



MEMORANDUM

TO: Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council Board of Directors
FROM: Matt Ransom, Executive Director *MR*
DATE: January 26, 2021
SUBJECT: **Human Services Transportation Plan, Endorsement 2021-23
Consolidated Grant Program Project Rankings**

AT A GLANCE – ACTION

The purpose of this agenda item: to provide the Board of Directors with information on special needs transportation project grant proposals; to report on application evaluation and ranking completed at the January 8 Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative (ATCI) meeting; and, to seek RTC Board of Director endorsement and transmittal of final grant proposals on behalf of partners within Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION CONSOLIDATED GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM

Through the consolidated program, WSDOT distributes a variety of state and federal grants to support public transportation programs. The following provides a summary of these programs:

- Federal Transit Administration:
 - o Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities
 - o Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas
 - o 5339(a) Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Formula Program
- State Rural Mobility Grants
- State Paratransit/Special Needs Grants

WSDOT provides further details of the Public Transportation Consolidated Grant funding program and guidance for applicants on its website.

THE HUMAN SERVICE TRANSPORTATION PLANS AND RTC’S ROLE IN THE CONSOLIDATED GRANT PROCESS

Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) has a role in the Public Transportation Consolidated Grant process because project applicants are required to participate in the planning process with the local MPO/RTPO. RTC is required to report to WSDOT on the evaluation and ranking of project proposals. Projects must be derived from the needs and strategies identified in a regionally coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) prepared every four years as a federal requirement and as a condition for funding eligibility under Washington’s statewide competitive Consolidated Grant Program. The HSTP provides a framework for identifying projects that can help meet the special transportation needs of those who cannot drive

themselves including the aged, people with disabilities, rural residents, youth, veterans and low-income workers.

The RTC Board of Directors adopted the existing [Human Services Transportation Plan in November 2018](#). The Plan is updated every four years. For this round of project proposals, no Plan update is required in order to apply for funding consideration as long as the project need is identified in the existing HSTP.

CONSOLIDATED GRANT PROJECT EVALUATION AND RANKING

One of the purposes of the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) is to support applications seeking statewide Consolidated Public Transportation Grant Program funding for projects to help fulfill transportation service needs identified in the HSTP. Local agencies and non-profits in Clark, Klickitat, and Skamania counties develop project grant proposals to meet identified transportation needs in the HSTP.

Project Evaluation Criteria:

An overview of the project evaluation and ranking process follows. Projects have been ranked according to how they meet the following evaluation criteria with the highest priority given to sustaining existing service:

- ***Sustain Existing Service*** – This is the highest priority evaluation criteria.
- ***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 measurable benefit.
- ***Community Connections*** – Support a sustainable network of transportation services within and between communities.
- ***Financial Partnerships*** – Establish opportunities for local jurisdictions, regional organizations, 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 Rankings:

As part of the WSDOT Public Transportation Consolidated Grant process, regions are to evaluate and rank projects submitted to the state. All projects are ranked by the region as either A, B, C or D. In the statewide competitive process, the region's ranking counts for additional bonus points

HSTP, Endorsement of 2021-23 Consolidated Grant Program Project Rankings

January 26, 2021

Page 3

with A ranked projects awarded 50 bonus percentile points and B ranked projects awarded 25 percentile bonus points. The number of allotted letter grades for each region is determined by criteria including its population, population density, rural population and numbers and percentages of those under 18 years, over 65 years, those with disabilities, living in poverty and veterans. Based on these demographics, the RTC region, which includes Clark, Klickitat and Skamania counties, is able to assign 4 projects with an A ranking, 6 projects with a B ranking, 6 projects with a C ranking and unlimited D rankings for this round of project applications.

Usually, the region would be able to assign 6 projects ranked “A” but in the 2021-2023 Consolidated funding cycle, the region has already used up 2 “A” rankings with successful 4-year project application requests submitted in 2018 to fund the Human Services Council’s Reserve-a-Ride program and Klickitat County Senior Services’ Existing Dial-a-Ride services. Therefore, the region has 4 “A” rankings to assign for the 2020 project applications.

PROJECT RANKINGS

In total, nine projects were submitted to RTC for ranking evaluation from the three-county region and Mid-Columbia Economic Development District based in The Dalles, Oregon. These include three projects from Skamania County Senior Services, two projects from Klickitat County Senior Services, two projects from Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) and two projects from the Human Services Council based in Clark County.

Plan Consistency Finding:

All projects meet an identified need in the [Human Services Transportation Plan \(November 2018\)](#).

YR 2021-23 Grant Application Ranking Process:

The [Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative \(ATCI\) for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties](#) is a regional coordinating committee which was convened to identify transportation barriers and challenges for at-risk populations and develop solutions to ensure all residents have access to safe, affordable transportation. The ATCI has been delegated by the WSDOT Public Transit Division as the primary regional coordinating committee to review and rank the HTSP grant proposals.

Preceding Actions:

- At the January 8, 2021 meeting of the Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative (ATCI), ATCI participants agreed on the project rankings and referred the project rankings to the RTC Board for the Board’s endorsement.
- The Regional Transportation Advisory Committee reviewed the ATCI project rankings at the January 15, 2021 RTAC meeting and recommended Board endorsement.

**Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council:
Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties
Consolidated Public Transportation Grants: Ranking of Project Applications**

“A”- RANKED PROJECTS

Skamania County Senior Services Dial-A-Ride: Sustain existing dial-a-ride service for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals. Provides essential transportation to medical, social service, and shopping. Total Project Cost (4 Years): \$1,193,420.00. Grant Request (4 Years): \$626,401.00.

Employment Transportation Program: The program assists low-income individuals, families, people with disabilities, and at-risk populations who reside in Clark County. The program is designed to help people get to employment job sites, interviews, training, education, and other work-related activities, which ultimately leads to self-sufficiency. Community employment organizations support the project and help determine the best way to serve the most critical demands. Total Project Cost (4 Years): \$1,149,250.00. Grant Request (4 Years): \$1,038,454.00.

Mt. Adams Express Fixed Route Service: Support the operation of the fixed route shuttle services that were started in 2018 with RMG funds. Mt. Adams Express has (2) fixed route shuttles that are providing much-needed service for work, education, and essential services, Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Each shuttle connects with another area transit center so passengers can connect to additional destinations. This has improved connectivity between counties in the Columbia Gorge Region in WA and OR and regional population centers and has reduced rural inaccessibility. Total Project Cost (2 Years): \$680,855.00. Grant Request (2 Years) \$505,855.00

Skamania County Route-Deviated Transit Service: Sustain existing route-deviated transit service. This service provides a route-deviated transit service from Skamania County to C TRAN’S Fisher’s Landing Transit Center. This service runs two times a day, Monday-Thursday. On Friday this service has an additional midday run. This service connects Skamania County to the urban City of Vancouver, where further connections can be made to such services as Amtrak, Greyhound, and Tri-Met. Total Project Cost (4 Years): \$575,600.00. Grant Request (4 Years): \$425,956.00.

“B”- RANKED PROJECTS

Skamania County Senior Services Vehicle Replacement: This project will replace three ADA minivans over the 2021-2023 biennium. These minivans are desperately needed to replace older, high mileage vans. These vans support the Skamania County Dial-A-Ride program, which provides essential transportation for seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income residents. Total Project Cost: \$143,595.00. Grant Request: \$114,876.00.

Gorge TransLink Alliance Mobility Management: Funding assistance will sustain the Gorge TransLink Mobility Management project in Skamania and Klickitat counties in Washington and Hood River, Wasco, and Sherman counties in Oregon to enhance transportation opportunities for the elderly, persons with disabilities, and other special-needs populations. The Mobility Management project provides facilitation, collaboration/coordination, planning, public outreach, and technical assistance for the rural transportation providers in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge region. Total Project Cost (4-years): \$416,508.00. Grant Request (4 Years): \$146,907.00.

Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Phase II: The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy will develop a roadmap for a regionally coordinated and robust public transportation system in a rural 5-county, bi-state region. Phase I, to be completed by June 2021, strengthens partnerships and analyzes existing local transportation plans in the Columbia Gorge to begin building a collective regional vision. Phase II, which will be launched in July 2021, will focus on a more comprehensive implementation strategy, including further data analysis, funding and financial planning, regional governance structures, and operational and policy strategies, making clear recommendations for development of a successful regional transit system. Total Project Cost: \$150,000.00. Grant Request: \$50,000.00.

North County Shuttle Service: This project aims to assist seniors, people with disabilities, those who are socially isolated, and those who live in rural North Clark County with transportation to gain access to critical services. This is accomplished by engaging contracted transportation providers in the first year and operating a shuttle service in the second year. The service would provide service into Battle Ground to provide access to services. The shuttle service will provide rural community members the access needed to age in place and live healthy, independent lives. Total Project Cost (2 Years): \$337,464.00. Grant Request (2 Years): \$315,464.00.

Bingen Point Bus Shelter: Purchase and install a bus shelter on the Port of Klickitat property at the Bingen Point Business Park for those riding the Mt. Adams fixed route shuttle service. The bus shelter will protect users from rain, snow, and wind. The shelter includes a two-person bench seat, a dedicated space to shelter a person in a wheelchair, a display case for service and schedule information, solar security lighting, and a metal roof. Total Project Cost: \$10,709.00. Grant Request: \$7,634.00.

POLICY IMPLICATION

The ATCI's decision and RTC Board endorsement of project rankings will allow RTC's ranking decision to be submitted to WSDOT to help inform the project funding decision for project applications seeking funding through the statewide competitive Consolidated Public Transportation Grant program. This will hopefully result in state and federal funding for special needs transportation projects within Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council's three county region.

ACTION REQUESTED

The RTC Board of Directors authorizes endorsement of the Accessible Transportation Coalition Initiative's (ATCI's) project rankings of the 2021-23 Consolidate Public Transportation Grant proposals for Clark, Skamania and Klickitat Counties; and, authorizes transmittal to the Consolidated Grant Program.