



STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM:  Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director
DATE: November 25, 2008
SUBJECT: **Human Services Transportation Plan, 2009-2011 WSDOT Public Transportation Consolidated Grant Applications: RTC Project Ranking, Resolution 12-08-15**

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this memorandum is to seek RTC Board approval of the list of ranked human services transportation projects from RTC's three-county Regional Transportation Planning Organization region. The Board's action will allow the ranked projects to be submitted to WSDOT for funding consideration through the 2009-2011 statewide competitive Consolidated Public Transportation Grant program.

Through the consolidated program, WSDOT distributes a variety of state and federal grants to support public transportation programs. These programs are:

- Federal Transit Administration:
 - Section 5310 Special Needs of Elderly & Individuals with Disabilities,
 - Section 5311 Rural,
 - Section 5316 Job Access and Reverse Commute, and
 - Section 5317 New Freedom to support new public transportation services and transportation alternatives for individuals with disabilities. New Freedom funds should be used for transportation services beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- State Rural Mobility Competitive
- State Paratransit/Special Needs Competitive for non-profit agencies.

WSDOT issued a call for projects for the 2009-2011 Public Transportation Consolidated Grant program in September 2008. Grant proposals are submitted every two years in line with the state biennium. For the 2009-2011 program, proposals are due to the state by December 12, 2008 with money available to successful applicants between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2011.

RTC'S ROLE IN THE PROCESS

RTC has a role in the Public Transportation Consolidated Grant process because project applicants are required to participate in the planning process with RTC as the local Metropolitan Planning Organization/Regional Transportation Planning Organization. Projects must be based on needs and strategies identified in a regionally coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP). The RTC Board adopted the existing RTC Human Services Transportation Plan in January 2007 following a process that included convening a stakeholders group, gathering of data and information, identification of unmet transportation needs and development of transportation alternatives. The Plan is available on RTC's website at:

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<http://www.rtc.wa.gov/reports/index.htm#HSTP>. The HSTP must be updated at least every four years so a 2010 update is anticipated. RTC is required to evaluate and rank project proposals from this region of Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties prior to submittal of project applications to WSDOT.

TRANSPORTATION NEEDS

A summary of the transportation needs and strategies identified in the Human Services Transportation Plan (RTC, January 2007) is provided below.

CLARK COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION NEEDS:

Clark County: Transportation Challenges and Gaps: Themes

The prime focus should be to maintain and preserve existing transportation services. Specific needs identified include:

- **Medical/seniors transportation needs:**
 - curb to curb transportation.
 - life sustaining medical treatment transportation.
 - seniors rides to nutrition programs.
 - C-VAN paratransit public transportation not available in rural areas of Clark County.
- **Transportation to/from jobs:**
 - requires longer fixed route transit service hours.
 - fixed route transit cannot accommodate all individual needs.
 - challenges of getting children to/from childcare on way to/from work.
 - C-TRAN fixed route public transportation not available in rural areas of Clark County
- **Ability to pay for transportation:** is a challenge for low income, elderly and people with disabilities

Clark County: Transportation Challenges and Gaps: Strategies

- Continue existing transportation brokerage program as a way of providing efficient transportation services that can meet the needs of seniors, people with disabilities and people requiring jobs access. The program extends Clark County wide.
- Need for recruitment, organization and training of volunteer drivers or transportation assistants:
 - would help meet curb to curb transportation needs for elderly, people with disabilities and those needing medical transportation.
 - would be efficient and cost effective.
- Provide for curb to curb transportation for those outside of the C-VAN service area.

Klickitat and Skamania Counties Human Services Transportation Needs:

- **Maintain and Preserve the existing transportation system.** The demand response system serving the general public and those with special needs is essential to the Klickitat County community. Likewise, the Skamania County Dial-a-ride project serving the general public and those with special needs is essential to the community. The fixed Route service into Fisher's Landing has successfully become an important linkage for Skamania County residents to the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area.
- **Expand Public Transportation Services.** Expand Klickitat Senior Services and Skamania Senior Services to better meet the needs of elderly, low-income, and those with disabilities. This may include extended service hours, weekend service, new fixed route services to neighboring counties, construction of additional park and rides, and other innovative public transit services.
- **Continue linkage with other transit providers in the region.** Continue and expand Gorge TransLink, an alliance of transportation providers offering public transportation services throughout the Mid-Columbia River Gorge area and to more distant destinations, such as Portland and Vancouver. In addition, the region needs to link with public transportation in Yakima County.
- **Expand Volunteer Driver Program.** Maintaining a well-trained and enthusiastic volunteer driving staff. The volunteer driving program can be a cost effective way to serve trips, which cannot be covered by traditional public transit service.

Klickitat and Skamania County Service Gaps and Needs

The major unmet needs are:

- Extended evening public transit service.
- Weekend public transit service.
- Additional in-county demand-responsive service, a portion of which is dedicated to employment needs.
- Daily access to neighboring counties, including Hood River, and for employment and services.
- Additional Park and Rides.
- Transit Amenities (shelters, benches, etc.)
- Additional education and outreach about public transportation opportunities to Klickitat and Skamania County residents and human service agencies.

PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING

Local agencies in Clark, Klickitat and Skamania counties developed grant proposals to meet identified transportation needs and on November 13 regional partners met with RTC staff to discuss and rank project proposals to be submitted for statewide funding consideration.

The projects were evaluated using criteria that reflect the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Program goals. The evaluation criteria are listed below:

- **Address Deficiencies** – encourage communities to identify and address deficiencies in paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation.

- ***Provide a Community Benefit*** – Assist local areas in determining community benefits and support for paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation.
- ***Preservation or Enhancement*** – provide funding to preserve or enhance paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation where there is a demonstrated need and measureable benefit.
- ***Community Connections*** – Support a sustainable network of transportation services within and between communities.
- ***Financial Partnerships*** – Establish opportunities for local jurisdictions, regional organization, private sector agencies, state and federal governments, and tribal governments in Washington to work collaboratively. Ensure stakeholders have a voice in project development. Encourage appropriate cost sharing on projects.
- ***Support Coordination*** – Local organizations are required to coordinate services with other transportation providers in their area, as well as other organizations potentially able to use or purchase the services.

PROJECT RANKING

The state's grant process requires each RTPO region to rank projects as A, B, C, or D. The number of letter grades each region gets is determined by the population in each of the following categories: rural, people with disabilities, youth, elderly and people with low income. Based on these populations, the RTC region, which includes Clark, Klickitat and Skamania counties, is able to submit 5 As, 5 Bs, 4 Cs and unlimited Ds. The region's ranking counts for one third of the total possible points awarded as part of the state's competitive process. For example, the maximum points awarded to a project by the state will be 100 points and projects ranked by the region in the A, B, C, and D categories will receive additional percentile points as follows:

A = top 5 projects	(50 percentile points)
B = second 5 projects	(25 percentile points)
C = third 5 projects	(12 percentile points)
D = remaining projects	(0 percentile points)

In total, nine projects were submitted for evaluation by RTC from the three-county region including three projects from the Human Services Council based in Clark County. At the November 13 meeting, stakeholders determined that all projects meet an identified need in the Human Services Transportation Plan (January 2007) and recommended ranking of the nine projects. Please note that projects are not prioritized within each category of letter ranking.

A. Human Services Council Employment Transportation – JARC. The Human Services Council provides employment transportation services to assist low-income individuals, families, and WorkFirst recipients who reside in Clark County, Washington. The program brokers transportation to eligible people to get to employment sites, job interviews, training services, education, childcare, and other work related activities. This would sustain an existing service. Grant request of \$650,000.

A. Klickitat Senior Services/Mt. Adams Transit Continue to Provide Klickitat County with Existing Dial-a-Ride and Route Deviated Service. Mount Adams Transportation provides essential transportation services for the disabled, elderly, and low-income within

Klickitat County. This service is essential to those that are transit dependent. This would sustain an existing service. Grant request of \$885,467.

A. Skamania Seniors Services Maintain the Existing Dial-a-ride Service for general public and those with special needs in Skamania County. Senior Services provides essential transportation services for the disabled, elderly, and low-income. This service is essential to those that are transit dependent to access medical and social services, shopping and errand destinations and other activities of daily life. This would sustain an existing service. Grant request of \$370,050.

A. Human Services Council Reserve-A-Ride Transportation (formerly U-Ride Clark County). This project provides transportation to elderly and disabled Clark County residents who: 1) do not qualify for Medicaid or for ADA services through the transit system; 2) live outside of the transit system service area; or 3) are Medicaid eligible but need transportation for non-medical purposes. This would sustain an existing service. Grant request of \$450,000.

A. Skamania Senior Services Maintain the existing deviated fixed route service between Skamania County and Fisher's Landing Transit Center in Clark County. The SR-14 deviated fixed route service makes three round trips per day (morning, midday, evening). The service began in January 2004 and has been very successful and continues to grow in ridership. This service provides access to jobs, schooling, and other trip purposes within the greater Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. This would sustain an existing service. Grant request of \$318,825.

B. Skamania Senior Services Capital funds to replace two vehicles to Skamania County's fleet. Purchase one new ADA rear-entry mini-van and one mid-sized cutaway bus to provide dial-a-ride services. Grant request of \$101,864.

B. Klickitat Senior Services/Mt. Adams Transit Replace one existing ADA minivan and purchase one additional vehicles. Replace on aging ADA minivan and add one new ADA minivan. Grant Request of \$56,000.

B. Mid-Columbia Economic Development District Gorge TransLink Mobility Management Project. Funding would be utilized to support a mobility manager who would explore the potential for establishing connectivity and developing a seamless transportation system between communities in Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties. The mobility manger would also seek to establish vanpool options and promote alternative forms of transportation including carpooling and rideshare. Grant request of \$88,000.

B. Human Services Council Volunteer Driver Program. The Human Service Council proposes to implement a Volunteer Driver program in the rural and remote areas of Skamania, Klickitat and Clark Counties. Grant request of \$125,000.

Once projects are submitted to the state, they will be evaluated using a forced pairs process where every project is compared to every other project. The regional ranking will be an important determinant in this competitive evaluation process.

POLICY IMPLICATION

The Human Services Transportation Plan (RTC, January 2007) was a requirement of the federal transportation act, SAFETEA-LU. The HSTP provides a framework for identifying projects that can help meet the transportation needs of the aged, people with disabilities and low income workers. RTC Board action on the project ranking will allow the projects to be forwarded to WSDOT for statewide competitive funding consideration.

BUDGET IMPLICATION

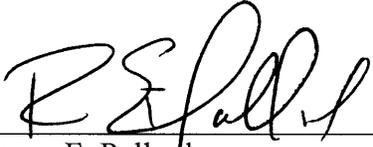
Adoption of the ranking of projects to be submitted for WSDOT Consolidated Public Transportation funding has no impact on RTC's 2009 budget. The ranking supports the project grant application requests from local human service transportation providers.

ACTION REQUIRED

Adoption of Resolution 12-08-15, "Human Services Transportation Plan, 2009-2011 WSDOT Public Transportation Consolidated Grant Applications: RTC Project Ranking".

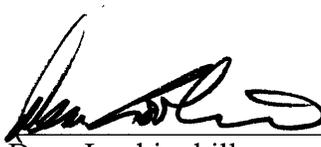
ADOPTED this 2nd day of December 2008,
by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL



Royce E. Pollard
Chair of the Board

ATTEST:



Dean Lookingbill
Transportation Director