ownership and oversight of service delivery by both human service and transportation service agencies.

## **Washington State Coordination Efforts**

In Washington, the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) is a partnership of members from the legislature, state agencies, transportation providers and consumer advocates, whose mission is to direct and promote activities that efficiently use all available state and community resources for special needs transportation across the state. ACCT was created by the legislature in 1998 to facilitate coordination and eliminate cross-jurisdictional and government program barriers to transportation. ACCT is taking a lead role to work with transportation providers and planning organizations throughout the state to implement the new federal planning requirements.

As a means of providing more efficient, cost-effective non-emergency medical transportation, Washington converted its transportation program into a brokerage service model. The Medicaid brokerage system has been able to keep transportation costs down by coordinating transportation services with other State agencies. Nine regional brokerage agencies are contracted to provide transportation services to 13 separate regions. Washington has been successful in providing expanded and effective access to medical services and is recognized as a model for other brokerage programs across the country.

## **Key Findings**

### **Demographic Profile**

The total population of the four counties in 2000 was 67,752<sup>5</sup>, with Asotin and Whitman Counties being significantly more populated than Columbia and Garfield Counties. All four counties are quite rural, with concentrations of population in several small cities and towns.

All four counties are characterized by a population that has a higher proportion of seniors, people with a disability, and people living in poverty, compared to the State of Washington. These are all groups that often have limited vehicle access and greater need for transportation services.

Only 6.7% of all households in the four counties do not have access to a vehicle. However, a higher percentage of households with older residents do not have access to a vehicle, ranging from 8-16% in each county.

The rural character of these counties makes it difficult for people to get places without a vehicle. Servicing the low density population is a distinct challenge for transportation service providers, who often must travel long distances to pick up and drop off single passengers.

### **Unmet Transportation Needs/Service Overlap**

An important element of this planning effort is to identify unmet transportation needs within the four-county Palouse RTPO area, as well as service redundancy. This analysis was conducted through a review of existing services in the region.

According to federal guidelines, an unmet transportation need is defined as follows:

- Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds

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5 Since the 2010 Census was being conducted during the development of this plan, no updated demographic information beyond population estimates was available other than that contained in the 2000 Census.

- New service established to meet an identified need
- Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need

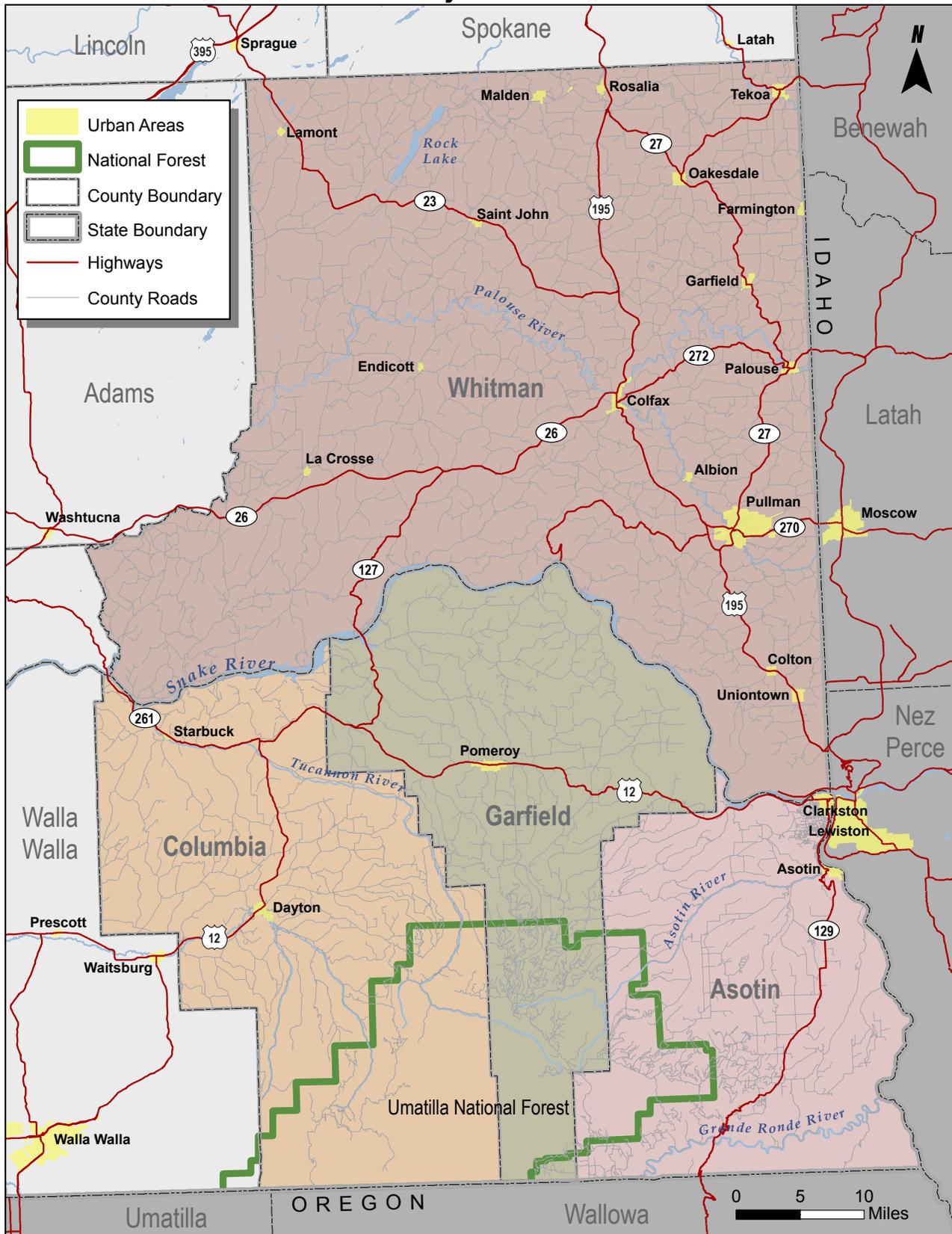
Transportation needs and gaps were identified in all three definition areas.

The need to maintain existing service was universally identified as the top priority by workshop participants in all four counties. Potential new services could also be established to meet identified needs, including expanded service hours (evenings and weekends), daily transportation for employment, transportation for non-Medicaid medical trips, new transit routes between key destinations, and continued transportation for Head Start students and parents. Other needs included better communication with the public about their transit options and increased coordination with human service providers and among the transit agencies themselves.

### **Service Duplication**

Redundancy in service did not emerge as a significant issue in the Palouse region. Due to the very rural character of the area, funding for transportation is spread over a very large area and thus various providers have established relatively distinct service areas.

**Figure 1-1 Palouse Project Area**



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## Chapter 2 Project Methodology

The initial *Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan* was prepared in 2006 and adopted in June 2007. This project is an Update to the 2007 Plan.

A Steering Committee of 11 stakeholders directed the overall plan development and set priorities for funding applications to the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). The Steering Committee was composed of seven transit providers, a representative of the Asotin County Community Services organization, a representative of the Lewis Clark Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (LCVMPO), a representative of the Washington State Department of Transportation, and the executive director of the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO). Appendix A contains the names and organizations of the Steering Committee.

At the beginning of the planning process, a conference call was held between the Steering Committee and the consultants to kick off the project. The Steering Committee discussed the tasks and timeline and some changes since the original plan was adopted.

This section of the report describes the steps undertaken to support the key findings and recommendations of this Update of the 2007 Plan.

### Demographic Profile

A demographic profile of the four-county Palouse RTPO region was prepared in 2006 using census data and other relevant documents. This step established the framework for better understanding of the local characteristics of the study area, with a focus on the three population groups subject to this plan: persons with disabilities, older adults, and those of low-income status. Because the 2010

Census was underway during the preparation of the Plan Update, newer results from the 2006 Census were unavailable. Therefore, the chapter on demographics contains no significant changes.

The demographic profile can be found in Chapter 3 of this report. It includes maps that were developed to illustrate percentages of people with disabilities; people 65 years or older; poverty levels; and households without an automobile.

### Document Existing Transportation Services

This step involved documenting the range of public transportation services that already exist in the four-county area. These services include public fixed route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, vanpool services, and transportation services provided or sponsored by other social service agencies. A detailed description is included in Chapter 4.

### Stakeholder Involvement and Summary of Unmet Needs

During the first week of May, 2010, public workshops were conducted in each of the four counties. An invitation letter and flyers were distributed by the transit providers to stakeholders, riders, and the general public notifying them of the workshop details. In addition, the PRTPO included articles in its newsletter announcing the public/stakeholder meeting dates, times, and locations for all four counties. Appendix B contains the list of workshop participants.

An important step in completing this plan included the identification of service needs or gaps. The needs assessment provided the basis for recognizing where—and how—service for the three population groups needs to be improved.

Chapter 5 describes the service gaps and priorities identified by participants in the workshops. In all four counties, maintaining and protecting existing services was identified as the most important service need.

In addition to maintaining existing services, participants in the stakeholder workshops identified potential service solutions intended to address service deficiencies. These “solutions” differed from specific projects in that they may not yet be fully defined, e.g. a project sponsor isn’t identified, or project expenditures are not fully defined. The Steering Committee then met to review the needs, gaps, and solutions resulting from the stakeholder workshops. Minutes of this Wrap-Up meeting are included in Appendix C.

### **Potential Strategies to Address Unmet Needs**

Following the workshops and Steering Committee review, a list of 10 potential strategies was developed to address the unmet needs identified in the workshops. The definition of unmet transportation needs in the federal guidelines was used as prioritization criteria to evaluate the strategies. The strategies are grouped into three tiers. The single and immediate strategy, to apply for operating funds in order to maintain existing services, is set out in Tier 1. Tier 2 lists six strategies that

could be implemented in the near term. Tier 3 strategies primarily require either significant staffing or new funding to implement. Chapter 6 describes the 10 strategies in detail.

### **Prioritization of Service Needs**

The Steering Committee participated in a webinar with the project consultants to apply the prioritization criteria to the proposed projects for WSDOT funding. Using this guidance, the consultants prepared a draft final report, which was again reviewed by the Steering Committee. The list of proposed projects to be submitted to WSDOT is included in Chapter 6 under Tier 1. The projects selected by the Steering Committee were forwarded to the Policy Board of the RTPO for approval prior to submission to WSDOT in January 2011.

# Chapter 3 Demographic Profile

## Study Area Description

Asotin, Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman Counties are located in southeastern Washington State (see Figure 1-1). Their total area is 4,374 square miles, with a total population of 67,752, according to the 2000 Census.

All four counties are quite rural, with population concentrations in small cities and towns.

## Population

The population varies significantly between the four counties, though they are of similar areas, with Asotin and Whitman Counties being much more heavily populated than Columbia and Garfield Counties. The population of the four counties was 67,752 people in 2000 and was 69,800, just slightly higher, in 2005. This was an 8.1% increase in population since 1990, when it was reported to be 62,652, with almost all of that growth in the 1990s. Comparatively, the population statewide has increased 29% since 1990.

In 2000, about 14% of the population in the four counties was 65 years of age or older, with Whitman having the lowest percentage (12%) and Garfield having the highest (21%). In actual numbers, Whitman and Asotin Counties, having larger overall populations, had more senior citizens, even though the percentage was lower compared to the less populated counties of Columbia and Garfield. In Washington State overall about 11% of the population was 65 years of age or older in 2000 (see Figure 3-1).

**Figure 3-1 Basic Population Characteristics (2000)**

Area	Total population	% of state population	% persons aged 65+	% persons w/ disability	% below poverty level
<b>Washington State</b>	<b>5,894,121</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>12%</b>
<b>County</b>					
Asotin	20,551	0.35%	16%	13%	15%
Columbia	4,064	0.07%	19%	17%	13%
Garfield	2,397	0.04%	21%	11%	14%
Whitman	40,740	0.69%	12%	11%	26%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>67,752</b>	<b>1.15%</b>		<b>12%</b>	

Source: Source: U.S. Census, 2000

## Disabilities

The definition of “disability” varies; for this project, information cited is consistent with definitions reported in the Census 2000. The Census 2000 included two questions with a total of six subparts with which to identify people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this definition differs from that used to determine eligibility for paratransit services required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). To qualify for ADA paratransit services, an individual’s disability must prevent him or her from independently being able to use the fixed-route transit service, even if the vehicle itself is accessible to persons with disabilities (i.e. lift or ramp-equipped. )

Twelve percent of the population in the four counties was identified as disabled in the 2000 US Census, including over 17% in Columbia County. Comparatively, 14% of the population statewide was identified as disabled. (See Figure 3-2.)

**Figure 3-2 Persons Reporting a Disability**

	Percent with Disability
Washington State	14%
<b>County</b>	
Asotin	13%
Columbia	17%
Garfield	11%
Whitman	11%
<b>AVERAGE</b>	<b>12%</b>

Source: Source: U.S. Census, 2000

<sup>1</sup> These questions were: 18. Does this person have a physical, mental, or other health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months and which (a) limits the kind or amount of work this person can do at a job? (b) prevents this person from working at a job? 19. Because of a health condition that has lasted for 6 or more months, does this person have any difficulty—(a) going outside the home alone, for example, to shop or visit a doctor’s office? (b) taking care of his or her own personal needs, such as bathing, dressing, or getting around inside the home?

## Income Status

The median household income in 1999 was similar in three of the four counties, which all had a median income somewhat above \$33,000, as illustrated in Figure 3-3. Whitman County was lower, however, with a median income of \$28,600.

Furthermore, a significantly higher proportion of households in Whitman County – over 25% – have incomes below the federally-defined poverty level. Comparatively, 13-15% of households in the other three counties have incomes below the poverty level. Notably, a large student population, attending Washington State University in Pullman, lives in Whitman County, which likely contributes to the higher percentage of individuals living below the poverty level.

Statewide, the median income for Washington was \$45,776 in 1999, with 7.3% of households having incomes below the poverty level.

**Figure 3-3 Income Status**

	Median Income	% of Individuals Living in Poverty
Washington State	\$45,776	12%
<b>County</b>		
Asotin	\$33,524	15%
Columbia	\$33,500	13%
Garfield	\$33,398	14%
Whitman	\$28,584	26%

Source: Source: U.S. Census, 2000

## Access to a Vehicle

Overall, only 6.7% of households in the four counties do not have access to a vehicle. However, as shown in Figure 3-4 significantly more households where the head of household is over 65 years of age do not have access to a vehicle. Though only 8% of these households in Garfield County do not have access to a vehicle, 14% in Whitman County and 16% in Columbia County do not have access to a vehicle.

**Figure 3-4 Households with No Vehicle Available**

	All Household	Head of Household Over 65
Washington State	7.4%	17%
<b>County</b>		
Asotin	6.1%	11%
Columbia	7.7%	16%
Garfield	4.6%	8%
Whitman	7.0%	14%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>

Source: U.S. Census, 2000

**Figure 3-5 Labor Force and Unemployment Rate (2008)**

	Labor Force	Unemployment Rate
Washington State	3,476,770	5.3%
<b>County</b>		
Asotin	10,520	6.1%
Columbia	1,580	7.1%
Garfield	1,010	4.6%
Whitman	21,000	4.1%

Source: Southeast Washington Economic Development Association's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2009 Supplemental Update

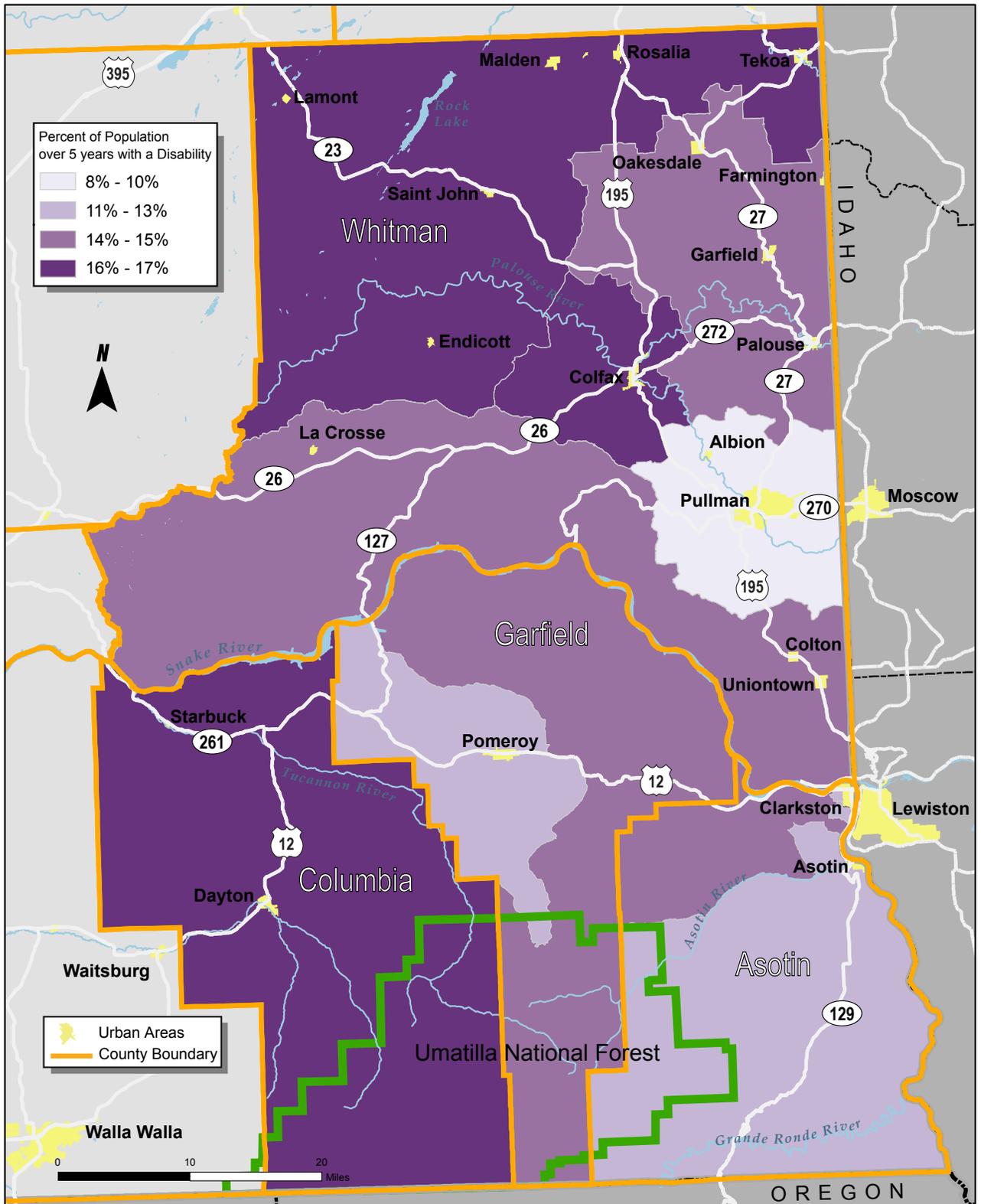
## Employment and Economy

The largest employers in each of the four counties are generally public sector, including school districts, hospitals, government agencies, and Washington State University (Pullman). Schweitzer Engineering in Pullman is a large employer as well. Though not providing a large proportion of jobs, grain production is a key income generator for the region.

The unemployment rate in Asotin and Columbia Counties is somewhat higher than the state-wide average, and somewhat lower in Whitman County, as shown in Figure 3-5. Educational attainment in the four counties is lower than the state average, with Whitman County being the exception because of the presence of the University. Economic development in the area is constrained by its remote location, limited access to metropolitan areas, and lack of capacity in the electricity transmission grid. The cultural magnetism and economic opportunities of more urban locations are drawing the younger generation, especially those with higher educational attainment, away from the four counties. The government provides 42% of all jobs in the four counties, significantly more than any other sector, followed by services (22%), and wholesale and retail trade (13%)<sup>2</sup>. This pattern generally holds for all four counties, except the services industry provides very few jobs in Garfield County.

<sup>2</sup> Southeast Washington Economic Development Association's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2008

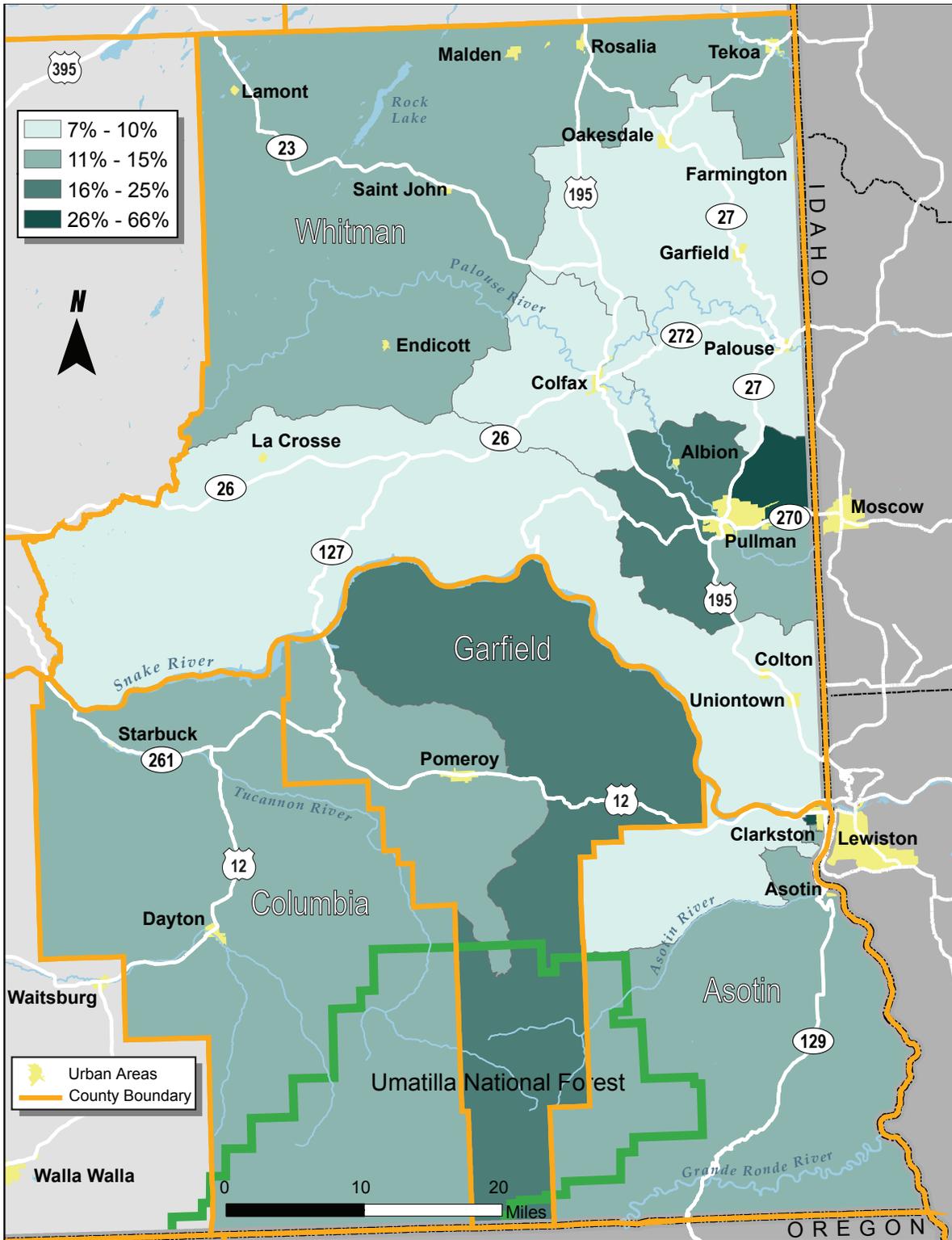
**Figure 3-6 Disabled Population**



**Nelson Nygaard**  
consulting associates

GIS Data Source: WA State GIC, Idaho DWR, Oregon GEO, ESRI  
 Census Data Source: US Census 2000 - Data by Census Tract  
 Location: Southeastern Washington State

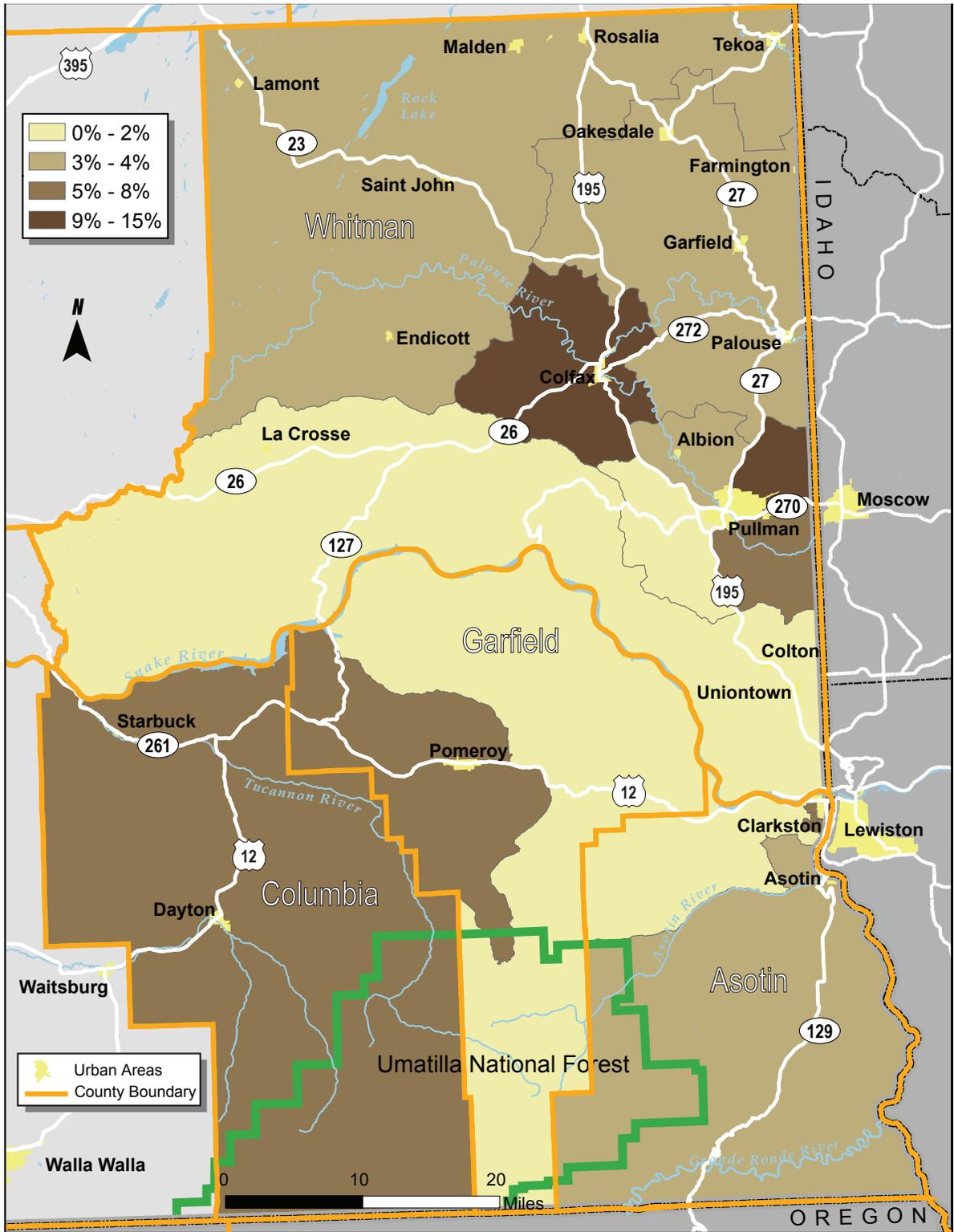
**Figure 3-7 Percent of Population Below Poverty**



**Nelson|Nygaard**  
consulting associates

GIS Data Source: WA State GIC, Idaho DWR, Oregon GEO, ESRI  
Census Data Source: US Census 2000 - Data by Census Tract  
Location: Southeastern Washington State

**Figure 3-8 Percent of Housing Units with No Vehicles**



**Nelson|Nygaard**  
consulting associates

GIS Data Source: WA State GIC, Idaho DWR, Oregon GEO, ESRI  
Census Data Source: US Census 2000 - Data by Census Tract  
Location: Southeastern Washington State

# Chapter 4 Description of Existing Transportation Services

This chapter provides an overview of transportation services in the Palouse region. Figure 4-1 illustrates the existing services available in the region, which are described in detail in the following sections

## Asotin County

### Asotin County Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA)

Asotin County Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) implemented its new fixed-route bus system in January 2010 with three new routes: Red route in Clarkston; Green route between Clarkston and Asotin; and Blue route between Clarkston and Lewiston in Idaho. Red and Blue routes operate from 6 AM to 6 PM, and Green route runs from 7 AM to 6 PM. All three routes operate on weekdays and provide half-hour headways.

Fares on the fixed-route system are \$0.75 one-way for the Asotin and Clarkston routes, and \$1.00 for the Lewiston route. Riders can purchase a monthly pass for \$20 in Asotin and Clarkston and \$30 in the Lewiston service area. Half-fares are available for seniors age 62 or older, Medicare card holders, and qualified disabled individuals. Half-fares are not available between 11 AM and 5 PM.

Asotin County PTBA also operates a dial-a-ride service for people in the fixed-route service area but with mobility limitations that prevent them from using the regular fixed-route service. Riders are scheduled in groups to efficiently provide as many rides as possible within the community. Priority day advance notice is required. Fares are \$1.50 one-way, and passes are available for \$30.00 for 30 trips. Passes are valid for three months from date of purchase.

Asotin County PTBA's vanpool program provides a travel option for commuters. A minimum of five people are required to form a vanpool group including designated drivers. Participants pay a monthly fee based on the distance and number of days traveled, and drivers ride for free. Six vanpool groups are currently operated: Schweitzer Engineering Labs in Pullman, Washington State University, and Lower Granite Dam.

Asotin PTBA's Guaranteed Ride Home program offers a ride from worksites when vanpool participants cannot make a scheduled vanpool trip due to emergency reasons, such as family emergencies, and unexpected overtime work, and emergency business meetings. The first ride is free, the second ride is \$20, and third ride is \$40.

The PTBA is funded with a county sales tax of 0.2%. Collection of the tax began in January 2005, providing a dedicated funding source for operations in Asotin County. This sales tax was renewed in 2010 and sunsets in 2015 unless renewed. The state of Idaho does not allow such local taxes, and this limits funding for service in Lewiston.

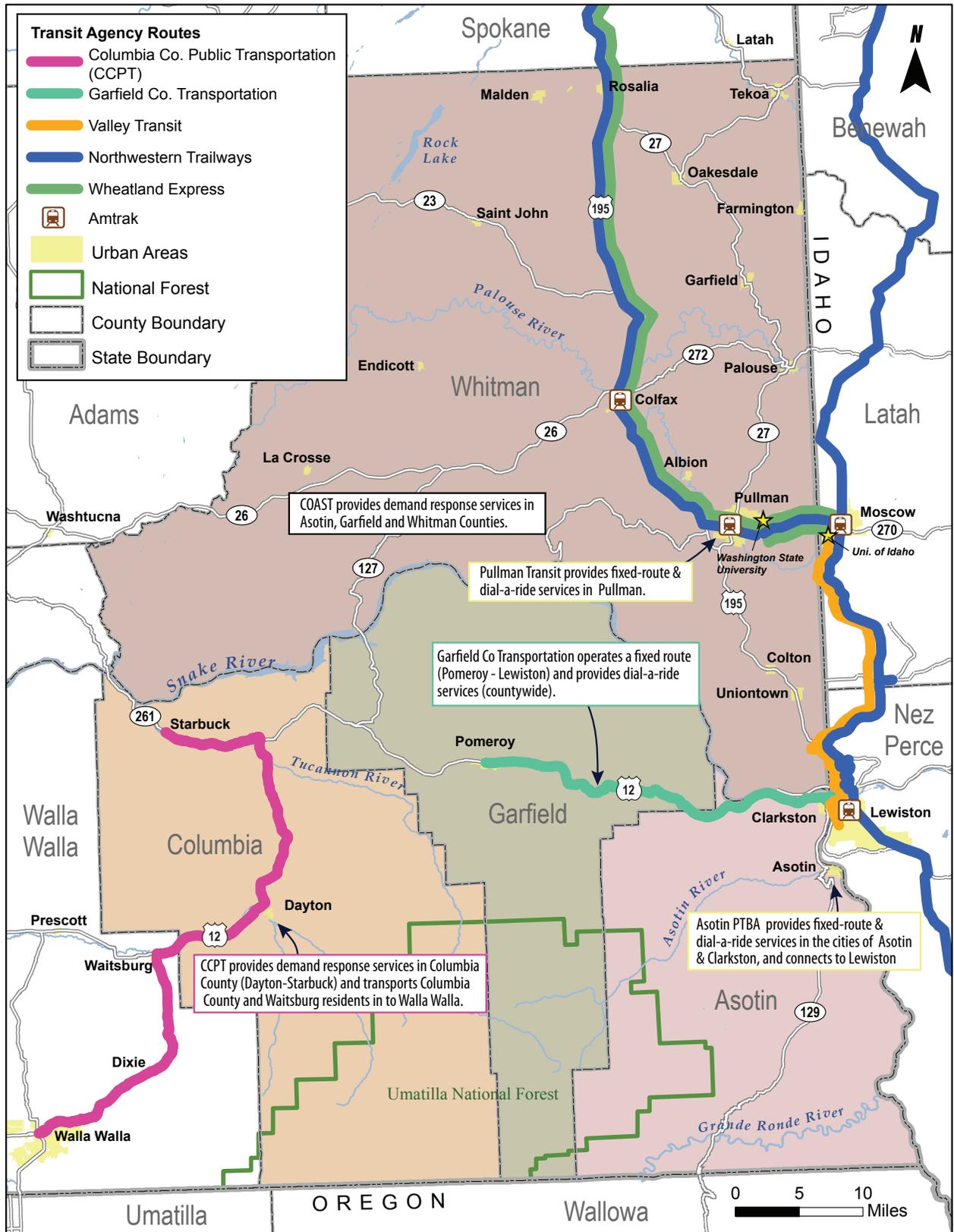
As a small urban area, Federal Section 5307 funds provide a 1:1 match to the local sales revenues, and the state sales tax provides additional funding. In 2007, the local sales tax and Federal match each provided \$117,638 and the state sales tax entitlement provided \$92,000<sup>1</sup>.

In 2009, Asotin County PTBA provided 32,273 rides on its fixed-route system, 10,174 rides through its Dial-a-Ride service, and 29,780 rides through its vanpool program.

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<sup>1</sup> Washington State Summary of Public Transportation 2007

**Figure 4-1 Palouse RTPO Existing Transportation Services**



## **Asotin County Human Services Transportation Providers**

- Asotin County Community Services transports individuals with a physical and/or mental disability to medical appointments, community activities, employment and daily living activities such as grocery shopping, banking, etc. Its cutaway vehicle has over 240,000 miles on it and needs replacing.
- Interlink is a non-profit agency located in Clarkston that has a volunteer driver program to provide assistance to seniors and people with disabilities. In 2008, it provided over 1,400 round trips to 161 care providers.
- Evergreen Estates Retirement Community is located on the campus of Tri-State Hospital in Clarkston and has a vehicle available for use by residents of this assisted living facility.
- Clarkston Care Center, a nursing home in Clarkston, has a lift-equipped vehicle.
- Garfield County Outreach, based in Pomeroy, provides shuttle services to the Clarkston Lewiston Valley areas twice a week.

## **Columbia County Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT)**

**Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT)** is the only public transportation provider in Columbia County, covering the entire county. CCPT also provides scheduled service from Dayton to Waitsburg, Dixie, and Walla Walla in Walla Walla County. CCPT is under contract with a Medicaid broker, People for People, to provide Medicaid transportation as well as with the Columbia County Public Hospital District to provide transportation for their patients and the residents of the Booker Rest Home.

CCPT staff consists of a General Manager, a Safety, Training, and Maintenance Coordinator, a Lead Dispatcher/Administrative Assistant, six full-time drivers and four part-time on-call drivers. One of the full-time drivers fills in as a back-up

dispatcher while another one is a part-time maintenance assistant. CCPT had operating expenses of \$ 723,435 in 2009. CCPT is a member of the Washington State Transit Insurance Pool.

CCPT provides dial-a-ride services with 20 vehicles, eight of which are ADA accessible paratransit mini-busses, 11 are vanpool vans, and one is an administrative car which is also used for single passenger trips. Hours are Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 5 PM with additional limited Saturday service. CCPT is available 24 hours for Medicaid clients seven days a week. CCPT provides outings and journeys through Dayton on various weekends throughout the year. Fares are \$1.50 for the general public students and adults. An adult monthly pass can be purchased for \$40.00 per month for transportation in Dayton. A student monthly pass can be purchased for \$25.00 per month for the first child and \$5.00 per month for each additional child in the same family. The elderly and people with disabilities are charged \$1 per day or \$10 for a monthly pass. Fares to Walla Walla are \$7.50 for all, regardless of age.

CCPT coordinates with various agencies to transport their clients to various appointments in Dayton as well as to Walla Walla. Those agencies include Department of Social Health Service (DSHS), Child Protective Services, Senior Nutrition, and Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). Transportation is available for medical and dental appointments, Blue Mountain Counseling appointments, grocery shopping, postal business, food bank, getting children to and from babysitters, getting children picked up after school as well as delivered to afternoon kindergarten classes, banking, and for any other services provided in Columbia County. School children are transported within Dayton, because the school district does not provide transportation for those residing within a one-mile radius of the school. CCPT purchased a demand response dispatch and scheduling program in

2008, which has been proven to be beneficial for CCPT's rapid growth. In 2009, CCPT demand response vehicles traveled 204,036 miles with 45,400 boardings and operating expenses of \$660,761<sup>2</sup>.

CCPT provides transportation to Walla Walla for medical and dental appointments given a one day notice. Weekly trips to Starbuck are available to bring those residents into Dayton. CCPT provides transportation to Waitsburg residents for medical and dental appointments, bringing them into Dayton or taking them on in to Walla Walla. CCPT will also deliver prescriptions from the local pharmacy to homebound residents.

In order to expand the transportation available to Columbia County and the surrounding service area, CCPT has instituted a vanpool program. Ten 15-passenger vans and one spare were purchased through the State Investment Program. Ten vanpools are currently in service. Current vanpool routes are:

- Dayton to Lower Granite Dam
- Pullman to Lower Granite Dam
- Moscow to Lower Granite Dam
- Pomeroy to Little Goose Dam
- Dayton to Little Goose Dam
- Walla Walla to Little Goose Dam
- Walla Walla to McNeary Dam
- Dayton to the VA Hospital in Walla Walla
- Dayton and Waitsburg to various agencies in Walla Walla (2)

CCPT matches vanpool applicants by hand, with a significant number consisting of employees of the Army Corps of Engineers. Each vanpool has an average of 8 riders. CCPT delivered 31,750 vanpool trips in 2009, with an average 82.7 miles round trip.

In order to be eligible for State vanpool funds, CCPT transitioned from a county department to a Countywide Transportation Authority (CTA) in 2005. The CTA successfully passed a sales tax of 4/10 of one percent in November 2005, which has provided some stable funding available for transportation services in Columbia County. Collection of the tax began in April 2006. CCPT receives \$3 per person for transportation provided to patients of the critical access hospital. Patit Creek Residential Treatment Center purchases multiple passes throughout the year for its clients, at \$1 per ride. The school district purchases passes for some of its programs to transport students to various destinations in Dayton during the school day when school buses are not in operation. The vanpool program is self-sustained, with operating expenses of \$62,674 and revenue of \$91,205 in 2009<sup>2</sup>.

## **Garfield County**

### **Garfield County Transportation (GCT)**

**Garfield County Transportation**, an Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Area, operates a demand response service from Pomeroy to the Lewiston/Clarkston Valley, on Tuesdays and Thursdays with departure at 9 AM. A dial-a-ride service is available in Pomeroy from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday. Both services are fully ADA accessible and available for any county resident needing transportation. Garfield County Transportation carries Medicaid clients to medical appointments, supplementing the service provided by COAST. It also provides assistance to the Garfield County Hospital District when the hospital's vehicles are not able to accommodate the medical equipment and wheelchairs.

There are no fares on either the local service or trips to Clarkston/Lewiston. The service relies on donations, with a suggested donation of \$1.00 for local trips and \$3.00 for trips to Clarkston/Lewiston.

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2 Columbia County Public Transportation

Garfield County Transportation has three 14-passenger vans (one van designated in retirement), five part-time drivers, one part-time administrator, and one full-time assistant. It provided 11,166 rides in 2009, with over 25,500 revenue miles. Its operating expenses in 2009 were approximately \$116,000.

### **Garfield County Human Service Transportation Providers**

- The Nazarene Church has a small van it uses to transport members to functions out of town.
- The Garfield County Hospital District has a private vehicle which is used to transport residents from its Long term Care Facility to medical appointments.

### **Whitman County Public Transit**

**Pullman Transit** is the primary public transportation provider in Whitman County and is fully accessible; however, it only operates within the Pullman city limits. Pullman Transit operates eight fixed-route bus services on weekdays: six routes run on 30 minute headways, and two express routes operate every 7 or 8 minutes. The service hours during the Washington State University (WSU) school year are from 6:50 AM to 3:00 AM Monday through Friday. On Saturdays, service is provided with two routes, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 AM. Sunday service is not provided. During the spring and winter breaks when the university is not in session, service is offered with three routes from 6:50 AM to 5:50 PM, Monday through Friday, and with one route on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to midnight.

During the summer course sessions, from May to August, three routes are operated on 30-minute headways from 6:50 AM to 6 PM. In 2009, the three routes were proved to be effective, but the overall ridership during the summer months declined by 21%.

The general public pays \$0.50 for a one-way trip. Monthly passes can be purchased for \$10. Discounted fares are available for youth (K-12), seniors and people with disabilities; \$0.30 for a one-way trip and \$6 for a monthly pass. Semi-annual and annual passes can also be purchased.

The paratransit system operates during the same hours as the fixed routes: from 6:50 AM to 12:30 AM Monday through Thursday, from 6:50 AM to 3:00 AM on Fridays, and from 9:00 AM until 3:00 AM on Saturdays during the WSU school year. During WSU spring breaks, service is offered from 9 AM to 5 PM, and 9 AM to 6 PM during the summer. In addition to people with mobility limitations, anyone over 65 years old is eligible to use the paratransit system.

Pullman Transit also operates a Senior Shuttle service, a deviated fixed-route paratransit service. This service is available to seniors age 65 or older. The shuttle makes 19 stops along the fixed route, connecting the downtown core and major medical facilities and stores. The shuttle runs from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday through Friday. Riders can call in advance to schedule a trip or “flag” it to request a bus driver to stop anywhere along the route. Pullman Transit has provided contract services, also open to the public, for the Pullman Public Schools for 24 years and for Washington State University for 15 years.

In 2009, the fixed-route system provided over 1,332,000 boardings. The paratransit system provided 16,540 one-way trips.

**Wheatland Express** is a charter bus operator and also provides a subsidized fixed-route service. Wheatland Express operates two routes with scheduled stops in Whitman County. The Pullman / Moscow Commuter Bus (a public shuttle between the Washington State University and the University of Idaho campuses) operates on one-hour headways seven days a week. This service is free to the university’s students, faculty and

staff. Other riders pay \$2.00 per one-way trip. Wheatland Express also operates an airport shuttle service traveling to the Spokane airport once a day every day, except twice a day on Fridays. The route makes scheduled stops at Moscow, Pullman and Colfax. Fares are \$45 one-way. Both buses used on the route are accessible and have bike racks.

Overall, Wheatland Express utilizes 18-24 passenger buses, 47- passenger buses, and 56-passenger buses. It also operates accessible buses, carrying from 18 up to 47 passengers, all of which are nearing life expectancy.

**Northwestern Trailways** operates intercity routes using over-the-road coaches. Of the four routes it operates, two routes make scheduled stops in Whitman County, traveling between Boise, Idaho and Spokane, Washington. In the Whitman County area, the buses stop in Pullman and Colfax. Its terminal facilities are only open for an hour around the time of the scheduled stop. The limited schedule restricts same-day service to either of the terminal destinations.

**An Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Area** was established in September 2009 mainly to provide vanpool services in the unincorporated part of the county. COAST was contracted to be operator of the system. As of this date, the Benefit Area has not provided any service but plans to have at least one van in operation by the end of Fall 2010. The van is proposed to travel along Hwy. 27, connecting the cities of Pullman, Garfield, Palouse, Farmington and Oakesdale. Any residents who live or work in those communities will be eligible to utilize the program. Fares are expected to be about \$75 a month for a full-time rider traveling between Garfield and Pullman, but they vary depending on the number of days and distance traveled. Whitman County will also operate a Guaranteed Ride Home program, which will provide up to two emergency trips to home per year without charge.

## **Whitman County Human Services Transportation Providers**

### **Palouse Industries & Early Learning Services:**

Palouse Industries operates a newer ADA accessible mini-van and two older fourteen passenger maxi-vans in support of its services which are based in Pullman. Palouse Industries' sheltered workshop is at one facility and the Early Learning Services and Child Care programs are located at the Gladish Community Center. The maxi-van is also used by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) after-school program, which is located at Gladish.

Palouse Industries makes 17,000 one-way trips a year over 22,500 miles. Staff drivers transport 50 people a day to work sites and other destinations in Whitman County.

**Palouse River Counseling Center** operates one van to provide supportive transportation services to group and individual clients. This van is not ADA accessible. For daily accessible service for its Harvest House clubhouse program, the Counseling Center contracts with COAST. Currently no clients need the lift van. In addition to van services, counselors from Palouse River Counseling travel to the outlying towns to provide services. The counselor's travel expenses are reimbursed by COAST. This "circuit rider" program is not a unique concept, but COAST's use of state and federal Special Needs transportation funds for reimbursement is a model for Washington State and FTA's United We Ride program.

### **Child Care Centers in Whitman County:**

- **Community Child Care Center:** CCCC operates three fully accessible multi-function school activity vehicles (MFSAB). In addition to regular child-care programs, CCCC operates the state Even Start Program and the Whitman County Head Start Program.
- **Building Blocks Day Care:** Operates one older maxi-van for students.
- **Sunnyside Pre-School:** Standard 15-passenger maxi-van

- **YMCA:** Leases a vehicle from COAST for summer programming and field trips .

**Senior Residential Facilities:** Four of Whitman County’s skilled nursing and assisted living facilities operate accessible vehicles exclusively for their residents:

- **Tekoa Care Center** provides two scheduled medical trips a week for residents.
- **Palouse Hills Nursing Center** in Pullman provides about three scheduled trips a week.
- **Bishop Place** in Pullman uses its van several times a day.
- **Whitman Senior Living Community** has an accessible mini-bus used with a staff driver to transport residents of senior apartments and assisted living.

**School Districts:** There are ten public school districts in Whitman County and two small private K-12 private schools. Each of the public school districts operates a fleet of buses including at least one lift equipped bus. Several of the rural districts outside Pullman used to provide complementary transportation for CCCC’s Head Start Centers located in those communities but changes in the Head Start regulations have complicated that service. Waivers of the child restraint requirements and the bus monitor may be granted based on individual program requests to Head Start offices in Washington D.C. and new regulations are proposed.

**Women’s Transit:** The Washington State University (WSU) Women’s Center operates Women’s Transit. Student volunteers operate three automobiles evenings and throughout the weekend. The services are designed to provide safe, one-on-one transportation for women traveling alone when Pullman Transit is not in operation. A coordinator oversees 160 volunteer drivers. About 40% of those volunteers are returning, and 100 new volunteers are trained each semester. About 20% of the volunteers are male. The hours of operation are 6:00 PM to 12:00 AM Sunday through

Thursday. Hours are extended to 3:00 AM on Friday and Saturday nights. The system does not operate during WSU’s summer recess, although over 5,000 students are on campus in the summer. The service is also open to the gay and transgender community. In the last four semesters, Women’s Transit has averaged approximately 5,100 riders per semester.

**Private taxi and van services:** All Ways Transportation of Lewiston uses a variety of vehicles, some accessible, to provide services throughout the region. It is a COAST subcontractor. There are several taxi companies, such as Big Cat Taxi and A Top Notch Taxi, serving Moscow/Pullman. None of these providers routinely operates later than midnight except on weekend nights. A Good Taxi, based in Pullman, operates two vehicles in the school year, one in the summer.

**Churches with Vans and Buses:**

- **Colfax:** Nazarene Church (lift van sold by COAST and renovated by the church); Baptist Church (16- passenger van)
- **St John:** Christian Life Assembly (van)
- **Pullman:** Calvary Christian Center (30- passenger bus); Living Faith Fellowship (mid-size school bus, older standard van).

**Whitman County Transition Council** supports the transition from secondary school to the workforce for individuals with disabilities. The Pullman School District is the lead agency for the Council. In addition to the bus fleet, the Pullman District operates a seven passenger van in support of students with disabilities. This van is not lift equipped. When a lift van is needed, subcontracts are negotiated with COAST and/or CCCC.

**Gritman Hospital** owns and operates two vans and a caravan to provide transportation for patients and employees, with a third van planned for the near future. Gritman's vehicles operate on a demand response basis throughout Gritman's service area which is primarily Latah County in Idaho, but it does transport Pullman area clients to the Adult Day Health program located at the Hospital.

## **Region-Wide**

### **Special Multi-County Service: COAST**

**COAST** serves eight counties in Washington and Idaho, including Whitman, Asotin, and Garfield counties in Washington. In Washington **COAST**, operates 11 vehicles. All but one is wheelchair accessible. **COAST** is the designated Medicaid transportation broker of services using a number of contracted and private human service providers in Washington. **COAST** also uses those same providers to provide non-Medicaid services. In addition, **COAST** is a direct provider of transportation services in Washington and Idaho, with a team of trained drivers. **COAST** leases several of its vehicles to various programs in Whitman County including the Community Child Care Center, Palouse Industries, and the YMCA. **COAST** also provides technical assistance, risk management services, and certified driver training for area providers. In the year from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 **COAST** provided 81,987 one-way trips in Washington State. **COAST** vehicles, and those of contracted providers, traveled 972,270 miles. For 2010 the trips will remain about the same, but mileage should be 1,077,000 miles, about a 9% increase.

**COAST** has a bi-weekly schedule of services serving selected rural communities in both Washington and Idaho. **COAST** calls this service, "scheduled vans." The services enable residents of these very rural communities to access larger urban service centers. The services are "demand response" because the riders make individual reservations (if

there are no reservations, the van does not operate). The services are also "deviated-fixed routes" because the van travels through one or more small communities picking up riders and then travels to a specific urban destination (e.g. Spokane). From the reservation list, the driver has a general idea of where the riders want to go and when. On arrival at the urban service center, the van operates as a "multiple charter" or "taxi," whereby the riders and the driver cooperate so that the various needs are met—for example visiting a spouse in a nursing home, shopping for groceries, keeping a medical appointment, and lunching with friends at a downtown restaurant. Frequently family and friends or public transportation services provide some of the one-way trips that are needed so that the rider can reconnect with the van and driver. There is a fixed time to pick up riders in the origin community and a general "target" departure time from the urban center but this time can vary by an hour or more.

**COAST** also provides demand responsive, one-on-one, services using agency vehicles and paid drivers, contracted providers and their drivers, and volunteers who drive their own cars. The normal hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Mondays through Fridays; however, services can be arranged earlier in the day or later in the evening, and on weekends. Usually, these trips are provided by volunteers or contracted providers.

During the last 23 years several agencies merged their volunteer driver programs into **COAST**'s program. These agencies include Inland Empire Muscular Sclerosis Society, Washington State Division of Social and Health Services (DSHS), and the Community Action Center. In addition, these services are coordinated with other volunteers from Alternatives to Violence, the Cancer Society, and the Disabled American Veterans. Volunteers drive their own vehicles to serve transportation needs in **COAST**'s service area. The volunteers are recruited, registered, trained, monitored,

insured and reimbursed for mileage by COAST, or the other sponsoring organizations. In 2009 COAST's volunteer drivers provided 9,874 one-way trips and drove 318,886 miles. At \$12.00 per hour the 7,907 hours they donated had a value of \$94,884.

COAST often is the sponsoring agency for "Community Vans." None are currently operating in Washington State but one is operating in Grangeville, Idaho. The vans are owned and insured by COAST, but operated by a local community board which is responsible for scheduling use of the vehicle, financing operation of the vehicle, providing volunteer drivers, and maintaining the van. COAST screens and trains the volunteer drivers. The community vans can be used to meet any transportation need as long as a trained driver operates the vehicle. In addition, COAST contracts with community vans to provide services in other communities, just as COAST would broker a trip to any other private or public provider.

In September of 2009 the Whitman County Commissioners voted unanimously to create the Whitman County Unincorporated Area Transit District, expressly for the purposes of van pooling. At the same time they voted for COAST to be the contracted operator of the system. As of this date, the District has not provided any service but plans to have at least one van in operation by the fall of 2010.

The 2009 to 2011 operating budget for COAST is projected to be \$1,345,000 consisting of \$65,000 from the Area Agency on Aging, \$250,000 in Medicaid administrative funding, \$285,000 as a Medicaid provider, \$180,000 in the value of volunteer drivers, and \$15,000 in fares and direct donations. The WSDOT is contracted to provide \$550,000 in FTA and state funding, primarily FTA 5310 Purchase of Services funds. In addition, COAST will broker an additional \$750,000 per year to contracted Medicaid providers, including mileage reimbursement to volunteers and to

approved family members of Medicaid eligible clients. The operating costs for the same two year period are allocated as follows: Direct Operating Costs - \$1,203,800 and Administration - \$156,200.

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# Chapter 5 Stakeholder Participation and Summary of Unmet Needs

## Stakeholder Participation and Public Outreach

During the first week of May, 2010, public workshops were conducted in each of the four counties. The consultants prepared an invitation letter and flyers that were distributed by the transit providers to stakeholders, riders, and the general public notifying them of the workshop details. In addition, the PRTPO included articles in its April 29, 2010 Newsletter announcing the public/stakeholder meeting dates, times, and locations for all four counties. The table in Figure 5-1 summarizes the outreach activities in each of the counties.



Site of the Columbia County Public Transportation Workshop.

Source: Nelson\Nygaard

Figure 5-1 Workshop Outreach Activities

County	Time and Place	Outreach activities
<b>Columbia</b>	May 4, 10 am-Noon, Delaney Bldg., Dayton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailed 50 invitations to various agencies</li> <li>• Put flyers on the bus to hand out to passengers</li> </ul>
<b>Garfield</b>	May 4, 2-4 pm, Senior Center, Pomeroy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placed the poster around town—all stores, post office and providers</li> <li>• Wrote a personal letter from the coordinator inviting agencies that provide human services and mailed to all agencies and government offices.</li> <li>• Announced the meeting at the Senior Meal site on several days</li> <li>• Wrote an article and had it placed in the local paper, The East Washingtonian</li> <li>• Made personal calls to riders inviting them to attend.</li> </ul>
<b>Whitman</b>	May 5, 10 am-Noon, Visitors' Center, Pullman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placed posters in all paratransit vehicles.</li> <li>• Wrote a personal letter from Paratransit Coordinator at Pullman Transit with both fliers and explanation letters inviting agencies that provide human services to attend. The letters were sent to 22 different agencies, including civic locations, the University and pharmacies.</li> <li>• Announced the meeting for a three-week period on Channel 13, Pullman's local government station.</li> <li>• Made personal calls to agency directors and individual patrons letting them know about the event.</li> </ul>
<b>Asotin</b>	May 5, 2-4 pm, Asotin County Aquatic Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mailed 45 invitations to various agencies</li> <li>• Posted in the office during pass sales</li> </ul>

The meetings opened with an overview of the issues to be documented in the update to the 2007 Plan, asking participants to consider:

- What are the transportation needs not being met in the county?
- In particular, what are the unmet transportation needs of the elderly, low income, youth, and people with disabilities?
- What services are now available and do they go to the places people need to go?
- What are possible solutions to fill the unmet transportation needs?

The transportation needs in the 2007 Plan were then described and those attending discussed which needs had been met and which had not. Participants were invited to add new transportation needs to the list. They then voted on the top priorities that should be addressed in the 2010 Update to the Plan. Finally, a discussion of proposed solutions was held, which included a review of the solutions proposed in the 2007 Plan to document which had been implemented, which should be deleted, and which should be carried over. Participants then brainstormed new solutions they would like to be considered.

The Executive Director of the PRTPO and the WSDOT representative attended the meetings in each county. Although they did not vote, they are included in the totals of those attending. Appendix B is a list of participants in each county.

**Without exception, participants in each county said their top priority was continuation of the existing services.** In addition to continuation of existing services, other service enhancements were proposed. The following summarizes the outcomes of the meetings. Beyond those specific to each county, regional unmet needs and solutions were sometimes raised. These regional needs are summarized after the review of the individual county meetings. Chapter 6 presents a set of strategies to address the unmet needs in the region.

## Asotin County

The director of the Lewiston Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization and a representative from the Lewiston Transit System in Idaho attended this meeting, in addition to the WSDOT, PRTPO, and Asotin PTBA directors. They were among the 10 people who participated. Others were two representatives from Aging and Long Term Care; one from Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; one from Lewiston Clarkston Partners—Habitat for Humanity; and one from Asotin County Community Services.

## Priorities

The two top needs expressed by the group were (1) more education about transit and how to use it and (2) institution of evening and weekend service. To implement the educational effort, the group saw a need for a single phone number that could be promoted as a source for all public transit information in the Palouse region and in neighboring Idaho cities. A need for transportation to medical services by those who do not qualify for Medicaid was also noted by some as a priority. Also requested was a passenger shelter for the new Habitat for Humanity facility at 8<sup>th</sup> and Highland.



The transit managers discuss coordination issues with representatives of human service agencies in Asotin County.

Source: Nelson\Nygaard

## Discussion of Potential Solutions

The group brainstormed ideas for educating the general public about riding public transit. One idea was travel training—how to ride the bus, such as a bus buddy taking someone on his or her first trip to show where to get on and off. Besides potential riders, travel training could be used to educate human service and group home personnel about the options available to their clients. Broad distribution of the YMCA’s resource guide is also a way to communicate about the availability of transit services. Other promotional ideas included being a guest speaker at service clubs, inserting ads in club newsletters, offering free rides on certain occasions, and giving away “try it” tokens for free rides. People could be introduced to the bus on shuttles to events, such as fairs sponsored by community and business organizations. Promoting certain routes could be accomplished by partnering with other agencies, such as the recreation department on how to access the bike and walking trails.

Addressing weekend service could be tested with a deviated shopper shuttle on Saturdays.

For work trips outside the Lewiston/Clarkston area, it was noted that the Palouse-Clearwater Environmental Institute (PCEI) has an on-line ridematching service for carpools making regular, not occasional, trips. PCEI also manages a vanpool from Lewiston to the University of Idaho in Moscow and will help set up other commuter vanpools in the Palouse region as needed.

Interlink Volunteers-Faith in Action provides a volunteer driver program, transporting elders locally to medical appointments as well as other personal needs with an occasional out-of-town trip. There was discussion about a Mobility Manager who could handle a “one-call” phone number and could match non-Medicaid patients with vehicles that were already traveling to distant facilities in Spokane or Moscow for riders with Medicaid appointments.

## Columbia County

Seven people attended the workshop in Columbia County. Participants included the director of Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT), a bus rider, a County Commissioner, the Mayor of Dayton, and a Walla Walla Community Council member.

### Priorities

Currently, two or three trips are made on Saturdays to medical services in Walla Walla for dialysis patients. The general public is permitted to ride on these trips, and the group indicated that a transportation need is continuation of Saturday service. Another desired service enhancement is public transportation to Clarkston in Asotin County, where residents could access the Department of Motor Vehicles, Costco discount store, and other services not available in Columbia County. A third priority was updating the transit information on the County’s website and providing a link on the Chamber of Commerce’s website in order to expand the availability of information about transit services.



US Highway 12 from Columbia County to Garfield County is over 30 miles through scenic, rural countryside.

Source: Nelson\Nygaard

## Discussion of Potential Solutions

Individuals at the meeting brought up several ideas for solutions to the identified needs. The first was increased operating funds to implement the priorities above. A summer recreational program transporting youth from Waitsburg to Dayton was also mentioned. Capital needs included an expansion minivan, more passenger shelters, and replacement of vanpool vehicles as they age.

## Garfield County

The greatest attendance among the four county meetings was in Garfield County. Seventeen Senior Center members were among the 31 people who participated. In addition, those attending included the Mayor of Pomeroy, one County Commissioner, two Garfield County Hospital District representatives, one Garfield County Health District representative, one representative from Blue Mountain Estates, one representative from Aging and Long Term Care, two drivers, one mother of a disabled son, and the director and her assistant from Garfield County Transit.

## Priorities

The highest priority among participants, after continuation of existing service, was more operating funds for expanded service. Expanded services that participants favored were daily transit trips into Asotin County, instead of the current two days a week, and extension of service hours beyond 2 PM within Pomeroy. Garfield County Transit now provides expanded service on an ad hoc basis for a temporary need. There is a small but limited demand to connect to Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT) for trips to Walla Walla. Volunteer programs meet some of these needs, but the small population of the county limits the availability of volunteers. It was noted that consistency, meaning a longer span of service, might attract more riders.

Participants favored the idea of a smaller vehicle to carry one or two persons on long-distance trips, in lieu of the current larger minibus, and the addition of a driver to operate the vehicle—although the Garfield County Transit Coordinator indicated that existing back-up drivers could be available if a smaller vehicle was funded. There was also support for rebuilding the sidewalk and installing drainage improvements on the side of the Senior Center where boarding and drop-off for the Garfield County Transit bus occurs.

## Discussion of Potential Solutions

Since Garfield County Transit does not have a website, it was suggested that the city and county websites should provide transit information to the general public. Participants also suggested conducting a survey of potential riders to determine if new services, such as a daily route into Asotin County or weekend service around town, would be utilized. The survey could be included in phone or power bills in order to reach beyond the senior citizens by contacting residents who might need a ride to work outside the county.

Another request was that WSDOT give Garfield County Transit credit for the funding contributions made to it by the County government. It was stated that, even though Garfield County does not have a dedicated sales tax for transit, the County's contributions are higher than some counties that do have a sales tax and, therefore, should be credited accordingly. It was also noted that evening trips are provided for residents taking English as a Second Language in Clarkston and, perhaps, these trips should be publicized to the community at large. Another suggestion was to coordinate the senior lunch program with Columbia County, which offers lunch on days Garfield County does not. Through joint transit trips with CCPT, seniors in both counties could socialize and have lunch every day.

## Whitman County

Fourteen people participated in the Whitman County outreach workshop, including the director of COAST, the COAST transit manager, and the director and two staff from Pullman Transit. The director of COAST was also representing the Pullman School District and the Council on Aging. Four residents from the Pioneer Square senior housing complex, including the president of the residents' organization, attended. Others included one representative from each of the following agencies: Gritman Medical Transportation service; Gritman Adult Day Health program; Palouse Industries; and Washington State University (WSU) Palouse Alliance.

### Priorities

The highest priority was for relaxation of restrictions limiting transportation across state lines between Pullman in Washington and Moscow in Idaho, particularly for medical needs. Another priority, carried over from the 2007 Plan, was for daily transportation from outlying small communities to Pullman for jobs and services. COAST provides some job-based service and has also started operating a new vanpool program for the County aimed at this issue. However, it has had a lack of success in identifying interested riders. The Lewis Alliance, a social and health care organization, provides volunteer drivers to meet some of these needs, but the drivers cannot take wheelchairs.

Pioneer Square residents voted for continuation of the senior shopper shuttle and evening service during the summer when some nearby routes are discontinued after the WSU session ends. The Pullman Transit director, who planned to attend a meeting of residents in Pioneer Square on the issue, noted that ridership on the shopper shuttle was too low to sustain the service.

A need in the 2007 Plan for longer hours on certain Pullman Transit routes may be addressed when WalMart moves into the south side of town.

### Discussion of Potential Solutions

More funding—for replacement vehicles and for operating funds for service outside of Pullman and additional summer service in Pullman—was the solution for some of the needs expressed. More operating funds might be particularly important because Headstart's federal revenues are being threatened and the private operator Wheatland Express has reduced its weekday hours and has eliminated weekend service. More taxi companies than in 2007 are now available as resources, but none of the cabs are accessible and the cost to travel in rural areas is high. Other ideas included reviving the study of a rail system to Spokane and providing library services to homebound residents. It was noted that the Palouse Resource Guide is a local and regional resource for promoting both transportation and human services.



Whitman County participants describe their needs at the May 5 workshop.

Source: Nelson\Nygaard

## Summary of Unmet Transportation Needs

According to federal guidelines, an unmet transportation need is defined as follows:

- Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds
- Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need
- New service established to meet an identified need

Transportation needs and gaps were identified in all three definition areas and are described in the following section. These needs are based on a evaluation of existing services relative to stakeholder inputs and demographic conditions and trends.

### Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds

- The need to maintain existing service was universally identified as the top priority by workshop participants in all four counties. Grant funds are required to sustain operations in Columbia, Garfield and Whitman counties and to support capital programs in the entire region.

### Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need

Current service is limited in scope by constrained funding. The following needs expand upon existing service to meet unmet needs.

- Continuation of limited Saturday service available to the general public by Columbia County Public Transportation to Walla Walla.
- Expansion of current semi-weekly trips into daily service by Garfield County Transit to Clarkston.
- Extension of Garfield County Transit's local trips beyond 2 PM

- Maintenance of loading area for Garfield County Transit at the Senior Center for the safety of frail elderly riders.
- Extension of Pullman Transit's routes in the summer to meet senior citizens' needs.
- Additional information about how to use public transportation in all four counties.
- Further coordination between transit and human service providers with ongoing meetings.

### New service established to meet an identified need

Each County has needs for new service, above and beyond what exists today. These vary by community characteristics and geographic opportunities and constraints.

- Regularly-scheduled evening and weekend service in all four counties. (Some limited evening service exists in Garfield and Columbia Counties and Pullman Transit provides Saturday service.)
- A connection between Garfield and Columbia Counties.
- A small vehicle for Garfield County Transit to better provide long-distance trips and free up resources for local service requests.
- Elimination of regulatory restrictions between Washington and Idaho to allow for interstate medical trips by public transportation.
- Daily transportation for jobs and services from outlying communities into Pullman.
- Medical transportation for those who do not qualify for ADA or Medicaid transportation in Asotin and Whitman Counties, which do not provide general public dial-a-ride, and in all counties for trips outside the Palouse region.

## Region-wide Needs

Many of the needs are pervasive across all four counties. These include:

- Sustained existing service
- Ongoing coordination between transit and human service providers
- Information sharing and promotion both at the local and regional level
- Non-Medicaid long-distance medical trips
- Transit connections outside of the region, especially into Idaho

Strategies to address these regional needs are discussed in Chapter 6.

## Additional Needs – Emergency Management and Technology

State and federal guidance also highlight emergency management and the use of facilitating technologies as elements of coordination. The following sections detail current coordination with emergency management programs in each county and the technologies employed by the transit providers.

### Emergency Management

Transit providers provide essential services and/or equipment as part of local and regional emergency preparedness plans. Most of the providers in the Palouse region are coordinating with the responsible parties to define the role for transit when planning for the movement of people, services and equipment at the time of a disaster.

The State of Washington has developed a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP)<sup>1</sup> which defines the roles of state agencies in dealing with emergency preparedness, response and recovery. The CEMP identifies public transit authorities as supporting agencies, providing

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<sup>1</sup> Developed by the Washington State Military Department, Emergency Management Division and available at: <http://www.emd.wa.gov/plans/documents/CompleteCEMP.pdf>

WSDOT with the use of available equipment and personnel resources to assist, as requested, with emergency or disaster requirements. State law (RCW 38.52.070) also directs the establishment of local organizations or jurisdictions for emergency management in accordance with the Washington State CEMP. These organizations have the responsibility of coordinating emergency management activities. Counties in Washington State have emergency management organizations and plans according to RCW 38.52.070. Most incorporated cities are part of the countywide emergency management organization plan but can develop additional organizations and plans as is the case in Pullman. The following highlights emergency management coordination with the Palouse Region transit providers.

### Asotin County

The Asotin County PTBA has not coordinated with the Asotin County Emergency Services.

### Columbia County

Columbia County Public Transportation is working with Columbia County Department of Emergency Management to define the transit provider's role in the county-level emergency management plan.

### Garfield County

Garfield County Transportation has collaborated with Garfield County Department of Emergency Management, committing to assist with evacuation and providing transportation for emergency responders. The January 2010 update to the Garfield County CEMP identifies the transit fleet as available resources. The plan also specifies that in the event of an emergency, transportation staffs will be alerted and will proceed to their assigned emergency operating centers and that transportation resources at all levels will be mobilized to meet immediate needs.

## Whitman County

COAST is working with the Whitman County Department of Emergency Management to detail the role of the transit provider outside of Pullman. The update to the plan is being reviewed and expected to be released this summer. The City of Pullman has a separate Emergency Management Plan and the role of the transit system is addressed in the plan. Pullman Transit has been involved in the development of the plan and *The City of Pullman Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, Draft Revision November 2009* identifies Pullman Transit's coordination role under the direction of the Public Works Director and highlights the potential use of the transit agency's resources, including radio communications and public notification systems.

## Emergency Management Coordination Needs

The Asotin County PTBA and Asotin County Emergency Services need to coordinate on the role of the PTBA resources in the event of an emergency. The roles for the other transit providers are currently addressed in county or local plans, or are currently coordinating with emergency management programs to define their roles.

## Technology

The application of technology has proven to benefit transit service providers and their customers. Common technological applications include:

- **Traveler information systems** to explain travel options to the riding public, often via the internet;
- **Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD)** to improve provider's efficiency when scheduling trip requests and to better respond to schedule changes and/or incidents in the field;
- **Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)** to track real-time vehicle locations and provide information to traveler information and CAD systems;
- **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)** to manage map data for planning purposes and to support AVL and CAD systems;

- **Electronic fare payment systems** to provide riders with a wider array of payment options, and providers with better data tracking and lower fare handling costs;
- **Security and surveillance systems** to increase passenger safety when responding to incidents

Rural and small urban providers employ a range of these technologies based on the needs in their community and the availability of financial resources to implement them. The following sections detail the current use in the four counties.

### Asotin County

- The Asotin County PTBA uses CAD software (RouteMatch) to support scheduling and dispatch functions, including AVL and GIS functions.
- Static versions of route maps and schedules (.pdf format) are available to riders via the agency's webpage.

### Columbia County

- CCPT uses computer-aided scheduling software and has recently purchased surveillance cameras for its busses.

### Garfield County

- Garfield County Transportation prepares manual manifests on paper which work well for the size of the system and the agency's staff resources.

### Whitman County

- Pullman Transit employs a CAD system (StrataGen).
- Pullman Transit has AVL for the Dial-A-Ride vans to support dispatch functions. It is in the process of upgrading the fixed-route buses with new mobile data terminals, AVL, automatic stop enunciators and smart card capabilities.
- COAST uses automated scheduling software (Mobiltar's Easy Rides Plus) which was specifically customized for COAST to meet the needs of a rural broker. COAST was the national Beta test site for this product.

## Technology Needs

The regional providers do not have technology needs as each is employing technologies appropriate for the scale and nature of their operation.

# Chapter 6 Potential Strategies To Address Unmet Needs

This chapter presents 10 strategies developed to address the unmet needs identified in the previous chapter and based upon the public outreach workshops for this Plan. The strategies are grouped into three tiers. The single and immediate strategy, to apply for operating and capital funds in order to maintain existing services, is set out in Tier 1. Tier 2 lists six strategies that could be implemented in the near term. Although these strategies do require staff resources, most do not require a large amount of additional funding. A source has been identified for the two strategies that do require new funds. Tier 3 strategies primarily require either significant staffing or new funding to implement.

Each of the strategies is matched with the federal guidelines for definition of an unmet need:

- Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds
- New service established to meet an identified need
- Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need

The following is a list of the 10 strategies. A detailed description of each strategy is then provided. Finally, a table summarizing the strategies, required action items and responsible parties is at the end of this chapter in Figure 6-1.

## Tier 1 Strategies

1. Apply for operating and capital funds from the Washington State Consolidated Grant Program.

## Tier 2 Strategies

2. Increase transit information through website links.
3. Promote ridership by broadening exposure to transit.
4. Expand coordination between human service agencies and transit providers.
5. Expand coordination among transit providers in the region.
6. Apply for a grant to hire a Mobility Manager in order to implement regional needs.
7. Apply for infrastructure funds.

## Tier 3 Strategies

8. Increase volunteer programs.
9. Provide new services that increase mobility.
10. Determine the market for increased transit services.

**Figure 6-1 Tier Strategies**

Tiers	Timeframe	Feasibility
Tier 1	Immediate	WSDOT grants available for operating and capital funds to continue existing service
Tier 2	Near Term	Modest staffing resources needed; potential sources for projects needing funding are identified
Tier 3	Long Term	Implementation requires identifying significant new funding or staffing

## Tier 1 Strategies

### 1. Apply for operating and capital funds from the Washington State Consolidated Grant Program.

**Description:** The need to maintain existing service was universally identified as the top priority by workshop participants in all four counties. Columbia, Garfield, and Whitman County transit operators rely upon significant funding from the State to continue their operations.

Transportation providers throughout the state compete for state and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds which are administered by WSDOT in a consolidated grant program. Through a formula developed by WSDOT, each region is allowed a set number of “A,” “B,” and “C” project applications, with “A” projects being the top priorities in the region. For the 2011-13 grant application period, the following are the priorities set by the transit providers in the Palouse RTPO:

#### “A” projects

Asotin PTBA: 2 cutaways with cameras—one replacement and one expansion vehicle; Cameras for entire existing fleet

CCPT: Operating funds to sustain existing service

GCT: Operating funds to sustain existing service

COAST: Operating funds to sustain existing service

Pullman Transit: Operating funds to sustain existing service

#### “B” projects

CCPT: 2 cutaways—replacement vehicles

GCT: one cross-over vehicle—expansion vehicle

COAST: One minivan—replacement vehicle

Pullman Transit: One ADA accessible van and one cutaway van for Senior Center—replacement vehicles

#### “C” projects

Asotin County Community Services: one cut-away—replacement vehicle

COAST: Funding for new Mobility Management program

**Responsibility:** Coordinated grant applications from all transit providers.

**Meets federal criteria:** Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds

## Tier 2 Strategies

### 2. Increase transit information through website links.

**Description:** In the internet age, many people find information through websites. Websites are particularly useful to new residents in a community. Specific linkages that are needed are as follows:

- Update the PRTPO website information and include links where available (e.g., Pullman Transit). If no link exists, include a phone number for the transit operator.
- Add transit information to the Garfield County and Pomeroy Chamber of Commerce websites.
- Add transit information to the Columbia County and City of Dayton websites.
- Add transit information to the Whitman County and Pullman Chamber of Commerce websites.
- Add transit information to the Asotin County and Clarkston Chamber of Commerce website and update the transit link on the City of Clarkston site.
- Work with human service agencies to provide transit links on their websites.

**Responsibility:** All providers and the PRTPO.

**Meets federal criteria:** Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need

**3. Promote ridership by broadening exposure to transit.**

**Description:** Individual transit operators could boost ridership through implementation of these variations on ideas suggested during the public workshops:

- **Travel Buddy program for fixed routes.** Volunteers could be trained to assist new riders by riding with them on one or two trips, showing them where to get on and off the bus for their trip and how to pay their fares. This program builds confidence for people who have been used to driving all their lives and for newcomers to the area.
- **“Try Transit” tokens:** Tokens/coupons can be given away at events and service clubs for free rides as an incentive to try transit, especially for non-riders.
- **Ten Toes Express:** Ten Toes is a walking program that incorporates the use of public transportation. Volunteers plan transit trips to interesting venues. When participants get off the bus, they walk through an area or neighborhood and learn about its history or unique characteristics before taking transit back to their origin. Several transit operators around the country have implemented the program by partnering with health organizations, recreation departments, and senior centers. Some provide maps and pedometers as incentives. For transit providers, the goal is to make a new group of potential riders familiar and comfortable with taking transit.

**Partnerships:** Promote specific routes by partnering with other organizations to include the information in their materials. For example, work with adult education, hospitals and clinics, and retailers to inform their clientele about how to get to their site on transit.

**Responsibility:** All providers

**Meets federal criteria:** Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need.

**4. Expand coordination between human service agencies and transit providers**

**Description:** A primary goal of the *Human Services Transportation Plan* is to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders with a common interest in human service transportation to collaborate on how to best provide transportation services for low income individuals, the elderly, youth, and people with disabilities. Collaboration with more frequency than the development of the HSTP every four years was an identified need. Recommended activities include:

- **Coordinating councils:** For ongoing interaction, transit operators should attend the existing human services coordinating councils in their counties, such as the Garfield County Interagency Coordinating Council, the Palouse Human Services Coalition, and the Blue Mountain Action Council. A method of sharing information regionally among the transit operators could be established to report on new guidelines and programs and “lessons learned” that are gleaned from these meetings.
- **State coordination:** WSDOT could be requested to facilitate webcasts of ACCT meetings and other statewide presentations so that the Palouse region could participate more easily and fully in coordination at the State level.

**Responsibility:** All providers and WSDOT

**Meets federal criteria:** Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need

## 5. Expand coordination among transit providers in the region

**Description:** The transit operators are separated by significant geographic distances. In order to bridge this gap, the following activities are recommended:

- Establish a Transit Section on the PRTPO website and circulate written contributions among the operators.
- Meet biannually to discuss regional transit priorities.
- Attend the Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SWEDA) meeting in the operator's own county for a short presentation to the commissioners about public transportation activities and needs.

**Responsibility:** All providers and the PRTPO

**Meets federal criteria:** Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need

## 6. Apply for a grant to hire a Mobility Manager in order to implement regional needs

**Description:** Operators could use a "C" designation from WSDOT for this grant cycle to apply for a Mobility Management grant to address region-wide needs. Requests for such a grant would be through the competitive statewide process and require only a 20% local match. Either a full or part-time position, depending upon the scope of responsibilities, might logically be housed in the Palouse PRTPO or COAST. Many of the Tier 2 and 3 Strategies described here could be implemented by the Mobility Manager, relieving busy transit operators of this responsibility and acting as supplemental staff to them. Additional needs identified in the workshops that are difficult to implement without new staffing could be included as elements of the program as follows:

- **A one-stop call center for information and trip planning.** The Mobility Manager would be able to tell callers what transportation services

are available in each county and would give contact information for further assistance. If the trip involved several carriers or was out of the area—Spokane, Moscow, Lewiston, Seattle—the Mobility Manager could help plan the trip. The Mobility Manager might also explore how to institutionalize this function beyond the grant period through technology.

- **Identify and seek unique funding options.** Besides the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program, there are other fund sources that could be investigated and sought for specific projects. For example, Transit Enhancement (TE) funds are available for infrastructure improvements. Other revenue sources could be tapped from non-transit funds, such as monies set aside for aging and long term care programs, environment and climate change initiatives, access to park and recreation activities, and English as a Second Language and adult education programs.
- **Retailer sponsorship.** Some transit operators have had success in obtaining sponsorships from retailers. For example, WalMart has paid for a passenger shelter for Asotin PTBA. A Mobility Manager could expand the program by contacting retailers for enhanced services, such as a shoppers' shuttle. The program would need to be sensitive to each county's retailers so it was not seen as direct competition but rather as business promotion for services not available within the county.
- **Facilitate trip coordination.** The Mobility Manager could be a central point for coordinating general public trips between counties or between Washington and Idaho cities. For example, if a Medicaid provider had empty seats for a scheduled trip, the provider could contact the Mobility Manager to let him or her know. Members of the public who needed or wanted such a trip outside their own county would be able to call the one-stop call center to see if any such trip was available. This is one way to meet the identified need to create more medical transportation for non-Medicaid eligible residents.

- **Coordinate with external informational resources.** The Mobility Manager could contact the Washington and Idaho 211 and 511 websites and phone systems to make sure that transit information was not only included but kept up to date. He or she could also work with the State’s ridematching program to ensure that it was useful to residents of the rural southeastern Washington area and could provide updates to local resources, such as the YMCA’s guide, the Palouse Resource Guide, and county websites.
- **Investigate restrictions** between the states of Washington and Idaho and develop strategies and solutions to address them, including new targeted legislation.
- **Telemedicine options for rural residents.** Work with human service agencies to identify insurance plans that provide remote access by computer and phone for “house call” visits. Some insurance plans and affiliated clinics offer physician consultations, remote monitoring of blood pressure, and even eye exams. Telemedicine is one way to provide routine, initial screening of patients without long-distance travel and could address some of the identified need for non-Medicaid visits.

**Responsibility:** All providers

**Meets federal criteria:** New service established to meet an identified need



Mayor Alan Gould points to the loading area at the Senior Center with its deteriorated sidewalk and gutter, which flood from rain and snow.

## 7. Apply for infrastructure funds

**Description:** This recommendation is specific to Garfield County. The sidewalk on the side of the Senior Center where boarding and drop-off for the Garfield County Transit bus occurs has eroded, causing some safety concerns for the frail elderly. In addition, drainage improvements are needed to prevent flooding. The Senior Center has applied for a grant from Puget Sound Energy to correct the situation. Should the application be unsuccessful, an application could be made for Federal Transit Enhancement (TE) funds, which are available for such projects.

**Responsibility:** Senior Center in Pomeroy

**Meets federal criteria:** New service established to meet an identified need

## Tier 3 Strategies

### 8. Increase volunteer programs

**Description:** Outside of Pullman and Clarkston, the Palouse region is very rural, making it infeasible to provide fixed route transit. Although dial-a-ride is more practical, it is also costly. Volunteer driver programs can provide increased mobility for residents at low or no cost. Conversely, the small populations in the rural counties make it difficult to find volunteers. There are a number of strategies that could be explored to increase the number of volunteers. Although increasing volunteers is a high priority strategy to increase mobility in rural areas, it is a Tier 3 strategy because it will take time and staff resources to implement. For this reason, it is a project that could be put in place more quickly by a Mobility Manager.

- **Rental/Donated Cars:** Work with a rental car company to make available a vehicle for a willing volunteer who does not wish to use his or her own car. The volunteer’s reasons might include insurance concerns, wear and tear, or unsuitability of the vehicle for trips outside of the immediate area. Alternatively, solicit a

tax-deductible donation, as many charities do already, for a donated car to be used by volunteers.

- **Carsharing:** A person who drives to a location, such as a job, and parks the car all day could allow a volunteer to use the car to transport others or to run errands for homebound people. In California, legislation has been introduced to ensure that the insurance company does not hold the owner liable for losses. Although this increases the availability of vehicles for volunteers, it does require a program coordinator.
- **Exchange Program:** Residents enroll in the program. A member who needs a ride calls and is matched with a member who has volunteered to drive. Drivers' hours are recorded in a computer program and banked for services the drivers may need to draw upon themselves, such as pet care or handyman services. Trading services doesn't always involve the same two people. No money is exchanged between members—it is just an exchange of skills. However, a membership fee could be charged for a staff member to coordinate the program.
- **Volunteer Drivers with a Stipend:** Given the economy, unemployed persons might be willing to be volunteer drivers for long distance trips, such as out-of-area medical trips, if they were given more than mileage costs. The driver would not be an employee, but would be given a stipend in an amount to make the task attractive. Although this requires new funding, the stipend program could be added to existing volunteer driver programs in the region, especially for lengthy trips that current volunteers do not wish to undertake.

**Responsibility:** Asotin PTBA with Interlink; GCT, CCPT, COAST

**Meets federal criteria:** New services established to meet an identified need.

## 9. Provide new services that increase mobility

**Description:** There are a variety of services that were mentioned in the workshops to address lack of mobility options as unmet needs. These services are listed in Tier 3 because they require new sources of funding.

- **Add three days to Garfield County Transit's route from Pomeroy to Clarkston in Asotin County.** This would provide more robust service for residents and, because of daily weekday service, could potentially enable workers to use transit to jobs in Clarkston.
- **Extend the hours of Garfield County Transit's service beyond 2 PM.** Although some trips are provided on an ad hoc basis, this would provide consistent service to Pomeroy residents.
- **Apply for grant funding to provide an accessible taxi in Whitman County** so that taxis could be an option for people in wheelchairs.
- **Establish a subsidized taxi voucher program for residents in rural areas of Whitman County** so that taxis could become an affordable transportation option.
- **Work with human service providers, community organizations and retailers to deliver goods and services to homebound residents.** For example, set up deliveries of medicines, groceries, and library books for isolated residents or those temporarily unable to drive or take transit. As a means of controlling transit costs, these services can also minimize the demand for more expensive dial-a-ride trips. Developing this option could be a task for a Mobility Manager.

**Meets federal criteria:** New services established to meet an identified need.

**Responsibility:** GCT, CCPT and COAST

## 10. Determine market for increased transit services

**Description:** Conduct a survey of residents to determine what services that are not now provided are needed. Although this strategy was suggested in Garfield County, it could also be used in other counties to document the need for weekend and evening service and to discover what destinations are most likely to be patronized, and on what days and hours, if transit served them (e.g., big box stores, Department of Motor Vehicles, churches, night school classes, etc.). One option would be to use an insert in utility bills to distribute the survey.

**Responsibility:** Asotin PTBA, GCT and CCPT

**Meets federal criteria:** New services established to meet an identified need.

**Figure 6-2 Strategies to Address Identified Needs**

Strategies	Tier	Action	Responsibility
1. Apply for operating funds from WSDOT	1	Coordinated grant application from all transit providers	Asotin PTBA, Garfield County Transit (GCT), Columbia Public Transportation (CCPT), Pullman Transit, COAST
2. Increase transit information through website links	2	Update PRTPO website; Add links to all County websites; Add links to all Chamber of Commerce websites; Add links to all City websites, where needed; Add links to human service agencies websites; Maintain at least annually	PRTPO, Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
3. Promote ridership by broadening exposure to transit	2	Establish Travel Buddy program; Explore Ten Toes program and “try transit” tokens; Promote partnerships with affiliated public agencies, medical facilities, retailers	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
4. Expand coordination between human service agencies and transit providers	2	Attend human services coordinating councils and share information; Enhance coordination at State level	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST, WSDOT
5. Expand coordination among transit providers in region	2	Establish transit section on PRTPO website; meet biannually; attend SWEDA meeting in own county	PRTPO, Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT, Pullman Transit, COAST
6. Apply for a grant to hire a Mobility Manager to implement regional needs	2	Use “C” designation in current grant cycle. Mobility Manager could establish one-stop call center; seek alternative funding sources; solicit retailer sponsors; coordinate inter-county and intra-state trips; coordinate 211 and 511 and local information sources; investigate telemedicine opportunities; propose strategies to relax interstate restrictions	COAST
7. Apply for infrastructure funds	2	Seek funds for repair of loading area at Senior Center	Senior Center in Pomeroy
8. Increase volunteer programs	3	Explore rental/donated cars for volunteers’ use; explore carsharing program; explore Exchange Program matching drivers with residents having other skills; Establish stipend for long-distance volunteer drivers	Asotin PTBA with Interlink; GCT, CCPT, COAST
9. Provide new services that increase mobility	3	Seek funding for daily service from Garfield County to Clarkston; extension of GCT hours; accessible taxis and subsidized taxi voucher program in Whitman County; delivery of basic needs to homebound residents	GCT, CCPT, COAST,
10. Determine market for increased transit services	3	Conduct survey to determine need for new services.	Asotin PTBA, GCT, CCPT

# Appendix A Palouse RTPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Steering Committee Members

Name	Organization
Mervin Schneider	Asotin County Community Services
Kim Gates	Asotin County Transit
Karl Johanson	Coast Transportation
Stephanie Guettinger	Columbia County Public Transportation
Janice Zorb	Garfield County Transportation
Steve Watson	Lewis Clark Valley MPO
Mike Wagner	Pullman Transit
Rod Thornton	Pullman Transit
Chris Mitchell	Pullman Transit
Tom Hanson	WSDOT
Duane Wollmuth	PRTPO



# Appendix B Workshop Attendees

## Asotin County Stakeholders Workshop May 5, 2010

Name	Organization
Kim Cortes	Asotin PTDJA
SUE BANCROFT	Agway's Long-Term CARE
Stew Watson	LCUMPO
Rich Goodwin	LC PARTNERS HABITAT FOR HUMANITY
Duane Wollmuth	PRTPD
Tom HANSON	WSDOT
LETA NEWMAN	ALTC
DARLENE BURKE	LEWISTON TRANSIT SYSTEM
DARLENE BURKE	LEWISTON TRANSIT SYSTEM
Jennifer Gordon	DVR - DSHS State of WA
Mervin Schneider	Asotin County Community Services

**Columbia County Stakeholders Workshop**  
**May 4, 2010**

NAME	AGENCY
Tom HANSON	WSDOT
Barbara Rhoades	bus rider
Dwight Robanek	Columbia County Commissioners
Duane Wollmuth	PRTP
CRAIG GEORGE	PRTP - PRER OF BOAM CITY OF DALTON
Mary Wollmuth	Walla Walla Community Council commit
Stephanie Guettinger	CCT

**Garfield County Stakeholders Workshop  
May 4, 2010**

1. Nan Ollerman-Felt
2. Gene Smith Driver
3. Patty Appel
4. Rachel Wessler
5. Elsie Adams
6. Donna L. Bragg
7. Mary Barley
8. Carl M. Wernicke Health District Garfield Co
9. Dyane Wollmuth
10. Kristen Anderson Hospital District Garfield Co
11. Jennie Odeh
12. Jim Wade Disabled Son
13. Bea Fuchs
14. Richard Fuchs
15. Pam Walker
16. Paulette Cramer Driver
17. Frances Fanning
18. Marietta Patterson
19. Annus Helke.

20. Susan Morrow Susan Morrow Hospital Dist.
21. Wanda McGarland
22. Jan Walker Blue Mtn Estates
23. JoAnne Casullo Aging & Long term Care
24. Alan Gould Alan Gould Mayor
25. Helen Fitzpatrick
26. Marvin Jones SR
27. Dianne M Jones 28. Louise & Tom

## Whitman County Stakeholders Workshop May 5, 2010

Name	Organization
Paulette McCollum	Pioneer Sq. Rider President Council
Julia Smith	Rider
Ginny Kinzer	Gritman Medical Transportation
Chris Mitchell	Pullman Transit
MICHAEL WAGNER	PULLMAN TRANSIT
Rod Thawnton	Pullman Transit
Tom HANSON	WSDOT
Teresa Combs	Palouse Industries

Name	Organization
Barb Mahoney	Gritman Adult Day Health
Christine Oakley	WSU PALOUSE ALLIANCE
CRAIG VANTINE	COAST TRANSPORTATION
KARE JOHANSON	Pullman School District COGENCY ON ASING
Doc Gulickson	Writer # Rider

# Appendix C May 6, 2010

## Steering Committee Meeting

After the two days of meetings in the four counties, a Wrap-Up Meeting with the Steering Committee was held the following day. The consultants summarized the Priorities and Solutions discussed in each county. They then listed transportation needs that were identified region-wide.

### Region-wide Needs

- Sustained existing service
- Ongoing coordination between transit and human service providers
- Information sharing and promotion both at the local and regional level
- Non-Medicaid long-distance medical trips
- Transit connections outside of the region, especially into Idaho

### Region-wide Potential Solutions

#### Sustained existing service

One purpose of the Update to the 2007 Plan is to document the identified Needs as a basis for funding applications by the transit operators to WSDOT. According to federal guidelines, an unmet transportation need is “continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds.” Participants in each county’s workshop named sustaining the existing service as their top priority. Transit operators agreed to meet mid-July to set priorities for this round of grant applications from the region.

#### Ongoing coordination between transit and human service providers

Preparation of the HSTP is a springboard for meetings between transit operators and human service providers. The idea of ongoing meetings, annually at a minimum, was brought up in several of the county meetings. It was suggested that, rather than institute another separate meeting, transit operators could attend the human services

coordinating councils in their areas. A Garfield County Transit representative already attends the County’s monthly Interagency Coordinating Council, and a COAST representative attends the Palouse Human Services Coalition. A Columbia County Public Transportation representative could attend future meetings of the Blue Mountain Action Council in Walla Walla, and the director of Asotin PTBA will explore which group in Asotin County would be most appropriate for her to attend. It was agreed that minutes from these coordinating council meetings will be posted on the PRTPO website as a mechanism for sharing information among the transit operators in the Palouse region.

Meetings of the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) and presentations by other relevant State agencies in western Washington are difficult and expensive to attend. It was suggested that WSDOT could help facilitate webcasts of these meetings so that transportation and human service providers in the Palouse region could participate in statewide coordination efforts.

#### Information sharing and promotion both at the local and regional level

Ideas to improve information sharing include the following:

- Posting the minutes of coordinating council meetings on the PRTPO website, as described above
- Adding a transit section in the quarterly PRTPO newsletter
- Committing to attendance at the Southeast Washington Economic Development Association (SWEDA) meeting by the transit operator in whose county the meeting is held for a 15-minute report to the commissioners
- Meeting together bi-annually to discuss transportation priorities in the region

## **Mobility Management**

In addition to the activities described in the previous paragraphs, the idea of applying for a Mobility Management grant to address the region-wide needs was discussed. Requests for such a grant would be through the competitive statewide process and require only a 20% local match. Either a full or part-time position might logically be housed in the Palouse PRTPO or COAST. Some elements of the program could be as follows:

- A one-stop call center for information and trip planning. The Mobility Manager would be able to tell callers what transportation services are available in each county and would give contact information for further assistance. If the trip involved several carriers or was out of the area—Spokane, Moscow, Lewiston, Seattle—the Mobility Manager could help plan the trip. The Mobility Manager might also explore how to institutionalize this function beyond the grant period through technology.
- Identify and seek unique funding options. Besides the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program, there are other fund sources that could be investigated and sought for specific projects. For example, Transit Enhancement (TE) funds are available for infrastructure improvements. Other revenue sources could be tapped from non-transit funds, such as monies set aside for aging and long term care programs, environment and climate change initiatives, and access to park and recreation activities and adult education programs.
- Retailer sponsorship. Some transit operators have had success in obtaining sponsorships from retailers. For example, WalMart has paid for a passenger shelter for Asotin PTBA. A Mobility Manager could expand the program by contacting retailers for enhanced services, such as a shoppers' shuttle. The program would need to be sensitive to each county's retailers so it was not seen as direct competition but rather as business promotion for services not available within the county.
- Facilitate trip coordination. The Mobility Manager could be a central point for coordinating general public trips between counties or between Washington and Idaho cities. For example, if a Medicaid provider had empty seats for a scheduled trip, the provider could contact the Mobility Manager to let him or her know. Members of the public who needed or wanted such a trip outside their own county would be able to call the one-stop call center to see if any such trip was available. This would create increased mobility while providing new revenue to the transit provider.
- Support information sharing efforts. The Mobility Manager could organize the activities outlined under the topic "information sharing and promotion both at the local and regional level" described above, relieving busy transit operators of this responsibility and acting as supplemental staff to them. In addition, the Mobility Manager could contact the Washington and Idaho 211 and 511 websites and phone systems to make sure that transit information was not only included but kept up to date. He or she could also work with the State's ridematching program to ensure that it was useful to residents of the rural southeastern Washington area and could provide updates to local resources, such as the YMCA's guide, the Palouse Resource Guide, and county websites.