




STAFF REPORT/RESOLUTION

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM:  Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director
DATE: November 30, 2010
SUBJECT: **Human Services Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania and Klickitat Counties and Project Priorities, Resolution 12-10-25**

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this Resolution is to provide information on the Human Services Transportation Plan update and to seek RTC Board action to approve the Plan update and the list of ranked special needs 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 2011-2013 statewide competitive Consolidated Public Transportation Grant program. The draft Human Services Transportation Plan update is attached with this Resolution for review and a brief overview of the ranked projects is included within the Resolution.

The RTC Board adopted the region's first Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) for Clark, Skamania and Klickitat Counties in January 2007. Development of an HSTP was first required by the federal transportation act, SAFETEA-LU (2005), with the intent of identifying transportation needs and solutions and thereby improving transportation services for people with disabilities, seniors, and individuals with lower incomes as well as those in rural locations who cannot provide transportation for themselves. Development of a Human Services Transportation Plan can help to ensure communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple federal programs. A coordinated plan can help to enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the most cost-effective transportation possible. Development of the Human Services Transportation Plan brings together service providers, agencies that distribute funds, riders, and the community at-large to improve special needs transportation throughout the region.

At the August 2010 meeting, staff provided the Board with background information on the Human Services Transportation Plan including a summary of current services, unmet needs, challenges and potential strategies to address the needs. Since then, staff has continued to meet with stakeholders to complete the draft Plan and to evaluate and provide a draft ranking of the proposed transportation projects resulting from the Plan.

HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN AND FUNDING PROGRAMS

Development of an HSTP is a condition for receiving funding through WSDOT's statewide competitive Consolidated Public Transportation Grant program. WSDOT created a consolidated

grant application process in 2003 to combine the applications for state and federal public transportation grants. Applicants for WSDOT's public transportation grant program are required to participate in the HSTP planning process with their local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). 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.

HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN: OUTLINE

The elements of the Human Services Transportation Plan, as recommended by the state Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT), to meet state and federal requirements are listed below:

- Convene Stakeholder Group,
- Gather Data and Information
- Identify Unmet Transportation Needs
- Develop Strategies to Meet Public Transportation Needs

THREE COUNTY DATA, CURRENT SERVICES, SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

For each of the three counties in RTC'S region, relevant data, a description of current service providers, stakeholder meetings to identify needs, a listing of needs, and potential strategies to meet these needs were provided at the August 2010 RTC Board meeting. They are fully addressed in the attached Human Services Transportation Plan.

PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING

Local agencies in Clark, Klickitat and Skamania counties developed project grant proposals to meet identified transportation needs and on November 17 regional partners met with RTC staff to discuss and rank project proposals to be submitted for statewide funding consideration. November 17 meeting participants included staff of Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, The Human Services Council, Mt. Adams Transportation, Skamania

County Senior Services, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, Catholic Community Services, WSDOT and C-TRAN.

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 RTPPO region to rank projects as A, B, C, or D priorities. 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, twelve projects were evaluated by RTC and stakeholders from the three-county region, including three projects from the Human Services Council based in Clark County, two from Mt Adams Transportation based in Klickitat County, six from Skamania County Senior Services and one from Mid-Columbia Economic Development District. At the November 17 meeting,

stakeholders determined that all projects support transportation needs identified in the draft Human Services Transportation Plan update and recommended ranking of the eleven projects. Please note that projects are not prioritized within each category of letter ranking.

Priority A (5 projects)

- A. **Human Services Council: Continue Employment Transportation project using brokered transportation model to help low-income individuals, residing in Clark County to access employment and employment related activities.**

The Human Services Council will continue to provide employment transportation services to assist low-income individuals who reside in Clark County. The program brokers transportation to eligible people to get to employment sites, job interviews, training services, education, childcare and other employment-related activities. *Grant request of \$500,000.*

- A. **Human Services Council: Continue Reserve-A-Ride/Clark, dial-a-ride services to get individuals residing in Clark County who do not qualify for other transportation programs to life-sustaining medical appointments and if possible to general medical appointments, nutrition sites, and shopping trips.**

The Human Services Council will continue to provide transportation under this program for elderly, disabled, and low-income residents of Clark County who need transportation to life-sustaining medical appointments such as dialysis, chemotherapy, and radiation treatments. While medical trips will remain the top priority of this program, this program would also like to offer group transportation options to destinations such as grocery stores, nutrition sites, and other locations that assist people in remaining independent in their homes. *Grant request of \$370,000.*

- A. **Mt. Adams Transportation: Continue to provide Klickitat County with existing dial-a-ride and route deviated service**

Mt. Adams Transportation will continue to operate existing dial-a-ride and route deviated services. Priority is given to seniors and persons with disabilities for life-sustaining service. The dial-a-ride service is provided Monday-Friday between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., with extension made for some critical services. Route deviated service is provided 3 times daily between White Salmon and Hood River to support an employment center for the developmentally disabled in Odell, Oregon. Additionally, volunteer drivers play an important role in providing transportation services in this region. *Grant request of \$1,020,000.*

- A. **Skamania County Senior Services: Maintain the existing Skamania County dial-a-ride service for the general public and those with special needs**

Skamania County Senior Services will continue to operate existing dial-a-ride service Monday-Friday between 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. In addition, after hour service can be pre-arranged for necessary services. Demand response trips are provided on a first-come,

first-served basis. Senior Services attempts to serve as many people as possible with limited funds. In addition to the demand response services, trips to senior meal program, distant shopping trips, and recreational trips are provided. *Grant request of \$359,000.*

A. Skamania County Senior Services: Maintain the existing route deviated service between Skamania County and Fisher's Landing Transit Center in Clark County

Skamania County Senior Services began providing deviated service between Skamania and Clark counties in 2004. This project has been very successful and there is strong support for the continuation of this service. This service provides a morning, mid-day, and evening trip each weekday along SR-14, between Carson and Vancouver. The round-trip service stops in Carson, Stevenson, North Bonneville, Skamania, and Fisher's Landing Transit Center in Vancouver. Connections are available from Fisher's Landing Transit Center to all parts of the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area. *Grant request of \$268,500.*

Priority B (5 projects)

B. The Human Services Council: Begin a new Community Mobility Solutions project by hiring a Mobility Manager to identify community transportation options and work with local transit, human service transportation providers, and community partners to coordinate transportation solutions for at-risk populations.

The Human Services Council is requesting funding to support a Mobility Management position. This position will focus on special needs transportation issues such as Emergency Preparedness, Veterans Transportation, Community Vanpools, and Local Coordinating Coalition activities. *Grant request of \$200,000.*

B. Mid-Columbia Economic Development District: Gorge TransLink Alliance Mobility Manager

The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) Mobility Manager will seek ways to provide communities with better access to jobs, medical attention, and other aspects crucial to quality of life. The Gorge TransLink Alliance is a coalition of partners in the Mid-Columbia region including Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington state and Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties in Oregon. The Mobility Manager will support further evaluation of collective scheduling software, planning assistance, regional marketing, development of a vanpool demand study, assistance for regional employers in developing commuter benefits and transportation programs, assessment of potential areas of collaboration and establish protocols related to fares, and evaluating shared training and other resource needs. *Grant request of \$88,000.*

B. Mt. Adams Transportation: Purchase of two (2) ADA Vans to replace two (2) aging ADA accessible minibuses

Mt. Adams Transportation is requesting funding to replace two aging ADA accessible mini buses with two ADA vans. This request will result in lower operating and maintenance costs. This will also add greater capacity to serve disabled clients in the more remote areas of Klickitat County and for distant medical trips. *Grant request of \$72,000.*

B. Skamania County Senior Services: Replace two Skamania County vehicles for dial-a-ride and route deviated services

Skamania County Senior Services is requesting funding replace two vehicles. This grant will replace an ageing mini-van and 20-passenger mini-bus. *Grant request of \$128,611.*

B. Skamania County Senior Services: New route deviated service between Skamania County and Hood River, OR

Skamania County Senior Services would add a new deviated route along SR-14 between Skamania and Hood River counties. This service would provide a morning, mid-day, and evening service each weekday. Stops would include North Bonneville, Stevenson, Home Valley, Cook, and Underwood, White Salmon, and Hood River. The round-trip route would be designed to serve as many residents as possible by matching the Hood River service with the Clark County service. This service will be coordinated with Mt. Adams Transportation in Klickitat County and Columbia Area Transit in Hood River. *Grant request of \$250,200.*

Priority C (2 projects)

C. Skamania County Senior Services: Add one vehicle to Skamania County dial-a-ride service

Skamania County Senior Services is requesting funding to add one ADA van. The new vehicle is necessary to provide efficient dial-a-ride service to the general public and persons with special needs in Skamania County. *Grant request of \$36,280.*

C. Skamania County Senior Services: Add one vehicle for new route deviated service between Skamania County and Hood River, OR

Skamania County Senior Services is requesting funding to add one 20-passenger mini-bus to provide new route-deviated service between Skamania County and Hood River County. *Grant request of \$70,561.*

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.

In addition to competing for public transportation funds at the statewide level, large urban areas such as the Portland-Vancouver region receive a direct formula allocation for Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom funds under SAFETEA-LU. The RTC Board, as MPO for the Clark County region, took action in December 2006 to concur with the Governors of Oregon and Washington in designating C-TRAN, TriMet and Smart (Wilsonville) as recipients of these funds within the Portland-Vancouver region. In FY 2009, \$159,731 JARC funding was received and \$97,477 New Freedom funds. C-TRAN uses these funds to help support the Connector transit service in Clark County and to fund the Travel Trainer program with the intent of training some users of C-VAN to ride fixed route service.

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 to adopt the HSTP update and project ranking will allow the projects to be forwarded to WSDOT for statewide competitive funding consideration.

BUDGET IMPLICATION

Adoption of the HSTP and ranking of projects to be submitted for WSDOT Consolidated Public Transportation funding has no impact on RTC's 2011 budget. However, the Plan does support the project grant application requests from local human service transportation providers.

ACTION REQUESTED

Adoption of Resolution 12-10-25, "Human Services Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania and Klickitat Counties and Project Priorities".

ADOPTED this 7TH day of December 2010,
by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council.

SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL


Molly Coston
Chair of the Board

ATTEST:


Dean Lookingbill
Transportation Director