

# Sherman County

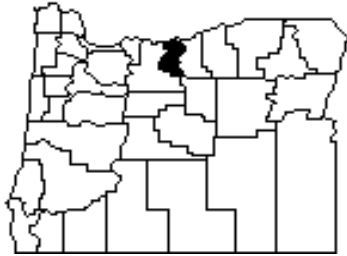
## Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan



Prepared by:

Mid-Columbia Economic  
Development District

Adopted November 2020



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# Sherman County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan

## Executive Summary

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The Sherman County Coordinated Transportation Plan was prepared by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) to meet state and federal requirements for Special Transportation Fund (STF) agencies and the State of Oregon's requirements for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Qualified Entities.

### Target Populations

The Coordinated Plan focuses on addressing the transportation needs of three target populations residing in Sherman County:

1. Older Adults
2. Low income individuals
3. Individuals with disabilities

#### **Older Adult Population**

Sherman County residents are older and more likely to have a disability than the statewide average. Over one-fourth of the population of the County is over the age of 65, according to the 2018 American Community Survey, which at 26.5% is higher than the State's percentage of 17.6%. There is a relatively large number of older adults needing to access the transportation programs in the County in a highly rural area where the population is dispersed over great distances.

#### **Individuals with Low Incomes**

The federal poverty threshold for a four-person household is \$25,701.<sup>1</sup> This means that in the United States an individual who has an income of less than \$34 per day or a family of four with a total income less than \$69 per day meet the definition of living in poverty. In 2019, 13.1% of people (or more than 1 in 10) living in Sherman County lived below the federal poverty level, higher than the State's proportion of 12.6%.<sup>2</sup> Oregon's Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund program requires a different

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<sup>1</sup> <http://federalsafetynet.com>

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2014-2018

definition of poverty level, which is based on a high percentage of low income. Oregon’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund program considers low income households to be those with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

The Sherman County STIF Plan defines all of Sherman County as an area with a high percentage of low income households: 1) “Low Income Household” is a household the total income of which does not exceed 200% of the poverty guidelines. 2) “High Percentage of Low-Income Households” is defined as higher than the Oregon state average. Data from the 2016 American Community Survey was used to calculate the percentage of low income households in Sherman County at 36.17% (281.8 households) by using the dataset for individuals and converting it to households using the average household size of 2.16 for Sherman County. As Oregon’s state average is 35% of low income households and Wasco County is 36.17%, all of Sherman County is designated as an area with a high percentage of low-income households in the Sherman County STIF Plan. Sherman County’s STF/STIF Advisory Committee recommended and the Sherman County Court approved defining all of Sherman County as an area with a high percentage of low-income households because the dataset for families and the dataset for individuals are both higher than Oregon state average.

More than 1 in 3 residents of Sherman County (37.7%) live with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty threshold, or \$25,520.<sup>3</sup> For a family of four, the threshold is a total income of \$49,200.

Residents with low incomes struggle to afford the basic necessities of life, including food, clothing, housing, and transportation. Public transportation can be a lifeline to these families and individuals, giving them access to critical resources and services and also allowing upward mobility by providing affordable transportation to jobs and higher education.

### ***Individuals with Disabilities***

The American Community Survey defines an individual with disabilities as a person who has serious difficulty with four basic areas of functioning – hearing, vision, cognition, and ambulation. At 22.1%, the percentage of people with a disability living in Sherman County is quite a bit higher than the State’s average of 14.1%.<sup>4</sup> Both the Sherman County Community Transit shopping bus and the Dial-A-Ride services can provide these residents with the ability to live with more independence and to participate more fully in community life.

## **What is a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan?**

A Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan is typically called a Coordinated Plan and will be referred to in this document as a Coordinated Plan. A Coordinated Plan is developed as a tool to help

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<sup>3</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2014-2018

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2014-2018



local transportation providers and communities improve transportation services, increase efficiency of service delivery, and expand outreach to meet growing needs. It provides a framework to guide the investment of transportation resources.

As such a resource, this plan will:

1. Evaluate community resources
2. Assess and document transportation needs of the four target populations
3. Identify strategies to address gaps in transportation services as well as in efficiencies of service delivery
4. Establish relative priorities of the strategies

This document is an update to the 2016-2020 Sherman County Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. It was updated using information collected from the previous coordinated transportation plan, demographic sources, new surveys and outreach efforts, and current service resources. The Coordinated Plan also includes relevant information from other regional planning efforts:

- 2018 Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) Community Health Assessment (CHA)
- 2019 Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact (MCEDD)
- 2019 Community Health Assessment (Columbia Gorge Health Council)

## Coordinated Plan Priorities

A Coordinated Plan is intended to define and prioritize general strategies that the transit service providers can use to address gaps and barriers. High priority strategies to address gaps and barriers, as prioritized by the Sherman County STF/STIF committees, fell under seven categories.

Performance measures linked to the below strategies were created to help the public transportation provider assess how it is meeting these strategies over time.

Sustain Existing Transportation Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain dial-a-ride transportation operations.</li> <li>• Maintain shopping bus programs.</li> </ul>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for replacement of vehicles that have exceeded their useful life.</li> <li>• Provide funding for vehicle repair and preventative maintenance for safe and reliable transport.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain affordable suggested donation.</li> <li>• Maintain contract to provide NEMT services.</li> <li>• Explore options to provide more efficient NEMT or Veterans trips <i>and coordinate with partners.</i></li> </ul>
Service Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify resources to serve the broader transportation needs of people with low incomes (youth events, court appointments, work sites).</li> <li>• Identify funding to support older adults' socialization needs and enhance quality of life.</li> <li>• Identify additional transportation services or options for those needing to travel to Portland for medical services.</li> <li>• <i>Include trips or stops at the Sherman County or The Dalles food pantries and locations where Veggie RX and Pantry Gift Certificates can be redeemed.</i></li> <li>• Increase service days/hours</li> <li>• Provide transportation for students to access after-school activities.</li> </ul>
Stable Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to leverage all match against state and federal grants.</li> <li>• Identify new grant opportunities: state, public, private.</li> <li>• Coordinate with other transportation providers and community partners to seek funding for local and regional projects.</li> </ul>
Marketing/Education/Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market and promote the services to ensure target populations are aware of the services available.</li> <li>• Partner with county agencies and community organizations to conduct community outreach and education on transportation services.</li> <li>• Develop an ongoing feedback system to identify and respond to needs.</li> </ul>

<p>Planning and Coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Cultivate a partnership with the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization.</i></li> <li>• <i>Attend the regular meetings of organizations representative of the target populations.</i></li> <li>• <i>Continue participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance.</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop stronger partnerships with human service agencies, county agencies like Sherman County Prevention and Outreach, and community organizations.</i></li> <li>• <i>Develop partnership with County food pantry coordinators.</i></li> </ul>
<p>Build Capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop strategies to address driver shortages.</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify training/grant training opportunities for office staff.</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify ways to increase operational capacity.</i></li> </ul>



# Introduction

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## Federal and State Requirements

This Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan meets both federal and state requirements for preparation and adoption of a Coordinated Plan. Projects submitted for FTA and State funding should be included in the Coordinated Plan or similarly acceptable adopted plan.

### Federal

With the passage of Federal Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) transportation authorization in 2005, Congress required a “locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan” intended to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, individuals who are elderly, and individuals with lower incomes.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requires recipients of FTA Section 5310 program funds to engage in a coordinated planning process to broaden the dialogue and support coordination between public transportation and human services transportation supporting key target populations. These funds are administered by the states.

### State

The Special Transportation Fund was created in 1985 by the Oregon Legislature. This is allocated by the Oregon Legislature every two years to 42 jurisdictions around the state including Sherman County. It is funded by cigarette tax revenue, excess revenue earned from sales of photo ID Cards, and other funds from the Oregon Department of Transportation. The STF Program provides a flexible, coordinated, reliable and continuing source of revenue in support of transportation services for seniors and people with disabilities of any age. The Oregon Legislature intended that STF funds be used to provide transportation services needed to access health, education, work, and social/recreational opportunities so that seniors and people with disabilities may live as independently and productively as possible. The funds may be used for any purpose directly related to transportation services, including transit operations, capital equipment, planning, travel training and other transit-related purposes.

In 2017, Section 122 of [Keep Oregon Moving](#) (Oregon House Bill 2017) established a new dedicated source of funding for expanding public transportation service in Oregon. The Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) was created through a new state payroll tax of one-tenth of 1 percent that is dedicated to funding transportation improvements in Oregon.

Sherman County is the STF agency and the STIF Qualified Entity that receives these state transportation funds. The Sherman County STIF Advisory Committee was established by the Sherman County Court in 2018 in accordance with the state rules for receiving the STIF dollars for Sherman County. To satisfy STF and STIF Committee requirements and create efficiencies, Sherman County established a joint STF/STIF Committee.

In June of 2020, the Oregon legislature passed SB 1601, which provided immediate flexibility to use Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Formula funds to maintain existing services and will also consolidate the Special Transportation Fund (STF) with the STIF Formula funds, effective on July 1, 2023.

The State of Oregon requires Special Transportation Fund (STF) agencies to prepare a Coordinated Plan to guide the investment of STF monies and Section 5310 funds to improve transportation programs and services for seniors and people with disabilities. The State of Oregon also requires Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Qualified Entities to have a current approved Coordinated Plan in order to receive STIF funds.

## Plan Purpose and Intent

The purpose of the plan is to meet federal and state requirements and to provide a framework for transportation providers and Sherman County to maximize transportation investments to assist three target populations: seniors, individuals with low incomes, and individuals with disabilities. It covers a four-year timeframe (2020-2024) and is intended to be reviewed at least every three years (per STIF plan requirements) or as conditions change.

The Sherman County Coordinated Plan addresses the existing transportation services and needs of residents in Sherman County, Oregon, and identifies available resources and strategies to create efficiencies, reduce redundancy, and continue to enable high-quality public transportation services. The Coordinated Plan seeks to improve the mobility of all Sherman County residents, focusing on the target populations and ensuring that those who rely on public transportation have access to medical care, jobs, higher education, social connectivity, recreation, and other basic services to maintain quality of life.

## Planning Area

The planning area covered under this Coordinated Plan is Sherman County, Oregon. Sherman County is 823.69 square miles in area, approximately 20 miles wide east to west, and 42 miles long, north to south, with a population of 1770 residents (2.1 citizens per square mile)<sup>5</sup>. Incorporated cities are

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<sup>5</sup> 2019 Portland State University Population Research Center

Wasco, Moro (County seat), Grass Valley, and Rufus. Biggs Junction is recognized as an unincorporated community. Major transportation corridors are US 97 running north and south which bisects the County, and Interstate 84 which runs along the northern boundary of the County parallel to the Columbia River. US 97 provides good access to the Bend area (118 miles, 2 ½ hours south), and Interstate 84 provides easy travel to Pendleton (123 miles, 2 hours east), The Dalles (38 miles, 40 minutes west) and Portland (121 miles, 2 hours west). Residents, including those in the four special populations of this Coordinated Plan, may cross jurisdictional borders daily to meet multiple needs.

# Planning Process

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## Public Involvement and Outreach

The Coordinated Plan was updated based on outreach and input from local transit providers, the STF/STIF Advisory Committee, stakeholders, and interested members of the public. Stakeholders include the target populations, agencies with significant contact with the four special needs populations, and entities providing transportation services, human service agencies, community organizations, medical facilities, and the public. Stakeholders were involved in identifying transportation needs of the target populations, the transportation resources available, and strategies to address the needs. Information was gathered through stakeholder interviews, stakeholder meetings, public meetings, and surveys.

The Sherman County STF/STIF Advisory Committee guided the planning and outreach process by identifying stakeholders, giving input on survey findings and strategy and project priorities, and commenting on the draft plan.

## STF/STIF Committee

The STF/STIF Advisory Committee is appointed by the Sherman County Court to provide recommendations on funding priorities consistent with the state or federal program guidance for each public transportation fund source and in the best interest of the citizens of Sherman County. The Committee specifically advises and assists Sherman County in carrying out the requirements of three funding programs: the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF), the Special Transportation Fund (STF) program, and the Federal Transit Administration's Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310).

The Committee members reflect the county's diverse interests, perspectives, geography, and the demographics. The committee includes at least one member each who is a member of or represents the following three groups:

- (a) Low income individuals
- (b) Seniors or people with disabilities
- (c) Public Transportation Service Providers or non-profit entities which provide public transportation service.

## Public Meetings

Public meetings were held on the following dates for the 2020-2024 plan update

- Sherman County Public Transportation Advisory Committee, The Link Transit Center Conference Room, The Dalles: October 2019, January 2020, May 2020 (conference call), October 2020 (conference call).
- Sherman County Board of Commissioners, County Building, The Dalles: December 16, 2019; Approval date: November?? 2020

## Surveys

Public, Transit Agency, and On-Board surveys were developed using the templates from the previous Coordinated Plan survey effort.

Paper surveys were distributed to the Department of Human Services, the Sherman County Senior Center, Area Agency on Aging, Community Health Workers, Mid-Columbia Health Equity Advocates, the Mid-Columbia Housing Authority, Oregon Department of Human Services, the Veterans Service Office, and the Columbia Gorge Food Bank. Onboard paper surveys for riders and a separate one for the bus drivers were distributed. Surveys were also available at the main offices of the Sherman County Courthouse.

Survey information was posted by County's Citizen Reporter, the County newsletter, and the Sherman County community Facebook page. Overall, a total of 29 surveys were completed. An overview of the survey tools used to inform the plan and highlights from the results can be found in Appendix B.

## Group Meetings

Where Group Meetings are indicated, the Mobility Manager attended the regular meeting(s) of the individual agency or organization to present information about the development of the Coordinated Plan update and to solicit feedback from the attendees.

## Interviews

Where interviews are indicated, the Mobility Manager conducted a one-on-one interview with an organization representative.

## List of Stakeholders

The following stakeholders participated in meetings, interviews, and/or the survey and gave input on transportation needs, services, gaps and solutions, and feedback on the draft plan.



Primary Staff Contact	Agency	Contact Information	Interview/Group Meeting/Surveys
Staff: Transportation Coordinator, Dispatcher	Sherman County Community Transit	marnenebw@co.sherman.or.us	Interviews, Group Meetings
Jody Warnock: Director Tammy Fuller and Dan Curtis: Case Managers Ilea Bouse: Info and Referral (ADRC/211)	CAPECO: Area Agency on Aging, Oregon Project Independence	541-506-3512 jwarnock@capeco-works.org	Interviews/Surveys
Kari Silcox, Director	Sherman County Senior Center	541-565-3191 kari@shermancounty.net	Interview/Group Meetings/Surveys
Kari Silcox, Director	Meals On Wheels	541-565-3191 kari@shermancounty.net	Interview/Meeting/Surveys
Sharon Thornberry Eva Kahn	Columbia Gorge Food Bank	(541) 370-2333 sthornberry@oregonfoodbank.org	Interview/Group meetings/Surveys
Jennifer Lopez, The Dalles Office	Eastern Oregon Center for Independent Living (EOCIL)	(541) 889-3119 (541) 370-2810	Interview
Laura Noppenberger, Executive Director	Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage	541-387-3600 lnopp@eossb.org	Interview/Group meetings/surveys
Dr. Mimi McDonnel	North Central Public Health District	mimim@ncphd.org	Interview
Lowel Linder Program Manager Intellectual & Developmental Services	Mid-Columbia Center for Living	541-296-5452 x7750	Interview
Erica Torres, Intake Amanda Ramey, Veterans	Mid-Columbia Community Action Council/ Partnership	(541) 298-5131 (541) 386-4027	Interview
Joel Madsen, Executive Director	Mid-Columbia Housing Authority	541-296-5462	Interview

Lucas O’Laughlin, Executive Director Shannon O’Brien	One Community Health	sobrien@onecommunityhealth. org	Group meetings/Intervie ws
Colleena Tenold-Sauter Lisa Viles Supervisor  Aging & People w/Disabilities  Sherman, Sherman, Wheeler, Gilliam & Hood river counties	Oregon Department of Human Services: Seniors and People with Disabilities	Colleena.TENOLD- SAUTER@dhsoha.state.or.us, LISA.M.VILES@ dhsoha.state.or.us	Meetings, Interview
Nadja Mcconville Neil Friedrich	Oregon Department of Human Services: Self Sufficiency	541-340-0775 Nadja.mcconville @dhsoha.state.or.us	Interview/Group meetings/Surveys
Marci McMurphy Project Coordinator-	Rental Assistance and Frontier Veggie Rx Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. (GOBHI)	mmcmurphy@gobhi.org	Interview/Group Meeting
Ursula Schaefer, County Coordinator	Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization	ursulas@ncphd.org	Group meeting, phone interview
Suzanne Cross Coco Yackley	Columbia Gorge Health Council (CGHC)	suzanne@ gorgehealthcouncil.org coco@gorgehealthcouncil.org	Group Meetings/ Interview/Surveys
Suzanne Cross Senior Project Manager	CGHC: Bridges to Health	suzanne@ gorgehealthcouncil.org	Interview/Surveys Meetings
Suzanne Cross Community Health Workers	CGHC: Community Health Workers	suzanne@ gorgehealthcouncil.org	Interview/Surveys/ Group meeting

Bonne Whitely, Resident	Grass Valley Store and STF/STIF Committee member	rbngv@hotmail.com	Interview, Meeting
Ree Ella Von Borstel	Sherman County Driver and STF/STIF Committee	reevonbo@gmail.com	Interview, Meeting
Brittany Willson , Volunteer Coordinator	Providence Memorial Hospital: Volunteers in Action	Brittany.Willson@providence.org	Group meetings/ Interview
Amy Asher, Coordinator	Sherman County Prevention and Outreach	aasher@co.sherman.or.us	Interview
Paul Conway, TriCounty Veterans Officer	Veterans Service Office	veteranservice@co.sherman.or.us	Interview/Surveys
Katie Woodruff, Program Director	Sherman County Victims Assistance	kwoodruff@co.sherman.or.us	
Aaron Cook, City Recorder	City of Rufus	rufuscityhall@gmail.com	Interview
Dan Spatz; Gerardo Cifuentes; Tiffany Prince, ASG; ASG Student Representatives	Columbia Gorge Community College	(541) 506-6034 dspatz@cgcc.edu	Interview/Group meetings/Surveys/ CGCC Survey
Gracen Bookmyer	Circles of Care	gbookmyer@ageplus.org	Interview
Debra Whitefoot, Director	Nch'i Wana Housing (Native American)	debrawhitefoot@gmail.com 509-910-8493	Group meetings, interview
Leadership Team Representatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DHS Vocational Rehab</li> <li>• DHS: Self-Sufficiency</li> <li>• Columbia Gorge Community College</li> </ul>	Northern Local Leadership Team of the East Cascades Workforce Board	ANDREA.J.ROGERS@dhsoba.state.or.us	Group meeting, interviews

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oregon Human Development Corporation</li> <li>• Worksource The Dalles (CGCC)</li> </ul>			
Dan Schwanz, Human Resources (former CAT/Link Director)	Transportation Solutions	Dan.Schwanz@transols.com	Interview

Programs administered by The Next Door, Inc			
Raymond Estrada	Community Health Worker/ Nch'i Wana Housing/Celilo Speaker	raymondestrada102@gmail.com	Group meetings Interview
Dawn LeMieux	Natives Along the Big River	DawnL@nextdoorinc.org	Group meeting/interview
Dawn LeMieux	Gorge Native American Collaboration	DawnL@nextdoorinc.org	Group meetings

# Regional Planning Efforts

## Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact

In 2019, Providence Health & Services and PacificSource Community Solutions, the Coordinated Care Organization of the Columbia Gorge Region, awarded a grant to the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District to convene transportation provider and health and wellness organizations in the Gorge to engage in a collaborative process with the goal of identifying key regional transportation gaps and innovative transportation solutions. Over 57 organizations from both Washington State and Oregon were invited and over 40 representatives attended four group sessions to discuss improved mobility access to essential services that would help to increase the quality of life in the Columbia Gorge, especially for vulnerable populations, including rural, low income, elderly, young, disabled, undocumented, and low English proficiency residents and actual or potential users of public transportation. Working through a neutral forum facilitated by the National Policy Consensus Center, interested organizations met four times over the course of five months to get grounded in the current system, identify the most critical gaps to mobility, learn about transportation tools from a transportation expert, and begin to identify solutions appropriate for the Gorge region.

### Consensus Recommendations

The Collaborative agreed to focus on those populations who are not eligible for transportation subsidies and/or are not covered for non-medical ‘wellness’ destinations (e.g. places to play, socialize, etc.). They defined ‘essential services’ to include all places for which wellness is being supported (including and beyond medical appointments).

## Critical Barriers to Service

- Navigation
- Geography
- Availability of service
- Financial cost
- Limit to door-through-door
- Eligibility for service
- Language/Literacy

Mobility Barriers Identified	
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of First mile/last mile/bus stop infrastructure</li> <li>• Riders have difficulty making transfers from one bus or service to the next</li> <li>• Lack of Education, Training, Confidence of the Rider</li> <li>• Extended Service hours needed: weekends, early or late hours, holidays</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fare transactions are difficult to manage</li> </ul>
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gorge residents need a “hospital van”: a vehicle that provides direct medical trips from Gorge region to Portland hospital facilities</li> <li>• Intercity Medical Trips (focus between The Dalles and Hood River)</li> <li>• Providers have difficulty serving people who live in remote rural areas</li> <li>• Vehicles have great difficulty accessing higher elevations in poor weather conditions</li> </ul>
Communication and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficult to make transfers from one bus or service to the next</li> <li>• Poor hospital staff to transportation staff discharge communication after medical appointments and hospitalization</li> <li>• Riders have difficulty with information discovery and use (website, paper schedules)</li> <li>• Language and literacy, cultural differences are significant barriers</li> <li>• Better Transportation and Health Agency coordination and communication needed</li> </ul>
Door Through Door Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unique challenges in Oregon to serve those who need door through door service</li> <li>• Institutional barriers include Oregon Health Authority policies and liability challenges</li> <li>• Transit drivers are not trained or provided liability coverage to serve clients inside the home (door through door).</li> </ul>

Prioritized Strategies	
Better Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a system of communication and accountability between transportation agencies and health agencies.</li> <li>• Transportation agencies will continue to work together on a regional system</li> <li>• Coordinate a special service to Portland for medical appointments.</li> <li>• Strengthen health and wellness partnerships through the Gorge TransLink Alliance.</li> </ul>
Travel Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop programs to teach both agency staff and riders how to use public transit (travel training and travel ambassadors).</li> <li>• Develop volunteer champion programs.</li> </ul>
Fare System	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a universal fare system for all transportation providers.</li> <li>• Develop fare mechanisms that can be purchased by social service or other organizations for their clients.</li> </ul>
Door Through Door	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support a third-party system for door through door assistance, using existing volunteer and human service programs.</li> <li>• Coordinate “travel assistant” program with the transit providers.</li> </ul>

## Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact January-June 2019

Providence Health & Services and PacificSource Columbia Gorge Region CCO awarded a grant to the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District to convene transportation provider organizations and health and wellness organizations in the Gorge to engage in a collaborative process to identify and implement innovative transportation solutions to create improved mobility access to essential services and increase the quality of life in the Columbia Gorge, especially for vulnerable populations, including, rural, low income, elderly, young, disabled, undocumented, and low English proficiency residents and actual or potential users of public transportation.

**Participating Organizations:**

**Oregon: Community Wellness**

Providence Health and Services  
Volunteers in Action (Providence)  
Mid-Columbia Medical Center  
PacificSource  
North Central Public Health District  
Greater Oregon Behavioral Health  
Oregon Food Bank  
Department of Human Services  
Community Action Program (ECO)  
Eastern OR Support Services Brokerage

**Oregon: Transportation**

Columbia Area Transit (CAT)  
The Link—Wasco County  
Sherman County Transit  
Gilliam County Transportation  
Wheeler County Transportation

Oregon Dept. of Transportation

**Bi-state (WA and OR) Organizations**

Columbia Gorge Health Council—staff and membership  
Next Door, Inc  
Gorge Grown  
MCEDD  
Aging in the Gorge Alliance  
One Community Health  
Opportunity Connections  
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission  
Mid-Columbia Center for Living  
Community Transportation Asso of the NW

**Washington: Community Wellness**

Skyline Hospital  
Human Services Council  
Washington Community Action Program  
People for People

Klickitat County Senior Services

Skamania County Senior Services  
Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of Southwest Washington  
Skamania Klickitat Community Network  
Washington Gorge Action Programs  
Klickitat County Public Health  
Skamania County Public Health  
Klickitat Valley Health Clinic  
Northshore Medical Clinic  
Southwest WA Accountable Communities of Health  
Klickitat Valley Hospital

**Washington: Transportation**

Mt. Adams Transportation Services  
Skamania County Transit  
Washington Department of Transportation  
Regional Transportation Council  
People for People

### Columbia Gorge Health Council’s 2019 Community Health Assessment

The Columbia Gorge Health Council (CGHC) is a 501 (c)3 non-profit focused on healthcare delivery for the Medicaid population in Hood River and Sherman Counties and improving the health of the Columbia Gorge overall. CGHC works in partnership with the regional Coordinated Care Organization, PacificSource Community Solutions (Columbia Gorge Region) and consists of local leaders in health care along with county and community members, providers, and agencies to serve the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Every three years CGHC convenes multiple regional organizations to complete a regional Community Health Assessment (CHA).

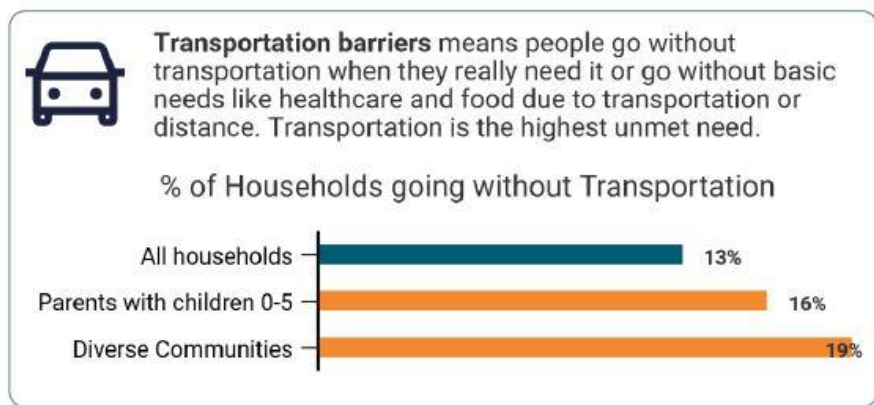
A robust consumer survey process provides the backbone of data for the CHA. The ongoing CHA process has helped the region to develop a common understanding of its health needs while adopting a broad definition of health that includes food, housing, transportation, sense of community, and access,

along with traditional physical, mental, and dental health. The purpose of the community health survey is to use a representative population sample and mail-based survey to provide statistically valid estimates of health and health needs throughout the community, including needs related to the social determinants of health.

The purpose of the community health survey is to 1) use a representative population sample and mail-based survey to provide statistically valid estimates of health and health needs throughout the community, including needs related to the social determinants of health; and 2) to supplement the mailed survey with hand-fielded surveys targeted toward communities of special interest, particularly those likely to be underrepresented in the mail survey. Over 55 organizations within the region helped to hand-field or distribute and collect surveys in 2019.

Hand-fielded surveys are important to capture the input of those residents who change addresses often or don't have a traditional mailing address. These residents are generally those that are the most vulnerable with the highest needs.

The 2019 CHA found that transportation is the highest unmet need in the Columbia Gorge Region, which includes Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, Sherman, and the tri-county area of Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties. Survey responses described that a lack of transportation impacted the ability to access health care, food, childcare, social activities, and exercise. Of low income households, 26% report going without transportation, an increase of 4.3% since the 2016 update.







Transportation issues are not experienced equally across all groups of populations in the region. A household of four people in the region living on a total of \$49,200 a year (or 200% Federal Poverty Level) is 15 times more likely to struggle with transportation needs than households earning more than 200% FPL.

## 2018 Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (EOCCO) Community Health Assessment CHA)

Focus Group Report: Moro, Oregon

The EOCCO Community Health Assessment Focus Groups were held on July 5, 2018 at the Oregon State University Extension Building. The focus group protocol covered three community health assessment focus areas: (a) community health, (b) health and healthcare disparities, and (c) social determinants of health. Focus group participants were residents of Sherman County and EOCCO members.

Focus group observations relevant to public transportation:

- **Social & Community Context (Social Cohesion):** Participants spoke highly about how well-attended the community events are in Moro; they described being a resident of Sherman County as a source of identity that makes them proud. They also noted that many community functions are accomplished through the hard work of volunteers and noted that this is a contrast to other settings where individuals might get paid to perform those functions.
- **Health Disparities (Vulnerable Populations):** Focus group participants were very observant in noticing populations that were presented implicitly as vulnerable. Specifically, of note were the following: a) the increasing population of elderly are at highest risk for social isolation, b) the notable number of kids with likely traumatic backgrounds have grandparents as their primary care-takers, and c) the increasing number of individuals who appear to be transient in the county.

- Health and Healthcare (Access): Participants also expressed concern for the older adult population accessing health care services.

### *Concurrent and Near-Term Planning Efforts*

The following plans will be relevant to this Coordinated Plan and have been launched and are in the process of completion, or are on schedule to be launched in the near future.

### *Gorge Transit Strategy*

In 2019, MCEDD received a \$135,000 grant award from the Oregon Department of Transportation’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Intercommunity Discretionary Fund. The grant proposal was designed to expand and preserve the Gorge TransLink Alliance Mobility Manager project, with expansion to include Phase I of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy project.

Phase I of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy builds on the recommendations of existing transportation plans in order to set a firm foundation for development of a comprehensive transit strategy for this complex, bi-state region. The Gorge Transit Strategy Phase II will focus on a more detailed implementation strategy including further data analysis, ridership forecasts, financial planning, and deeper operational assessments.

The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy builds on the work accomplished during the Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact work sessions, expanding the regional partnerships to focus on key challenges in the Columbia Gorge. All materials of the work accomplished can be found at <https://gorgetranslink.com/gorge-transit-strategy/>.

**Improved public transportation options can help address regional challenges:**

- Workforce Mobility
- Affordable Housing
- Tourism and Outdoor Recreation
- Traffic Congestion and Safety
- Access to Higher Education, Jobs, Social, Medical, Recreation
- Environmental

**Project Partners:**

- Public Transportation Service Providers
- Local, State, Fed Government
- Tribal Representatives
- State and Fed Agencies
- Health and Wellness Organizations
- Higher Education
- Local Employers
- Local and Regional Planning entities
- Tourism and Outdoor Recreation
- Active Transportation

# Demographic Profiles and Analysis

## Population Data

Sherman County, established in 1889, is home to four incorporated cities. Moro is the County Seat and the second largest population center in the County. As the County Seat it serves as a hub for county government, education, human services and transportation. In addition to its cities, Sherman County also has one census-designated place (CDP) with a small population concentration and three Tribal In-Lieu/ Treaty Fishing Access Sites.

Sherman County's economy is based upon wheat, barley, cattle and tourism. (Windfarm construction aided job growth considerably over 2017 to 2019, producing a two-year gain during that period of 90 jobs or 11 percent.)

With a population of 2.1 persons for every square mile, Sherman County's isolated rural roads, long travel distances, and inclement weather present a unique challenge for seniors, low income individuals and those with disabilities who must travel outside the county for most essential services such as medical care, social and legal services, shopping and higher education. Special needs individuals without adequate transportation also face the very real health impact of social isolation.

The nearest commerce hub is located in The Dalles where most medical, senior and social services are found along with federal offices, places of employment, diverse shopping opportunities and various education services. The Dalles is 38 miles from the Sherman County Seat (Moro) – an approximately 40-minute drive and is accessible by US Highway 97 and Interstate 84.

Sherman County Total Population	
	1,780

Cities <sup>6</sup>	Population
Wasco	425
Moro	335
Rufus	280
Grass Valley	165

Census-Designated Places (CDPs) <sup>7</sup>	Population
Biggs Junction	26

<sup>6</sup> Portland State University Population and Research Center

<sup>7</sup> World Population Review <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/biggs-junction-or-population/>

Tribal In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites	Population
Rufus	Unknown
Preacher's Eddy	Unknown
Lepage Park	Unknown

## Demographic Data Overview

Planning for special transportation services is contingent upon the need for the service, thus understanding County population demographics and future population projections are important. Data from the American Community Survey 2018, 5-year estimates, were used to provide a fuller snapshot of Sherman County's special needs populations.

Population	Sherman County <sup>1</sup>	Oregon <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total population</b>	1,780	4,081,943
<b>Percentage of population 65 years and over</b>	26.5%	16.7%
<b>Percentage of individuals with a disability</b>	22.1%	14.5%
<b>Percentage of individuals living below the federal poverty level</b>	13.1%	12.6%
<b>Percentage of individuals living below 200% federal poverty level</b>	37.7%	33%
<b>Percentage of Hispanic or Latino individuals</b>	17.8%	12.8%
<b>Percentage of Veterans</b>	9.2%	6.8%
<b>Percentage of individuals who speak a language other than English at home</b>	2.5%	15.4%
<b>Limited English—Spanish Speaker (by household)</b>	1.6%	4%

Since the previous 2016-2019 Coordinated Plan, much of Sherman County's special needs populations continue to increase with the exception of a decline of 6.3% of individuals living below the poverty line—from 19.4% in 2015 down to 13.1% in the 2018 estimates. Even so, with a poverty rate of 13.1%, Sherman County still remains above the State poverty rate of 12.6%.

## Older Adults

Individuals aged 65 and over comprise 1 in 4 people in Sherman County and this ratio is projected to increase and then trend downward in the next 20 years.<sup>8</sup>

The expected population changes may intensify demands on the transportation system, requiring more

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<sup>8</sup> Oregon Population Forecast Program, Population Research Center, Portland State University (2019).

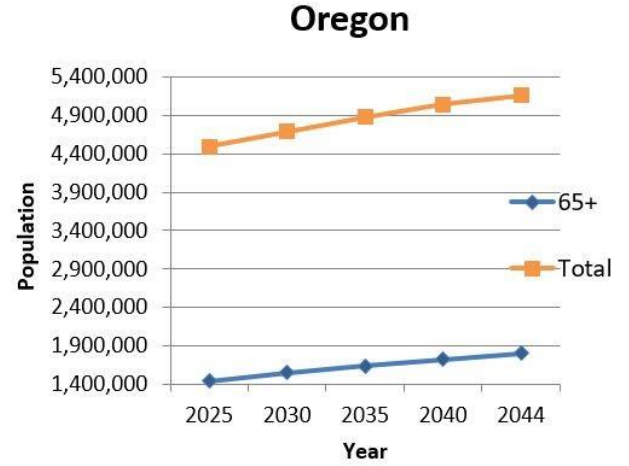
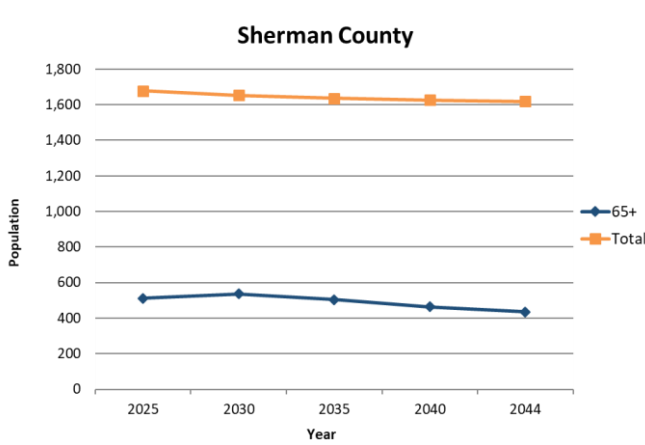
responsive services and additional replacement vehicles to meet the needs of a larger and more complex transit dependent population. Many older adults rely upon public transportation for frequent medical appointments and to safely meet the necessities of life such as access to shopping for food and medicines. Wheelchair-accessible public transportation service is paramount for older adults.

**Total and Older Adult Projected Population Growth, 2020-2040**

Populations at the State level are projected to grow over the next 25 years, but Sherman County’s population is expected to slightly decline. A fairly stable total population that is aging and more disabled will put additional demands on public transportation systems in Sherman County.

*Source: Oregon Population Forecast Program, Population Research Center, Portland State University (2019).*

Year	Sherman County			Oregon		
	Total Population	Population 65 and over	Proportion of 65+ population	Total Population	Population 65 and over	Proportion of 65+ population
2025	1,679	512	30.5%	4,497,000	1,439,971	32.0%
2030	1,653	536	32.4%	4,694,000	1,545,479	32.9%
2035	1,636	503	30.8%	4,878,000	1,637,406	33.6%
2040	1,626	464	28.5%	5,044,000	1,722,607	34.2%
2044	1,617	436	27.0%	5,163,000	1,797,153*	34.8%



## Low Income and Poverty

Statistically, 13.1% of the county population lives below the poverty level –1 in 10. This should be noted as a real change from 2015, when 19.4% of the population lived below the poverty level--almost 1 in 5.<sup>9</sup> In the past year, fuel prices have dramatically declined resulting in cost savings to the public transportation service provider. Gas may be cheap, but some low income individuals still may not be able to afford to purchase or maintain a car. Additionally, a low income family may only have one vehicle for multiple transportation needs.

In addition to medical, social services, and shopping trips, rural public transportation is an important link to vital destinations such as workplaces for those on limited incomes, including many seniors and those with disabilities. Public transportation is crucial to those who most need access to jobs, education, groceries, medical care and social services. Without reliable transportation, some individuals are, in every sense of the word, stranded.

Place	Percent below poverty level <sup>10</sup>
Biggs Junction	0 (sample size too small)
Grass Valley	31.2%
Moro	11.6%
Rufus	21.2%
Wasco	12.7%

## Transportation and Housing Costs

Individuals with lower incomes may not be able to afford to purchase or maintain a car or a family may only have one vehicle for multiple transportation needs. Public transportation is an important link to vital destinations such as workplaces and human service agencies for seniors, low income, disabled and Limited English Proficiency individuals. Public transportation is crucial to those who most need access to jobs, education, groceries, medical care and social services. Without reliable transportation, these individuals are, in every sense of the word, stranded.

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<sup>9</sup> U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

<sup>10</sup> Data from U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates. 2014-2018.

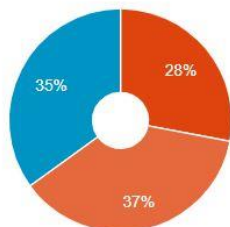
Typically, a household's second-largest expense is transportation. Factoring in both housing and transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability. The H+T Affordability Index tool (<https://htaindex.cnt.org/>) uses American Community Survey data from 2015 for Sherman County to show that the average housing plus transportation costs are 65% of Sherman County residents' income (see chart below).<sup>11</sup>

In the past year, fuel prices have declined, but the other costs related to ownership of a private vehicle are continually increasing. A robust public transportation system allows residents to decrease their dependence on ownership of a private vehicle, thus reducing overall household costs significantly.

#### Average Housing + Transportation Costs % Income

Factoring in both housing *and* transportation costs provides a more comprehensive way of thinking about the cost of housing and true affordability.

- Housing
- Transportation
- Remaining Income



#### Transportation Costs

In dispersed areas, people need to own more vehicles and rely upon driving them farther distances which also drives up the cost of living.



## Individuals with Disabilities

The overall number of Sherman County disabled individuals has increased by 2.2% to 19.9% since the last Plan update, with 25.7% of the disabled reported to be age 65 and over. Sherman County has a high rate of seniors age 65 and over, as a striking 26.5%, or 1 in 4 individuals, living in the county fit this description.<sup>12</sup> This aging population trend mirrors what is happening within Oregon, and indeed, across the country, as Baby Boomers reach retirement age in record numbers. An older and increasingly disabled Sherman County population will put significant demands on transportation resources such as the need for ADA accessible vehicles in good repair, timely replacement of vehicles and an increase in capacity to transport more individuals who need transportation help.

<sup>11</sup> Source: <https://htaindex.cnt.org/>

<sup>12</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

## Population Estimate, Sherman County Disabled Individuals

Sherman County Seniors age 65+ will be increasingly disabled, requiring transportation options and assistance.

<b>Sherman County</b>	<b>Total Population Estimate (2018)</b>	<b>Percent of population with a disability Estimate<sup>13</sup></b>
Total civilian noninstitutionalized Population	1604	22.1%
Population under 18 years	163	9.2%
Population 18 to 64 years	929	18.2%
Population 65 years and over	412	<b>25.7%</b>

There are many organizations serving people with physical and developmental disabilities in Sherman County, including the Community Developmental Disabilities Program provider, Opportunity Connections, Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage, and the Oregon Department of Human Services: Aging and People with Physical Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Developmental Disabilities sections.

Some of these organizations have access to transportation funding and contract with transportation providers to provide rides for their clients. These potential partnerships are discussed further in the Improving Coordination Chapter.

Many people with disabilities already use Sherman County's public transportation system to access medical services, employment, and other services. These transit-experienced individuals could become the transit champions needed to staff a robust travel training program.

## Individuals Without Homes

County residents without homes are more likely than most to need public transportation to access basic resources like food pantries, free congregant meals, and warming shelters in the winter. The

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<sup>13</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



Hood River Shelter Services reports that sixty percent of the region’s homeless have part time or full time jobs, mainly at local gas stations and local fast food restaurants. Sherman County Community Transit can work with organizations serving these residents to assess their needs and to provide access to public transportation resources.

In Sherman County, many of these individuals and families take advantage of free camping sites near Rufus or along the Deschutes or John Day rivers and use these areas as places to live, moving when forced to and returning soon after.

## Native American Population

There are three Tribal In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites in Sherman County located along the Columbia River: Rufus, Preacher’s Eddy, and LePage Park.

The Columbia Plateau is home to four major tribes that share similar languages, cultures, religions, and diets: the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. These four tribes have a long history of interaction, including intermarriage, shared use of common resources like Celilo Falls, and extensive trade.<sup>14</sup>

Below: The reservations and ceded lands of the four Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fisheries Commission’s member tribes. The combined area of these four tribes’ ceded lands covers 25% of the Columbia Basin.

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<sup>14</sup> [https://www.critfc.org/member\\_tribes\\_overview/](https://www.critfc.org/member_tribes_overview/)



## Individuals with Low English Proficiency

An Association of Oregon Counties Pilot Project study completed in January 2016 confirmed the number of Limited English Proficiency individuals in the County is extremely small. As noted in the ACS data above, less than 2.5% of Sherman County individuals speak a language other than English at home.

## Understanding Sherman County's Families

Because of Sherman County's highly rural nature, many families live far from the location of school activities and it is difficult for students of families with transportation challenges to participate. Additionally, it is often difficult for parents, extended family members, and residents to attend youth presentations or events.

Another way to understand the challenges that many of Sherman County's families are facing is to look at the school grades K-12 demographic data. Data from the Oregon Department of Education's 2018-19 report card (<https://www.ode.state.or.us>) were used to detail the demographics of the Sherman County School District.

Most notably, the percent of students with disabilities is more than twice that of the State's.

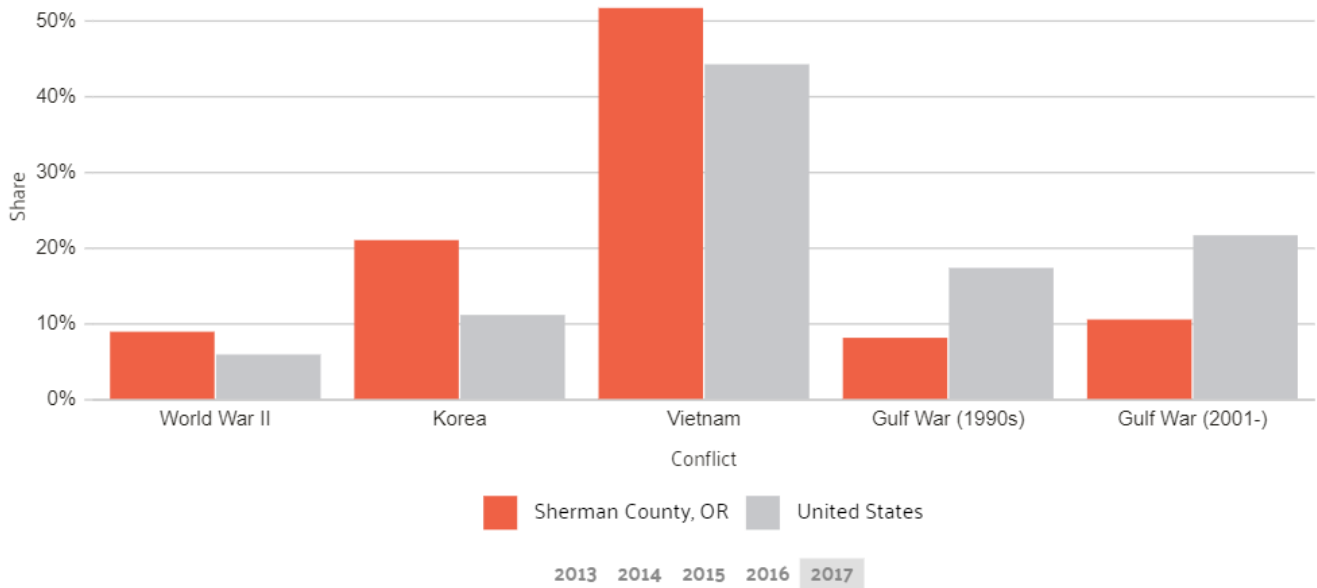
Sherman County School District Demographics	Sherman County SD	Oregon
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<b>Total student enrollment</b>	268	4,081,943
<b>Percentage of Hispanic or Latino students</b>	11%	23.4%
<b>Percentage of Native American students</b>	2%	1.3%
<b>Ever English Learners</b>	5%	15.4% (Spanish)
<b>Percentage of Students that qualify for free/reduced price lunch</b>	52%	49.0%
<b>Students with Disabilities</b>	18%	7.4%

## Veterans

There are 164 Veterans living in Sherman County, over 10% of the total population. The largest percentage of those served in Vietnam, 2.46 times greater than any other conflict. See graph below.

<b>County or State</b>	<b>Veterans</b>	<b>Percent of Population</b>	<b>Disabled Veterans</b>
<b>Wasco County</b>	2,294	8.9%	593
<b>Hood River County</b>	1,166	5%	193
<b>Sherman County</b>	164	10.2%	49
<b>Gilliam County</b>	200	10.5%	32
<b>Wheeler County</b>	154	10.8%	53
<b>Klickitat County</b>	2,343	11%	420
<b>Skamania County</b>	1,238	10.7%	265
<b>Oregon</b>	288,540	7%	67,523
<b>Washington</b>	537,713	7.37%	126,070



Source: *datausa.io* using data from the ACS 2018 5-year estimates

### **Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Van**

**Background:** In response to government cuts to Veterans travel benefits in 1987, the Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization, created a national network of volunteer drivers administered by the DAV at VA facilities nationwide. DAV Van Transportation takes veterans to and from VA Hospitals and clinics. The DAV donates vans where needed in order for DAV and Axillary volunteers drive the veterans where they need to go. There is one staff person in Washington DC who manages the nation-wide program.

All rides must be scheduled at least four days in advance by calling (503) 721-7804. The DAV transportation schedule can be found online.

DAV Vans are NOT Wheelchair Accessible and are not equipped to carry oxygen canisters larger than can be carried in a sling or backpack. DAV riders must be able to access/egress vehicles without any assistance.

### **Counties served by the Mid-Columbia area DAV van:**

1. Sherman

2. Klickitat
3. Gilliam
4. Wheeler
5. Skamania
6. Hood River
7. Wasco

### **Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs (ODVA): Veterans Transportation Programs**

**Beneficiary Travel:** Reimbursement program for mileage and/or costs incurred while traveling to and from VA health care facilities, to include special modes of transportation and some common carrier transportation, such as bus, taxi, airline, or train travel.

**Veterans Transportation Service (VTS):** A transportation program for non-ambulatory and remote VA patients that provides transport to VA Medical Centers within a 20-mile radius only. Currently only serving Veterans with dialysis or chemotherapy needs (essential medical). All Veterans with federal VA-funded medical appointments are eligible to ride VTS, but first priority is given to wheelchair-bound patients with no other transportation alternatives.

**Special Mode Transportation:** Service is contracted out with private providers such as Metro West and American Medical Response (AMR). Veterans must be eligible for this service by meeting criteria including:

1. 30%+ disability rating
2. The disability itself must require the specific service
3. Must be medically necessary and the physician must place the transportation request
4. Poverty level
5. Transportation benefit cannot be placed through Medicare/Medicaid.

Counties served within this region: Sherman, Klickitat, Gilliam, Wheeler, Crook, Deschutes, Skamania, Cowlitz, Hood River.

### **Notes from Interviews with Columbia Gorge Transportation Provider and Veterans Service Officers**

**Gilliam County Transportation (GCT):** GCT does not connect to the DAV van because it is more difficult to schedule the rides to meet the van at the stop in The Dalles than to take the Veteran directly to the VA. GCT feels that the DAV van's daily schedule is too long for any person, especially if they are ill or older. GCT uses the Highly Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation grant program to cover transportation costs to pick up Veterans at their door and transport directly to medical appointments. The grant fully covers the cost of transporting Gilliam County Veterans to their medical appointments in

The Dalles, Hood River, or Portland. Gilliam serves between 15-21 unique Veterans per month, with an average of 40-50 trips per month.

***Sherman County Community Transit:*** SCCT does not connect to the DAV Van because it is more difficult to schedule the connection rides than taking the Veteran directly to the VA. They are also sensitive to the long day required of Veterans who take the DAV van service. Sherman County uses the Highly Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation grant money to transport Veterans to medical appointments in The Dalles, Hood River, Bend, Portland, Tri-Cities, and Vancouver, WA. These grant funds usually only cover rides that Sherman County provides for 9 months out of the year. Sherman County provides the funds for the rides not covered by the grant, on average \$18,000 per year that must be covered by the general Sherman County Community Transit budget.

***The Link, Wasco County:*** The Link does not provide transportation to Portland. The Link refers calls from Veterans needing transportation to the Portland VA or to Sherman County Community Transit.

***Columbia Area Transit, Hood River County:*** CAT is interested in coordinating with other transportation providers and possibly with the brokerage and PacificSource to provide transportation for Veterans and other residents to OHSU, the Portland VA, and Providence in Portland. Prior to 2018, CAT provided a service 2 days a week that left from Hood River and would make a stop at OHSU. The Link connected to that service in Hood River.

***Tri-County Veterans Service Officer (Gilliam, Wheeler, Sherman), Paul Conway:*** Paul Conway doesn't know any Veterans who use the DAV Van. He refers the Veterans who have transportation needs to each county's transportation provider.

### ***ODOT Transportation Human Services Coordination Plan (2013)***

This plan recommended identifying opportunities for interagency coordination with Veterans programs and public transportation services, barriers to Veterans transportation and strategies to address them, and opportunities to improve coordination with brokerages for Veterans transportation. This could include a OHSU/VA dedicated hospital van that services the Columbia Gorge and makes daily trips to medical facilities in Portland.

### ***Mid-Columbia Action Council***

The Mid-Columbia Action Council administers the Supportive Services for Veteran Families in Hood River, Sherman, and Sherman counties. The program provides supportive services for low or very low-income veteran families residing in or transitioning to permanent housing. These services are designed to increase the housing stability of veteran families that are at-risk of or are experiencing homelessness. A Veteran family may be comprised of a single individual or of multiple persons. The head of household or the spouse of the head of household must be a veteran.

### **Summary of Veterans transportation program opportunities and challenges**

The general view of transportation providers and Veterans Service Officers interviewed is that the DAV Van program does not work well in the Columbia Gorge region.

A successful regional program will need to include more data and research, good survey work conducted by a Veterans champion (someone from within the community), and outreach. Rogue Valley Transportation District launched a successful pilot program called [GO Vets](#) that used an Individualized Marketing Program strategy. RVTD also developed a Go Vets toolkit that gives a blueprint for how to conduct a successful Veterans mobility program. Basic information like how to use the wheelchair lift in a public transit vehicle (demand-response or fixed route) was key to convincing Veterans in wheelchairs to use those services.

<p><b>DAV Van Limitations</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does not serve Veterans in wheelchairs or those needing assistance.</li> <li>• Veteran needs to find a ride to the pickup/ drop-off points at the scheduled times.</li> <li>• Schedule is inconsistent and depends on volunteer drivers.</li> <li>• Service to areas outside of the stop in The Dalles and the stop in Hood River depends on the willingness of the driver to leave earlier and return later and drive further.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many Veterans are unaware of existing transportation services, both public and Veterans.</li> <li>• Many VSOs are unaware of or not familiar with public or Veterans transportation services.</li> <li>• It is difficult to reach Veterans with information about services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Many Veterans would be very uncomfortable in the same vehicle with civilians without individualized training and support tools and techniques (using noise-blocking headsets, sitting in the back of the bus).</li> <li>▪ One-call, one-click resources are not successful without individualized training</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Opportunities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Successful outreach is done by forming strong partnerships with other institutions and organizations who serve Veterans (fraternity clubs, Housing Authority, Community College, Easter Seals, VSO).</li> <li>• Younger Veterans aren't joiners, but you can reach them through email.</li> <li>• Older Veterans are harder to reach through email, but many are on Facebook.</li> <li>• Travel Training programs can be successful when planned and implemented thoughtfully. A highly successful program, RVTD's Go Vets, has a toolkit available.</li> </ul>

## Income, Employment, and Commute Data

The average wage per job in Sherman County in 2019 was \$ 48,026.<sup>15</sup> In 2018, Sherman County had a per capita personal income (PCPI) of \$52,296. This PCPI ranked 6th in the state and was 103% percent of the state average of \$50,843, and 96% percent of the national average, \$54,446. The 2018 PCPI reflected an increase of 9.6 percent from 2017.<sup>16</sup>

Sherman County’s 2019 annual unemployment rate was 3.4 compared to 3.7 for Oregon.<sup>17</sup> While employment continued to rebound since the great recession through the end of 2019, the immediate economic impacts of the COVID-19 global pandemic have been severe and it is difficult to predict at this time what the long term effects will be.

A 2014 – 2018 analysis of commuting patterns by the American Community Survey, shown in Appendix E, shows a shared labor market inside and outside the Columbia River Gorge. While a majority of Sherman County workers are employed within the county, those who are not travel most frequently to Wasco County and secondly to Multnomah County. During the public survey process, people shared that transportation to work is a need for those residing in the County. This need to travel outside the County for employment is illustrative of the interconnectivity of the region’s economies and it supports the need for greater interconnected regional public transportation.

<b>Journey to Work:</b>			
<b>2018 ACS Commuting Patterns (5-Year 2014-2018)</b>			
	<b>Hood River</b>	<b>Sherman</b>	<b>Wasco</b>
Total Workers	11,299	684	11,131
In-County %	86.9%	68.6%	80.5%
Top Work Destination	Multnomah	Wasco	Hood River
2 <sup>nd</sup> Work Destination	Wasco	Multnomah	Multnomah
3 <sup>rd</sup> Work Destination	Klickitat	Yakima	Clackamas
4 <sup>th</sup> Work Destination	Clackamas	Deschutes	Klickitat

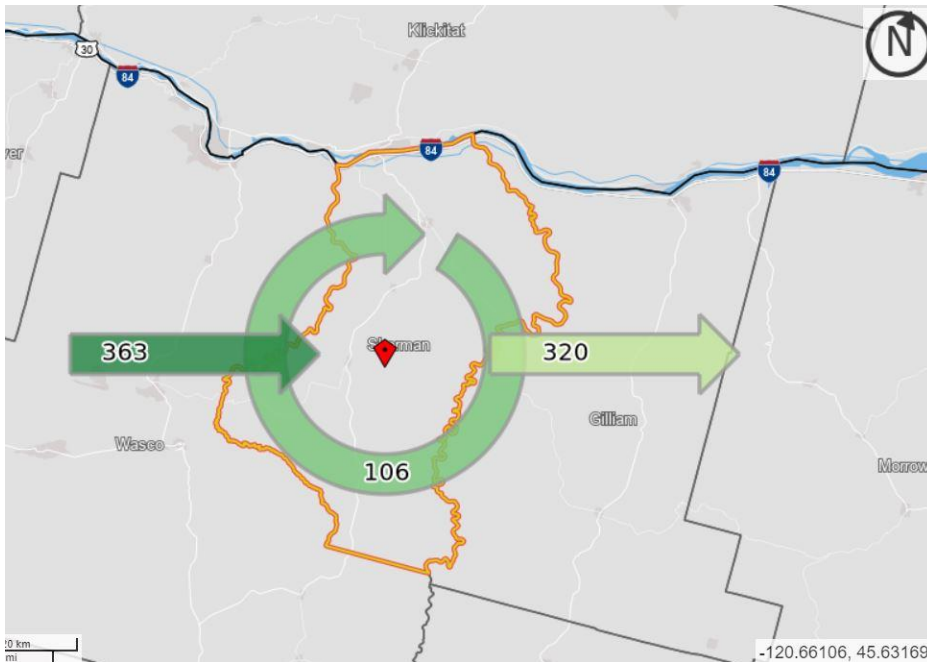
Note: *Work Destination (for 2017)* provided by Census Bureau’s On-The-Map <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>  
 ACS Table S0801-2018 (5-Year) Commuting Characteristics by Sex <https://data.census.gov>

<sup>15</sup> State of Oregon Employment Dept. Quality Info

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

<sup>17</sup> State of Oregon Employment Dept Quality Info



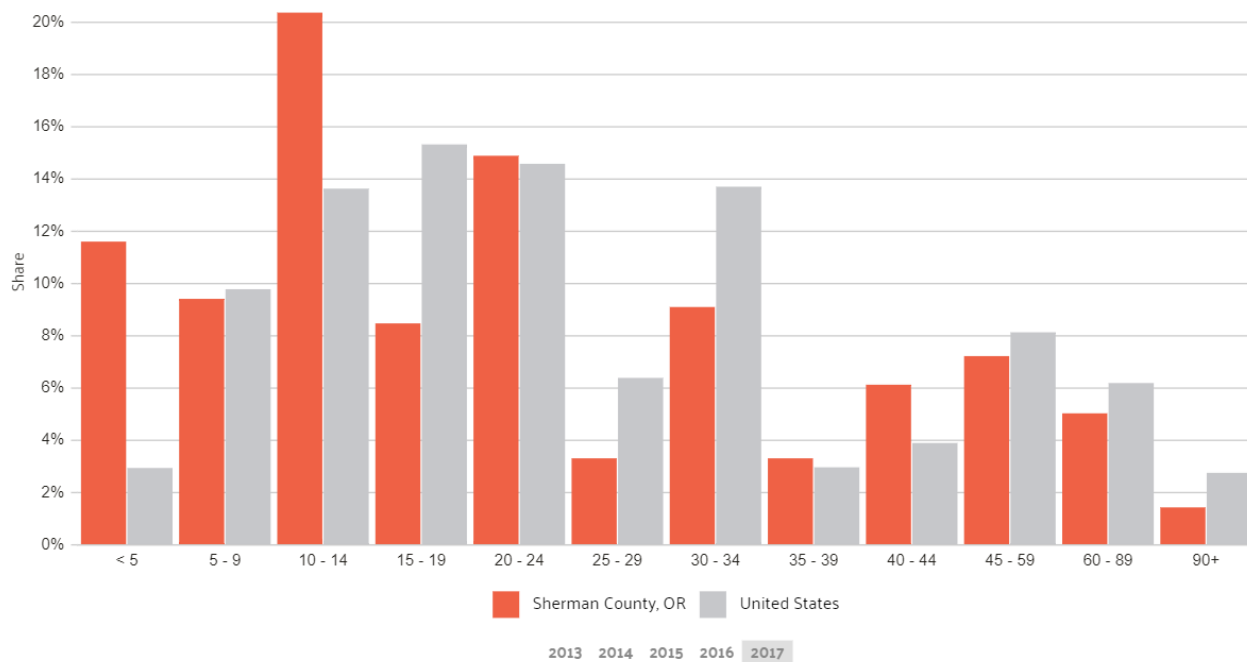


From: Census Bureau's On-The-Map (2017 data) <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

Inflow/Outflow Job Counts (Private Primary Jobs)		
	2017	
	Count	Share
<u>Employed in the Selection Area</u>	469	100.0%
<u>Employed in the Selection Area but Living Outside</u>	363	77.4%
<u>Employed and Living in the Selection Area</u>	106	22.6%
<u>Living in the Selection Area</u>	426	100.0%
<u>Living in the Selection Area but Employed Outside</u>	320	75.1%
<u>Living and Employed in the Selection Area</u>	106	24.9%

The data above illustrates that 106 residents live and work in Sherman County, while 320 live in Sherman County but work in another county. The breakdown shows the largest percentages of workers traveling outside the county for work are headed for Wasco County and Portland.

Mean travel time to work did increase by 4.3 minutes to 25.6 minutes, so residents are spending more time in their car to reach their place of employment. However, data from the American Community Survey 2018 5-yr Estimates and the below graph from <https://datausa.io> indicates that mean travel time to work is still well below the state and national average. The percentage of “super commutes” over 90 minutes is 1.41% and most likely reflects the number of people traveling to the Portland area to work.



Population Estimates <sup>18</sup>	Sherman County	Oregon
<b>Total population</b>	1,780	4,081,943
<b>Mean travel time to work in minutes for workers 16 years and over</b>	19.9 min.	23.7 min.
<b>Percentage of Super-Commutes (over 90 minutes one-way)</b>	1.41%	1.85%
<b>Percentage of 60+ minute commutes</b>	5.0%	6.0%

<sup>18</sup> Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

<b>One-car households</b>	12.7%	32.0%
<b>Car-free households</b>	2.2%	7.0%

## Columbia Gorge Community College Students

The Columbia Gorge Community College (CGCC) has two campuses, one in The Dalles and the other in Hood River. This community college draws students from throughout the Columbia Gorge region, including from Klickitat and Skamania counties in Washington, and is preparing to launch a nursing internship at the Klickitat Valley Hospital in Goldendale, WA. Both Columbia Area Transit and the Link have worked with CGCC staff to develop routes that would serve students and staff wishing to use transit to access either campus or to travel between campuses.

Over one third of CGCC students are considered low-income or dependents of low-income families. In the school year of 2018/2019, 36% of CGCC students received Federal Pell Grants. For dependent Pell recipients, the median parent annual income was between \$24,000 and \$29,999. For independent Pell recipients, the median student/spouse annual income was between \$12,000 and \$15,999. Data was provided by the Columbia Gorge Community College.

<b>Student Demographics</b>		
<b>Total enrollment 2018/2019</b>	1,124	100.00%
<b>American Indian or Alaskan Native</b>	27	2.38%
<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	324	32.03%
<b>Asian</b>	20	1.88%
<b>Black or African American</b>	8	.68%
<b>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	9	.73%
<b>White</b>	710	60.44%
<b>Unknown</b>	26	1.86%

In 2018 the college announced that they would be building a new skill center and student housing building. A student housing survey with 21 respondents included a question about transportation. Fifteen percent of the respondents said that they would use the bus daily while living on campus. Fifteen percent said that they would use the bus occasionally while living on campus.

## Changing Conditions

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Changing conditions will affect the ways in which the target populations travel in the next few years. Public transportation providers must anticipate these changes when planning for current and new services.

### Sherman County Community Transit: New Programs and Services

In 2019, Sherman County Community Transit launched a new shopping bus service, designed for those individuals who need a shorter shopping day than the other shopping bus services offer. The new Tuesday service has fixed stops and times at the Grass Valley Market, the Moro Senior Center, the Wasco Event Center, and in Rufus at Bob's Texas T-Bone. The service requires riders to call ahead to make reservations.

### Gorge TransLink Alliance: Expansion of Regional Fixed Route Services



Columbia Area Transit, Mt Adams Transportation Service, and the Link Public Transit launched a significant expansion of fixed route services that connect the region. Because of this regional expansion of fixed route services, Sherman County residents can access public transit from The Dalles Transit Center that will take them to Goldendale and White Salmon in Klickitat County, to most communities in Hood River County, and to Portland on a direct route from The Dalles. Sherman County Community Transit added a new weekly shopping bus route that has fixed stops and times, which means that now residents of Sherman County can get to The Dalles three days a week.

Columbia Area Transit (CAT) operates the Columbia Gorge Express, which runs from The Dalles to Portland with stops in Mosier, Hood River, and Cascade Locks. CAT also operates a Hood River City Loop and an Upper Valley Deviated Fixed route service.

In September of 2018, Mt Adams Transportation Service, operated by the Klickitat County Senior Services, launched the White Salmon-Bingen-Hood River and a Goldendale-The Dalles routes.

The Link Public Transit launched the Deviated Fixed route, a loop route within the City of The Dalles, in April 2019 and increased the headways from 1 hour to 30 minutes in July of 2020. The Link is scheduled to add more stops to the routes in September of 2020.

Skamania County Transit is applying for funds in fall of 2020 to continue their regular fixed route from the final stop of Carson on to Bingen, which would resolve one of the biggest gaps in the regional system.

## GorgeTransLink Alliance: Marketing and Outreach

### **Everybody Rides/ ¡Todos Arriba! Marketing Campaign**

Designed to provide enhanced awareness of available public transportation resources throughout the five-county region, this public outreach campaign engaged Gorge communities by using creative and innovative public outreach techniques. The Everybody Rides campaign received a National Association of Development Organizations Impact Award and the Transportation Options Group of Oregon Best Program of the Year award. It was funded by grants from the Columbia Gorge Health Council and ODOT. Sherman County Community Transit's video showcasing their services was one of the most-watched videos on You-Tube and the GorgeTransLink.com website, with well over 10,000 views.

A rack card highlighting Sherman County Community Transit's services and contact information was produced and the Mobility Manager distributed copies to public places in Sherman County. The main feature of these rack cards was a large map showing the regional transportation system. This is especially helpful for Sherman County residents who need to travel longer distances into Klickitat County, Hood River County, or Portland. If a rider takes the Sherman County shopping bus or can get a ride to The Dalles Transit Center, they can access a direct public transit service to Goldendale, Hood River, or Portland, for example. The rack card included contact information to all of the regional providers and to the GorgeTranslink.com website, where all of the schedules and routes are featured.

### Sherman County Video:

- Beloved community members
- Senior Center (social hub)
- Celebrate the Culture!



10,000 views, 1996 engagements

### **GorgeTransLink.com Website Redevelopment**

The redeveloped Gorgetranslink.com website was launched in 2019 using open source website plugins developed by Trillium Transit Solutions for the NW Connector website (with ODOT funding) and continues to be improved with new technology tools. The new website is rider-focused with a trip planner for individual trips, an interactive regional route map, and timetables and interactive maps produced for each route based on a single template.

These are game-changing tools to help riders understand where the bus goes and what time it departs and arrives. The website includes information about each of the five Gorge TransLink providers and services to destinations in the Columbia River Gorge. Having the information in one place is especially helpful to for riders to understand how to transfer from one transit provider's services to another.

This website is especially helpful for Sherman County residents who need to get to Portland, Klickitat County, or Hood River County. It would be possible to take one of the three shopping bus services or even to get a ride from family or friends into The Dalles and from there to use the other public transit services to access the other communities in the Columbia Gorge or ride the Columbia Gorge Express straight into Portland.

The GorgeTransLink.com website won a National Association for Development Organization award for this innovative project.

## White Salmon to Hood River Route

White Salmon – Bingen – Hood River / Monday - Friday



## COVID-19 Pandemic 2020

On January 31, 2020, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services declared that a new coronavirus disease, COVID-19, was a public health emergency for the United States. Coronavirus are a group of viruses that can cause respiratory disease with the potential to cause serious illness or loss of life.

On March 8, 2020, Governor Kate Brown declared a State of Emergency for the State of Oregon, stating that the novel infectious coronavirus had created a threat to public health and safety, and constituted a statewide emergency under ORS 401.025(1). On March 23, 2020, Governor Kate Brown issued Executive Order 20-12, Stay Home Save Lives, ordering Oregonians to stay at home, closing specified retail businesses, requiring social distancing measures for other public and private facilities, and imposing requirements for outdoor areas and licensed childcare facilities.

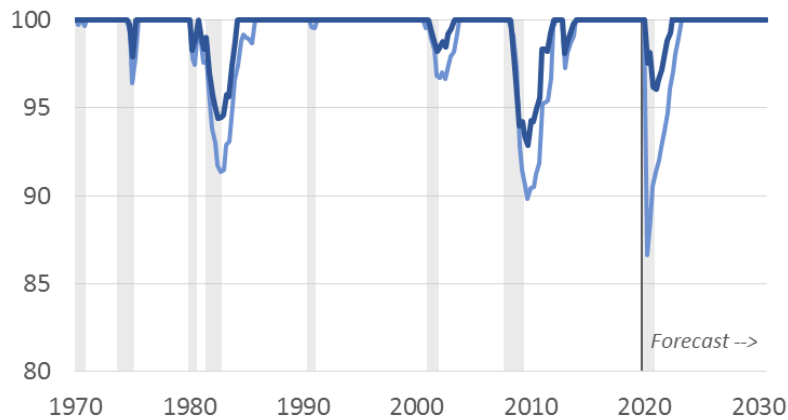
In May and June 2020, select Oregon counties including Sherman County that had met certain criteria were able to open their economies in a phased approach.

The long-term impact on the economy is unknown, but the short-term impact has been devastating.

## Oregon Income Losses

Inflation-Adjusted Income as Percent of Pre-Recession Peak

Total Personal Income | Excluding Transfer Payments



Latest Data: 2019q4 | Source: BEA, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

### Impact to Transit

While data showing the impacts to public transportation agencies in Oregon has not been analyzed, demand for transit services in Sherman County decreased significantly in March and April, as most non-essential medical appointments were cancelled and residents heeded the directive to stay at home.

Sherman County adopted the State of Oregon's guidance for public transportation providers, which included sanitation procedures, physical distancing for riders, extra protections for drivers, and mask requirements.

### Broadband in Rural Areas

Recent improvements have meant that most residents in Sherman County now have some true broadband access. Fiber optic network to the home has been accomplished in all four cities in Sherman County, and will soon be completed in Biggs Junction. Sherman County also received funding from Business Oregon's Rural Broadband Capacity program to purchase trailer-based, solar-powered repeaters to increase access to previously unserved areas.

Internet connectivity can significantly improve the lives of those without transportation resources, giving them online access to healthcare, higher education, social services, and shopping.



## Resiliency

Public transportation is a key resource when the immediate need is to move many people quickly. During the Oregon fire season of 2020, many public transportation agencies worked with emergency management teams to evacuate senior living facilities, move evacuees to new sites, and to shuttle teams of fire fighters.

# Transportation Resources in Sherman County

## Vehicle-based Transportation Service Options

Sherman County has very few vehicle-based transportation service options for residents, especially those of the target populations. Sherman County Community Transit offers a lifeline to county residents, particularly to its special needs populations, who may be isolated by the vast geography of this area.

Included in this list are both private and public transportation providers. Some services are only accessible if the person meets specific eligibility requirements. Some services have geographical limitations or are not ADA accessible.

Transportation Provider	Public/Private	Service Type	Hours	Days	Service Area
Sherman County Community Transit	Public	Dial-a-Ride, Shopping bus, NEMT, Veterans Medical	8 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Monday-Thursday (office) Monday-Friday (medical rides)	Sherman County, Wasco County, Hood River County, Portland, Madras, Bend.
Eastern Oregon CCO Contracts with GOBHI, a Non Emergency Medical s Transportation (NEMT) Brokerage	Must meet eligibility requirement	Non Emergent Medical Transportation	7 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Monday - Friday	Sherman County and Eastern Oregon
Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage	Public – serves eligible clients only	Non-medical Client transportation reimbursement or contracts with public and private transportation	As needed	As needed	13 counties in Eastern Oregon including Sherman, Hood River, Wasco

The Community Developmental Disabilities Program (OHA)	Public – serves eligible clients only	Non-medical Client Transportation	As needed	As needed	Sherman, Hood River and Wasco counties
Community Action Program of East Central Oregon/CAPECO/Meals on Wheels, Food Banks and Pantries, Area Agency on Aging, people with	Public – serves those eligible for their many programs	Contracts with other organizations	Mon – Fri deliveries	Monday - Friday	Sherman, Wasco, Hood River, Gilliam, Morrow, Wheeler, Umatilla
Veterans Administration	Serves eligible Veterans only	Medical Transportation – Reimbursement and Beneficiary Travel	As needed	As needed	Columbia Gorge and Portland
Disabled American Veterans (DAV)	Serves eligible Veterans Only-- Not ADA accessible	Veterans Transportation to Portland for Medical. Fixed route, no Door to Door.	As needed	Depends on volunteer driver availability	Columbia Gorge and Portland
The Dalles Taxi, LLC	Private company serves the public	Taxi: door-to-door	24/7	Sunday and Monday: 6am to 6pm; Tuesday – Saturday operates 24/7	City of The Dalles; will negotiate long trips with interested individuals or under contract to area Human Services
Gorge Taxi	Private-- Also contracts to provide NEMT rides	Taxi: Door to Door	Monday Sunday	Hours are changing due to COVID-- 19	The Dalles/Hood River

Greyhound Lines	Private	Bus- Fixed Route	By schedule	Monday-Sunday	I-84 corridor
Amtrak	Quasi-public	Train- Fixed Route	By schedule	Monday-Sunday	Wishram and Bingen, WA to Portland
Get There Oregon	Public – Free to participate	Carpool/Ride Share/Trip Planner	As arranged	As arranged	State of Oregon (ODOT)
Commute with Enterprise	Private	Vanpool	As arranged	As arranged	Throughout Oregon/Washington

## Active Transportation Resources

A car-dependent community leaves many people without access to basic resources like food, medical services, higher education, jobs, and social and civic opportunities. One third of people living in the U.S. do not drive. Children, the elderly, the visually impaired or otherwise physically challenged, those with lower incomes, or those who simply choose to not have access to a car, are among the groups that benefit most when opportunities to safely walk or bicycle are improved. Active transportation modes include walking, biking, wheelchair rolling, and transit.

Half of the trips Americans take are within range of a 20-minute bike ride, with more than one-fourth within range of a 20-minute walk. Yet the vast majority of even these short trips are taken by car.<sup>19</sup> Sometimes driving is often the only safe and convenient way to get from Point A to Point B. And as walking and biking have become more marginalized and difficult, driving has become second nature, so embedded in our culture and our behavior that we do it without thinking.

In 2015, the US Surgeon General issued a “Call to Action” to promote walking and walkable communities. Physical activity is one of the most important things Americans can do to improve their health. Regular physical activity can reduce the burden of chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and some cancers, and can prevent early death. Walking is an easy way to maintain a physically active lifestyle, and walkable communities make it easier for people of all ages and abilities to be active. The Surgeon General's goal is to increase access to safe and convenient places to walk and wheelchair roll and to create a culture that supports walking for all Americans.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.railstotrails.org/partnership-for-active-transportation/why/>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/walking/call-to-action/index.htm>

Safer walking and biking infrastructure would provide more freedom and independence to youth, older adults, low income, and others who do not or cannot drive. Lack of safe active transportation infrastructure impacts their ability to access resources, including public transportation.

Indeed, residents who stay active by choosing to walk and bike are also those who will continue to have the ability to access a bus stop instead of being dependent on a door to door service.

# Sherman County Community Transit

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## Service Highlights

- **Dial-a-Ride and NEMT:** Monday – Friday: Transportation for prearranged medical rides to appointments.
- **Monday Shopping Bus:** The Dalles shopping bus departs Moro at 8 a.m. for shopping. Return trip leaving The Dalles by 2:30 p.m. Suggested Donation: \$10 per rider
- **Tuesday Shopping Bus:** This shopping trip is geared to make a shorter day for seniors and senior disabled clients. No appointment stops, just shopping and a stop for lunch (location a choice of clients aboard). Designated shopping stops to be determined prior to the first stop in The Dalles. There are scheduled pick up times at specific locations in Grass Valley, Moro, Wasco, Rufus.
- **Thursday Bus:** The Dalles shopping bus departs Moro at 8 a.m. for appointments and shopping. Appointments are suggested to be scheduled between 9:45 a.m. and 11:30 a.m., allowing time for pharmacy stops and return trip, leaving The Dalles by 2:30 p.m. **Suggested Donation:** \$10 per rider.
- **Fees for Non-residents or those without transportation benefits:** .75 per mile from Moro, round-trip.

## Veterans Transportation Service

Sherman County Community Transit served 29 individual veterans, providing multiple trips for some of them over the course of 2019.

Dates, 2019	Total Rides	Destinations
January-March	43	Portland VA, Bend VA, The Dalles VA, medical destinations in Wasco and Hood River counties
April-June	26	Portland VA, Bend VA, Providence Portland, Providence Hood River, Fairview
July-September	63	Portland VA, Bend VA, The Dalles VA, Fairview, Gresham, Vancouver, The Dalles
October-December	58	Portland VA, Bend VA, The Dalles VA, The Dalles, Hood River

## Average Trip Count to Portland, All Riders

Sherman County Community Transit makes an average of 120 trips to Portland medical facilities per year, generally 2-3 times per week. Destinations include: Portland VA, OHSU facilities, Vancouver VA, Retina NW, Therapydia Portland.

## Total Ride Numbers for 2019

Sherman County Community Transit provided 1,253 total rides in 2019.

## Common Origins and Destinations

Sherman County residents often require transportation traveling to and from and within The Dalles as it is a major destination for accessing human service agencies, shopping centers, and medical facilities. Survey results point to Hood River and Portland as the second highest priority destination cities.

A map of common destinations may be found in Appendix D. Common destinations concentrated in The Dalles include the following:

- Medical Care: MCMC Family Medicine, Mid-Columbia Center for Living, Mid-Columbia Medical Center, Fresenius Kidney Care (dialysis), Outpatient Clinics, Waters Edge, One Community Health
- Shopping and Pharmacy: Safeway, Fred Meyer, Grocery Outlet/Cascade Square, BiMart, RiteAid
- Post Office
- Human Service and Social Service offices
- Ace Hardware
- Banks
- Evans Fruit Stand

Survey and Interview respondents highlighted that these destinations should be added when service can be expanded:

- Food Pantries
- Youth events
- Social excursions for older adults
- Destinations within Sherman County like Biggs
- Mid-Columbia Center for Living in Moro
- Sherman County Clerk's Office and Courthouse

In addition to The Dalles, Portland is a significant transportation destination by Sherman County special needs populations, with trips for medical care cited most often. The Portland VA Medical Center along

with OHSU are primary locations for specialty medical care. With a growing disabled senior population, the need for specialty medical care not available in the region is likely to grow, thereby increasing the importance of dependable public transportation to Portland.

## Public Transportation Funding Sources

### ***State and Federal Funding for Transportation Services***

The following resources are state and federal resources designed to support transportation for seniors, those with disabilities and low income individuals:

- Section 5310 & 5310 Discretionary: Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance. Federal funding source designed specifically to meet elderly and disabled individuals' transportation requirements. Administered by states and available through the State of Oregon through the discretionary grant process.
- Section 5311: Rural Transit Assistance. Federal funding source designed to support rural transportation operations. Administered by states and available through the State of Oregon through a formula process.
- Medicaid Non-Emergency Transportation. Provides funding, administered by the state's Coordinated Care Organizations, provides funding for eligible client transportation to and from medical services that are both medically necessary and covered by Medicaid.
- Non-Medical Medicaid resources for the developmentally disabled.
- Special Transportation Fund. State funding source distributed both by formula and through the discretionary application process.
- Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund: Formula, Discretionary, Intercity programs.
- Veteran's Administration. Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG). This grant-based program helps Veterans in highly rural areas travel to VA or VA-authorized health care facilities. The program provides grant funding to Veteran Service Organizations and State Veterans Service Agencies to provide transportation services in eligible counties. The program in Oregon is administered by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs. Sherman County qualifies for this program. However, the grant does not cover the entire cost of transporting Sherman County Veterans to their medical appointments and Sherman County Community Transit is seeking other sources of funding that could help to cover the cost.



## Improving Coordination

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As the Link's city-wide fixed-route services and the regional public transit system expands, there are new opportunities to partner with other organizations to meet their client's transportation needs.

### The Gorge TransLink Alliance

Sherman County enjoys a well-established level of coordination between the area's transportation providers through The Link's participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance, a bi-state coalition of five county's transportation providers, state transportation officials and local agency partners in the Mid-Columbia region. The Alliance is facilitated by MCEDD's Mobility Manager.

The Mobility Manager position is grant-funded. Gorge TransLink Alliance members support the Mobility Manager position through agency resolutions and Memorandums of Understanding, along with match and in-kind assistance.

One future Gorge TransLink project that might help Sherman County Community Transit cover the unfunded portion of their Veterans transportation program is currently under discussion between Columbia Area Transit and the Link Public Transit, both eligible to apply for Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation grant funds.

Further collaboration with existing regional transportation services can help riders that aren't eligible for transportation benefits transfer to other services going to other cities and counties: Mt Hood, Portland, Goldendale, etc.

### Organizations serving Target Populations

#### **Sherman County Victims' Assistance Program**

This program supports anyone who has been the victim of a crime. The Program Coordinator works closely with the County's Prevention and Outreach Coordinator. Both programs provide some funding for the transportation needs of their clients, most of whom are low-income. Because the only transportation service in Sherman County is the County's Community Transit, both coordinators have been interested in working with the transportation provider to resolve some of their client's transportation challenges. Transportation needs include accessing court and trial appointments, access to The Dalles for needs other than shopping or medical, and access to services within Sherman County—Biggs Junction, Mid-Columbia Center for Living in Moro, and the Clerk's office for civil matters. Both of the County's Prevention/Outreach and Victims' Assistance programs have some funds allocated for transportation services in their budgets.

### **Sherman County Prevention**

This program provides educational information to the public and youth regarding unsafe and unhealthy behaviors. The Prevention Coordinator, Amy Asher, works closely with partner organizations and agencies like the Sherman County Sheriff's office, the School District, the Public Health District, the Juvenile Department, and the Local Community Advisory Council. Youth programs include Children's Theater, a Swim Bus to Goldendale, and the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps. Transportation has been listed as one of the barriers to participation in these activities. A recipient of STIF formula funds, Sherman County Community Transit is required to spend at least 1 percent of the Formula Fund moneys received each year on student transit services for students in grades 9 through 12. Although \$1,000 doesn't go far, a partnership with the other members of the Local Community Advisory Committee might result in more resources to invest in a program that will make a real difference to the low-income families that Sherman County Prevention serves.

### **Circles of Care**

The Circles of Care program operates under AGE+, a statewide nonprofit created to support successful aging for all Oregonians. Circles of Care intends to address the challenge that the United States has a rapidly growing aging population and not enough resources to meet the needs of older adults, especially those living in rural areas. The mission of this program is to develop solutions within the community to improve the lives of older adults, their families and the communities that they live in. Circles of Care is a volunteer-based program supporting older adults in The Dalles to age in place and to feel more connected to their community. Volunteers help with yard work, transportation, light housecleaning, meal preparation and companionship. Volunteers provide door through door assistance with transportation needs.

Circles of Care is interested in expanding to other counties like Sherman County and presented at a recent EOCCO Local Community Advisory Council meeting. Circles of Care volunteers could coordinate with Sherman County Community Transit to provide travel assistance for residents who might be able to use public transit if they had volunteer assistance

### **The Community Developmental Disabilities Program**

This program currently in transition as the Mid-Columbia Center for Living's contracted role ends in September 2020. CDDP services include eligibility determination, case management, licensure of Foster Homes and protective service investigations for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities for Hood River, Sherman, and Wasco counties.

The Oregon Department of Human Services provides funding to the Community Developmental Disabilities Program for nonmedical Medicaid transportation services. Both Columbia Area Transit and the Link have in the past contracted with the CDDP provider to provide nonmedical transportation services.

### **Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage (EOSSB)**

The Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage provides services to people with intellectual or developmental disabilities in 13 counties including Hood River, Sherman, and Sherman counties. Eligibility is determined through the CDDP. EOSSB also has transportation funds that can be used to provide transportation services to their clients, whether dial-a-ride or a bus pass on the fixed route system. EOSSB contracts with both public and private transportation providers to provide for their clients' varying needs.

### **The Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS)**

ODHS has many programs that assist older adults and people with disabilities, including Aging and People with Disabilities, Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities, and Self Sufficiency. Staff also participate in the East Cascades Workforce Board Local Leadership Team that includes the Oregon Human Development Corporation and meets at the Columbia Gorge Community College once a month. This Leadership Team has access to transportation funds for the people that they serve and would be interested in purchasing bus passes or participating in an ongoing travel training program.

### **Community Action Program of East Central Oregon (CAPECO)**

CAPECO serves Gilliam, Hood River, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Sherman, and Wheeler counties and focuses on CAPECO focuses on four key social service needs in east central Oregon. Services include the Area Agency on Aging, Oregon Project Independence, Congregant and Meal Delivery, Food Pantries, and the Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon (ADRC). ADRC staff connect their clients to local resources like public transportation services. CAPECO's Senior Advisory Council meets once a quarter in The Dalles and would be an excellent meeting for the Link staff to attend on a regular basis.

### **Opportunity Connections**

Changes in state and federal regulations have resulted in Opportunity Connections, a social services agency that supports adults with intellectual disabilities, no longer operating its sheltered workshop known as the Columbia Gorge Center in Hood River. Rather than providing jobs, Opportunity Connections is now focused on finding jobs within the community for its clients and helping their clients succeed at these jobs. Opportunity Connections workers need transportation to their community job location rather than the previous centralized worksite. Opportunity Connections is dedicated to providing more opportunities for their clients to become more integrated with their communities. Transportation funds would come from the CDDP organization or service brokerages like the Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage. Sherman County Community Transit has worked with Opportunity Connections in the past to provide transportation services to their clients.

## Resiliency: Emergency Management Partnership

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), emergency management is defined as the “managerial function charged with creating the framework within which communities reduce vulnerability to hazards and cope with disasters.” The mission of emergency managers is “to protect communities by coordinating and integrating all activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to mitigate against, prepare for, respond to, and recover from threatened or actual natural disasters, acts of terrorism, or other man-made disasters.”

Long before disasters and other events hit, local communities must continually reassess plans and responses to all kinds of emergencies. Transportation is a critical component of these efforts, particularly for non-drivers and people who need mobility assistance during emergency situations or require other means to have access to essentials such as food, medical care, and prescriptions.

From the transportation perspective, emergency response plans typically include an inventory of available vehicles and transportation resources, and the response to emergencies requires significant coordination between various agencies, transportation providers, hospital, etc. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the region’s transportation providers were key stakeholders during their county’s Emergency Operations Center team meetings and forged new and effective partnerships with other organizations that enabled them to address the specific challenges faced by their most vulnerable residents.

Strategies to become a key stakeholder in Sherman County’s Emergency Management planning, response, recovery, and mitigation activities include building relationships with the key emergency management officials, identify capabilities and limitations of services and resources, inventory residents and pockets of populations with special needs (physical disabilities, low income, LEP), and engage the organizations who serve those people with emergency planning efforts. Participating in county-led emergency management planning and tabletop exercises is a good way to become integrated into the emergency management systems planning for Sherman County.

## Coordinated Care Organizations and Non Emergency Medical Transportation

A **Coordinated Care Organization** is a network of all types of health care providers (physical health care, addictions and mental health care and dental care providers) who work together in their local communities to serve people who receive health care coverage under the Oregon Health Plan (Medicaid). CCOs focus on prevention and helping people manage chronic conditions, like diabetes. This helps reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and gives people support to be healthy.

In 2019, the Oregon Health Authority signed new contracts with 15 organizations to serve as CCOs for the Oregon Health Plan’s 1 million members. The new contracts set new requirements for CCOs to

improve care for OHP members and hold down cost increases in Oregon’s Medicaid program. Medicaid funds health and medical services for qualified individuals and families with low incomes and few resources. The contracts represent the largest procurement in state history, totaling more than \$6 billion for the 2020 contract year.

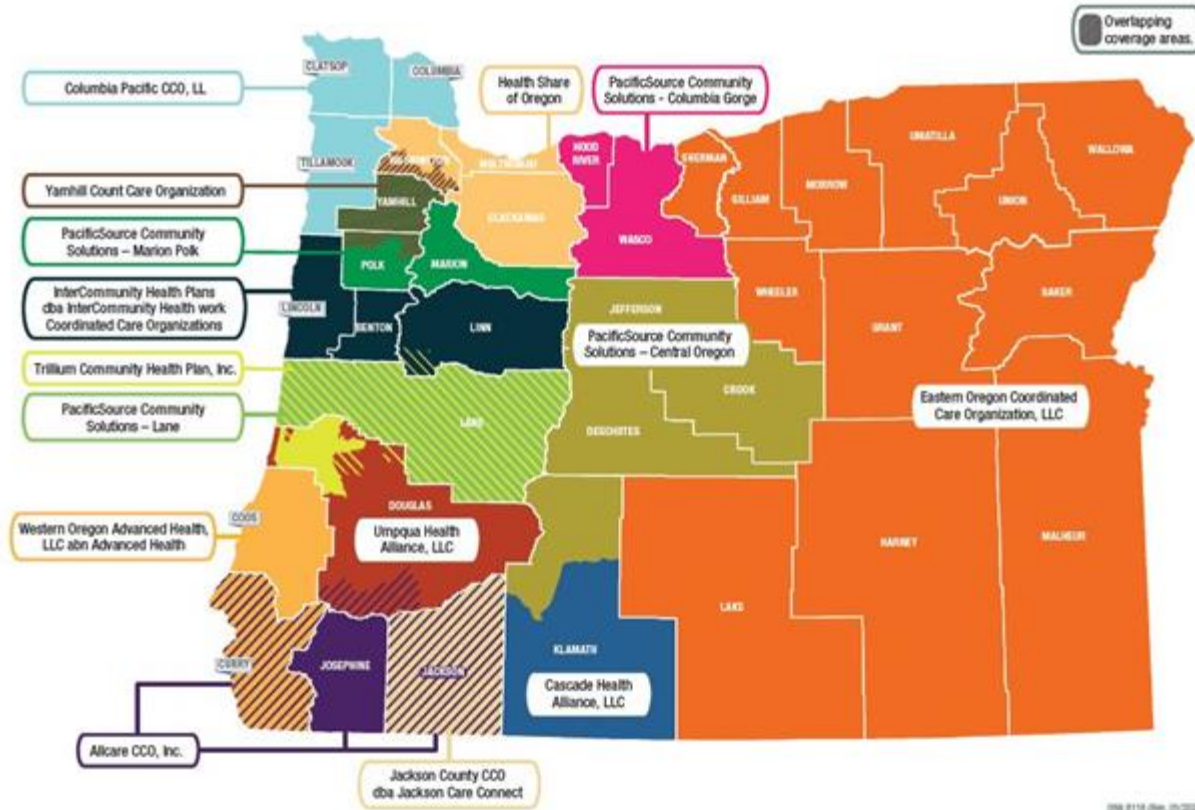
From January 1, 2020, and over the next four years, the CCOs must focus on the governor’s four priority areas: improve the behavioral health system, increase value and pay for performance, focus on social determinants of health and health equity, and maintain sustainable cost growth. The new contract has new requirements for the CCOs, the transportation brokerages they contract with, and the transportation providers that contract with the brokerages to provide direct transportation services.

The CCOs contract with transportation brokerages to provide non-emergency medical transportation, a Medicaid benefit. The largest share of federal transportation funding for human services comes from Medicaid-funded NEMT benefits. The Eastern Oregon CCO (EOCCO) covers Sherman County, and continues the previous transportation brokerage contract with Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc (GOBHI), a locally-based organization.

Sherman County Community Transit enjoys a good partnership with GOBHI and the NEMT revenues are key to securing match for state and federal grants. Regular attendance at the Local Community Advisory Council for the EOCCO would further establish this beneficial relationship. Members include representatives from the Public Health District, the Columbia Gorge Food Bank, Sherman County Medical Clinic and the Prevention Department, the School District, and other local organizations, and the group would welcome the addition of a representative from the public transportation provider. The EOCCO also provides annual grant funds for projects that could fund small projects for outreach, marketing, or relevant events.

GOBHI also supports the Veggie RX program, which allows many Sherman County residents to access fresh fruits and vegetables with coupons prescribed by their physician and purchased with funds that are awarded to counties when they reach certain metrics. GOBHI, Food Pantry, and Senior Center representatives expressed a desire for more coordination with the necessary transportation needed for residents to be able to take advantage of their coupons.

# Coordinated Care Organization 2.0 Service Areas



000 010 (Rev. 01/2020)

# Transportation Needs and Barriers

Across the target populations, there was great consistency in the identified service needs, gaps, and barriers. The list was developed through the analysis of the survey responses and stakeholder meetings and interviews.

Mobility Barriers	
Service Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service is needed on weekends.</li> <li>• Access to Food Pantries and locations where Veggie RX coupons can be redeemed is needed.</li> </ul>
Dial-A-Ride	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to work, court, social activities, youth activities, is needed.</li> <li>• Drivers report that sometimes riders heading to medical appointments don't know where they are going or why and need an assistant or an advocate with them.</li> <li>• Many in-home health care programs don't provide enough hours per week to include transportation assistance.</li> </ul>
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to locations within Sherman County is needed.</li> </ul>
Fares	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donation of \$10 roundtrip can be a barrier, even though the fee is donation-based.</li> <li>• Medicare clients do not receive NEMT transportation benefits, yet are more likely to need transportation services.</li> </ul>
Regional Provider Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with regional transportation providers to streamline the regional system and realize cost efficiencies. For example, the Highly Rural Veterans grant does not cover the full cost of the program for Sherman County, but coordination with other providers who are eligible to receive Rural Veterans Grant funds might help alleviate the financial burden.</li> <li>• Transportation to Portland for medical care continues to be a need for those without NEMT benefits that could be addressed with a regionally coordinated inexpensive service.</li> </ul>

Organizational Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend local and regional meetings of County and Human Services organizations to better coordinate with partners and identify opportunities for cost sharing, efficiencies, and to enhance services for Sherman County residents.</li> <li>• Human Services agency staff need more information about what transportation services are available, locally and regionally.</li> </ul>
Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More general outreach needed.</li> </ul>
Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fare donations for multiple family members traveling at the same time can be prohibitively expensive</li> </ul>
Rider Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for riders and the public to participate in service design.</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for riders to give feedback about existing services.</li> </ul>
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited local funding: a significant issue for Sherman County is the limited amount of local funding available to leverage state and federal funding sources. Sherman County has no taxing authority to supplement for local match.</li> <li>• Highly Rural Veterans grant does not cover the full cost of the program.</li> </ul>
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop strategies to address driver shortages.</li> <li>• Identify training opportunities for office staff.</li> <li>• Build office staff capacity.</li> </ul>



## Strategies to Address Needs, Barriers and Gaps

Based upon information gathered from public meetings, surveys, and stakeholder interviews the following are strategies to address Sherman County’s transportation needs, barriers and gaps. Strategies affecting seniors are marked by an S, those affecting individuals with disabilities are marked by a D, and those affecting low-income individuals are marked by an LI. The Sherman County STF/STIF Advisory Committee was tasked with determining the Priority rankings for each of the strategies corresponding to an identified transportation need, barrier or service gap. In the chart below, green denotes high priority and yellow denotes medium priority, and red denotes low priority.

### Category: Sustain Existing Transportation Services

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Priority	Population Affected(S/D/LI)	Resource Capacity
Continue to provide the current dial-a-ride transportation service which is vital to special needs populations.	Maintain dial-a-ride transportation operations.	High	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources available through state and federal funding for operations.
Continue to provide current shopping buses which are very popular and highly utilized.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintain shopping bus service.</li> <li>Conduct regularly scheduled review of service to ensure target populations needs are being met.</li> </ul>	High	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources available through state and federal funding for operations.

Continue to meet demand for coordinated transportation services to meet Veterans' medical needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue partnership with Veteran's Administration to coordinate service for Veterans' travel to VA or VA-approved medical facilities.</li> <li>• <i>Seek coordination with other transportation providers who could apply for similar funding.</i></li> </ul>	High	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources available to partially fund operations through the Highly Rural Veterans grant. More funds needed to cover the full cost of the program.
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### Category: Operations

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Priority	Population Affected(S/D/LI)	Resource Capacity
Fleet Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for replacement of vehicles that have exceeded their useful life.</li> <li>• Provide funding for ongoing and timely preventative vehicle maintenance to ensure the safety and reliability of the transportation services.</li> <li>• Seek funding for additional vehicles required for any service expansion.</li> </ul>	High	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources likely available through state and federal funding programs.
Protection and safety of vehicle fleet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek funding for expansion of bus barn or for covered structure similar to an RV carport steel building to protect the fleet from the elements and ensure the safety of the fleet.</li> </ul>	Medium	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Financial resources available through state and federal funding programs.

Maintain affordable fares as cost is an issue for the target populations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Donation-based allows flexibility for low-income clients.</li> <li>• Explore other pass systems and partnerships.</li> </ul>	High	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Seek partnerships with other human service organizations to cover fare cost.
<i>Expand organizational capacity.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify strategies to address driver shortage.</li> <li>• Identify training/grant training opportunities for office staff.</li> <li>• Increase management and operational capacity.</li> </ul>	Medium	S,D,LI	Administrative capacity exists.
Seek opportunities to create efficiencies with regional coordination	Work with the Gorge TransLink Alliance to create a more streamlined, efficient, and coordinated regional public transit system.	Medium	S,D,LI	Administrative capacity exists.

### Category: Service Expansion

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Priority	Population Affected(S/D/LI)	Resource Capacity
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Expand dial-a-ride service area coverage inclusive of the entire county and expand ride purposes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze operations to see if efficiencies would provide greater ability to offer more reliable service to outlying areas of the county.</li> <li>Consider public/private partnerships to expand services throughout the county.</li> <li>Continue to seek state/federal and private grant funding to support expanded service.</li> </ul>	Medium	S,D,LI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Administration capacity exists.</li> <li>Would require additional financial and staff resources.</li> <li>Financial resources are likely available through state and Federal transportation grants; local funds would be needed; private partners may be interested in supporting.</li> </ul>
Employment and higher education transportation: address the need some individuals in the target populations have in accessing regular public transportation to/from work or to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct a survey of employers to clarify needs, identify partners and define potential contributions.</li> <li>Explore options like van pools.</li> <li>Partner with the Community College and other transportation providers.</li> </ul>	Low	D,LI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs assessment could be done by partners.</li> <li>Would require additional financial and staff resources.</li> <li>Discretionary funding; local funding would be needed; private partners may be interested in supporting.</li> </ul>
Continue to explore options for residents who are not eligible for transportation benefits to get to medical facilities in Portland.	Discuss connections through the Gorge TransLink Alliance.	Low	S,D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Might require additional financial and staff resources.
Expansion of service hours. Expansion to include Fridays and weekends.	Seek state/federal and private grant funding to support expanded service hours.	Medium	D,LI	Administration capacity exists. Would require additional financial and staff resources.

<p>Provide additional transportation services to increase access opportunities and to enhance quality of life:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occasional Portland shopping trips</li> <li>• Social events and outings</li> <li>• Week-end transportation options</li> <li>• Intra-county transportation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with Human Services partners or volunteers to coordinate special social trips.</li> <li>• Work with County partners to provide trips to work, court, and youth activities.</li> <li>• <i>Work with local partners to include stops to Food Pantries and locations that accept Veggie RX coupons.</i></li> </ul>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>S,D,LI</p>	<p>Requires initial additional Administrative capacity to recruit and train Volunteer. May also require additional funding and/or resources to provide additional transportation services.</p>
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Category: Stable Funding

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Priority	Population Affected(S/D/L)	Resource Capacity
<p>Address limited local funding that can be used to leverage state and federal funding sources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to seek all Federal and state transportation grants that Sherman County is eligible for.</li> <li>• Leverage all match against Federal and state grants.</li> <li>• Engage local groups to advocate for public transportation funds.</li> <li>• Identify potential additional sources/partners to support local operational funding or local match.</li> </ul>	<p>High</p>	<p>S,D,LI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sherman County currently seeks out and applies for eligible grants.</li> <li>• Working with local groups to develop advocates for public transportation requires additional administrative capacity.</li> <li>• Work to identify and build collaborative operational support from potential additional sources/partners.</li> </ul>

Category: Marketing/Education/Outreach

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Priority	Population Affected(S/D/LI, LEP)	Resource Capacity
<p>Continue general outreach to highlight new services available to all. Market and promote the system to ensure target populations are aware of the services available.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribute material about the transportation system at key sites.</li> <li>• Maintain existing promotion routes, including website, newsletter, and print.</li> <li>• Explore effective opportunities to better promote the services offered.</li> <li>• Market and promote the services to ensure target populations are aware of the services available.</li> <li>• Partner with county agencies and community organizations to conduct community outreach and education on transportation services.</li> <li>• Develop an ongoing feedback system to identify and respond to needs.</li> </ul>	High	S,D,LI	Administrative capacity exists.

Category: Planning and Coordination

Identified Transportation Needs/Barriers and Service Gaps	Strategies to Address	Priority	Population Affected(S/D)	Resource Capacity
Increase options for regional travel in the Mid-Columbia area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance to network and collaborate with the Mid-Columbia transportation service providers. Gorge TransLink Alliance members continue to identify and bring to fruition funding opportunities to support regional transportation connections and projects.</li> </ul>	Medium	S,D,LI	Capacity currently exists through the regular participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance.



<p>Increase collaboration with Human Services providers in essential to meet the needs of the target population.</p>	<p>Attend regular public Human Service organization meetings to maintain strong working relationships and bolster the ability to respond collaboratively to emerging needs or changing conditions. Many of these organizations have their own transportation budgets that could be used to expand services or leverage grant funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivate a partnership with the Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization.</li> <li>• Attend the regular meetings of organizations representative of the target populations.</li> <li>• Develop stronger partnerships with human service agencies, county agencies like Sherman County Prevention and Outreach, and community organizations.</li> <li>• Develop partnership with County Food Pantry coordinators.</li> </ul>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>S,D,LI</p>	<p>Capacity exists within the current Administration.</p>
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<p><i>Coordinate with local government to develop more transit-supportive transportation budgets.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish regular communication channels with local government including emergency management.</li> <li>• Establish the public transit agency as a key stakeholder within the County.</li> </ul>	<p>Medium</p>	<p>S,D,LI</p>	<p>Capacity exists within the current Administration.</p>
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## Performance Measures

Identified high priority strategies are linked to performance measures in the Coordinated Plan to help determine their efficacy in addressing service needs, gaps and barriers. The performance measures were developed in concert with the transportation provider to measure success of the high priority strategies. Performance measures were designed to capitalize on current tracking methods or otherwise be easy to track so they are not burdensome. The performance measures are listed below. Progress will be reviewed regularly with the Public Transportation Advisory Committee.

Transportation Need	Strategies	Performance Measure
Sustain existing transportation services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain dial-a-ride transportation operations.</li> <li>• Maintain shopping bus services.</li> <li>• Continue partnership with the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs to support Veterans’ travel to VA-approved medical facilities. Seek other partners to share expenses not covered by the Highly Rural Veterans Transportation grant.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track ridership for dial-a-ride services.</li> <li>• Track ridership for NEMT trips.</li> <li>• Track ridership for shopping bus services.</li> <li>• Track ridership and cost for Veterans’ medical trips.</li> </ul>
Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for replacement of vehicles that have exceeded their useful life.</li> <li>• Seek funding for vehicle repair and preventative maintenance for safe and reliable transport.</li> <li>• Maintain current fare system of a suggested donation. Consider a sliding scale base for donations.</li> <li>• Continue to seek funding for expansion of bus barn or for a covered structure similar to an RV carport steel building to protect the fleet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track vehicle mileage and vehicle replacement.</li> <li>• Track complaints about fares quarterly and report to STF Committee.</li> <li>• Assess operations at regular monthly staff meetings.</li> </ul>

Service Expansion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore employment and higher education transportation needs.</li> <li>• Identify resources to expand transportation service.</li> <li>• Modify shopping bus service to include food pantries and allow residents to take advantage of special programs like Veggie RX and local food gift certificates.</li> <li>• Expand service to include needed trips to Parole and court appointments.</li> <li>• Expand services to include social activities for older adults and youth.</li> <li>• Work with School District partners to plan STIF required student transportation service.</li> </ul>	New services explored, planned, and established.
Stable Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to leverage match against state and federal grants.</li> <li>• Continue to work closely with GOBHI, the transportation brokerage, and with EOCCO on NEMT needs, challenges, and opportunities.</li> <li>• Identify potential additional sources/partners to support local operational funding or local match.</li> <li>• Seek local partnerships or regional transportation provider partners to increase funding for Veterans transportation services.</li> <li>• Develop a grant strategy, identifying all applicable grants and keeping a grant calendar.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amount of federal/state funding secured</li> <li>• All match for state and federal funds met</li> <li>• Amount of local funding contributions increase.</li> <li>• Sustainable sources of funding are used for Veterans transportation services and cover the full cost of the program.</li> </ul>

Marketing / Education/ Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market/promote the system to ensure target populations are aware of services available.</li> <li>• Continue to use social media to enhance community visibility.</li> <li>• Coordinate with the Gorge TransLink on joint marketing and outreach projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track increase in ridership</li> <li>• Use community based organizations to lead needs assessments.</li> <li>• Measure use of services by target populations and the effectiveness of the transportation program changes.</li> <li>• Measure number of partnerships established.</li> </ul>
Planning and Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance.</li> <li>• Participate in the regular meetings of human services agencies.</li> <li>• Seek partnerships with local organizations to provide needed local services.</li> <li>• Work with the County Court to elevate and enhance transportation services, including Veterans transportation services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend Gorge TransLink Alliance meetings.</li> <li>• Attend human service agency meetings regularly.</li> <li>• Attend County Court meetings to share regular updates, challenges, successes.</li> </ul>
Organizational Capacity Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and structure office staff positions, roles, responsibilities with the goal of increasing capacity.</li> <li>• Provide training opportunities for all staff.</li> <li>• Work with ODOT staff to identify and attend grant writing workshops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transportation provider capacity levels identified and increased.</li> </ul>

## Plan Review and Adoption

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### 2007-2010 Coordinated Plan Adoption

The new Transportation Coordinator, Marnene Benson-Wood, provided input for the finalization of this plan at a meeting on August 23, 2007. On August 28, 2007, the plan was presented to the STF Committee for their review. A workshop was held on September 6, 2007 at which time the Committee submitted recommendations for consideration which have been incorporated into the final plan. The 2007-2010 plan was adopted by the Sherman County Court on September 19, 2007.

### 2009-2011 Coordinated Plan Update

Under contract with Association of Oregon Counties, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District began updating the plan for 2009-2012. The draft was presented for comment to the Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee on January 20, 2009. The plan was posted on MCEDD's website (<http://www.mcedd.org>) for public review between February 2009 and March 2009. Notice of plan availability was noted in the Sherman County eNews and made available in hard copy or electronic (PDF) form. The final version was presented to the Sherman County Community Transit Coordinator, Sherman County Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee and to the Sherman County Court for adoption in April 2009.

### 2012 Coordinated Transportation Plan Addendum

The Gorge TransLink Mobility Manager met with Sherman County Community Transit in September 2012 to review the Coordinated Plan and prepare an addendum in advance of the full plan update anticipated for 2013. The plan addendum draft was presented for comment to the Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee on January 14, 2013. The final version was presented to the Sherman County Community Transit Coordinator, Sherman County Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee and to the Sherman County Court for approval in January 2013.

### 2016-2020 Coordinated Plan Update

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District began updating the plan in 2016-2019. A draft was presented to Sherman County's STF Committee on August 16 and September 27, 2016. The draft plan was also posted on the MCEDD's website (<http://www.mcedd.org>), the Sherman County (<http://www.co.sherman.or.us/index.asp>) and Gorge TransLink Alliance ([www.gorgetranslink.com](http://www.gorgetranslink.com)) websites for public review between August and September 2016. Paper copies were available for review at the Wasco Pioneer Potlatch, the Sherman County Senior and Community Center and the Sherman County Public/School Library during the same time period. Stakeholders were encouraged to

provide feedback. The final plan was approved by the Sherman County STF committee on September 27, 2016 and by the Sherman County Court on October 5, 2016.

### 2020-2024 Coordinated Plan Update

Under contract with Sherman County, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District updated the plan for 2020-2024. A draft was presented for comment to the STF/STIF Advisory Committee on May 28 and October 21, 2020. The draft plan was also posted on MCEDD's website (<http://www.mcedd.org>), the Sherman County website ([www.co.sherman.or.us](http://www.co.sherman.or.us)), and the Gorge TransLink Alliance website ([gorgetranslink.com](http://gorgetranslink.com)) for public review between October 26 and November 6, 2020. Paper copies were available for review at the Sherman County Senior and Community Center and the Sherman County Courthouse during the same time period. Notice of plan availability was noted on the Gorge TransLink and Sherman County Community Transit social media platforms. The draft plan was made available in hard copy or electronic (PDF) form. Stakeholders were encouraged to provide feedback. The final plan was recommended for submission to the Sherman County Court by the Sherman County STF/STIF committee on October 21, 2020 and by the Sherman County Court on **November 18, 2020**. (Note that date is pending.)

### Future Plan Reviews

This plan is designed to be reviewed and updated at least once every three years. It should be reviewed and updated in 2024/2025 at the latest.

## Appendices

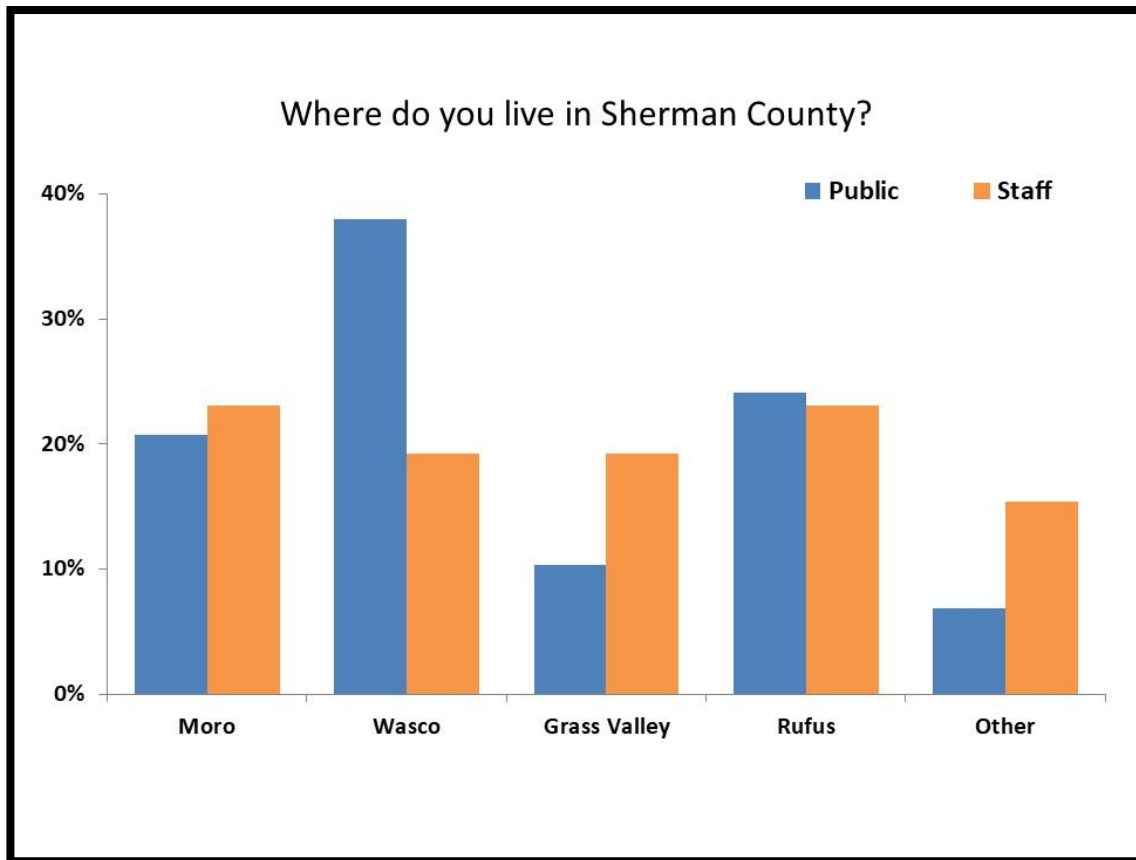
### Appendix A: Fleet Inventory for Sherman County Community Transit

Operator	Model/ Year	Mileage Estimate	ADA Accessible	Remaining Useful Life (Years)	Seating Capacity
Sherman County Community Transit	#1 2011 Chev Tahoe	155248	n/a	1	6
Sherman County Community Transit	#2 2014 Ford E350	26741	n/a	4	9
Sherman County Community Transit	#3 2018 Chev 4500 Arboc	5924	800#	3	10+2/12+1/14
Sherman County Community Transit	#4 2017 Toyo Sienna	103512	n/a	2	7
Sherman County Community Transit	#5 2009 Ford E450	89212	800#	0/100,000 miles	12+2
Sherman County Community Transit	#6A 2019 Braun Entervan	3321	800 #	9	4+1/2+3/5
Sherman County Community Transit	#7 2013 Ford E350	41487	800#	3	7+1
Sherman County Community Transit	#8 2015 Ford Explorer	130458	n/a	2	7
Sherman County Community Transit	#9 2015 Ford Escape	121624	n/a	2	5
Sherman County Community Transit	#10 2017 Ford Transit	17763	1000#	8	5+1
Sherman County Community Transit	#11 2018 Toyo Sienna	44439	n/a	6	7

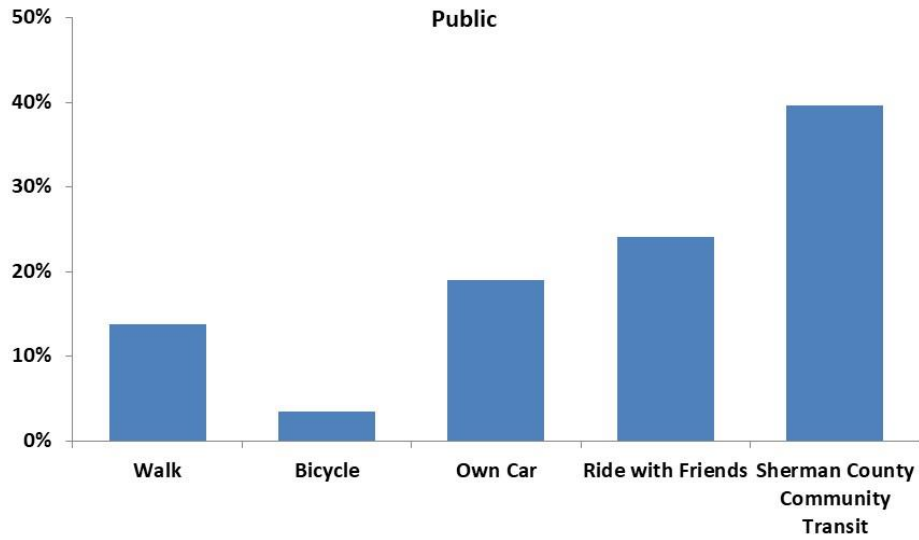


## Appendix B: Survey Results

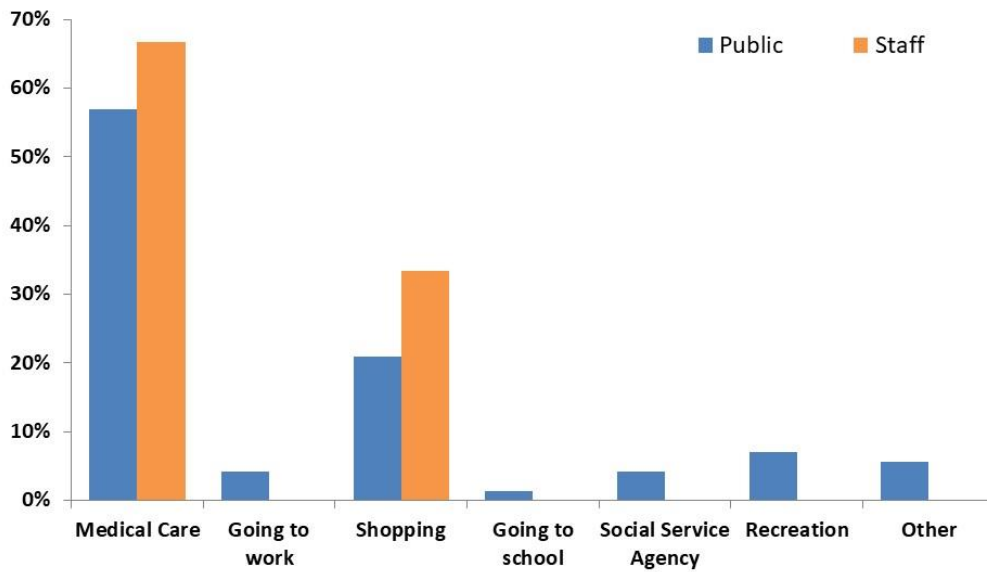
Members of the public, riders of Sherman County Community Transit, and staff participated in a paper survey that was made available between October 1, 2019, and January 15, 2020. The onboard rider survey generated 21 responses, 5 were completed by staff, and 4 were completed by members of the public, resulting in a total of 30 print surveys completed.

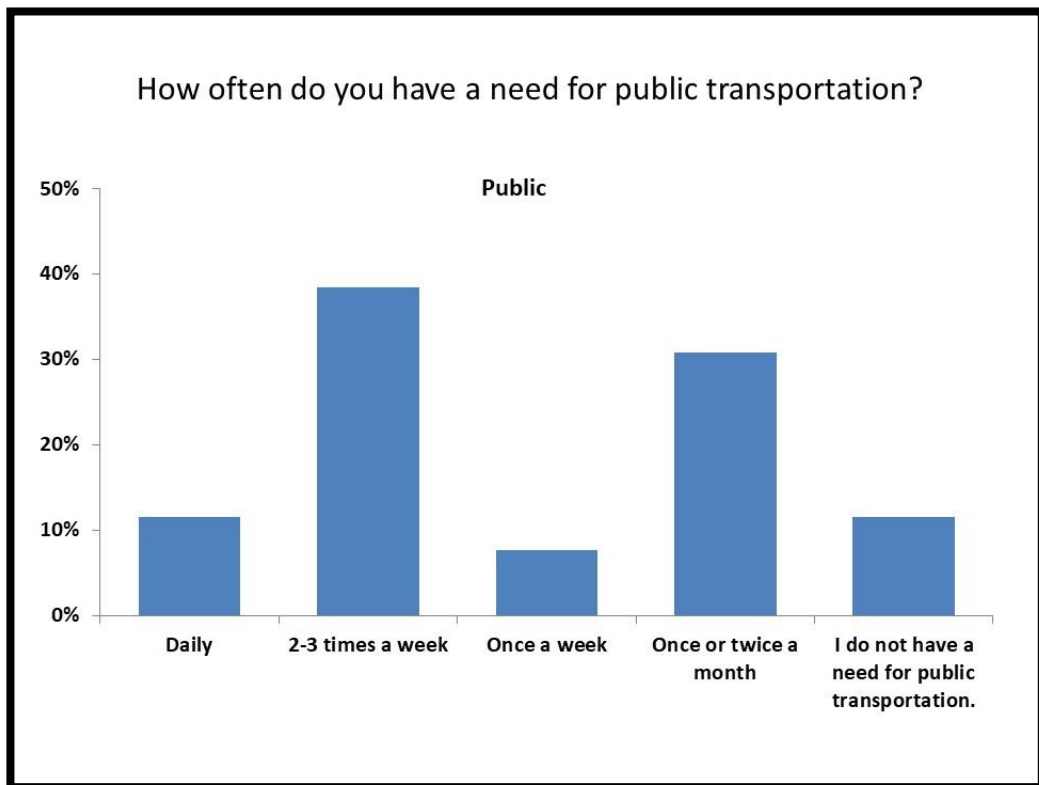
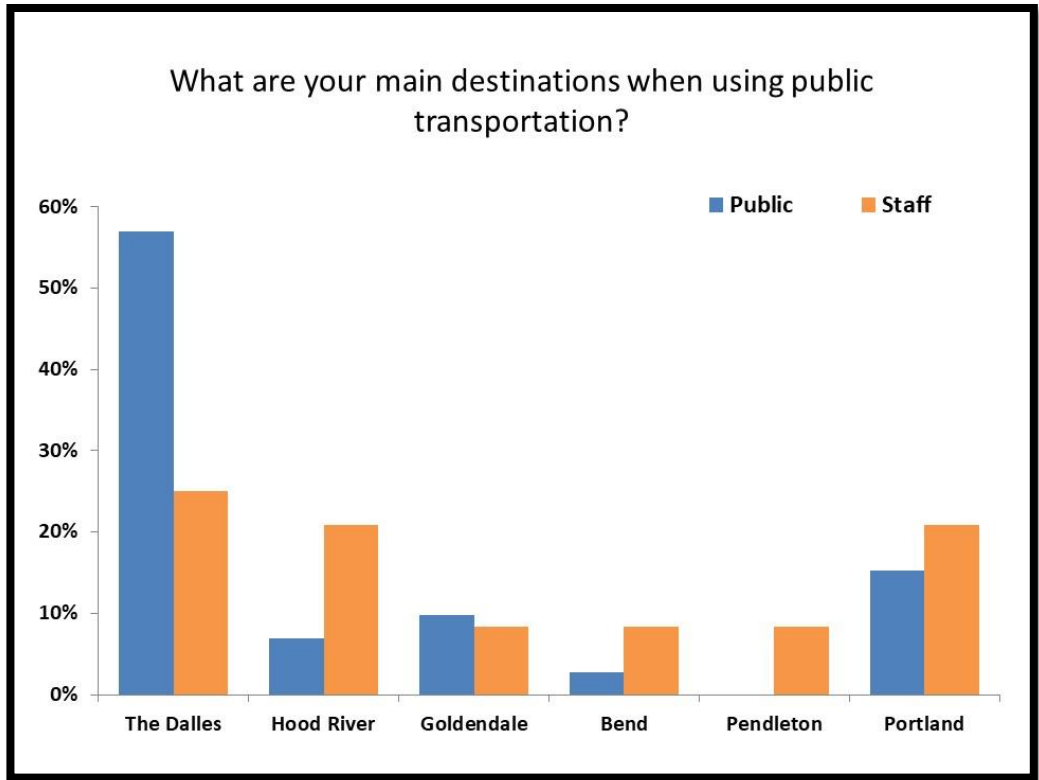


### What type of transportation do you currently use?

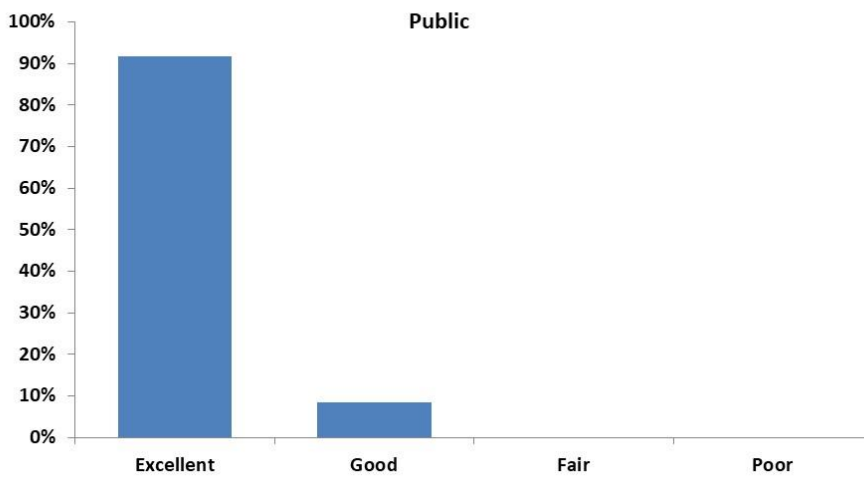


### What are your main purposes for using public transportation?

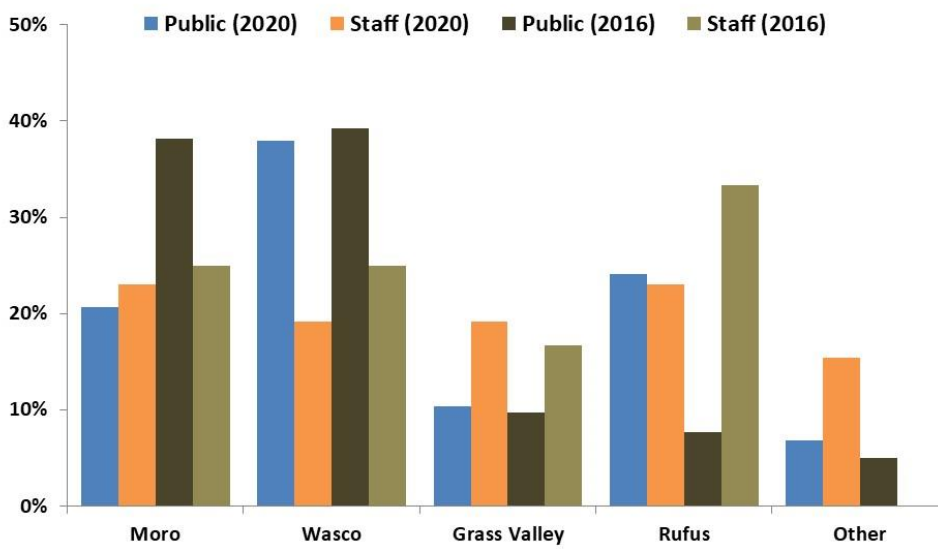


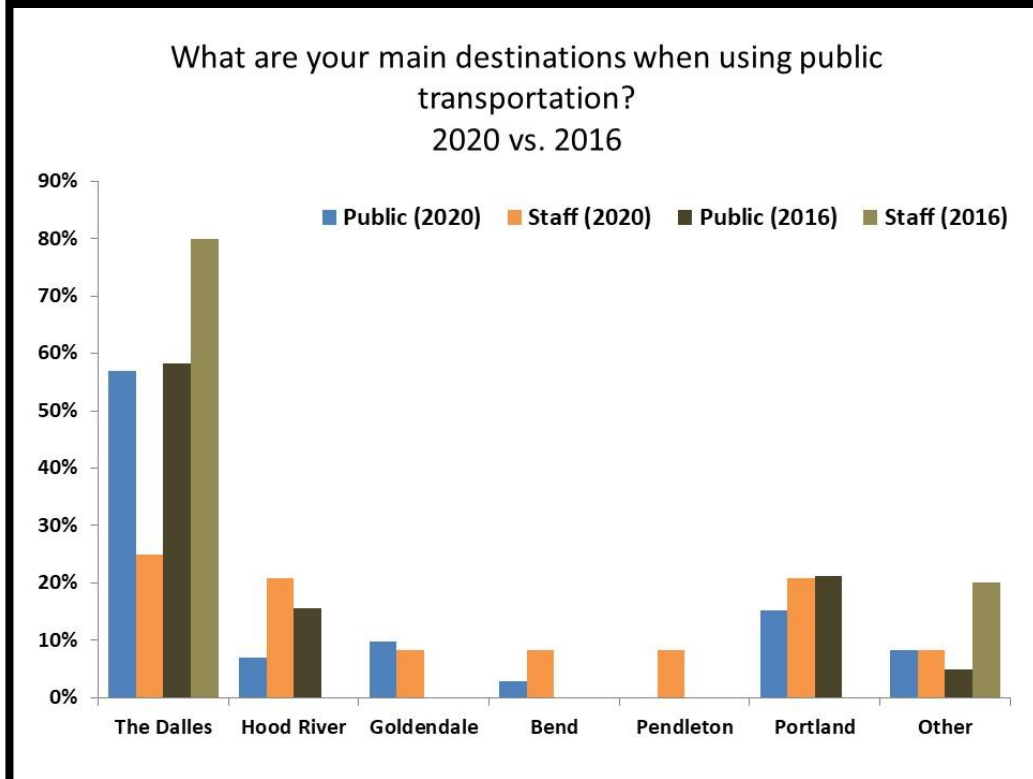
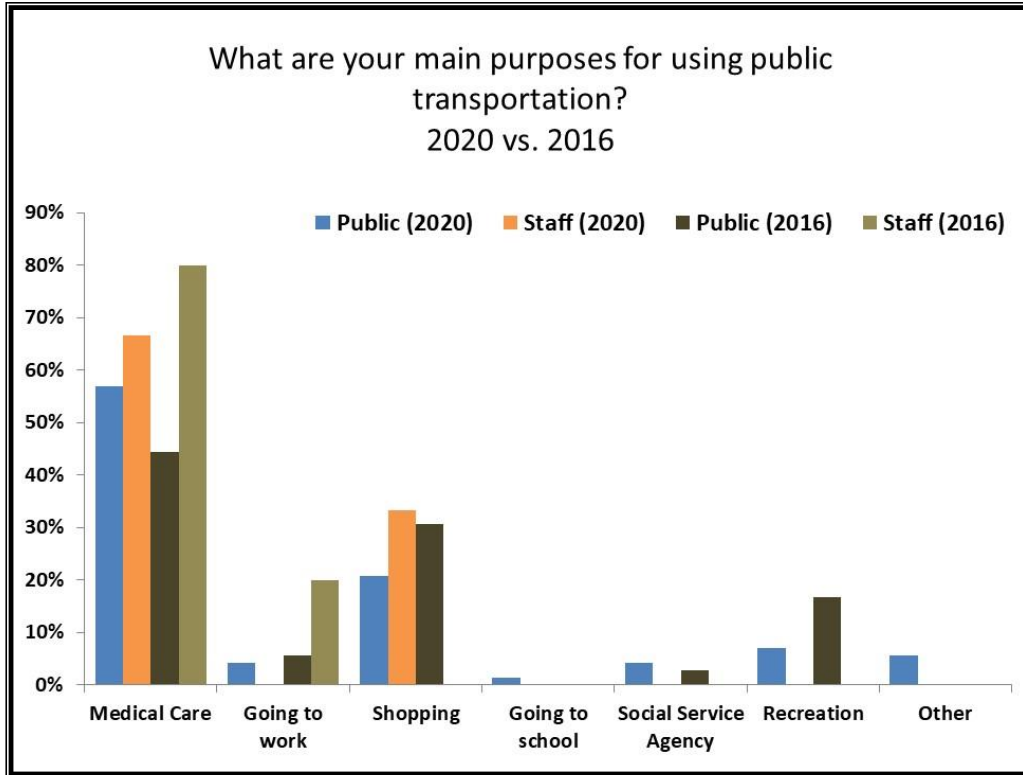


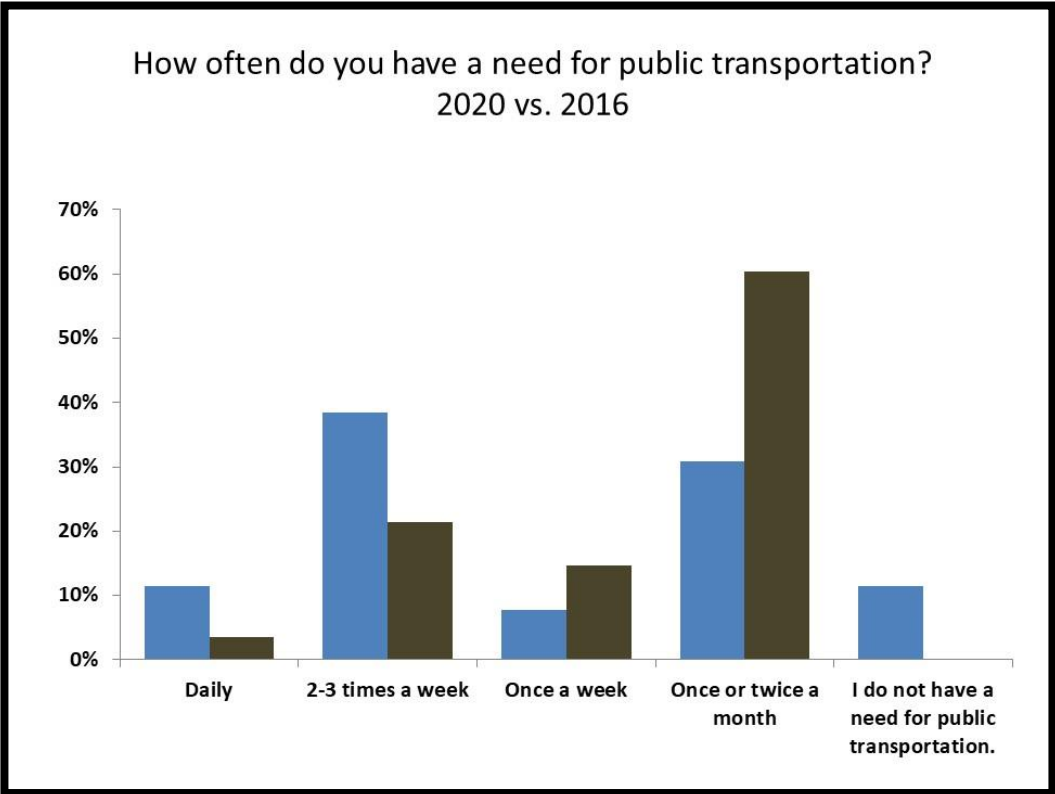
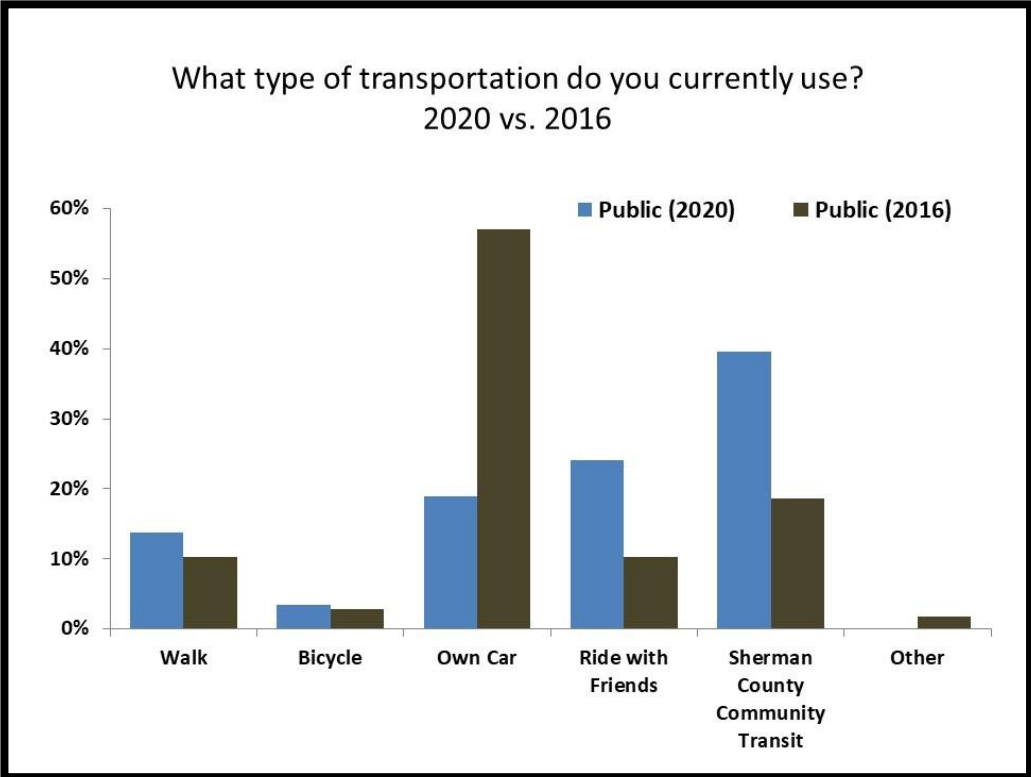
### How would you rate the service of the Sherman County Community Transit Bus?

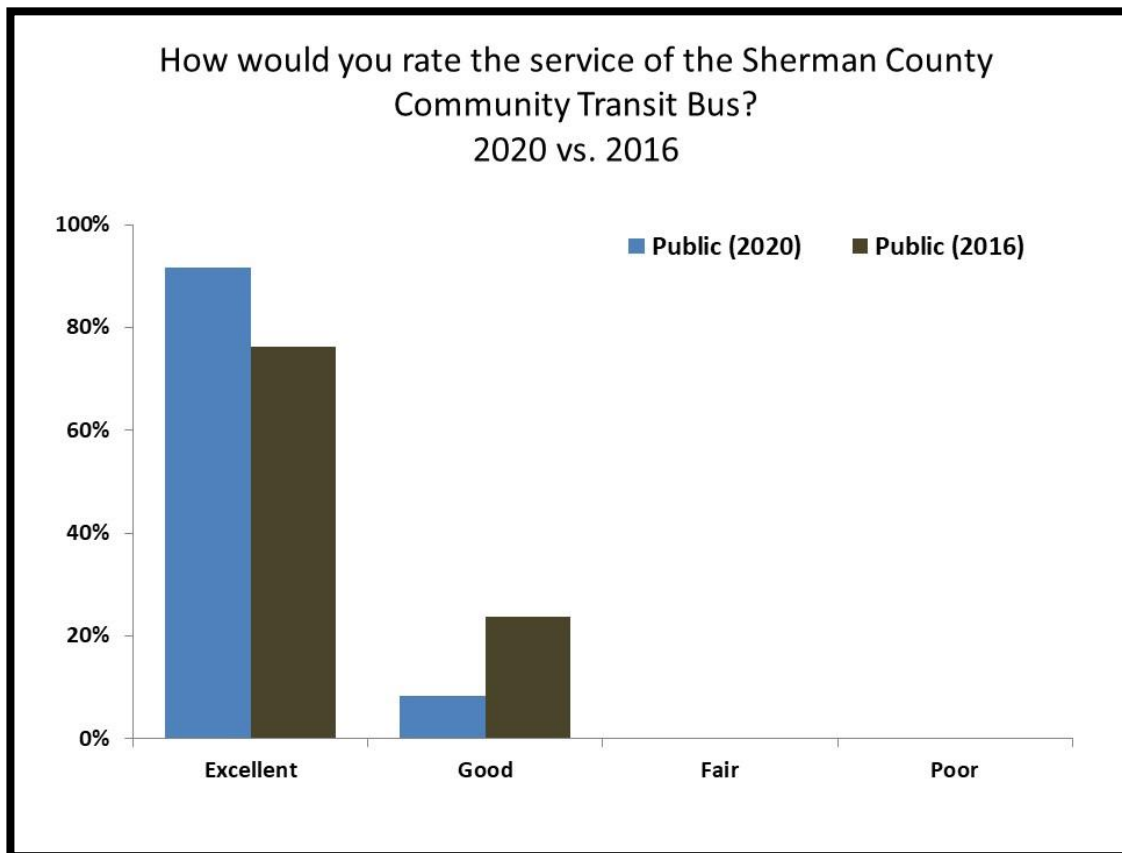


### Where do you live in Sherman County? 2020 vs. 2016









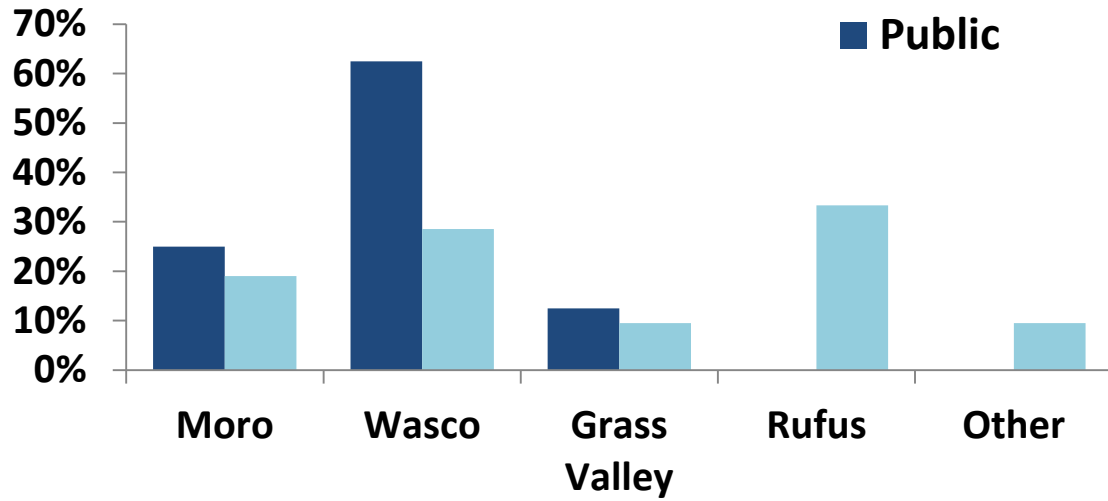
Written Comments from Survey Question: What one thing stands out as needing most improvement in Sherman County’s Public Transportation Services?

Responses:

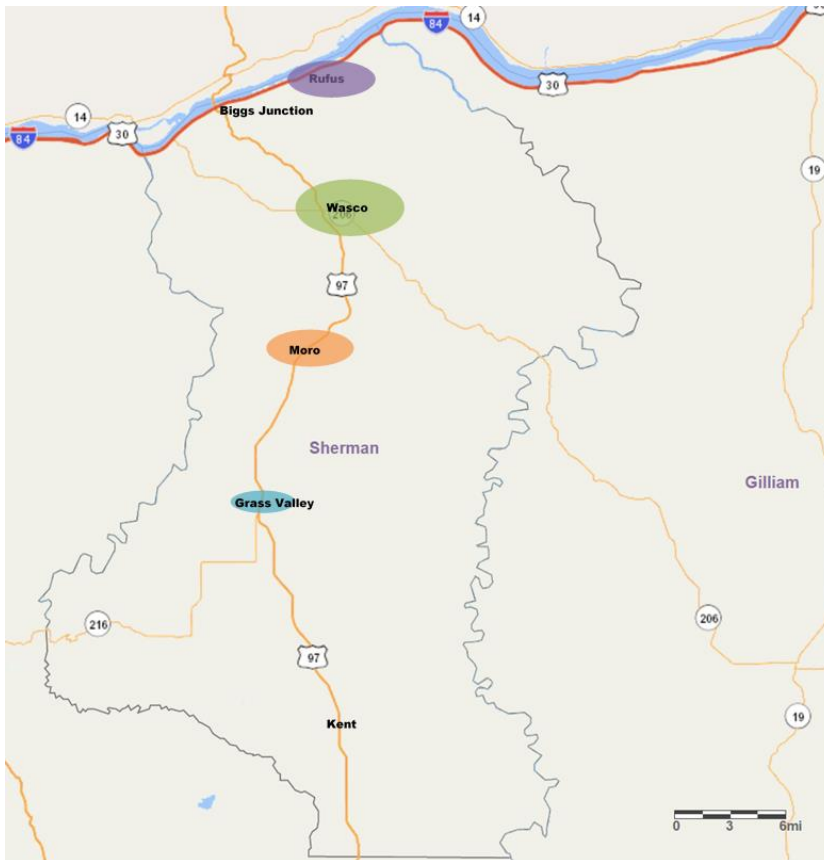
- Additional Service: more days of the week
- Additional Service: more stops, more days, expanded hours
- Better advertising: who is eligible, what services are available
- Additional Service: more routes, more stops

## Appendix C: Survey Respondents Home Locations

Areas in Sherman County where survey respondents live.

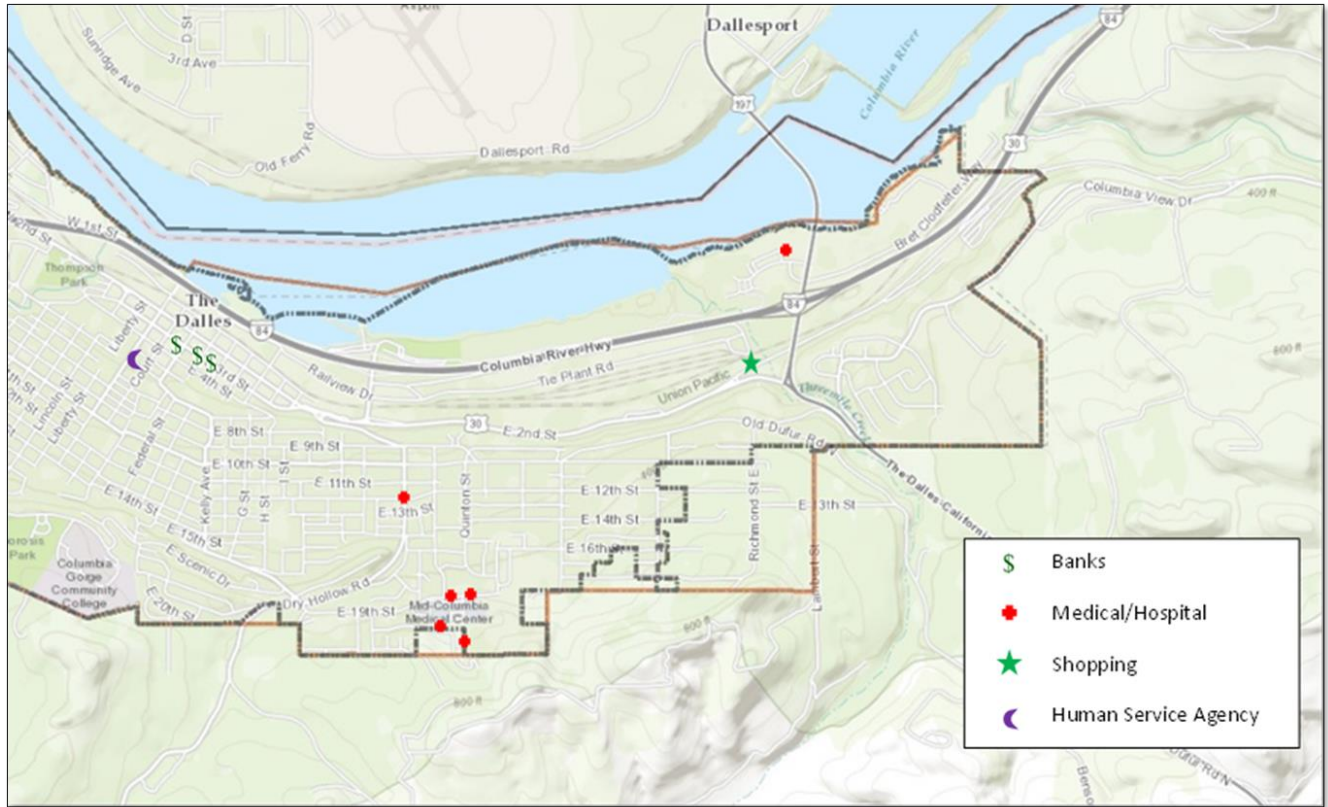


Areas in Sherman County where survey respondents live.

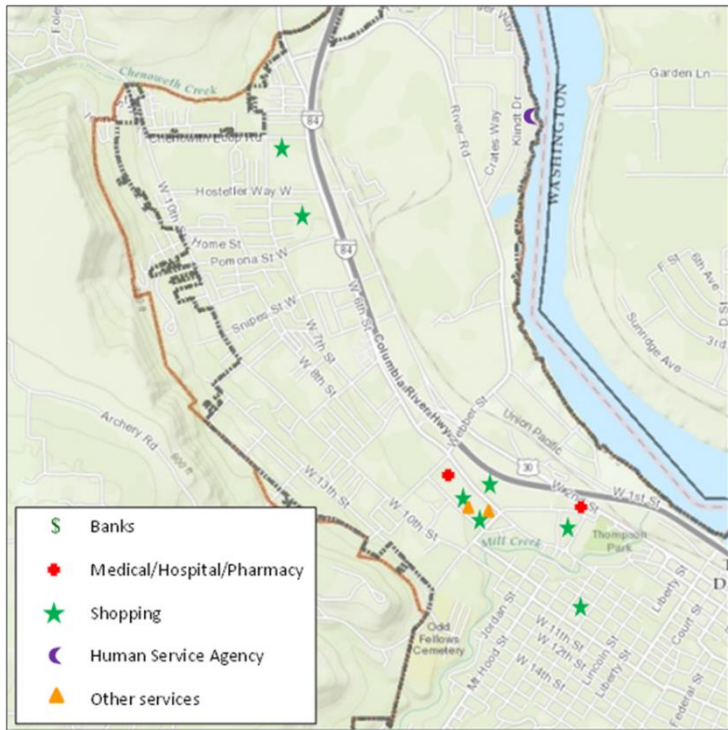




## Appendix D: Maps of Primary destinations in The Dalles

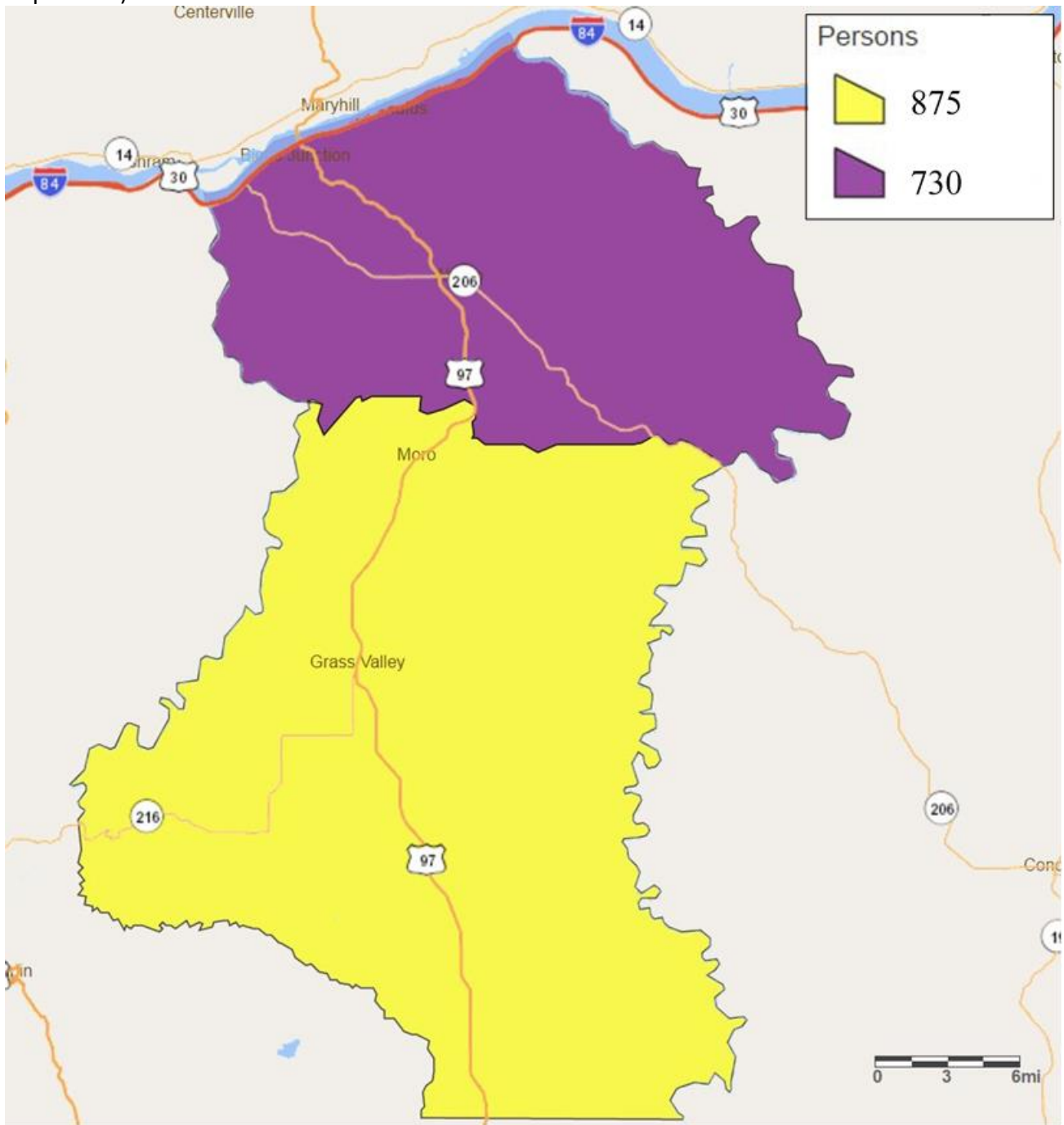


### Primary Destinations in The Dalles, west side.

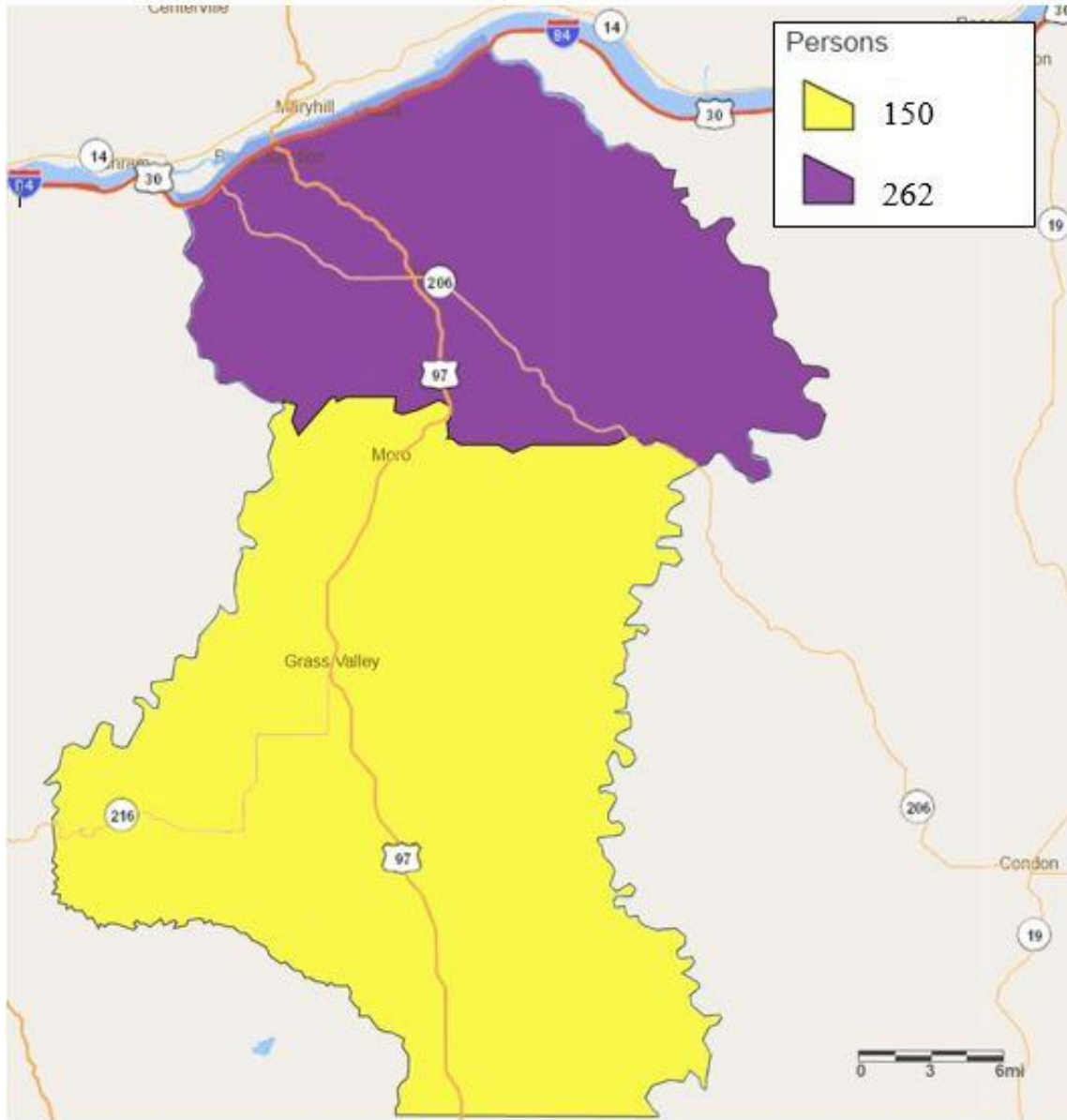


# Appendix E: Population Distribution in Sherman County

(Geography by: Block Group within Census Tract; 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Universe: Total Population)

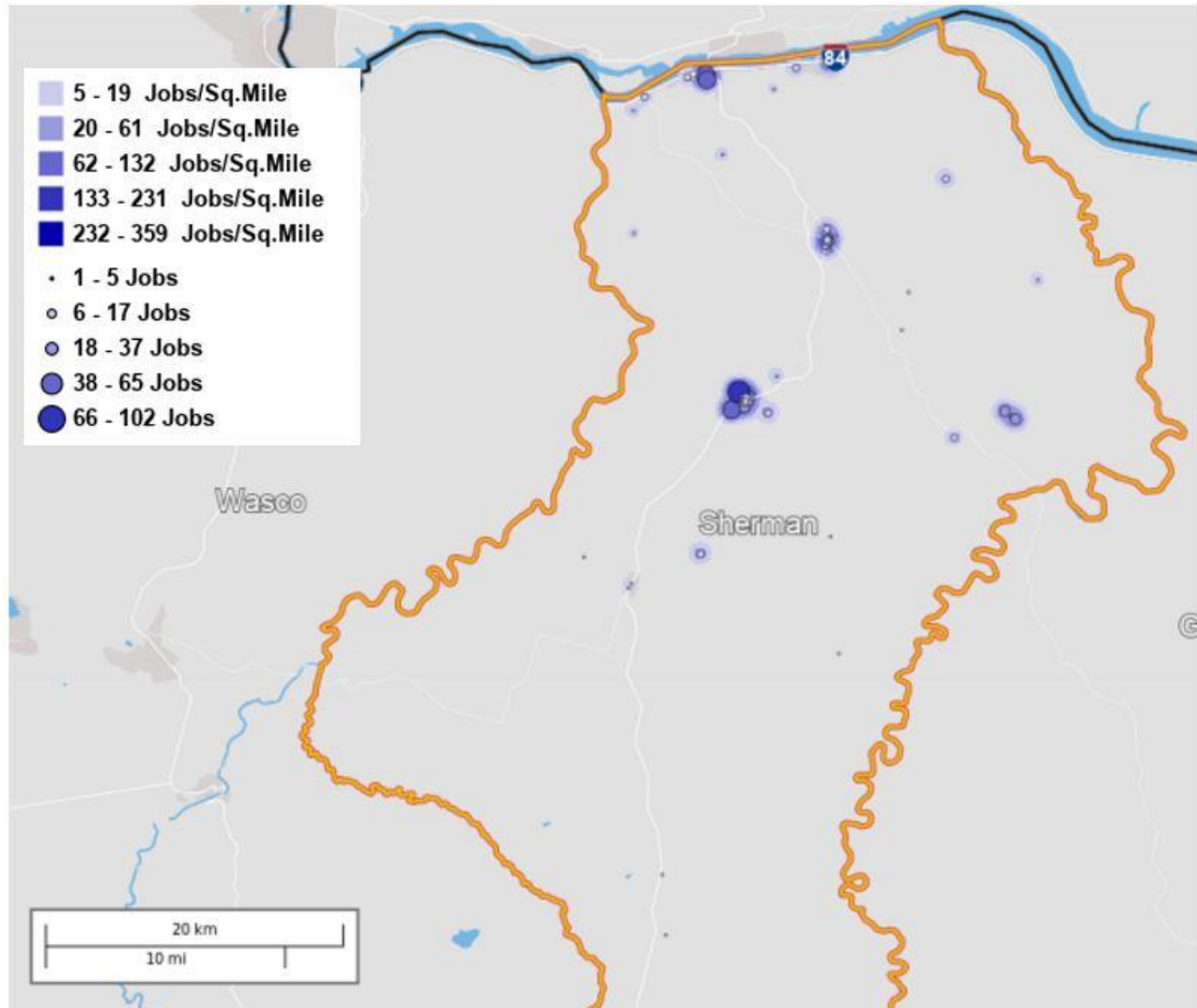


Appendix F: Distribution of Elderly Population in Sherman County  
Geography by: Block Group within Census Tract; Data: 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates; Universe:  
Population 65 years and over)



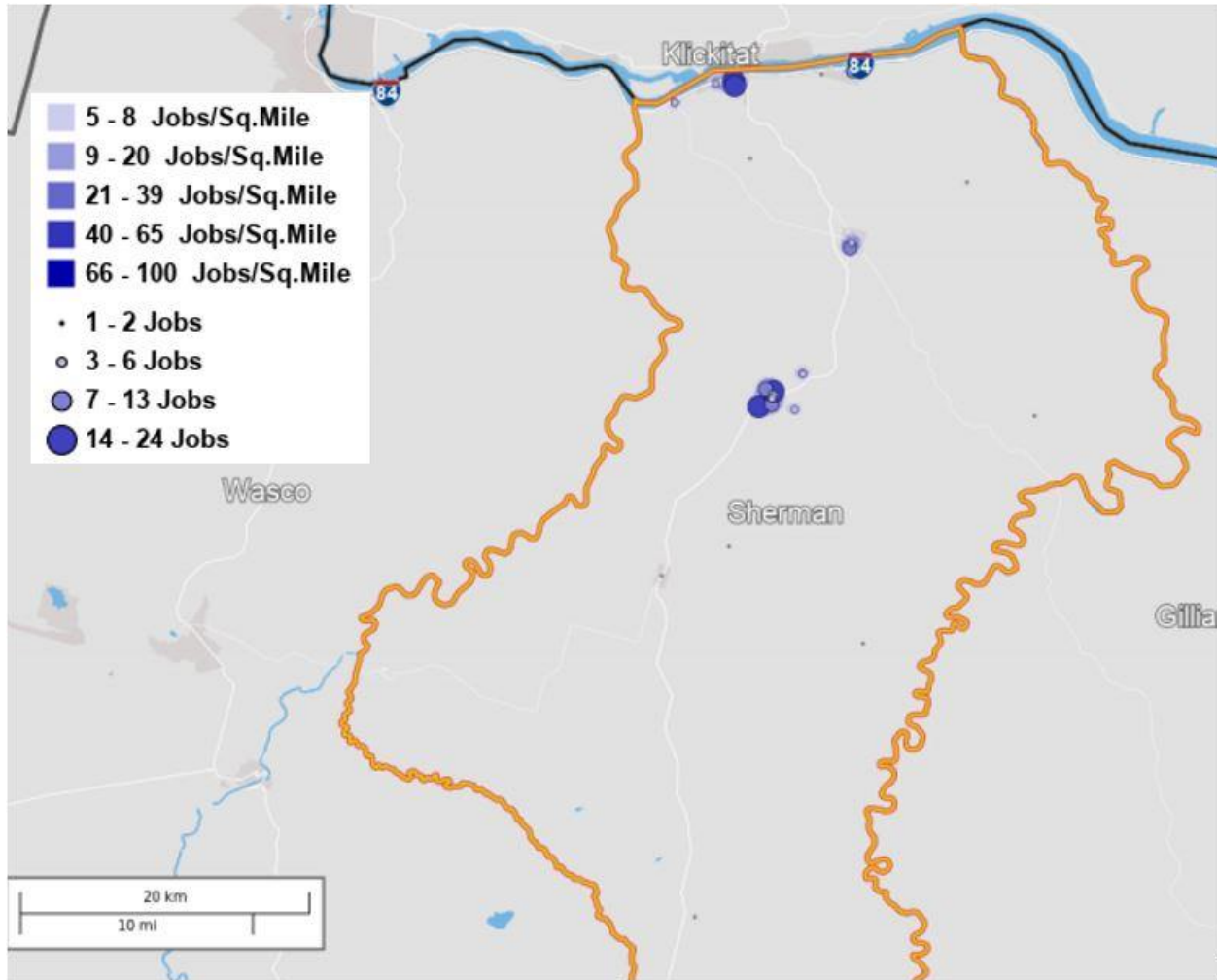
## Appendix G: Distribution of Work Areas in Sherman County

(Data: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2017); Universe: Counts and Densities of all jobs and all workers)



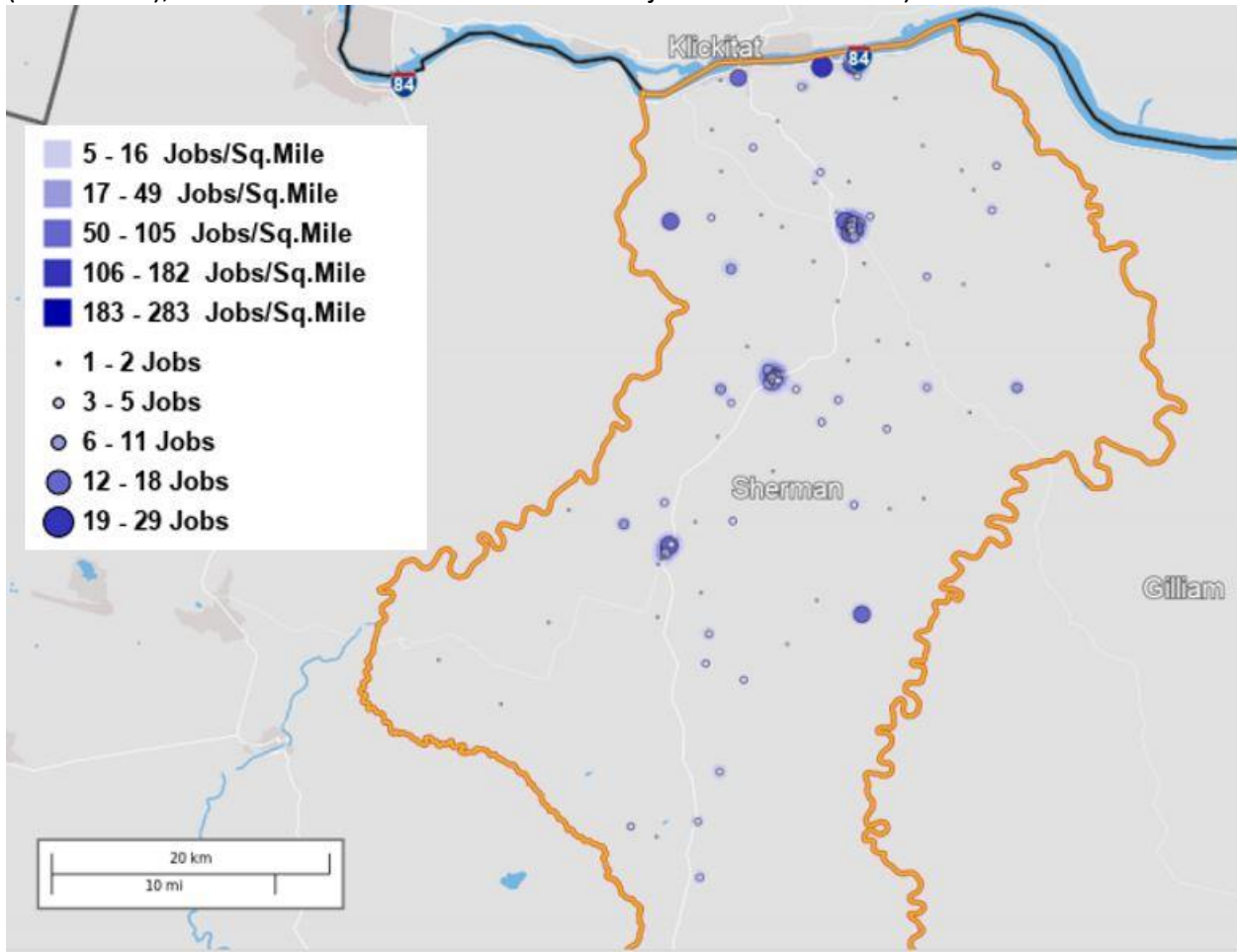
## Appendix H: Distribution of Work Areas for Low Income Workers in Sherman County

(Data: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2017); Universe: Counts and Densities of all jobs and workers making \$1,250 per month or less)



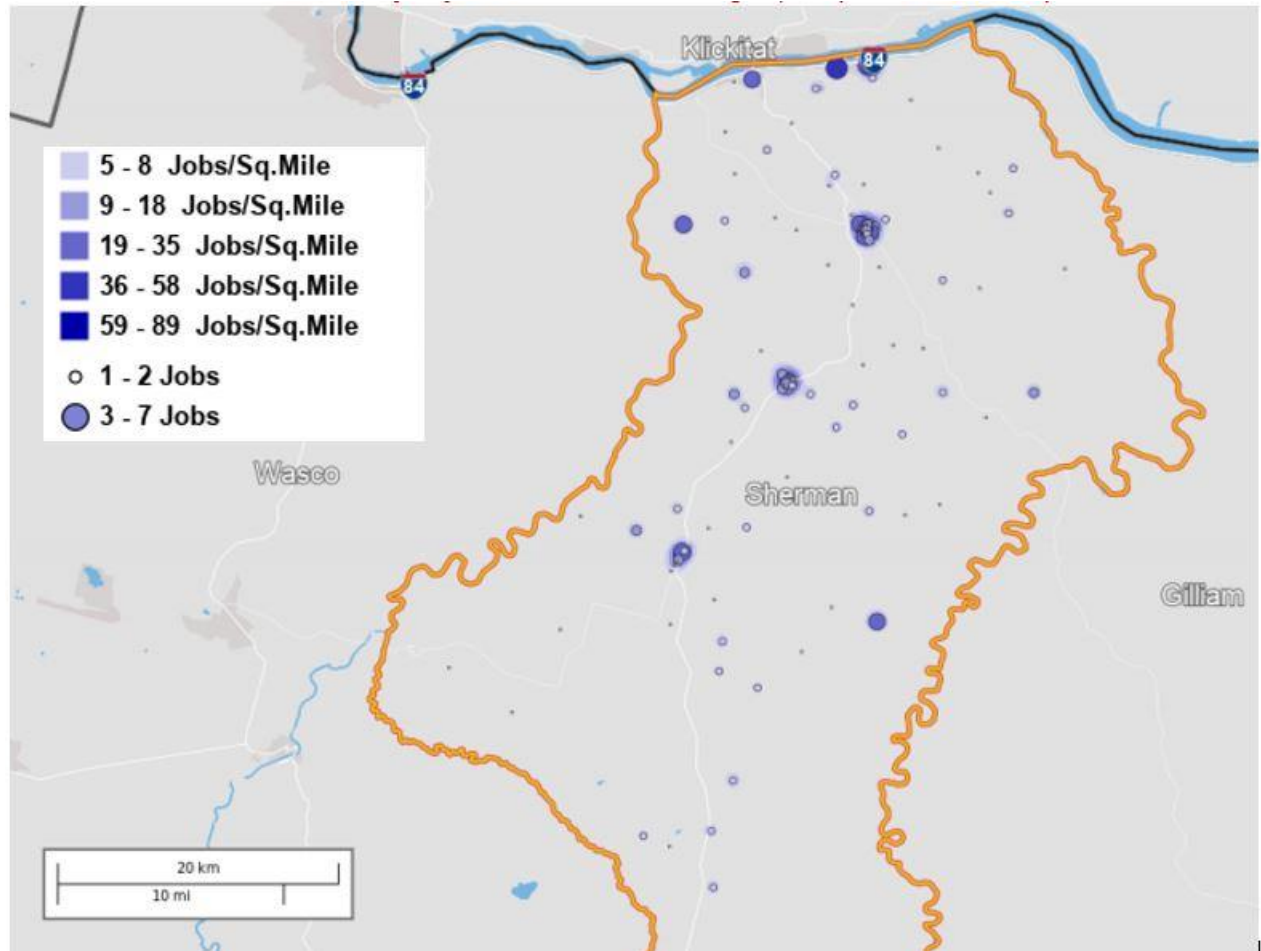
## Appendix I: Distribution of Home Areas for Workers in Sherman County

(Data: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2017); Universe: Counts and Densities of all jobs and all workers)



## Appendix J: Distribution of Home Areas for Low Income Workers in Sherman County

(Data: U.S. Census Bureau OnTheMap Application and LEHD Origin-Destination Employment Statistics (2002-2017); Universe: Counts and Densities of all jobs and workers making \$1,250 per month or less)



## Appendix K: 2020-2024 Plan Adoption

The 2020-2024 Sherman County Coordinated Plan was presented to the Sherman County Community Transit Coordinator and the STF/STIF Advisory committee for recommendation on October 21, 2020 and then to the Sherman County Court for adoption on November 18, 2020.

Adopted by the Sherman County Court:

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Judge

Date