

# GORGE TRANSLINK GATEKEEPER NETWORK FORUM

*Your Gateway to Mobility in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge*

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## Summary Report

August 2011

Hood River Inn | Hood River, Oregon

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Organized by:



Sponsored by:



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### **Acknowledgements**

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## EVENT SUMMARY



The Gorge TransLink Gatekeeper Network Forum took place on June 2, 2011 at the Best Western Hood River Inn in Hood River, Oregon. The Forum represents Gorge TransLink’s continuing effort to increase awareness among potential transit users of the transit services available. The Forum was specifically designed to build awareness among individuals and organizations that provide assistance to groups with a consistent need for public transportation. Such service providers are considered “Gatekeepers,” or organizations who work with low income families, senior citizens, veterans, non-English language speakers, job seekers, and individuals with disabilities.

Gatekeepers participating in the Forum had the opportunity to learn about public transportation services and procedures from Gorge TransLink Alliance providers; discuss the transportation options provided to clients; share information about transportation options not included in Gorge TransLink, such as volunteer services for veterans and church-provided trips; network with transportation and other service providers to enhance regional connections; and express the transit needs of clients and how to provide access to transportation.

## PARTICIPANTS, PRESENTERS, & ACTIVITIES

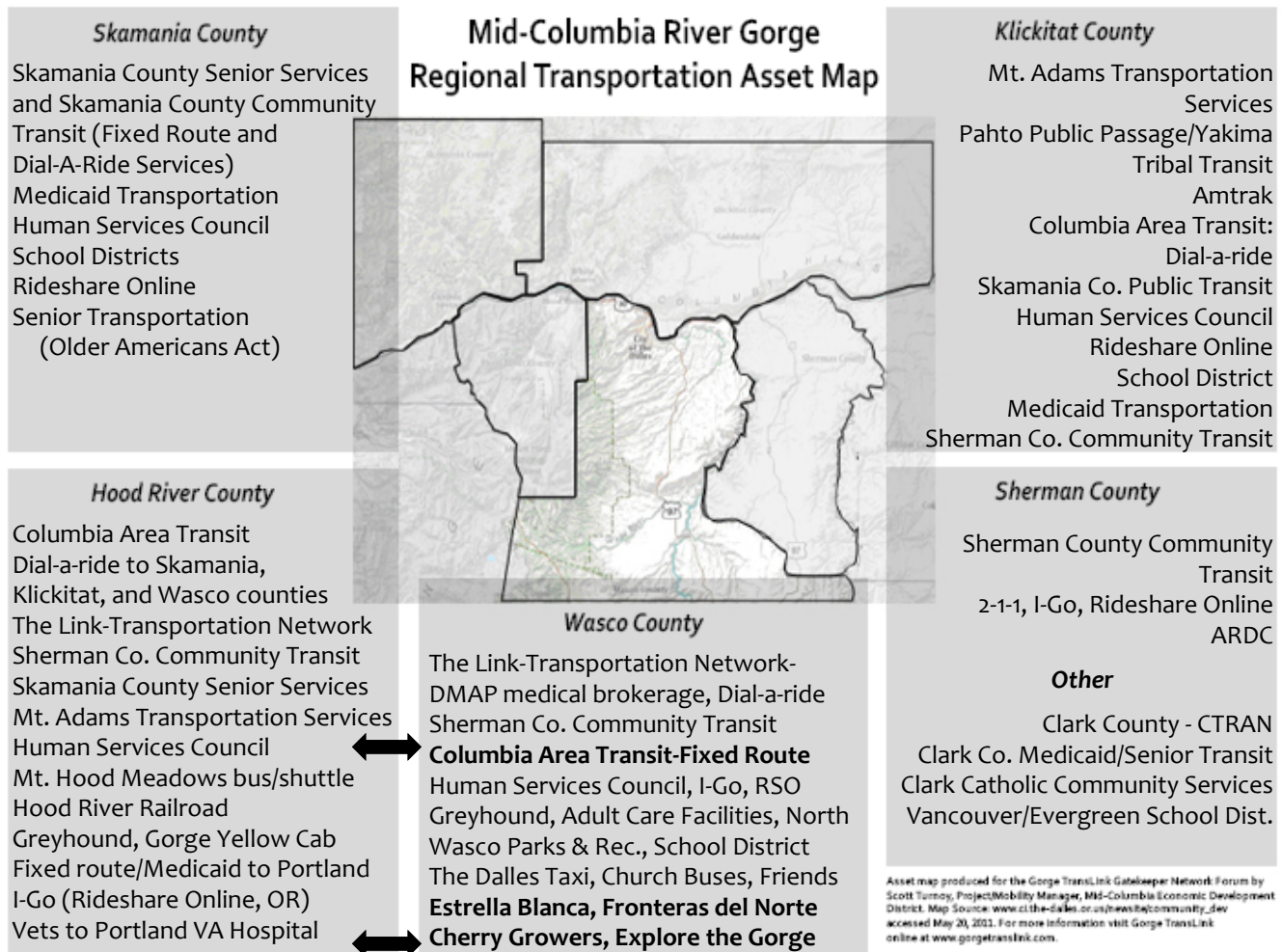
Gorge TransLink is an alliance of rural providers offering public transportation services throughout the Mid-Columbia River Gorge area. Alliance members are committed to providing efficient, reliable and accessible transportation services to the residents of Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman Counties. Member organizations represented at the Gatekeeper Network Forum include Columbia Area Transit, Mid-Columbia Council of Governments' Transportation Network (The Link), Sherman County Community Transit, Skamania County Public Transit, Mt. Adams Transportation Services (MATS), the Human Services Council, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, Oregon Department of Transportation, and Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT). Participants not affiliated with Gorge TransLink include social and human services organizations such as Oregon Department of Human Services, WorkSource Columbia Gorge, The Next Door, Inc. (Nuestra Comunidad Sana), Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living, Mid-Columbia Housing Authority, Mid-Columbia Children's Council, and Opportunity Connections; medical and senior services organizations such as Mid-Columbia Senior Center, Sherman County Senior and Community Center, and Skamania County Senior Services; economic development groups such as Klickitat County Economic Development Council, Washington State University Horizons, and Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, and educational institutions such as the Columbia Gorge Community College.

The Forum began with an overview of transportation options and definition of key terms and concepts related to transit and demand response public transportation, presented by Ryan Warner of WSDOT. Representatives from each of the five county providers and the Human Services Council, then explained their services and service area. The description of TransLink member services was immediately followed by a Regional Transportation Asset-Mapping Exercise. After a brief break for refreshments and networking, BJ Jacobson presented on the proper procedure to schedule non-emergent medical transportation through the Human Services Council and local providers in Klickitat and Skamania Counties. Deanna Bisbee of Columbia Area Transit presented on how to reserve dial-a-ride services in Hood River and Wasco Counties, including the information a potential rider must have to make the reservation. Forum participants then engaged in a discussion focused on common challenges that their clients face, such as language barriers and limited services on weekends. The forum concluded with a presentation on Rideshare Online by Forum sponsor Alison Wiley of Oregon Department of Transportation. Forum participants were given a questionnaire at the end of the event, the results of which are discussed on Page 9.



# TRANSPORTATION ASSET MAPPING

Asset mapping focuses on opportunities within a community by identifying assets or resources that exist in the community or region. By identifying resources and services currently in operation, we can also identify problems and strategies to address them. The purpose of mapping transportation resources is to identify our region’s assets, in terms of individuals and organizations, both public and private, which provide transportation services and have the potential to forge connections to increase mobility and access to services for those who need it most. The Gorge TransLink Gatekeeper Network Forum provided a unique opportunity for transportation providers and social and human services providers to indicate any and all individuals, organizations, programs, or unaffiliated services of which they are aware, that provide transportation options in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge region. Participants listed resource names, population served, geographic area served, and details about service gaps or needs for the region. The map below summarizes resources listed by Forum participants for each county in the region.



## KEY TRANSPORTATION CONCEPTS & PROCEDURES

### Key Transportation Concepts

- **Fixed Route Public Transit:** Regular service on a set schedule with designated stops. Most often associated with large buses in urban areas, fixed-routes use smaller buses and vans in some areas.
- **Dial-a-Ride Service:** Buses or vans pick riders up at home and take them wherever they need to go within the service area.
- **Demand-Response:** Most often associated with Dial-a-Ride Service, Demand-Response Transit Service is comprised of vehicles operating in response to calls from passengers or their agents to the transit operator, who dispatches a vehicle to pick up the passengers and transport them to their destinations. Typically, vehicles do not operate on a fixed route or schedule. Vehicles may be dispatched to pick up several passengers at different locations before taking them to their respective destinations and may alter the route to pick up additional passengers.
- **Paratransit:** Curb-to-curb service that picks up passengers with disabilities who cannot use an available fixed-route public transit service. Fixed-route services require an accompanying paratransit service to pick-up passengers within a 3/4-mile span on each side of a fixed route and may use a variety of vehicles.
- **Medical Transport:** Available for individuals with a current Medicaid Card for the state in which they live to access medical appointments. Riders must have Medicaid ID Card; pick-up address; name, address and phone number of medical provider; appointment date and time; type of medical appointment; and return time.

### Procedural Discussion

**Making a Dial-a-Ride Reservation:** Deanna Bisbee of Columbia Area Transit explained that to arrange a trip using a dial-a-ride service, passengers must generally pre-schedule at least one (1) day before the desired trip. To schedule a trip, riders need to provide their name, address and phone number; the date and time when they need to travel; persons traveling with the rider, and any special needs, such as wheelchair transportation, child seats, and oxygen bottles.

**Non-Emergent Medical Transport (NEMT):** BJ Jacobson explained that individuals who are eligible for medical services in a state Medicaid program and have no other way to get to and from a Medicaid-covered appointment can use NEMT services. The Human Services Council (HSC) provides NEMT services in Klickitat and Skamania Counties. Riders can obtain service directly or reimbursement for trips with other vendors. HSC can take riders to Oregon for appointments and contracts with vendors to make trips on weekends and evenings.

## REGIONAL TRANSIT NEEDS & RIDESHARE ONLINE

### Regional needs noted during the procedural discussion include:

- **Equipped weekend and holiday service** is needed throughout the region, particularly for Sunday services and weekend activities.
- **Spanish language information** is needed to increase awareness and use of public transportation services by the Spanish-speaking community in the Gorge.
- **Data needs**, such as the number of buses, vans, and licensed drivers; available routes and route capacity using both public and private services; DDL training opportunities and maintenance facilities to inform policies and strategies for increasing services and access to service.
- **Consolidating rides** to Portland/Vancouver from the Mid-Columbia Gorge region.
- **Agency coordination** to increase services and service efficiency.
- **Central phone number** or contact to access information or to schedule a ride.
- **Ticket or card system to provide convenient access** to a variety of regional transit services. The card/ticket-holder would be able to load money onto the card and use it for every ride in the Gorge TransLink system, regardless of the transit provider.
- **Network with partners in the Gorge Technology Alliance** for innovative technology to link public and self-services, create efficiencies, and increase mobility.

### Rideshare Online

Alison Wiley (ODOT) presented on the new ridesharing database and networking program, which is currently active in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. The online program enables users to find other users making similar commute trips, or within a similar area, with whom to share rides. The service can be used for regular trips or for one-time trips and supports carpools, vanpools, bike-commuters, and pedestrians. Users can also filter by group categories to find rides with a particular user group, such as veterans, church groups, school-pools, and seniors. For more information about Rideshare Online, visit [www.rideshareonline.com](http://www.rideshareonline.com).



## QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Participants were asked to fill out a questionnaire that sought to gather information about the transportation needs of the Gatekeepers' clients. Subsequently, those invited to the Forum but could not attend were asked to complete the questionnaire via an online survey.

A total of 18 participants or invitees completed the questionnaire. Most respondents have low-income individuals, seniors, and individuals with a disability as their clientele. Additional client groups include job seekers, individuals with mental health issues, non-English speakers, students, individuals re-entering the labor market, and staff or employees.

### Destinations:

Respondents identified the destinations their clients need transportation to access. The highest percentage of respondents noted medical appointments (78%) and social services (72%), with over half of respondents identifying work (67%) and school/training (61%) destinations. Additional destinations include recreation, shopping, and church on weekends.

### Most commonly used transit options:

When asked to note which transportation options their clients use most, half of respondents indicated "dial-a-ride," with "carpool with family" (39%) noted as another commonly used option. Additional services used include personal vehicles and program mentors. The most frequently noted transportation options for Medicaid-funded trips were dial-a-ride to medical appointments, with one mention of fixed route, and specific mention of The Link's DMAP service and Mt. Adams Transportation Services.

Transportation Option	Count	Percent
Dial-a-ride	9	50.0%
Carpool with family	7	38.9%
Fixed Route	4	22.2%
Walk	4	22.2%
Carpool with neighbors	3	16.7%
Bicycle	0	0.0%

### Modifications to services:

Respondents indicated additions to transportation services to allow their clients to utilize available services or do so more frequently. Suggestions include more capacity and extended hours, such as evening, weekend, and special event service; more regular stops and access points, with a noted need to cross the river; more fixed routes, with specific mention of a fixed route in Klickitat County; dial-a-ride service available for work commute; Spanish-speaking dispatchers; and more knowledge sharing, marketing, and better informing clients about existing services. One respondent specifically noted services that would help and services that do help by stating, "Weekend options would be helpful. Many of my clients need accessible transportation. Door-to-door pickups are helpful." Another respondent mentioned the need for "having more regular transportation from outlying areas."

## QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Whereas a majority of respondents do not provide transportation services for their clients, many organizations do provide service, generally to and from appointments. One respondent informally volunteers to provide rides for hospital discharge. Other respondents indicated the use of group home vans and company vehicles for trips to work or medical appointments. Still others mentioned that staff may transport clients to appointments, meetings, and services, while others utilize a bus or other special transport of clients to medical appointments. A respondent noted some transportation to church services, but such service is limited by vehicle access for mobility devices. One respondent also mentioned the possibility of providing a voluntary Rideshare service.

Over 3/4 of respondents indicated that they would like to participate in follow-up brainstorming or problem-solving meetings with representatives of Gorge TransLink. Meetings could focus on specific issues each organization and its clients face with regards to local and regional mobility. Respondents noted the following items to address in future problem-solving sessions:

1. Ensure ADA regulations are met for elderly riders and individuals with disabilities.
2. Transportation for children and families to medical appointments.
3. Transportation on weekends for church and social events.
4. Disseminating information to communities that need transportation service.
5. Identify resources, encourage collaboration among providers, and increase transportation options.
6. Marketing.

Additional comments for how to improve public transportation services include appreciation for the existing services in the Mid-Columbia region, with specific mention of the CAT bus, as well as suggestions for a one-stop online portal for information, and a suggestion to institute more transportation districts within the region to fund increased services.

### COMMENTS

*“As we develop more and more jobs for people in the community - our transportation issues are changing!”*

*“Make a commitment to reach out to the Hispanic community and broad low income community.”*

*“Better marketing - the service is getting better and better - now [get] the word out.”*

## TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE LIST

### Oregon State Public Transit

#### Columbia Area Transit

Columbia Area Transit provides demand response service to the general public in Hood River County and inter-city fixed route service between the cities of The Dalles and Hood River and Hood River and Portland.

Phone: (541) 386-4202

Oregon Telecommunications Relay: 7-1-1

<http://community.gorge.net/hrctd/>



#### Sherman County Community Transit

Sherman County Community Transit provides demand response service to the general public in Sherman County.

Phone: (541) 565-3553

[www.co.sherman.or.us/govt\\_transportation.asp](http://www.co.sherman.or.us/govt_transportation.asp)



#### Transportation Network - The Link

The Transportation Network provides demand response service to the general public in Wasco County and acts as the Medicaid Transportation Broker for seven Oregon counties.

Phone: (541) 296-7595

Alternate Phone: (877) 875-4657

Relay: 7-1-1

[www.mccog.com/transportation-network.htm](http://www.mccog.com/transportation-network.htm)



#### Tri-MET

Provides service to the general public in Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties. (Does not serve the Columbia Gorge)

Phone: (503) 238-7433

TDD/TYY: (503) 238-5811



### Trip Planner

#### Oregon Dept. of Transportation - TripCheck

TripCheck has Oregon travel information, the latest conditions via road cameras, continuous winter travel updates, year-round highway construction details, and other valuable tips to get you to and from your favorite places in Oregon.

[www.tripcheck.com](http://www.tripcheck.com)

#### Washington State Dept. of Transportation

**Travel Options** - Travel Options provides information on rideshare, riding the train or bus, bicycling, walking, or telecommuting.

[www.wsdot.wa.gov/partners/commute/default.htm](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/partners/commute/default.htm)

**Dial 2-1-1** for community information and referrals.

### Washington State Public Transit

#### Mt. Adams Transportation Services

Mount Adams Transportation Services provides demand response service to the general public in Klickitat County.

Phone:

Goldendale Area: (509) 733-3060 or (800) 774-1699

White Salmon Area: (509) 493-4662 or (800) 493-7606.

[www.klickitatcounty.org/Senior/](http://www.klickitatcounty.org/Senior/)



#### Skamania County Public Transit

Skamania County Public Transit provides fixed-route and dial-a-ride service to the general public in Skamania County. Fixed transit serves Carson and Stevenson to Vancouver.

Phone: (509) 427-3990

Medical Transport Services: (800) 752-9422

[www.skamaniacounty.org/public\\_transit.htm](http://www.skamaniacounty.org/public_transit.htm)



#### Human Services Council

Human Services Council is a non-profit corporation that provides medical transportation and dial-a-ride services in Southwest Washington, including Skamania and Klickitat Counties.

Phone: 360-694-6577

[www.hsc-wa.org](http://www.hsc-wa.org)



#### C-TRAN

C-TRAN provides fixed route service to Vancouver and the urban growth boundary as well as express service to downtown Portland, Marquam Hill and the Lloyd District. (Does not serve the Columbia Gorge)

Phone: 360-696-4494

TDD/TYY: 360-695-2760

[www.c-tran.com](http://www.c-tran.com)



#### Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities (SWAAD)

SWAAD provides assistance to individuals over age 60 to access services, including medical transportation and general mobility options.

Phone: 360-694-8144

Alternate Phone: 360-735-5720

<http://www.helpingelders.org/transportation.shtm>



#### DISCLAIMER

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District is not responsible for the service operations of the transportation resources referenced in this document. Please contact resources directly prior to utilizing specific services.

## TRANSPORTATION RESOURCE LIST

### Ridesharing Databases

#### RideShareOnline

RideshareOnline.com provides an easy way to find others in Oregon, Washington, or Idaho State who are interested in sharing their commute in a carpool or vanpool.  
[www.rideshareonline.com](http://www.rideshareonline.com)

#### Ridester

Ridester is a service where anyone traveling anywhere in the USA can offer or find rides within a feedback-rated community. Ridester offers the first web payment system to help riders securely pay drivers before each trip.  
[www.ridester.com](http://www.ridester.com)

#### WeCar

WeCar is a membership-based car sharing program for people who are looking for an alternative method of transportation that lowers the cost and reduces the hassles of traditional transportation.  
[www.wecar.com](http://www.wecar.com)

### Passenger Rail and Intercity Bus

#### Amtrak

Nationwide Passenger Rail Service. Affiliated bus service to numerous Oregon locations.  
Phone: 800-872-7245  
TDD/TYY: 800-523-6590  
[www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)



#### Greyhound

Greyhound provides intercity bus service throughout the Columbia Gorge.  
Phone: (800) 231-2222  
TDD/TYY: (800) 345-3109  
[www.greyhound.com](http://www.greyhound.com)



#### RAZ Transportation & Gray Line

RAZ Transportation is the largest passenger charter transportation company in Oregon and Southwest Washington.  
Phone: (888) 684-3322  
[www.portland.coachamerica.com](http://www.portland.coachamerica.com)

### Vanpool/Shuttle

#### C-TRAN Vanpool Program

C-TRAN's Vanpool Program is open to any group with 5 to 12 passengers who can commute to and from work together. The commute must be at least 10 miles in one direction, and must start, end, or move through C-TRAN's service area in Washington State.

Phone: (360) 906-7510  
[www.c-tran.com/vanpool](http://www.c-tran.com/vanpool)

#### Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Transportation Network

DAV and volunteers driving vets to and from VA hospitals and clinics. It's a program administered by DAV Hospital Service Coordinators at the Portland and Walla Walla VA medical centers. Contact local service coordinators to schedule a ride.  
Phone: (541) 506-2502 - The Dalles, OR  
Phone: (509) 525-5200 - Walla Walla, WA  
[www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org)

#### Enterprise Rent-A-Car Rideshare

A division of Enterprise Rent-A-Car, Enterprise Rideshare specializes in providing vanpool and carpool commuter services to individuals and companies.  
Phone: (800) VAN-4-WORK  
[www.vanpool.com](http://www.vanpool.com)

#### Metro VanPool

The Metro VanPool program coordinates vanpool services for commuters who travel into the city of Portland, Oregon metropolitan region including Clark County, Washington.  
Phone: (503) 813-7566  
[www.metro-region.org/vanpool](http://www.metro-region.org/vanpool)

#### VPSI, Inc.

VPSI Inc., helps vanpoolers form groups of 5 to 14 colleagues, friends or neighbors or search the company's online database for existing vanpools on their preferred routes. A volunteer driver from the group collects a pre-determined monthly fee from passengers and VPSI covers all maintenance and insurance costs.  
Phone: (800) VAN-RIDE  
[www.vpsi.org](http://www.vpsi.org)

#### Faith in Action

Faith in Action Providence Community Caregivers assists community members in Klickitat and Hood River counties with shopping, chores, visits and transportation.  
Phone: (541) 387-6404



## GORGE TRANSLINK

Your Gateway to Mobility in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge



[www.gorgetranslink.com](http://www.gorgetranslink.com)

For questions contact Scott Turnoy, Project/Mobility Manager at  
Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

(541) 296-2266 or [scott@mcedd.org](mailto:scott@mcedd.org).

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## ACTION ITEMS

The Gorge TransLink Gatekeeper Network Forum provided a venue for discussion of transportation needs and available services in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge region. The event convened transportation providers and representatives of human and social services organizations as a means to distribute information about regional transportation options to special needs passengers. The Gorge TransLink Alliance members and Mobility Manager will prioritize actions to pursue to follow-up on the needs and information discussed at the Forum and provided by the Forum Questionnaire respondents.

- Conduct follow-up meetings with Gatekeeper organizations to address specific issues each organization and its clients face with regards to local and regional mobility.  
Organizations with which to meet include:

Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living	Sherman Co. Senior and Community Center
Oregon Department of Human Services	Mid-Columbia Senior Center
Columbia Basin Care Facility	Opportunity Connections
Mid-Columbia Council of Governments	Mid-Columbia Children’s Council
Gorge Action Programs	Columbia Gorge Community College
La Clinica del Carino	WorkSource Columbia Gorge
The Next Door, Inc.	Committee on Weekend Transportation
- Educate organizations and clients about available transit options to medical appointments, job sites, workforce training, etc.
- Market services to the general public by distributing publications, media ads, or PSAs.
- Continue to make the Gorge TransLink website a robust, up-to-date, one-stop online portal for information.
- Work with senior centers, churches, and care facilities to find equipped transit options for weekend service.
- Partner with The Next Door, Inc. to disseminate Spanish language information to clients and increase awareness and use of transportation services by the Spanish-speaking community in the Gorge.
- Obtain data on demand and vehicle capacity for increased or consolidated trips from Mid-Columbia region to Portland/Vancouver and to common destinations within the region.
- Continue to research Intelligent Technology System products and strategies for implementation to increase provider coordination and service efficiency.
- Partner with 2-1-1 to provide central phone number and contact to access transportation information.
- Explore potential for ticket or card system to provide convenient access to all regional transit services. Forge partnerships and apply for funding to implement strategy.
- Explore potential for regional transit district and cohesive transit loop system.

