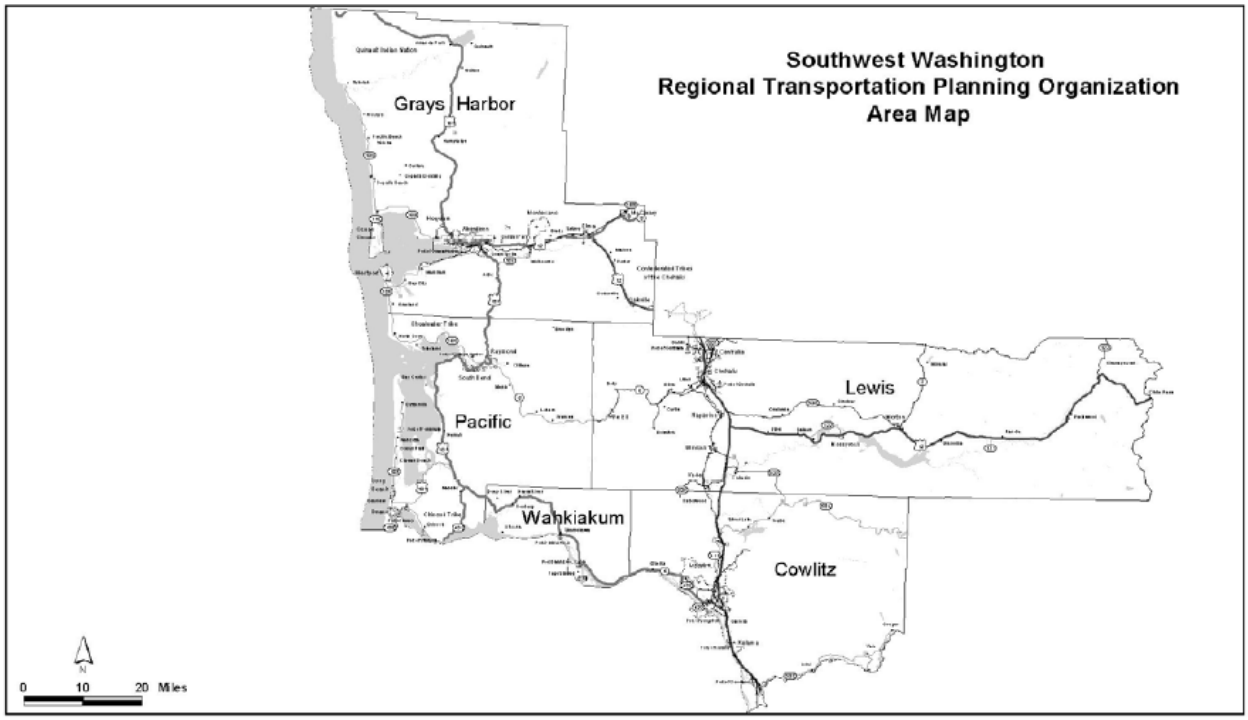
Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan



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Submitted by:
Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments and
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Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
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Community Urban Bus Service
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Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan
Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background	
Overview	1-1
Introduction	1-3
Eligible Funding Sources	1-4
Project Goals	1-5
Chapter 2: Project Methodology	
Stakeholder Involvement	2-1
Document Existing Services	2-1
Demographic Profile/Maps	2-2
Needs Assessment/Identify Strategies	2-2
Prioritization of Service Needs/Projects	2-2
Chapter 3: Unmet Needs and Strategies to Address Them	
Cowlitz County	3-1
Wahkiakum County	3-12
Lewis County	3-18
Pacific County	3-25
Grays Harbor County	3-30
Conclusion	3-39
Chapter 4: Proposed Project List for FY 2007 Funding Requests	
Ranking Strategy	4-1
Ranked List of Projects	4-2

Appendix A: Stakeholders

Appendix B: Cowlitz County Emergency Response Plan for Special Needs Populations Scope

Figures

Figure 1: Cowlitz County Trip Attractors 3-7
Figure 2: Cowlitz County Transit Dependent Population 3-8
Figure 3: Wahkiakum County Trip Attractors 3-14
Figure 4: Wahkiakum County Transit Dependent Population 3-15
Figure 5: Estimated Population in Lewis County 3-18
Figure 6: Lewis County Trip Attractors 3-22
Figure 7: Lewis County Transit Dependent Population 3-23
Figure 8: Pacific County Trip Attractors 3-27
Figure 9: Pacific County Transit Dependent Population 3-28
Figure 10: Grays Harbor County Population 3-30
Figure 11: Grays Harbor County Trip Attractors 3-35
Figure 12: Grays Harbor County Transit Dependent Population 3-36

Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

This document was first written in 2007 by Landsman Transportation Planning, LLC. The Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments and the Grays Harbor Council of Governments has updated the document to reflect current needs and trends. This has been developed and written to respond to Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and WSDOT requirements that all transit projects funded by FTA programs to serve the transit needs of the transit dependent including elderly, disabled and low-income people, be part of a coordinated transit plan. WSDOT has taken this requirement even further to include FTA 5311 projects that are submitting consolidated funding grant requests.

Overview

Findings in this report are based on demographic analysis of the study area, interviews with key stakeholders, transportation providers, and community forums. Chapter 2 presents project methodology; Chapter 3, Unmet Needs and Strategies to Address Them; and Chapter 4, Project Ranking. The major conclusions are:

- Transportation in urban areas is easier than in rural areas. This is particularly true in Lewis and Cowlitz Counties where transit serves only the major population centers of Chehalis/Centralia and Longview/Kelso. Twin Transit and the Community Urban Bus Service (CUBS) should continue to explore options to provide service outside the boundaries of the cities they serve, especially when the local economic climate improves.

- There is a need for countywide service in both Lewis and Cowlitz Counties. Without a countywide system, many of the smaller communities receive no service at all and others only limited service. While social service organizations have done outstanding jobs to fill the gaps, they receive no sales tax funding so they must rely on grants and they are not able to meet all needs. Countywide service can become a part of existing Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBAs) or can be provided by establishing new ones to serve the areas not currently included.

- While transportation may be easier in the urban areas, there are several transportation services throughout the five-county RTPO that serve the rural areas and provide an extremely important connection to medical, shopping, and social opportunities in the urban areas. It is important to continue to support and maintain these transportation services as they provide a vital link to services and regional transportation connections and they continue to experience an increased demand.

- Coordination between social service agencies and transit agencies needs to continue beyond this plan. These efforts must be continued so that the transit dependent can lead active productive lives. Therefore, the SWRTPO will establish transit committees made up of both providers and users or advocates

to meet on a quarterly basis in order to continue the sharing of information and explore coordination possibilities.

- There are riders who would like to use public transit, or who will soon be relying on public transit that are unfamiliar with how each system works and are nervous and intimidated by the public transit system. There is a need for travel training or a 'bus buddies' program to provide rider education, especially to the elderly population.

- While transportation providers understand the need for emergency coordination and are willing to provide services when called upon, there is a lack of formal coordination between emergency management departments and transit in the majority of jurisdictions within the RTPO.

- There is no central source of ride information that makes it easy for riders to see all transportation options available in their area.

- Social service and other organizations have managed to fill transit gaps by providing an array of services. This is especially true in those counties that do not have a countywide Public Transit Benefit Area (Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Lewis Counties).

Introduction

Access to goods, services and activities is critical to the quality of life of all residents in the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Planning Organization (SWRTPO) of Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific and Wahkiakum Counties. This is particularly true for older adults and people with disabilities - segments of the population that will continue to increase both proportionately and in absolute numbers over the next 20 years. This is also true for people with limited incomes and without access to a working vehicle. Access to life activities can often be a challenge in these five counties because of their rural nature and distance between urban areas. In all but Grays Harbor County, a clear majority of people live in unincorporated areas.

Presently, there are a variety of transportation options available to the elderly and disability communities in this region. Four transit authorities provide fixed-route and paratransit services. They are Twin Transit in the Centralia/Chehalis urban area of Lewis County, Grays Harbor Transit Authority in Grays Harbor County, Pacific Transit in Pacific County and CUBS in the urban area of Longview and Kelso in Cowlitz County. In addition, several human services organizations and tribes identified unmet needs and began providing transit services. These include

- Wahkiakum on the Move
- Lower Columbia Community Action Council (CAP)
- Coastal Community Action Council
- L.E.W.I.S. Mountain Highway Transit
- Cowlitz Tribal Transit
- Quinault Indian Nation Transit
- Lewis County Senior Transportation Services
- Catholic Community Services
- Human Services Council
- Disabled American Veterans Van

Transit providers and human service agencies have often worked to coordinate services but barriers sometimes limit the success of these efforts. These barriers include regulatory restrictions, funding requirements and differing perceptions. For example, both Medicaid and ADA have scheduling requirements that may make it difficult to coordinate use. Additionally, some people feel uncomfortable riding with others or cannot ride with other people.

With the passage of the 2005 reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, titled SAFETEA-LU, regulations specify that it is desirable for federal monies to be coordinated and consolidated in *a process through which representatives of different agencies and client groups work together to achieve any one or all of the following goals:*

- *more cost-effective service delivery;*
- *increased capacity to serve unmet needs;*
- *improved quality of service; and,*
- *services which are more easily understood and accessed by riders*.

Moreover, to give teeth to this, FTA mandates that starting in Fiscal Year 2007, projects funded through three programs included in SAFETEA-LU, including the Job Access and

Reverse Commute Program (JARC, Section 5316), New Freedom (Section 5317) and the Formula Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) are required to be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan. SAFETEA-LU guidance issued by the Federal Transportation Administration (FTA) indicates that the plan should be a *unified, comprehensive strategy for public transportation service delivery that identifies the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with limited income, laying out strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritizing services.* The three funding programs focus on the needs of transportation disadvantaged persons or those with special transportation needs that cannot be met through traditional means (access to automobile or public transportation). For the purpose of this plan, the State of Washington statutory definition of people with special transportation needs is used: *those people, including their attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age, are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation*. While SAFETEA-LU does not require that Section 5311 funds be subject to the coordinated plan, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has established this requirement.

Eligible Funding Sources and Types of Projects

Projects funded with the four sources of grant funds are required to be selected through a competitive process, and derived from this coordinated planning effort. Many, if not all, of the suggested strategies and solutions could be structured to take advantage of available program funds. The sources of funds and examples of eligible projects are described below:

<u>Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC)</u>
The purpose of the JARC program is to fund local programs that offer job access services for low-income individuals. JARC funds are distributed to states on a formula basis, depending on that state's rate of low-income population. This approach differs from previous funding cycles, when grants were awarded purely on an "earmark" basis. JARC funds will pay for up to 50% of operating funds to support the project budget, and 80% for a capital project. The remaining funds are required to be provided through local match sources. Examples of eligible JARC projects include:

- Late-night and weekend service
- Guaranteed Ride Home Programs
- Vanpools or shuttle services to improve access to employment or training sites
- Car-share or other projects to improve access to autos
- Access to child care and training

<u>New Freedom Program</u>
The New Freedom Program provides funding to serve persons with disabilities. Overall, the purpose of the program is to go "beyond" the minimal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Funds are distributed to states based on that state's population of persons with disabilities. The same match requirements for JARC apply to the New Freedom Program. Examples of eligible New Freedom Program projects include:

- Expansion of paratransit service hours or service area beyond minimal requirements

- Purchase of accessible taxi or other vehicles
- Promotion of accessible ride sharing or vanpool programs
- Administration of volunteer programs
- Building curb-cuts, providing accessible bus stops
- Travel Training programs

Elderly and Disabled Program (Section 5310)
Funds for this program are allocated by formula to states for capital costs of providing services to elderly persons and persons with disabilities. Typically, vans or small buses are available to support non-profit transportation providers. A 20% local match is required.

General Public Transportation: Non-urbanized areas (Section 5311)
Federal Section 5311 funds are intended to enhance the access of people in non-urbanized areas to health care, shopping, education, employment, public services, and recreation. Services are available to the general public, but may also be used to support services for elderly and disabled. The match requirement is consistent with the JARC and New Freedom programs. Examples of eligible projects include:

- Wheelchair accessible passenger vehicles
- Communications equipment
- Purchase and installation of bus shelters or other amenities
- Operating Assistance

Project Goals

The purpose of the Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan is to provide a framework for prioritizing projects to receive state and federal transportation funds. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has a competitive consolidated grant application process for both state and federal public transportation grants. WSDOT serves as the designated recipient for the federal funds listed above intended for non-urbanized portions of the state, and, in turn distributes them to local entities through this competitive grant process. Applicants submit a completed grant to WSDOT and they determine the appropriate type of funding to be used on the submitted project. This process eliminates the need for applicants to fill out multiple applications. It is a requirement that projects funded through the next funding cycle, effective July 1, 2011, be derived from a coordinated transportation plan. The overarching goal of this planning effort, then, is to respond both to SAFETEA-LU and the State of Washington requirements for receiving these federal funds.

WSDOT identifies six specific goals for the Consolidated Grant Program:

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

• **Provide a community benefit** – Assist local areas with determining community benefits and support for paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation.

• **Preservation or enhancement** – Provide funding to preserve or enhance paratransit/special needs or rural public transportation where there is a demonstrated need and measurable benefit.

• **Community connections** – Support a sustainable network of transportation services within and between communities.

• **Financial partnerships** – Establish opportunities for collaboration among local jurisdictions, regional organizations, private sector agencies, state and federal governments, and tribal governments. Ensure stakeholders have a voice in project development. Encourage appropriate cost sharing for projects.

• **Support coordination** – Local organizations are required to coordinate services with other transportation providers in their area, as well as other organizations potentially able to use or purchase the services.

Additionally, an important goal for this plan is to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders with a common interest in human service transportation to convene and collaborate on how best to provide transportation services for these targeted populations. Specifically, the stakeholders are called upon to identify service gaps and/or barriers, strategize on solutions most appropriate to meet these needs based on local circumstances, and prioritize these needs for inclusion in the plan. Stakeholder outreach and participation is a key element to the development of this plan, and federal guidance issued by FTA specifically requires this participation, and recommends that it come from a broad base of groups and organizations involved in the coordinated planning process, including (but not limited to):

- area transportation planning agencies,
- transit riders and potential riders,
- public transportation providers,
- private transportation providers,
- non-profit transportation providers,
- human service agencies funding and/or supporting access for human services, and other government agencies that administer programs for targeted population,
- advocacy organizations,
- community-based organizations,
- elected officials, and tribal representatives

Chapter 2 provides more detail on how stakeholder involvement was conducted during this planning process.

Chapter 2

Project Methodology

This chapter discusses the methodology used to develop the SWRTPO Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan. This plan was updated by both the Cowlitz-Wahkiakum Council of Governments (CWCOG) and the Grays Harbor Council of Governments (GHCOG) staff.

Stakeholder Involvement

One of the more important goals for this plan is to provide an opportunity for a diverse range of stakeholders to participate in the planning process. Stakeholder outreach and participation is a key element to the development of this plan, and federal guidance issued by FTA specifically requires this participation, and recommends that it come from a broad base of groups and organizations involved in the coordinated planning process.

To achieve this, in Grays Harbor County, agencies and service providers were first interviewed in person. Discussion focused on services provided, user numbers, funding issues, unmet needs, and program changes since the last plan was published. Discussion with Grays Harbor County Emergency Management covered existing procedure or lack thereof, barriers to participation, and the need for a county-wide unified format for emergency evacuation procedures. In addition to in-person interviews, a group meeting was held to encourage discussion between transportation providers. Discussion included existing services, common destinations and origins, emergency management, unmet transportation needs and strategies, and new service recommendations.

Throughout the other areas of the RTPO, targeted groups of community stakeholders were interviewed to provide input on available transportation services, information on program changes since the plan was last updated, identify unmet needs and potential strategies to address them. To create a plan that truly reflected the transportation needs of the transit dependent populations, the planning process also sought to maximize existing resources and relationships through interviewing key stakeholders, while also reaching out to those who wouldn't typically participate in a planning process. We did this by reviewing recent transit surveys and studies to gauge riders concerns, attending community forums, hosting meetings, participating in open houses and attending and presenting at existing meetings such as neighborhood associations, AARP, and senior fairs. This process allowed staff to reach a broad range of users of the systems rather than just the agencies that associate with or provide transportation services. It also provided a more relaxed environment that yielded more candid responses from users of the system and allowed staff time to provide information on services and answer questions.

Document Existing Transportation Services

This step involved documenting the range of public transportation services that already exist in within the five counties. These services include public fixed route and dial-a-ride (paratransit) services, vanpool services, and transportation services provided or

sponsored by other social service agencies. Providers were contacted by telephone to discuss their services as well as any issues or constraints.

Demographic Profile/Maps

Using 2000 Census data, two maps for each county were developed. One map shows the concentration and numbers of people who are: elderly, low-income, without a vehicle or disabled. The other map shows trip attractors such as employers with more than 100 employees, education and medical facilities, and social service offices. Both maps overlay the existing transit fixed route transit services. This step clearly shows what areas in each county are underserved as well as what areas need service the most because of a high concentration of transit dependent populations and trip attractors.

Needs Assessment/Identification of Strategies

An important step in completing this plan is the assessment of needs and identification of strategies to fill these gaps. This was accomplished through interviews with stakeholders, users of the system, and transportation providers.

Prioritization of Service Needs for FY 2011

WSDOT has allocated the five-county SWRTPO a total of 19 ranking spots; 7 A's, 6 B's, 6 C's and an unlimited number of D's. To rank submitted projects, the SWRTPO developed a ranking strategy, listed below in descending order of importance.

- Top priority: Existing projects meeting community needs
- Level 2 priority: Projects providing lifeline service to currently un-served geographic areas with transit dependent population
- Level 3 priority: Projects coordinating services to increase use or improve efficiency of existing services
- Level 4 priority: Projects that expand existing services
- Level 5 priority: Projects the upgrade quality of existing service

A ranking committee comprised of representatives from the tribes, non-profit groups, the brokerage, and a transit agency and the RTPO met and ranked the submitted projects based on the priorities identified above. The committee ranked 21 projects submitted by 10 different agencies that have been submitted through the WSDOT Consolidated Grant Process. Chapter four provides a more detailed look at the project prioritization process as well as a listing of projects submitted.

Chapter 3
Unmet Needs and Strategies to Address Them

This chapter presents the findings of the stakeholder surveys, the demographic analysis and meetings held throughout the SWRTPO. For each of the five counties it addresses:

- Demographic data
- Existing transit services
- Emergency management
- Analysis of demographic data
- Unmet needs
- Proposed strategies to address unmet needs

Cowlitz County

Cowlitz County covers 1,144 square miles and is home to an estimated 100,000 residents. Roughly 58 percent of those live in the incorporated cities of, Kelso (population 11,780) Longview (pop 36,100), Kalama (pop 2,510), Castle Rock (pop 2,150) and Woodland (pop 5,165). The remaining 42 percent live in rural, unincorporated communities such as Ryderwood, Toutle, Yale, Silver Lake, Lexington, Ariel and Cougar. Most of these communities are along I-5, the major north/south route in Cowlitz County. Of the total population 13.4 percent are 65 or older, slightly higher than the Washington State average of 11.7 percent. According to the 2000 Census, about 19,000 people have disabilities.

Existing Transportation Services

Cowlitz County has a wide range of transportation services provided by public transit, non-profit organizations and volunteer services. Most of these services are concentrated in the Longview/Kelso urban area where the majority of the county population lives, works and receives services. There are still a large number of people living in the unincorporated areas. Transit dependent people who live outside of Longview and Kelso may be able access some form of public transportation provided by one of the regional transportation providers, however, many still have to rely on friends and family to get where they need to go. Existing services include:

- **CUBS**-Community Urban Bus Service, provided by the Cowlitz Transit Authority and operated by the City of Longview, provides fixed route bus service within the cities of Longview and Kelso. CUBS runs five hourly loop routes from 7 AM to 7PM Monday through Saturday. CUBS recently passed a 2/10 sales tax increase in 2008 allowing for additional services. In response to the community support that was received, CUBS is currently preparing a Transit Enhancement Plan to determine which services to develop further. This may include a change in route structure and services provided. The Cowlitz Transit Authority board is expected to adopt the plan in mid-December. Public outreach and stakeholder interviews conducted throughout the planning process revealed several areas where services could be improved including reducing the hour headway so it is more convenient for riders to get to places, increased coordination with other area service providers at the downtown

transit center, and the need for a travel training program for fixed route and paratransit.
CUBS receives funding to provide transportation services through local sales tax revenues (3/10ths of 1 percent), Federal Transit Administration funds, stimulus funds, Paratransit special needs grants. The CUBS fleet includes 8 Gillig Phantom buses that hold between 29 and 35 passengers, and 10 paratransit vehicles. The fleet includes Zonar GPS systems that allow the staff to monitor fuel use, miles traveled, idle time, all features that can help reduce fuel consumption. The system also allows for in field diagnostics to allow drivers to know if they need to bring the vehicle in for maintenance. Pre and post trip inspections are electronic for drivers. The GPS also features customer web based access that allows them to check the location of a bus on the route in real time.

- **Paratransit Services** - CUBS also provides required ADA paratransit services during the same hours as CUBS fixed route services and within 3/4ths of a mile of the fixed routes. CUBS contracts with Paratransit Services to provide this service. Paratransit provides demand response or door to door service to the elderly or disabled who can not access the fixed route services due to a disability. Eligibility for services is determined by CUBS staff upon receipt of a completed application and professional verification of an applicant's disability. Their staff use Rides Unlimited™ scheduling/dispatching software to ensure efficient use of the system. In an effort to improve the ability to respond to the specific needs of agencies and their clients, Paratransit staff meet regularly with local social service agencies to inform them of transportation services available through CUBS.

Regional Public Transportation Services

- **Lower Columbia Community Action Council** (CAP) –The Lower Columbia Community Action Council provides several transportation services.

  Rural public transportation: CAPs Rural transportation service provides a link from the Longview/Kelso area south to connect with C-Tran at Salmon Creek 5 times a day on weekdays. This route stops at rural communities along the I-5 corridor including Kalama and Woodland. They also provide service northbound between Longview and Tumwater with stops in Lexington, Castle Rock, Toledo/Winlock and Centralia twice a day during the weekday. In an effort to serve rural commuters coming into the urban area, CAP runs an early morning and evening run between Longview and Castle Rock and Lexington, although that service has been underutilized and may be eliminated in the future. The service uses 12 –passenger lift-equipped vehicles and charges $1 each way

  The majority of CAP's riders are heading from the Longview/Kelso area south to meet up with C-TRAN at the Salmon Creek park and ride. Many are travelling south to access services, jobs and educational opportunities in the Vancouver area. In fact, CAP has consistently reached or exceeded capacity on this leg of the route and are expected to continue to do so. In response to this increased demand for the southbound route, CAP will be shifting resources to better accommodate this load. Through coordination with the transportation providers in the Lewis and Thurston County areas, CAP is proposing to reduce the length of the northbound route to go only as far north as the Wal-Mart in Chehalis where

it will meet up with Twin Transit. Twin Transit will then take passengers north to Grand Mound where it will meet up with Rural Transit (RT) from Thurston County. This eliminates duplication of services and allows CAP to shift resources where the need is greatest while still providing the same operating hours of service.
The Lower Columbia CAP transportation service receives funding from State Rural Mobility Competitive Grants, Federal Transit Administrations 5311 and 5310, Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging to provide senior transportation, Medicaid/Reserve-A-Ride funds under contract with HSC which is funded through the State Rural Mobility Competitive Grant, and fees for private pay service.

Demand response services for seniors: With funding from the Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging, CAP also provides demand response services for seniors (60 and above) within Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. CAP uses one wheelchair-accessible van and volunteer drivers using their own cars. Because of limited funding, seniors are eligible for only one round trip a month. This is down from two round trips the last time this report was written as funding has become limited for this program. With so few trips available, most riders use these trips for medical purposes if they are not Medicaid eligible.

Private Pay Transportation. CAP provides transportation by car or by wheelchair accessible van for a fee.

- **Catholic Community Services (CCS)** provides demand response services for elderly, low income and disabled people throughout the five-county planning region. CCS provides these services using volunteers driving their own cars. These volunteer drivers are required to take a defensive driving course and CPR classes. Services are not advertised but are known through word of mouth and referrals from other agencies such as Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging, Lower Columbia CAP and CUBS. They are available every day for 24 hours IF they have drivers available. The agency provides about 300 to 500 one-way trips a month, but cannot meet all the needs of their clients. Some clients choose to use their service for grocery shopping trips because the bag limit on the fixed route system is only 4 bags. They have many clients in Toutle and Silver Lake going to Castle Rock. They also receive a lot of requests from Clatskanie, Oregon to access services in the Kelso/Longview area. The CCS was not aware of the Columbia County Rider bus that provides transportation from rural towns like Clatskanie in to Longview/Kelso and this coordinated planning effort helped them make that connection. In addition to requests for rides to medical appointments and shopping trips, they are also getting more requests to help low income families move but they have no vehicle to help with that effort. The overriding need continues to be to go to hospitals or medical appointments in Portland or Vancouver.

- **Disabled American Veterans Van** provides veterans with free rides to medical facilities in Vancouver or Portland. It departs from the 15th avenue Safeway in Longview and makes only one trip down and one trip back on a fixed route Monday - Friday. The van service only handles ambulatory riders, although veterans are able to bring an escort with them if needed. Drivers are not allowed to assist passengers

in any way – all riders must be able to enter and exit the vehicle under their own power. It serves approximately 300 clients using volunteer drivers. The vehicle is funded through the Portland VA and all drivers for the service are volunteers. Because there is only one pick-up and drop-off point that the DAV van can use to service passengers, some volunteers will use their personal vehicles to pick up passengers so they can access the DAV van. The Portland VA has restricted a door-to-door service of the van to decrease appointment delays.

- **Cowlitz Tribal Transit.** The Cowlitz Indian Tribe provides free general public dial-a-ride service and tribal transportation services Monday – Friday from 8am to 7pm. In addition to the general dial-a-ride, they provide a van that takes people to the dialysis center in Longview on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Tribal Transit service operates three lift-equipped vehicles that serve the rural portions of Cowlitz and Southern Lewis County and will travel a maximum of 20 miles east or west of I-5. The service began to serve unmet transportation needs in the rural area, especially for those who need to travel between communities. This service is the only free dial-a-ride service that will travel off the I-5 corridor to pick up rural residents. The service is gaining in popularity and they have experienced continual increases in demand since it began operation in 2005. In recent months demand for service has been so great that they have had to turn customers away. The Cowlitz Tribe receives funding from several sources, including WSDOT and FTA/TTP-Tribal Transportation Program.

- **Medicaid Transportation:** The Human Services Council (HSC) is the regional Medicaid transportation brokerage that serves Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. When clients request a ride, HSC determines the best transportation option for the client at the lowest cost option that suits the client's needs and arranges the trip. The HSC contracts with area transportation providers to provide rides to Medicaid recipients that need rides to medical appointments and pays the fare. In Cowlitz County, HSC says it has enough providers to ensure that people do not get denied service.

- **Reserve-A-Ride Transportation –** The Human Services Council (HSC) also provides a reserve-a-ride program to provide transportation options to low-income, disabled or elderly individuals in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum and Clark counties where public transportation options may not be available or if they are not Medicaid medical transportation eligible. They help match clients with the most efficient service available and help provide transportation to those who need transportation for essential medical and nutritional services. The HSC has held quarterly meetings with service providers as well as local health and social service agencies to continue coordination and outreach effort so more people can become aware of the service. Providing service for those who were not Medicaid eligible was an unmet need identified during the FY 2007-2009 grant cycle and it has proven to be a valuable service as local agencies such as CAP and Wahkiakum on the Move had only limited resources to provide services to these individuals. This service has been crucial in helping people say in their homes and maintain their health rather than forego appointments due to a lack of transportation.

- **Columbia County Rider, Oregon –** The Columbia County Rider (CC-Rider) is a service of the Columbia County Transit Division. They provide general public

transportation within Columbia County, with services to surrounding counties, including Cowlitz county and the cities of Longview and Kelso. Columbia County is a rural county and the Longview/Kelso urban area is where many residents come to access medical and shopping services. CC-Riders provide four round trips per weekday into Kelso/Longview with designated stops at the Greyhound Bus Station at Holt's market, St. John's Medical Center, CUBS transit center in downtown Longview, Amtrak station in Kelso, Three Rivers Mall in Kelso and Wal-Mart in Longview. The trip around the two cities takes approximately an hour. Fares for the route that accesses Cowlitz County vary depending on where you board. A one-way fare from Rainer, Oregon into Longview/Kelso is $2.80 and from Westport it is $5.80.

- **Program Specific Transportation** is offered by several organizations to serve the needs of their clients. The Monticello Retirement Home, Canterbury Inn and Delaware Plaza has a vehicles which they to take its residents shopping and on other recreational trips. There may be some opportunities for coordination of rides, but confidentiality, payment schedules, liability issues and rider abilities may limit this.
- **Other community transportation options:**
    - **C-TRAN Vanpool Program** – C-TRAN is the transit provider for Clark County, located just south of Cowlitz County. The vanpool is available to those who commute at least 10 miles in each direction and have a job that starts, ends or moves through C-TRAN's service area. They currently operate two vanpools in the area; one that links employees who live in Clark County and work at St. John's hospital in Longview and one for employees who live in Longview and commute to the Washington State Department of Transportation office in Vancouver. St. Johns is looking to expand the use of the vanpool program. CUBS will begin working with C-TRAN to help encourage more use of this option in the local community.
    - **Taxi Companies** – There are several taxi companies operating in Cowlitz county including, Bridgeview Taxi, Owl Taxi, Uptown Taxi, Kalama Cab, and Cowlitz County Cab in Woodland. None of the taxi companies have wheelchair lift-equipped vehicles. The average cost is approximately $2.25 for the pick-up and $2.25 per mile.
    - **Greyhound Bus**– The local Greyhound pick-up in the Longview/Kelso area is at Holt's Market in Longview. Holt's is open from 9:00am – 5:00pm for ticket sales. There are three trips to Portland daily for a ticket price of $14 – 21 and four trips daily to Seattle for $26-37.
    - **Amtrak** - Amtrak train service is available from downtown Kelso. The Amtrak Cascades runs four times per day each way to both Portland and Seattle. A one way ticket to Portland is about $13, while a one way to Seattle is about $24. The Coast Starlight runs two times daily to and from Los Angeles. The train station is open from 8:00 am to 9:00pm and offers purchase of tickets from a kiosk. There are no staff people at the station, although it is staffed occasionally by knowledgeable volunteers.

Emergency Management

Transportation plays a key role in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. At the request of the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, the update of this plan has been expanded to include a section on the role transportation providers in the five-

county Regional Transportation Planning Organization are participating in and addressing emergency management issues.

According to the Cowlitz County Department of Emergency Management (DEM), there are no formal agreements in place for including area transportation providers in emergency evacuation planning. CUBS has participated in emergency planning scenarios in the past, it has been several years and management staff has turned over twice since then. Lower Columbia CAP has helped to evacuate during recent floods when called upon by emergency management. This help was done the day of the floods with no prior coordination. While there are no formal agreements in place between emergency services and transportation providers, all are open and willing to participate when called upon in the case of an emergency and encourage a formal agreement. The Cowlitz County DEM has spent some time working with the Lewis County DEM to learn lessons from the recent flooding disasters that have occurred there. They stressed having a formal coordinated agreement in place before the disaster.

In fall 2008 and spring 2009, the DEM hosted a Vulnerable Populations planning meeting to survey those interested in the topic and to explore ways area agencies were planning to help clients before, during and after an emergency. The interest in the topic was high and participants from retirement homes, churches, support shelters, and health centers and more were at the first two meetings. The work has stalled since then, due to staffing shortages and budget cuts. Since then, new materials that help communities plan for helping vulnerable populations in emergency situations has been released and a scope of work for preparing a plan for the Cowlitz County area has been developed. A Cowlitz county Emergency Response Plan for Special Needs Populations for assisting vulnerable populations before, during and after an emergency will be conducted in 2011.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Figure 1: Cowlitz County Trip Attractors (below) shows that CUBS covers most of Longview/Kelso, although fast growing areas such as Lexington just north of Longview do not have any service. CAP did provide service to this area during the past two years, but the service was not utilized enough to continue to justify the route. The CAP I-5 service does provide connections between major communities such as Castle Rock, Kelso/Longview, Kalama and Woodland, but there is no service within any of these communities. The Cowlitz Tribe service provides connections in the northern area of the county and will travel off the I-5 corridor a maximum of 20 miles. The majority of services and the most common origins and destinations are located within the urbanized area of Longview and Kelso. Those living in the city limits served by CUBS will likely have an easier time accessing services than those in the unincorporated areas. This isn't to say that everyone has success accessing these common origins and destinations by relying on the fixed route service. With the current one hour headway, it is often difficult for the transit dependent to access services in a timely manner. The combination of the CUBS fixed route service operating within the urban area, and the rural transportation connectors (Wahkiakum on the Move, CAP, Columbia County Rider, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and the Human Services Council) bringing in rural residents all work together to provide access to transportation for as many low income, elderly and disabled in Cowlitz County.

Figure 1: Cowlitz County Trip Attractors

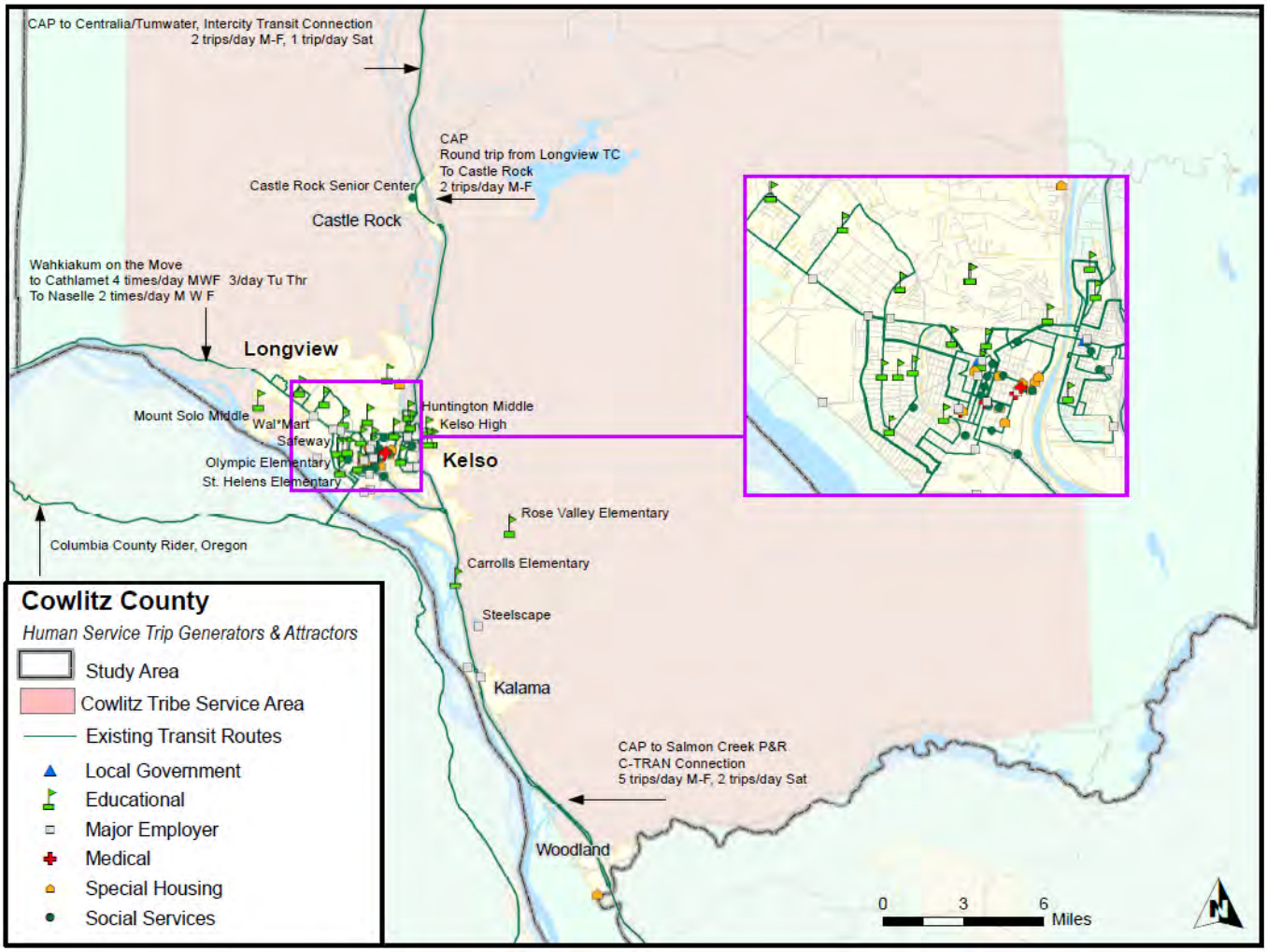
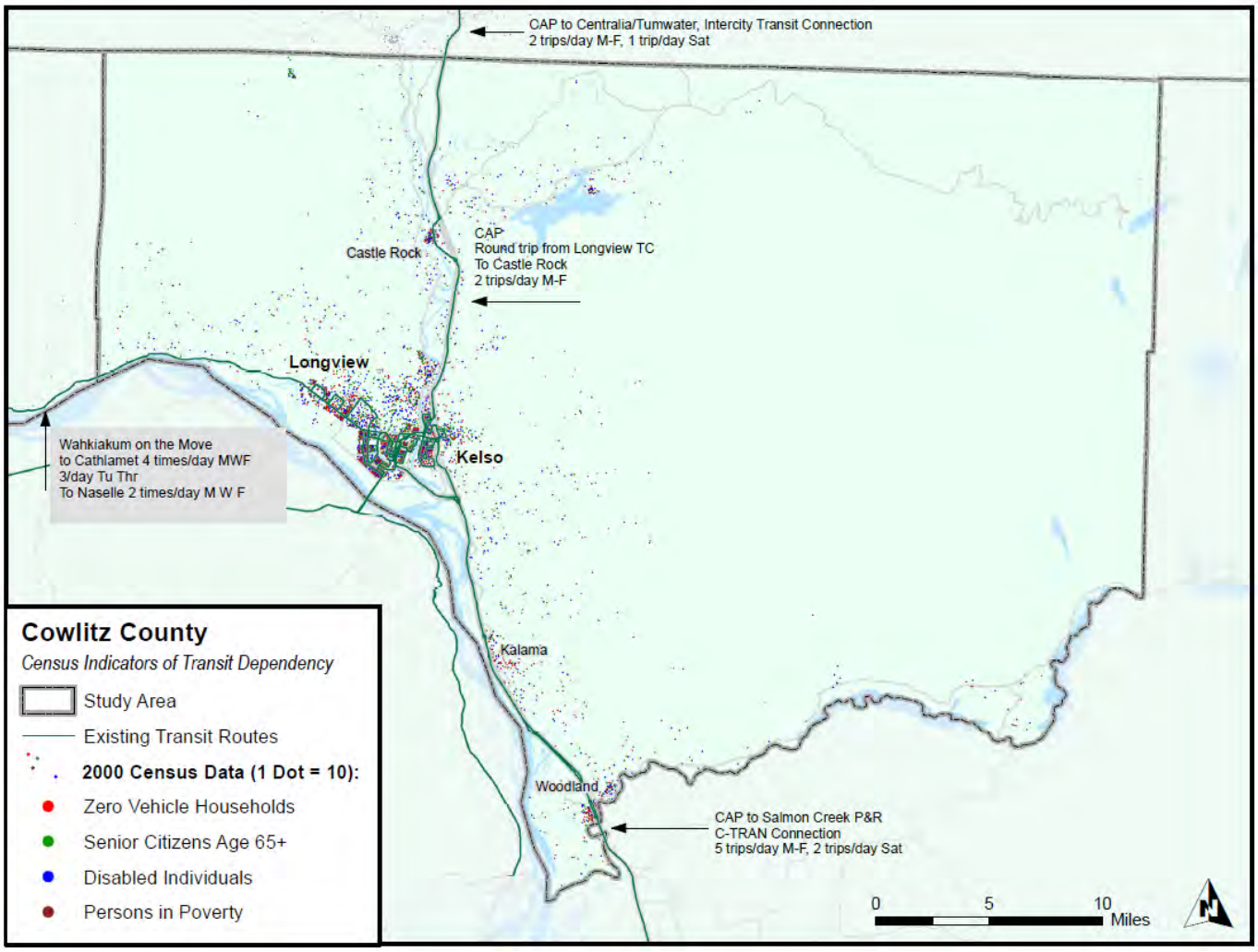


Figure 2: Cowlitz County Transit Dependent Population, (below) shows concentrations of populations with no household vehicles, that are older than 65, that are disabled, and that are living in poverty. Most of these groups are concentrated in the Longview/Kelso area, although there are concentrations in Castle Rock, Kalama and Woodland as would be expected. This map also shows that these groups are represented in the more rural areas as well.

Figure 2: Cowlitz County Transit Dependent Population



Unmet Needs and Issues

Based on interviews with stakeholders and the results of public meetings attended and hosted during the planning process, the following were defined as unmet needs.

1. CUBS provides service only in Kelso/Longview and only during day and early evening. The service is sometimes difficult for riders to use as the wait times are long.
2. Several programs in the county have vans to serve their clients; some of them are looking at ways they could coordinate services
3. Shortage of volunteers for transportation programs; one concern is training is too intensive for volunteers; another concern is insurance for volunteers.
4. No one central place or material lists all existing transportation services, and who is eligible
5. Difficult to coordinate return times for medical trips because of uncertainty of appointment end times.
6. Only general public service outside of Kelso/Longview is CAP service and the Cowlitz Tribe Transit program, and Wahkiakum on the Move in west Cowlitz County
7. It is difficult to find transportation for dialysis patients who are not Medicaid eligible
8. Difficult to get to work on graveyard shifts, to school for evening classes, to evening treatment meetings, bereavement meetings or to areas outside CUBS service route
9. No service for unincorporated areas off the I-5 corridor other than Cowlitz Tribal Transit
10. Coordination of transportation services for veterans needs to continue. HSC is working on pilot project to focus on transportation needs of the veterans community. The project does not currently have funding, but a group has met several times and the work needs to continue to be supported. Coordination efforts learned through that process can be used elsewhere.
11. Outreach to disabled veterans needs to be increased so they are aware of transportation available to those who cannot use the DAV van (those who are disabled). DAV's volunteer drivers are not allowed to assist passengers in any way – all riders must be able to enter and exit the vehicle under their own power. The DAV does not have a wheelchair accessible vehicle for passengers.
12. There are no formal agreements in place between emergency services and area transportation providers to provide coordinated evacuations during the event of an emergency. There is also no current scenario planning that details the role of or involvement of transportation providers in the event of an emergency.
13. For agencies who provide bus passes to those who are low-income, recently incarcerated, or homeless, they express frustration with the CUBS bus passes as they are good only for the calendar month and not for a full 30 days.

Proposed Strategies to Address Unmet Needs

1. Medical transportation for the non-Medicaid population
    a. Medical transportation program using volunteer and other drivers
    b. Programs to encourage volunteer drivers.
    c. Continue to support the Human Services Council's Reserve-A-Ride Program

2. General public transportation that expands CUBS service area and decreases headways so it is more user friendly
    a. Support CUBS in the effort to reduce headway as outlined in their recent Transit Enhancement Plan. Replacement of high mileage vehicles are needed now so they can begin to prepare for the expansion of the fleet in the coming years that will allow them to decrease the headway. Having a shorter headway on routes may also encourage more use of the fixed route system and reduce the need for social service agencies starting their own transportation programs to fill the gap.
    b. explore option of countywide service as mentioned in the RTPO's long range transportation plan
3. Employment transportation for areas and times unserved by CUBS
    a. Van pools – explore starting use of vanpools for the local area and take advantage of the vanpool program offered to local residents by C-TRANS
    b. Use of taxis for employment and after CUBS hours employment and social activities
    c. Transportation program using volunteer and other drivers
    d. Central source of information about existing services
    e. Coordination efforts including brokerage and materials identifying services available
    f. Support Lower Columbia CAP's Rural I-5 van service and the Cowlitz Tribal Transit as they are the only public transit service that connects rural communities (Castle Rock, Kalama, and Woodland) to employment in Longview/Kelso and Vancouver.
4. Lack of coordination among service providers
    a. Coordination efforts including brokerage and materials identifying services available
    b. The RTPO will host at least quarterly meetings to bring service providers together and facilitate discussions on services, potential coordination strategies. This may benefit the coordinated planning process in the future as a continued relationship is established.
5. Services for disabled outside of CUBS service area
    a. Programs to encourage volunteer drivers. Offer ways to support existing services that have a system for taking in volunteer drivers such as the Catholic Community Services.
    b. Support the Cowlitz Tribal Transit and Lower Columbia CAP they are the only existing services that can accommodate this need at this time.
    c. Support the Human Services Council as they continue to provide riders with information for the lowest cost option for transportation.
6. Expanded services for elderly
    a. Programs to encourage volunteer drivers
    b. Continue to support the Human Services Council's Reserve-A-Ride program
7. Continue to support the Human Services Council's efforts to coordinate veterans transportation in the Southwest Washington Area.
8. Support the local Cowlitz county Emergency Response Plan for Special Needs Populations effort that is underway so it can be used as an example throughout the rest of the RTPO. Any remaining planning funds from this Coordinated Plan Update will be used to kick off that plan and the finished document will be

included as an attachment when it is completed sometime in the summer of 2011.

Proposed New Services

The Cowlitz Indian Tribe is seeking funds to meet the demand of their rural dial-a-ride service for area riders. The service has increased in popularity since its beginning in 2005 and has been in such high demand recently they have had to turn riders away. They are seeking capital funds for an additional vehicle and operating funds to better serve the rural areas of Cowlitz and South Lewis counties. As one of the only dial-a-ride services in the area that reaches the rural portions of the county, the RTPO supports this project.

Should resources become available, other potential projects include:

- Improved coordination through the use of internet, meeting, publications, and mobility coordinator
- Creation of a website that houses information on all transportation services available, who is eligible, and maps to show other regional connections
- Travel training programs to encourage use of all public transportation options available, including fixed route transit and Paratransit, the rural transportation options, Amtrak and Greyhound. Many potential riders are intimidated at the thought of riding public transportation and providing a travel training program or bus-buddies program can help give people the independence they desire. This is especially true of elderly populations.
- A re-design of the CUBS transit center. The CUBS transit center in downtown Longview is used as the regional hub by all regional transportation providers. The five individual shelters that are used at the center are often vandalized, are not large enough to shelter all riders, and are occasionally lived in by local homeless persons. A re-design to an open-air style shelter that can accommodate all waiting passengers would be ideal. It would also allow for better signage for other transportation providers that use the area including, CAP, CC-Rider and Wahkiakum on the Move.
- Should additional funds become available through other avenues, the Cowlitz Indian Tribe has outgrown their existing transit facility in downtown Longview.
- Work with the City of Kelso in development of the Amtrak Station to accommodate transit.

Wahkiakum County

Wahkiakum County is the third smallest county in Washington. The estimated 2010 population is 4,150. The county seat is the town of Cathlamet, and with a population of 580, is the only incorporated community in the county. Unincorporated areas include Elochoman Valley, Puget Island, Skamokawa and Grays River. Over 20 percent of the total population is 65 or older; this is almost double the state percentage. According to the 2000 Census, slightly less than 1,000 people have disabilities. Wahkiakum County does not have a public transit agency in operation.

Existing Transit Services

There are a couple transportation programs providing transit services in Wahkiakum County. The small size of the county limits available transit services because it is expensive for out of the area providers to travel to Wahkiakum County to pick up residents.

- **Wahkiakum on the Move (WOTM)** was started and is operated by Wahkiakum County Health and Human Services. This deviated route system offers three routes:
  1. From Wahkiakum County to Naselle (Pacific County) twice on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, linking with Pacific Transit, which provides service throughout Pacific County and with connections to Aberdeen in the north, and Astoria, Oregon, to the south.
  2. Local service in the Cathlamet area, providing riders with service to local business, shopping, medical appointments, and community events on a daily basis.
  3. Monday - Friday service to the Kelso/Longview area allowing riders to access medical appointments, shopping, regional governmental agencies as well as linking with other transportation services such as CUBS, CC-Rider, CAP and Amtrak.

  In addition, the agency also provides door to door service for seniors and non-ambulatory riders of all ages. The service has proven to be a community asset as they also coordinate with the local school districts to provide rides to school children for after school activities after pupil transit drivers have gone home for the day.

  In the past, WOTM has run to Naselle daily. They have received requests for daily runs to Naselle so customers can use the system to commute to work and school opportunities. Many in these rural areas of Wahkiakum County are seeking job retraining at local community colleges. WOTM has heard from users of the system that understanding the schedule is often difficult since they operate one schedule on Tuesday/Thursday and a different schedule on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. WOTM would like to reinstate these services to meet these needs.

- **Catholic Community Services** also provides demand response services for elderly and disabled people in Wahkiakum County. They rely on volunteer drivers using their own cars. Services are available every day all day long IF they have drivers available. They currently have about 20 volunteers of whom 10 will be on the road at any given time.

- **Lower Columbia CAP** provides senior transportation to the Longview/Kelso urban area from Wahkiakum County once a month on the first Wednesday of every month. This service is provided with funding from the Southwest Washington Area Agency on Aging.

- **Medicaid Transportation:** The Human Services Council (HSC) is the regional Medicaid transportation brokerage that serves Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties. Wahkiakum on the Move is a Medicaid Provider in the area. When clients request a ride, HSC determines the best transportation option for the client at the lowest cost option that suits the client's needs and arranges the trip. The HSC contracts with area transportation providers to provide rides to Medicaid recipients that need rides to medical appointments and pays the fare. In Cowlitz County, HSC says it has enough providers to ensure that people do not get denied service.

- **Reserve-A-Ride Transportation –** The Human Services Council (HSC) also provides a reserve-a-ride program to provide transportation options to low-income, disabled or elderly individuals in Cowlitz, Wahkiakum and Clark counties where public transportation options may not be available or if they are not Medicaid medical transportation eligible. They help match clients with the most efficient service available and help provide transportation to those who need transportation for essential medical and nutritional services. The HSC has held quarterly meetings with service providers as well as local health and social service agencies to continue coordination and outreach effort so more people can become aware of the service. Providing service for those who were not Medicaid eligible was an unmet need identified during the FY 2007-2009 grant cycle and it has proven to be a valuable service as local agencies such as CAP and Wahkiakum on the Move had only limited resources to provide services to these individuals. This service has been crucial in helping people say in their homes and maintain their health rather than forego appointments due to a lack of transportation.

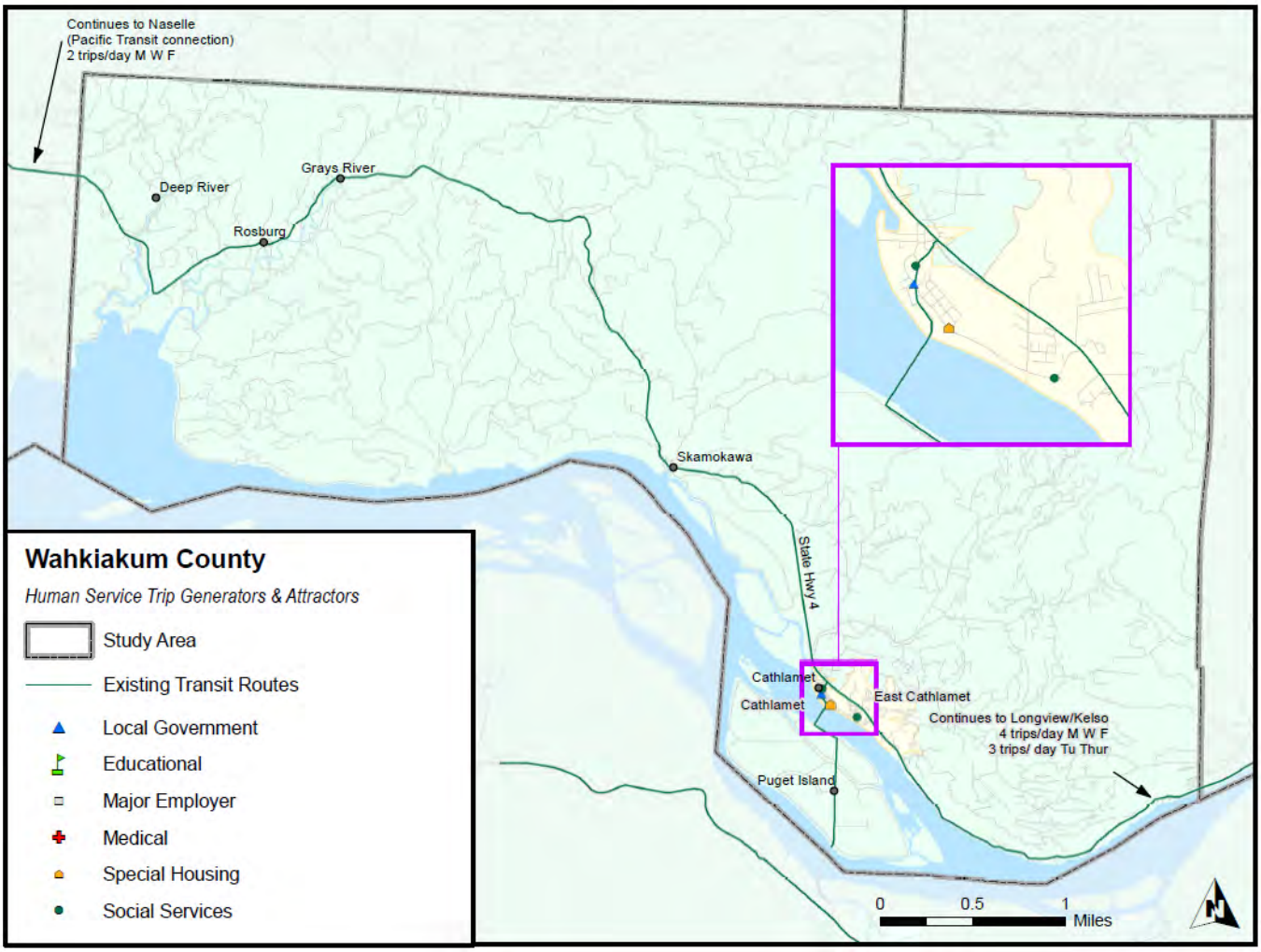
Emergency Management

According to the Wahkiakum County Department of Emergency Management (DEM), there are no formal agreements in place for including area transportation providers in emergency evacuation planning but it is something they would like to begin working on. While no formal agreements are in place, Wahkiakum on the Move has participated in emergency events in the past by providing bus service to employees trying to access Longview/Kelso when landslides have blocked state route 4. They have also transported emergency responders during emergencies and allow use of their vehicles. Wahkiakum on the Move is in the process of trying to formalize their use agreements.

Analysis of Demographic Data

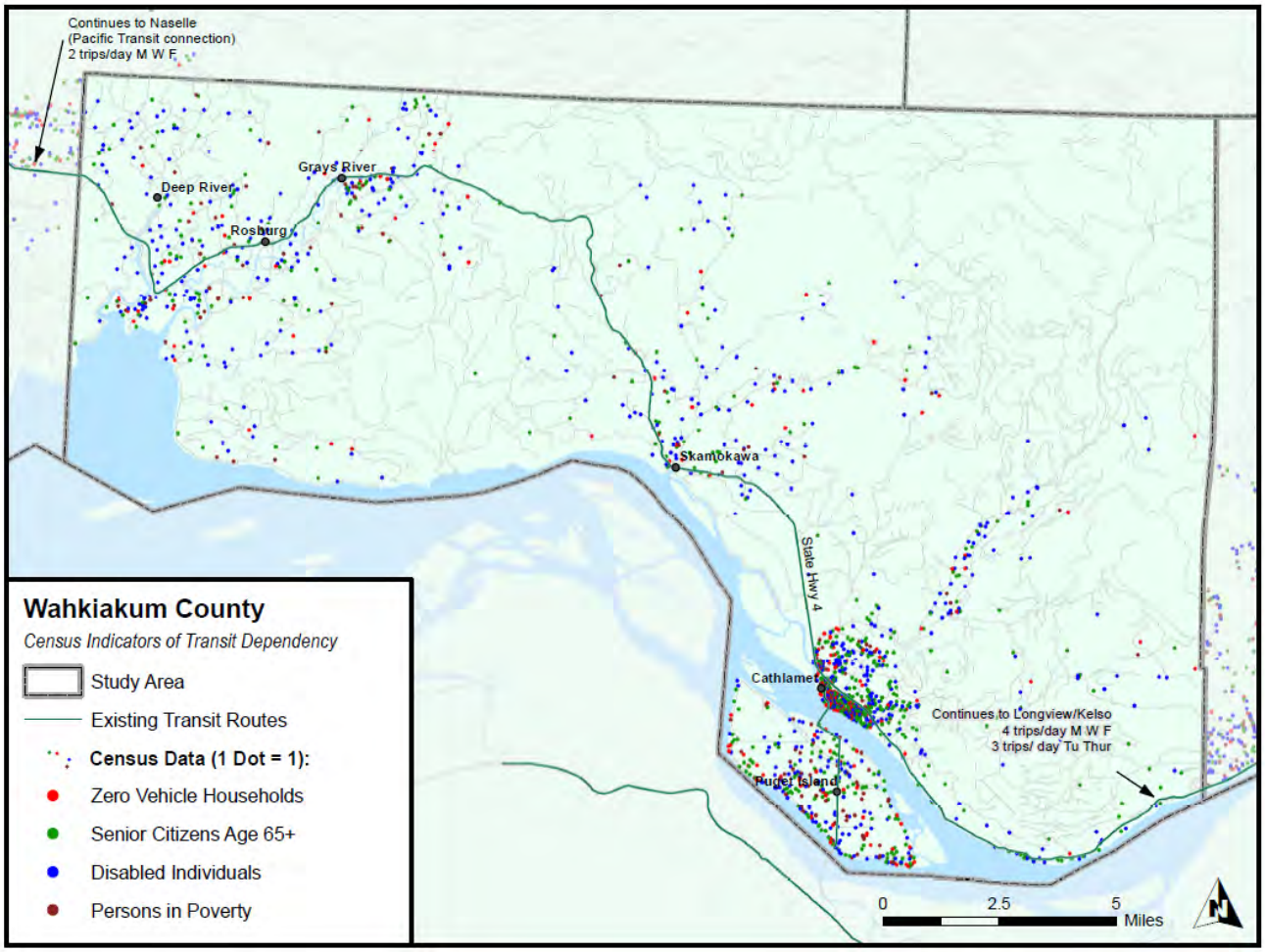
As **Figure 3: Wahkiakum Trip Attractors** shows (below), there are very few major trip attractors in Wahkiakum County. The few that exist are in Cathlamet. This lack of services increases the need to travel to Longview/Kelso or to Pacific County and Astoria. This can be very difficult for the transit dependent. Wahkiakum on the Move is a critical link to medical, shopping, education, and jobs outside this rural county.

Figure 3: Wahkiakum County Trip Attractors



As Figure 4: Wahkiakum County Transit Dependent Population shows (below), most of the transit dependent in the county live in Cathlamet. However Puget Island has a large number of households who may be transit dependent. The figure suggests that a sizable (for the county) number of transit dependent people live in the western part of the county, as well.

Figure 4: Wahkiakum County Transit Dependent Populations



Unmet Needs and Issues

1. Limited family jobs and affordable housing within Cathlamet force residents to move to rural locations that often are not easily served by transit
2. The geography of Wahkiakum County makes it difficult for transit to serve residents who do not live adjacent to SR 4
3. When SR 4 closes because of slides, alternative transportation routes are a challenge. This poses a huge threat to life-line medical services.
4. County is experiencing out-migration of working families and in-migration of retirees as well as telecommuters
5. There are limited transportation services for people needing to commute to work or get to educational opportunities
6. Existing service to Longview needs to expand from twice weekly service to a minimum of one round trip a day and more regular daily service if possible
7. Service to Naselle needs to expand so that workers can make the connection on Pacific Transit to the Astoria area
8. Transportation to social service programs is very difficult, limiting participation. Specific examples include parenting programs, the Wahkiakum County Chemical Dependency Program and mental health services.
9. There is a lack of transportation service for youth to get to after school activities.
10. Lack of regular coordination with other service providers
11. Lack of a central source for information to advertise services offered by Human Services Council, Wahkiakum on the Move, CAP and Catholic Community Services
12. Lack of coordination and formal agreements for use of transit in the event of an emergency

Proposed Strategies to Address Unmet Needs

1. Continue to support Wahkiakum on the Move as the only regional transit provider in Wahkiakum County
2. Explore van pooling opportunities
3. Invite taxi service to operate in Wahkiakum County
4. Explore ways to better use volunteers to provide medical and employment transportation
5. It is difficult for non-Medicaid transit dependent people to get to medical appointments. Continue to support the Human Services Council's Reserve-A-Ride Program for which Wahkiakum on the Move is a provider
6. Add additional runs to link up with Pacific Transit in Naselle for transportation to and from Astoria, Oregon and the Ilwaco/Long Beach areas as recommended in the 2006 Coordinated Plan update. This will allow rural western Wahkiakum County residents who rely on services in Astoria and Long Beach to access services. This will also help to eliminate confusion over a split schedule.
7. Continue to support WOTM's efforts to provide transportation to youth for afterschool activities.
8. Begin coordination and formal agreements for use of transit in the event of an emergency and follow up by replicating efforts being started in Cowlitz County with their Emergency Response Plan for Special Needs Populations
9. Lack of coordination among service providers
    - Coordination efforts including brokerage and materials identifying services available

- The RTPO will host at least quarterly meetings to bring service providers together and facilitate discussions on services, potential coordination strategies. This may benefit the coordinated planning process in the future as a continued relationship is established.

Should resources become available, other potential service include:

- Develop van-pool program
- Develop Mobility Manager Program in which county wide mobility manager works with transit dependent and existing programs to find rides and helps train volunteers to provide rides.
- Creation of a website that houses information on all transportation services available, who is eligible, and maps to show other regional connections
- Travel training programs to encourage use of all public transportation options available, including fixed route transit and Paratransit, the rural transportation options, Amtrak and Greyhound. Many potential riders are intimidated at the thought of riding public transportation and providing a travel training program or bus-buddies program can help give people the independence they desire. This is especially true of elderly populations.

Lewis County

Lewis County has a 2010 estimated population of 75,600. **Figure 5** shows the population of its incorporated areas.

Figure 5
Estimated 2006 Population in Lewis County

Centralia	15,570
Chehalis	7,185
Morton	1,150
Mossyrock	695
Napavine	1,715
Pe Ell	670
Toledo	695
Vader	640
Winlock	1,370

Approximately 2/3rds of the county residents live in unincorporated areas. Of the total population, 16 percent are 65 or older and over 15,000 people have a disability.

Existing Services

- **L.E.W.I.S. Mountain Highway Transit (LMHT)** is a private transportation program operated by the White Pass Community Services Coalition (WPCSC). LMHT provides rural, fixed route, intercity bus service **f**rom Packwood to Centralia/Chehalis via Hwy 12 communities of Randle, Glenoma, Morton, Mossyrock, Silver Creek, Salkum, Ethel, and Hwy 508 community of Onalaska. LMHT operates a fleet of 12 vehicles. All vehicles are accessible with wheelchair lifts. They charge a fare of $3 per person per boarding for adults and $1.50 for seniors. In addition to the rural fixed route transportation services, LMHT is also the Medicaid subcontractor to Paratransit services.

  While LHMT transports people for a wide variety of purposes, there are a large number of riders going to Centralia Community College, many of whom are unemployed timber workers who are in vocational training programs. The White Pass Community Services Coalition provides a platform for frequent coordination with other social service providers in the area including the affordable housing network, United Way, Cascade Mental Health, local law enforcement, school districts, and area churches to name a few. They provide a community resources guide on the back of their transit maps and coordinate with nearly everyone listed.

- **Twin Transit** is a public transportation system operated by the Lewis County Public Transit Benefit Area. Twin Transit provides five deviated routes and paratransit services to passengers within the Cities of Centralia and Chehalis, Washington. They are beginning to install GPS units in their new vehicles. Twin Transit responded to the community's changing needs after conducting a comprehensive passenger survey in 2009 by shifting routes to provide service to Grand Mound, where it meets

up with Rural Transit from Thurston County, and an express service from Amtrak to the Town Center shopping area. The survey also indicated that the majority of riders who use the system have no access to a vehicle and are using the system to get to work, school and medical services. Twin Transit recently raised fares from $.50 to $1 per ride. An all day pass is $2. They offer a discount to college students and the college subsidizes the pass.

Twin Transit if funded by a .2% local sales tax, as well as state and federal grants. The continued decrease in funding has had a toll on the agency's budget as the declining economy has resulted in lower sales tax funds generated. This equates to a loss of approximately $160,000 in funds in 2010 with a projected loss of $323,000 for 2011.

- **Cowlitz Tribal Transit.** The Cowlitz Indian Tribe provides free general public dial-a-ride service and tribal transportation services Monday – Friday from 8am to 7pm. They provide a scheduled trip to Toledo on Friday's for the tribal elders and they provide a van that takes people to the dialysis center in Longview on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. The Tribal Transit service operates three lift-equipped vehicles that serve the rural portions of Cowlitz and Southern Lewis County and will travel a maximum of 20 miles east or west of I-5. The service began to serve unmet transportation needs in the rural area, especially for those who need to travel between communities. The service is gaining in popularity and they have experienced continual increases in demand since it began operation in 2005. In recent months demand for service has been so great that they have had to turn customers away. The Cowlitz Tribe receives funding from several sources, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Federal Transportation Administration and Washington State Department of Transportation.

- **Lower Columbia Community Action Council** (CAP) – CAPs Rural transportation service provides a link from the Longview/Kelso area south to connect with C-Tran at Salmon Creek 5 times a day on weekdays. This route stops at rural communities along the I-5 corridor including Kalama and Woodland. They also provide service northbound between Longview and Tumwater with stops in Lexington, Castle Rock, Toledo/Winlock and Centralia twice a day during the weekday. In an effort to serve rural commuters coming into the urban area, CAP runs an early morning and evening run between Longview and Castle Rock and Lexington, although that service has been underutilized and may be eliminated in the future. The service uses 12 –passenger lift-equipped vehicles and charges $1 each way

  The majority of CAP's riders are heading from the Longview/Kelso area south to meet up with C-TRAN at the Salmon Creek park and ride. Many are travelling south to access services, jobs and educational opportunities in the Vancouver area. In fact, CAP has consistently reached or exceeded capacity on this leg of the route and are expected to continue to do so. In response to this increased demand for the southbound route, CAP will be shifting resources to better accommodate this load. Through coordination with the transportation providers in the Lewis and Thurston County areas, CAP is proposing to reduce the length of the northbound route to go only as far north as the Wal-Mart in Chehalis where it will meet up with Twin Transit. Twin Transit will then take passengers north to Grand Mound where it will meet up with Rural Transit (RT) from Thurston County. This eliminates duplication of services

and allows CAP to shift resources where the need is greatest while still providing the same operating hours of service.

- **Medicaid Transportation**- Paratransit Services is the regional Medicaid transportation brokerage that serves Lewis County. It contracts with 16 regional transportation providers, including several taxi and cabulance companies and other private providers. The broker does not currently contract with Twin Transit or any of the public transportation systems in this region. However, it does purchase transit bus tickets and passes on behalf of its Medicaid clients. To use this service, passengers must have Medical ID and have no other way to get to medical appointments. Passengers must call at least 2 business days before their medical appointment.

- **Disabled American Veterans Van** provides veterans with free rides to medical facilities in American Lake and the local VA clinic in Chehalis from within a 50 mile radius of Chehalis. They offer a door-to-door service to veterans who are unable to have a friend or family member get them to a central pick up point. The service operates five vans throughout Grays Harbor, Lewis, Thurston counties that are all run by a team of volunteers. While many of the vehicles are 15 passenger vans, they limit the number of people to five since it can be an 8-10 hour day for the volunteers when there are more passengers. They are more people using the service and demand often exceeds supply. They currently have a shortage of volunteers. Volunteers for the DAV do not have to be veterans, but they do have to attend training in Seattle and go through a background check. The vehicles are funded through the VA and all drivers for the service are volunteers.

- **Catholic Community Services** uses volunteers using their own cars to provide rides in northern Lewis County and southern Thurston County for senior citizens. Currently, they have about 5 volunteer drivers in Lewis County. Most of the trips are to medical appointments or for errands. They mostly provide trips within the county because their volunteers do not like to make long trips. There is a great need for rides in the western part of the county, in Pe Ell and nearby communities because no public transit serves this area. CCS would like to provide more rides if they could find and train more drivers.

- **Lewis County Senior Transportation Program** provides Dial-a-Ride service anywhere in the county for Medicaid and Medicare covered seniors 60 years and older who are Lewis County residents. They provide transportation to and from doctor appointments, shopping trips, appointments as long as they are not within the Twin Transit service boundary. They operate a scheduled medical and shopping shuttle to downtown Chehalis for residents in Pe Ell on Tuesdays**.** General hours of service are from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday. Special Saturday service can be arranged for certain life-sustaining trip purposes, such as dialysis treatment**.** This service uses only paid drivers.

- **Other community transportation options:**
    - **Vanpool Program** – Intercity Transit is the transit provider for Thurston County, located just north of Lewis County. The vanpool is available to those who commute at least 10 miles in each direction and have a job that starts, ends or moves through Intercity Transit's service area. You must have at

least five people to start a vanpool. They currently operate approximately 30 vanpools in the area that either start or end in Lewis County;

- **Taxi Companies** –Quality Taxi and Redi-Cab are two taxi companies operating in Lewis County.
- **Greyhound Bus**– The local Greyhound pick-up in Lewis County is at 1232 Mellen Street in Chehalis. The station is open from 8:00am – 5:00pm for ticket sales. There are three trips to Seattle daily for a ticket price of $ 20.
- **Amtrak** - Amtrak train service is available from downtown Centralia. The Amtrak Cascades runs four times per day each way to both Portland and Seattle. A one way ticket to Portland is about $20, while a one way to Seattle is about $26. The Coast Starlight runs two times daily to and from Los Angeles.

Emergency Management

While there are no formal agreements in place, local transportation providers are willing to help in the event of an emergency and welcome formal agreements with the Department of Emergency Management. The Lewis Mountain Highway Transit (LMHT) service provided assistance during the floods by providing transportation to evacuate seniors at the Evergreen Nursing Home in Centralia. The severe flooding and snow storms that occurred in Lewis County in recent years has spurred some communities into action by planning ahead for the next disaster. The White Pass Community Services Coalition is housing PODS (portable storage devices) on site full of emergency supplies and donations. Another serves as a portable work site for Red Cross. Staff also attended training in providing emergency services to vulnerable populations in the event of an emergency, although no group has been formed to coordinate a plan of action that includes transit coordination. The DAV has not been part of any coordination effort, but is willing to lend vehicles to help.
One problem experienced by Twin Transit during past flooding events there is no written agreement and they get called by agencies and not through the DEM mgmt for evacuation service. The calls usually come after the water has risen beyond they area they can access and they are unable to help. Also, the majority of drivers live in flood prone areas and need to see to their personal homes so they don't get trapped in town where there are no provisions to stay during a flood.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Figure 6: Lewis County Trip Attractors (below) shows that most of the trip attractors are in the Centralia/Chehalis area, although there are some in Winlock and Morton. This map clearly shows that the western part of the county, in the Pe Ell area, has no transit services and very few services. This increases the need for transit services so that people can have access to important life activities. The southern part of the county, including the communities of Winlock, Vader, Napavine and Toledo, has limited service as well. Currently the Cowlitz Tribe is the only transportation provider to serve southern and western Lewis County off the I-5 corridor.

Figure 6: Lewis County Trip Attractors

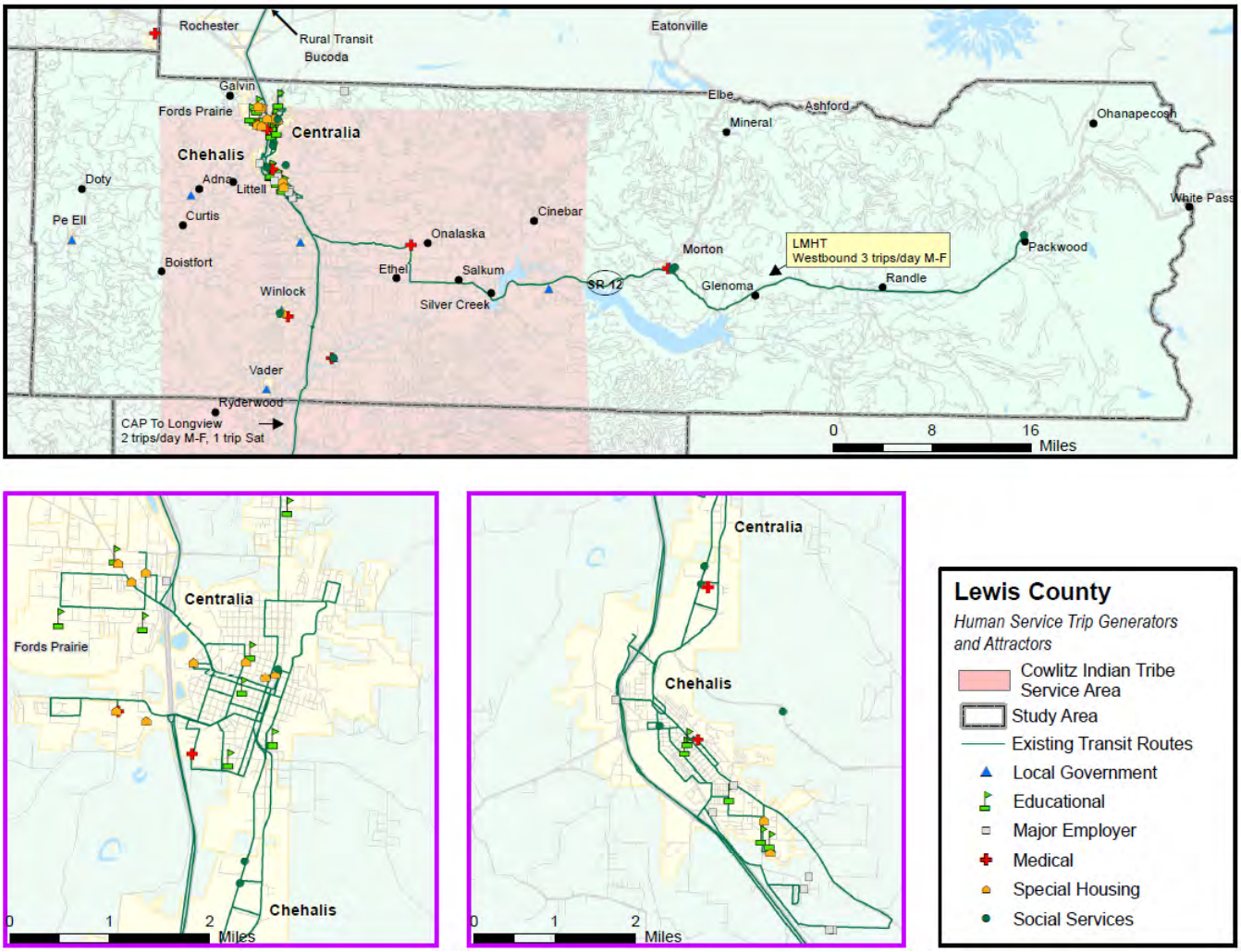
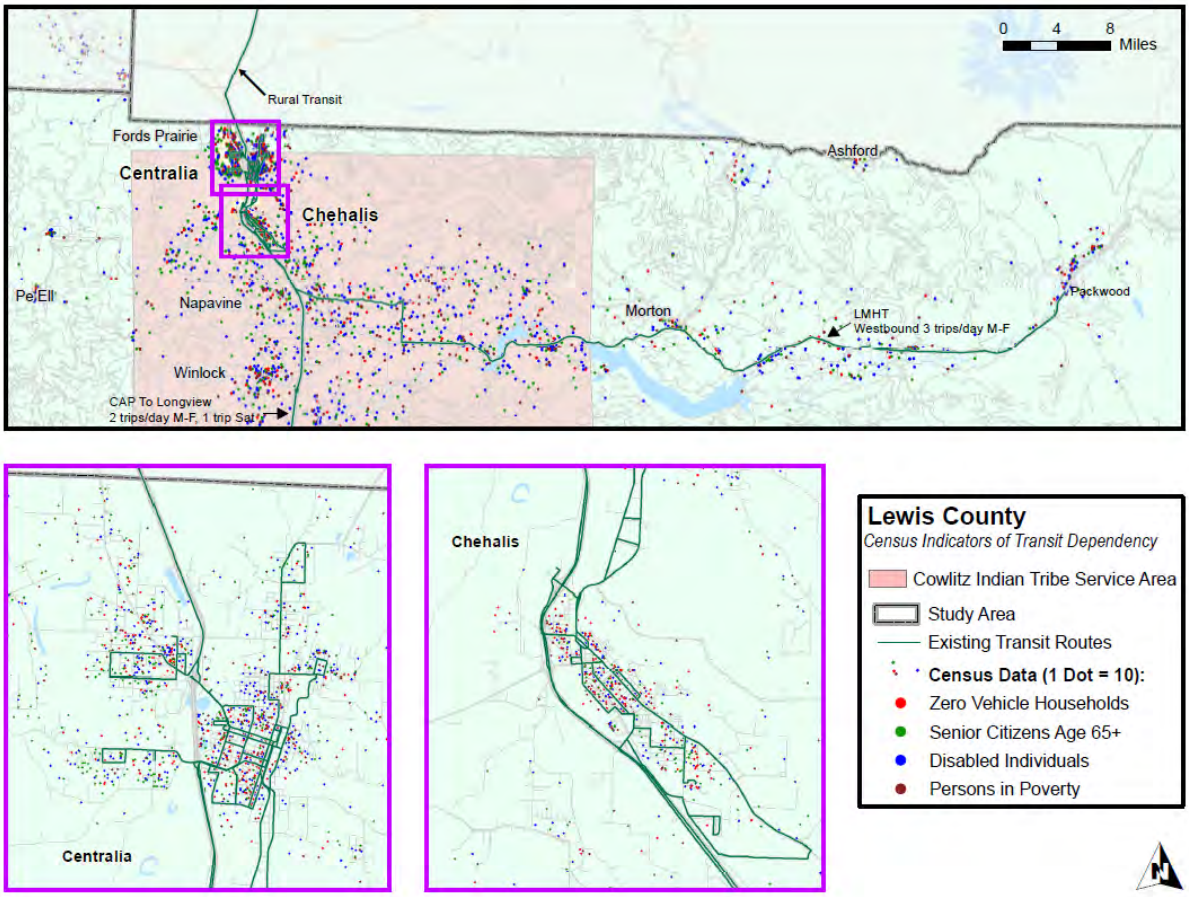


Figure 7: Lewis County Transit Dependent Population indicates that transit dependent populations live throughout the county although they are focused in Centralia and Chehalis. However the Winlock and Vader area also have concentrations of transit dependent populations.

Figure 7: Lewis County Transit Dependent Population



Unmet Needs and Issues

1. There is no public transportation to or in western Lewis County and very limited dial-a-ride service to southern Lewis County and portions of Hwy. 12 west of Mossyrock to I-5 and west of Cinebar on Hwy. 508. No dial-a-ride service west of Chehalis on Hwy. 6 to Pe Ell.
2. Access to medical care for the non-Medicaid population is difficult, especially for those under-60 years of age
3. Funding will be an issue in coming years due to a decrease in sales tax revenue
4. No public transportation options between eastern Lewis County and Yakima along the Hwy. 12 corridor
5. No central source of information about available transit services & funding resources. The Centralia College website is the only location that publicizes information about all of the transportation options in the area.
6. Lack of countywide transportation coordinating body
7. There is a need for out of county connections, especially medical trips to Olympia
8. There is no transit service in or to Toledo
9. Lack of knowledge within social service agencies and medical clinics on the kinds of transportation options available
10. Lack of formal agreements for use of transit and transportation providers in the event of an emergency

Strategies to Address Unmet Needs

1. Continue to support Twin Transit operating in the Centralia/Chehalis area as they are the regional circulator in the urban area that CAP, LEWIS Mountain Highway Transit, and Cowlitz Tribe, and Rural Transit (Thurston County) feed into.
2. Expand public transit services countywide when funding situation improves. Until then, continue to support those rural transportation providers that are filling the gaps; Cowlitz Tribal Transit in rural southern Lewis County, LEWIS Mountain Highway transit in east Lewis County and CAP's I-5 van service.
3. Form consortium to explore options for funding patient transport. (To include Morton General & Providence Centralia Hospitals, Twin Transit, Paratransit Services, Lewis Mountain Hwy. Transit (LMHT), WSDOT, Catholic Community Services & Lewis Co. Senior Transportation Program)
4. Expand scheduled service between Centralia/Chehalis & Olympia (Twin Transit to coordinate with Paratransit Services, Lower Columbia CAP and Intercity Transit)
5. Establish scheduled service between Centralia/Chehalis and Aberdeen. (Twin Transit to coordinate with Paratransit Services & Grays Harbor Transit.)
6. Increase access to Centralia Community College & work sites
7. Create countywide mobility manager to improve information dissemination, volunteer recruitment and coordination of existing transit services
8. Establish travel training program for transit dependent population

Should other resources become available, other potential projects include:

- Demand response to provide medical trips for the non-Medicaid population
- Expanded services for seniors/disabled throughout the county
- Mobility Manager Program that will train volunteers and connect services and riders
- Expanded time and frequency for existing service in Chehalis/Centralia and eastern parts of the county

Pacific County

In 2010, Pacific County had an estimated population of approximately 22,100. The county seat is in South Bend with a population of 1,740. Its largest city is Raymond with a population of approximately 3,065. The county has two other cities--Ilwaco with a population of 1,115 and Long Beach-population 1,535. About 2/3rds of the residents live in incorporated areas. Of the total population, over 24.5 percent are 65 or older; this is over two times the state percentage. The county has 5,400 people with disabilities according to 2000 census data, but given the estimated increases in population among the over 65 population, this is expected to increase.

Existing Services

- **Pacific Transit** is a countywide transit system that operates fixed route and dial-a-ride services that serve the north and south Pacific County communities of, Bay Center, Chinook, Ilwaco, Long Beach, Nahcottta, Naselle, Ocean Park, Oysterville, South Bend, Surfside, Raymond, and Astoria Oregon. The public transit system has five routes, two of which, Raymond to South Bend and Ilwaco to Oysterville, run frequently throughout the day. The other three routes connect Pacific County to larger population centers in Grays Harbor County and in Oregon. Fares are dependent on the route and range from $.35 to $.50. A day pass for all routes is $1.50. They operate a fleet of 16 vehicles, all of which are equipped with aging two-way radios. They are seeking a grant to replace all devices as they are seventeen years old and are becoming increasingly difficult to replace. The fleet is installed with GPS technology and security cameras.

- **Catholic Community Services** provides dial-a-ride service to senior citizens in Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. This program relies on volunteers using their own cars to transport clients. Currently, they have 10 volunteer drivers available to serve both counties. They do not have a lift-equipped vehicle so they can only transport ambulatory riders. CCS tries to meet the need for long distance medical trips. Usually, that means taking ambulatory patients to medical facilities in Olympia, Tacoma, Portland and Seattle.

- **Coastal Community Action Program** provides three transportation services in Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties: Medicaid medical transportation for those with DSHS coupons; cancer treatment transport to Olympia; and, Private medical/basic needs transportation for seniors over 60 who do not drive due to health and/or aging issues. Hours of service are 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday thru Friday. Saturday trips can be scheduled for special needs. Coastal CAP's paratransit program relies on volunteers using their own cars to transport clients. The agency has one van that is used for trips to radiology labs in Olympia. None of the individual or agency vehicles are lift-equipped, so they can only transport ambulatory passengers. The agency has 20 volunteer drivers available to serve Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. About 65 percent of trips are for Grays Harbor County residents.

  Coastal CAP also runs a program to transport people to work and job related training. The agency has four, accessible vans for the JARC program that cover Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties. Under the restrictions of the program they can

only transport for work, school/training and daycare purposes and are not allowed to transport minors (other than with a qualifying adult for daycare). Coastal CAP trains its drivers to enable them to provide service within FTA guidelines. This demand response employment program averages between 500-600 rides per month, with an average trip of 25 miles one-way. The program is available 24 hours a day to meet the needs of shift workers. The most common destinations are Aberdeen, Westport, Raymond, Ocean Shores, and East Grays Harbor County to Aberdeen.

In order to expand their volunteer driver program in Pacific County Coastal CAP is embarking on a volunteer driver drive, blanketing the county with public service announcements funded in part by the Olympic Area Agency on Aging.

Emergency Management

Pacific Transit is one of the only transit agencies in the five-county area that is part of a coordinated team through the emergency management department. General Manager, Tim Russ, participates on an Operations team through the Pacific County DEM. They conduct table top drills once or twice a year. In the event of an emergency, Tim reports to the courthouse, where DEM is held, and directs all bus operations – this includes his transit buses and the school district buses. They have established priorities in the event of an emergency. If there is enough warning time, they will evacuate nursing homes and seniors first. According to the DEM office, they are meeting quarterly to update their plans in an effort to better prepare for an emergency.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Figure 8: Pacific County Trip Attractors shows the rural, spread-out nature of Pacific County. The county wide transit system serves most of the population centers and provides connections to larger cities in other counties. There are few major trip attractors in Pacific County and most of them are on transit routes. **Figure 9: Pacific County Transit Dependent Population** shows that the major concentrations of transit dependent people are in Raymond and on the Long Beach Peninsula where there is bus service.

Figure 8: Pacific County Trip Attractors

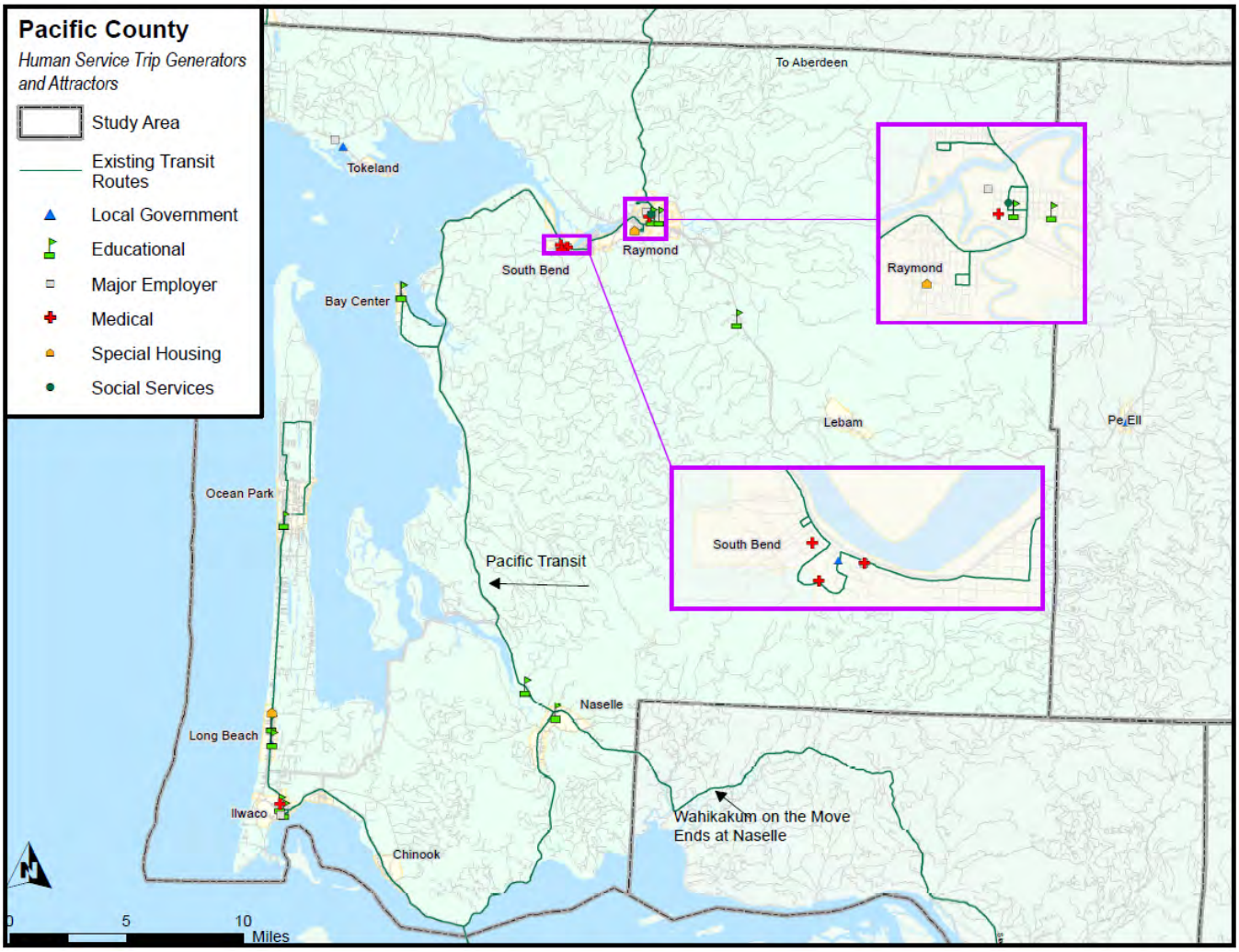
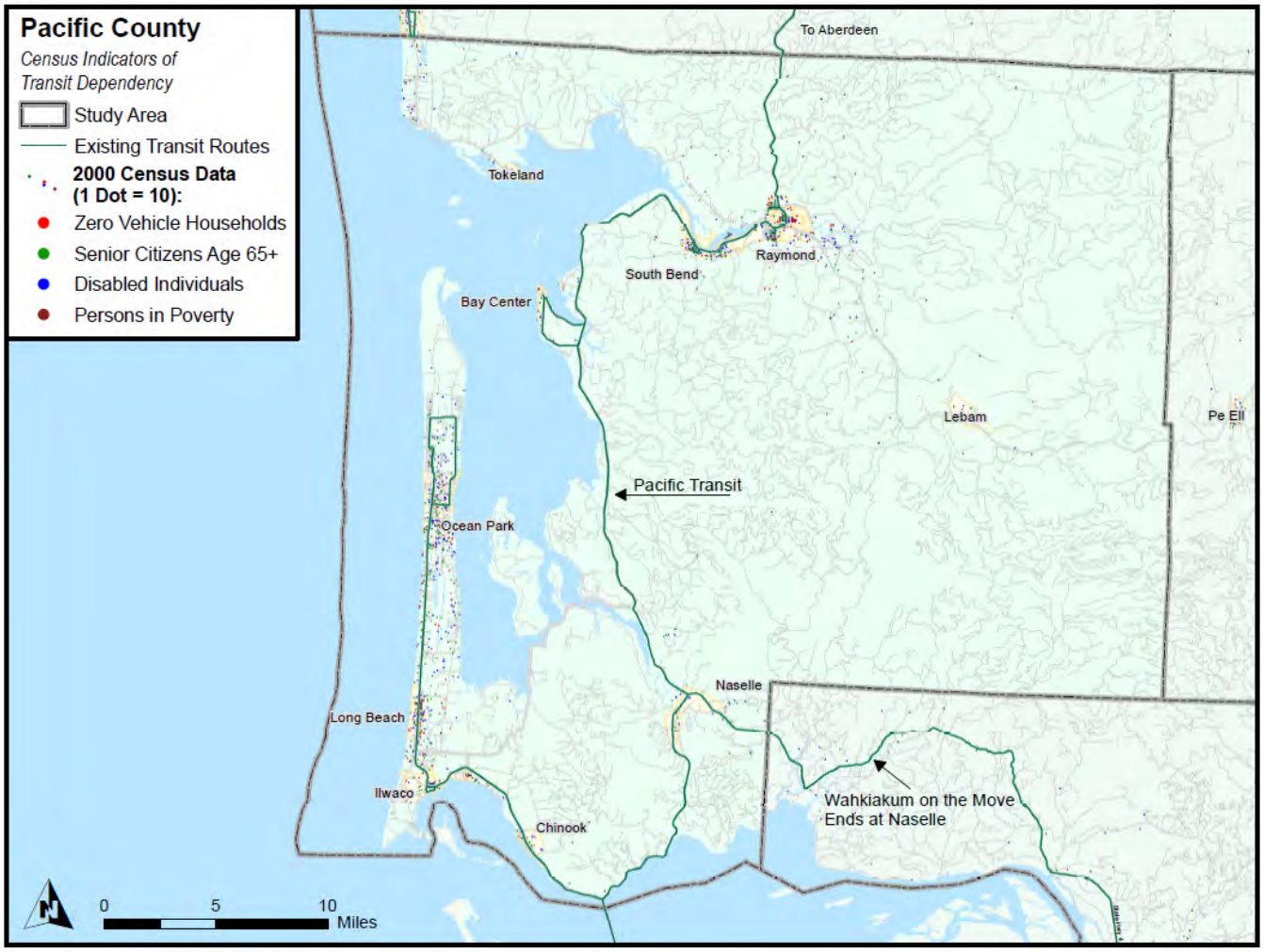


Figure 9: Pacific County Transit Dependent Population



Unmet needs and Issues

1. Level and frequency of public transit services in all parts of the county need to be increased.
2. Regional employment transportation efforts need to be expanded and improved by greater coordination between Pacific Transit and Grays Harbor Transit and support by Coastal CAP
3. Lack of specialized medical services and higher educational facilities within this rural county creates challenge to get residents to out-of-county destinations.
4. Expanded services for out-of-county connections, especially medical trips to Aberdeen & Astoria, Oregon
5. Access to jobs (especially in the southern part of county, and for Shoalwater Bay Tribal members), and to job training (Grays Harbor Community College in Aberdeen) needs to be expanded
6. Medical trips for non-Medicaid and under-60 populations can be difficult
7. No central source of information about available transit services & funding resources

8. Lack of accessible vehicles. For example, CCS & Coastal CAP only transport ambulatory riders
9. Lack of local taxi providers
10. Pacific Transit is one of only providers in RTPO that participates in a coordinated emergency evacuation scenario plan. They have an aging radio system that needs to be replaced so all systems are functioning for daily operations as well as emergency operations

Proposed Strategies to Address Unmet Needs

1. Increase frequency of scheduled service to Aberdeen & Olympia
2. Continue scheduled service to Astoria where medical and educational opportunities exist by supporting Pacific Transit's request for continuation of funding
3. Expand employment transportation in Pacific County, especially to work sites in the Long Beach area, & runs to Community College in Aberdeen
4. Support Coastal CAP's request to sustain transportation for low income, TANF, and underemployed individuals during off-transit hours.
5. Form consortium to explore options for funding patient transport. (To include Ocean Beach & Willapa Harbor Hospitals, Pacific Transit, Paratransit Services, WSDOT, Catholic Community Services, Coastal CAP, county health dept., DSHS & Olympic AAA)
6. Create countywide mobility manager to improve information dissemination, volunteer recruitment, advocacy and coordination of existing transit services
7. Support Coastal CAPs request for a wheelchair accessible vehicle during this grant cycle
8. Support Pacific Transit's request for replacement of their entire 17 year old 2 way radio communication system for the fleet so they can maintain daily operations and be available to fully participate in the event of an emergency

Grays Harbor County

Grays Harbor County has an estimated population of slightly greater than 71,000 people. Figure 10 shows the estimated populations for incorporated communities.

Figure 10
Grays Harbor Population for Incorporated Communities

Aberdeen	16,450
Cosmopolis	1,645
Elma	3,140
Hoquiam	8,770
McCleary	1,565
Montesano	3,605
Oakville	715
Ocean Shores	4,940
Westport	2,345

A little more than 1/3 of the county residents live in unincorporated areas. Of the total population, slightly less than 15 percent are 65 or older. According to the 2000 Census, approximately 15,000 people have disabilities.

Existing Providers

- **Grays Harbor Transit Authority (GHTA):** Provides fixed route, county wide ADA, commuter and vanpool services. GHTA has several routes serving Grays Harbor County and its cities seven days a week. GHTA also makes six daily runs to Olympia, and runs to Centralia/Chehalis on Mondays and Fridays. The service also connects with Thurston, Lewis, Pacific, Jefferson and Clallam Counties. Between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010 GHTA provided over 1.2 million passenger trips covering over 1.6 million vehicle miles.

  GHTA has 20 vans and 4 vanpools to serve commuters. These numbers are anticipated to increase within the next two years. Management of 25 to 30 vans necessitates GHTA hiring a vanpool coordinator. While vanpools are growing in popularity in Grays Harbor, vanpools do not generate revenue for the Agency; they are operated at cost.

- **Catholic Community Services** provides dial-a-ride service to senior citizens in Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. This program relies on volunteers using their own cars to transport clients. Currently, they have 11 volunteer drivers available to serve Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. They do not have a lift-equipped vehicle so they can only transport ambulatory riders. CCS tries to meet the need for long distance medical trips to medical facilities in Olympia, Tacoma, Portland and Seattle. CCS is seeing community needs for this type of service grow at a more rapid pace than they feel they can meet.

- **Coastal Community Action Program** provides three transportation services in Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties: Medicaid medical transportation for those with DSHS coupons; cancer treatment transport to Olympia; and, Private medical/basic

needs transportation for seniors over 60 who do not drive due to health and/or aging issues. Hours of service are 7:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday thru Friday. Saturday trips can be scheduled for special needs. Coastal CAP's paratransit program relies on volunteers using their own cars to transport clients. The agency has one van that is used for trips to radiology labs in Olympia. None of the individual or agency vehicles are lift-equipped, so they can only transport ambulatory passengers. The agency has 20 volunteer drivers available to serve Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. About 65 percent of trips are for Grays Harbor County residents.

Coastal CAP also runs a program to transport people to work and job related training. The agency has four, accessible vans for the JARC program that cover Grays Harbor and Pacific Counties. Under the restrictions of the program they can only transport for work, school/training and daycare purposes and are not allowed to transport minors (other than with a qualifying adult for daycare). Coastal CAP trains its drivers to enable them to provide service within FTA guidelines. This demand response employment program averages between 500-600 rides per month, with an average trip of 25 miles one-way. The program is available 24 hours a day to meet the needs of shift workers. The most common destinations are Aberdeen, Westport, Raymond, Ocean Shores, and East Grays Harbor County to Aberdeen.

In order to expand their volunteer driver program in Pacific County Coastal CAP is embarking on a volunteer driver drive, blanketing the county with public service announcements funded in part by the Olympic Area Agency on Aging.

- **Medicaid:** Paratransit Services is the regional Medicaid transportation broker for Grays Harbor County. It has several providers with whom it books medical rides for county residents. However, it does not contract with the Grays Harbor Transit Authority, although it does purchase transit bus tickets and passes on behalf of its Medicaid clients. About half of the Grays Harbor County trips originated in Aberdeen (2,500), and another 1,100 in nearby Hoquiam. Out-of-county trips accounted for about one-third of all trips originating in the county's three largest communities -- Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Elma -- and about one-quarter of all trips countywide. The most common destinations were as follows (in descending order): Olympia, Seattle, Tacoma and Pacific County, with a smattering of trips to Bremerton, Chehalis, Mason and Clallam Counties. The vast majority of in-county trips were made to the Aberdeen/Hoquiam urbanized area.

- **Olympic Area Agency on Aging**: This agency provides funding for volunteer transportation providers in Grays Harbor County. Importantly, this includes door-to-door volunteer transportation for those who are too frail to use para-transit services such as Grays Harbor Transit.

  OAAA provides about $12,000 per year in funding to Coastal CAP for both Pacific and Grays Harbor Counties. This is a very low amount of funding for two counties leaving no money available for program administration. All funding goes directly to services to pay for mileage of the volunteer drivers. In Grays Harbor Coastal CAP absorbs most of these costs, but Pacific County does not have any existing administration to absorb administrative costs.

- **WorkSource Grays Harbor:** The Tacoma Goodwill Senior Program provides a part-time employee to staff the Aberdeen WorkSource office. Seniors are referred to Coastal CAP for transit services (RSVP program for medical-related transport for seniors). Referrals are also made to Grays Harbor Transit and to the Veterans Administration counselor in residence if seniors are vets. Grays Harbor Transit provides free passes as needed to meet program needs. No one who is able to use the public transit system is turned away.
- **Private Providers:** Three private providers operating in Grays Harbor County were identified; Far West, Mobility Transport, and Coastal Transport. All take private pay, Medicare, and Medicaid referrals. Each provides non-emergent transport only and no medical assistance. Mobility Transport is working with Grays Harbor Transit to fill the gaps in service provision related to the transport of Medicaid clients.

New Providers

- **Quinault Indian Nation – Rez Racer**: In December 2010, the Quinault Indian Nation Transit will begin operation of its first deviated fixed route transit service, the Rez Racer. Funding was received from the Tribal Transit Program FY09 and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to assist the Nation in implementing its Rez Racer transit service.

  Operation services will be contracted out to a transit provider. The Nation's Transit service will provide mobility around the Reservation and connection to existing transit providers in 3 hour increments. This will be the first time that Reservation residents will be able to use public transit for employment, medical services, and personal needs. This route only has enough operational funding to continue for one year. Additional funding is needed to ensure this new service continues and can be relied on by the Reservation community.

  Major Destinations include the populated areas of Queets, Amanda Park, Taholah, and Qui-nai-elt Village. This service will make on Reservation connections with Grays Harbor Transit and Jefferson Transit where no connections previously existed. The main objectives of this service are to fill transit gaps, connect people to existing systems, and implement a more comprehensive lifeline service.

  Priorities of the new, weekday service are:

  - Allow residents of Queets and Amanda Park access to governmental services and to hold governmental jobs from 8am to 5pm.
  - Connect to GHTA once in the morning (Taholah connection) and in the afternoon (Moclips connection) to allow for greater movement of passengers and flexible access to services in Grays Harbor County.
  - Circulate people around each village the maximum amount of times.
  - Priorities of the new, Saturday service are:
    - Connect to the GHTA service stop 10.1 miles from the Village of Taholah (the closest tribal community) during its Saturday run.
    - Provide service connection to the greater Grays Harbor County community on the weekend.

- Provide residents of the Reservation with improved opportunities to run errands, visit friends and family, and perform activities that are currently limited.

The Nation has been providing a subsidy to Jefferson County Transit to support the Olympic Connection. The Olympic Connection is an on-reservation connection between the Grays Harbor Transit and Jefferson Transit Authority systems. Jefferson Transit manages this service and enters into Grays Harbor County to make the system connection within the Village of Amanda Park, located along the southeastern banks of Lake Quinault. Since 2007, the Nation provides $26,000.00 of tribal dollars for support. This service provides basic lifeline movement on the Peninsula but requires supplementation.

Other Quinault Nation Transportation Services include: Community Health Representatives which offer medical transportation services and monitored checks on patients and clients within the tribal service area (Reservation plus 25 miles). This is provided through the Roger Saux Health Clinic in Taholah, Washington; and the Quinault Beach Resort and Casino offers shuttle service to and from businesses in the Grays Harbor Coastal area to the Casino free of charge.

Emergency Management

Grays Harbor County Department of Emergency Management (DEM) has discussed a number of specific scenarios with certain transportation providers, for specific human services needs, but does not have a coordinated, comprehensive plan for transporting the populations identified under this plan (youth, elderly, disabled and low income).For example, DEM has discussed potential use of public school buses for transport of certain elderly populations to public shelters. Discussion has also taken place with regard to emergency transport of kidney dialysis patients to dialysis centers.

Coastal Transport a non-profit provider out of Elma, reports that they are working toward a Memorandum of Understanding with Aberdeen, Elma and Montesano on emergency management of evacuations. The Quinault Indian Nation is currently involved in mitigation planning and are establishing County and Tribal interaction/policy. The Grays Harbor Transit Authority is establishing a Memorandum of Understanding with Grays Harbor County. They also have agreements with three nursing homes, Timberland Opportunities, and the County Juvenile Facility. There is, however, no regional, comprehensive and coordinated planning underway, nor are there written plans or procedures in place to address the human services population groups addressed in this update.

Interagency needs in Grays Harbor for emergency transportation planning include:

a. Coordinated emergency planning for transport of human services populations identified in this plan should occur among Grays Harbor providers, facilitated by the county Department of Emergency Services.
b. The coordinated planning process described above should culminate in written plans and procedures for emergency transport of youth, elderly, disabled and low income groups in Grays Harbor.

c. The planning process should also culminate in a comprehensive umbrella Memorandum of Understanding among county, cities and providers that addresses emergency transport management.
d. Human services transportation providers identified in this plan should provide certain information to DEM for use in emergencies. This information should include the following:
    1) provider's primary and secondary emergency contacts (email and phone);
    2) estimated average daily count of special needs population served, and their location;
    3) provider's designated emergency meeting place and secondary meeting place;
    4) description of emergency management processes of providers such as designated staff to serve in emergencies (it is estimated that up to 30% or more of regular staff will leave in the event of an emergency, in order to locate and care for their own families); provisions for fuel supplies, alternative shelter arrangements.

Strategies to meet unmet emergency management needs.

e. **Create Planning Group to Develop Emergency Transport Plan**. County DEM act as facilitator and convene Grays Harbor transportation providers as identified in this Plan and other stakeholders including city representatives, and meet monthly to provide above-listed information to DEM, and develop a written plan and procedures to address emergency transport needs in Grays Harbor.
f. **Adopt Multi-Party Comprehensive MOU**. Develop and execute umbrella comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding among county, cities, Transit and other providers, addressing provision of emergency transport management. This effort will result in different plans for different jurisdictions, and may require considerable effort and time to complete.
g. **Seek Funding for Emergency Planning and MOU Efforts**. Grays Harbor Council of Governments seek out and apply for state/federal funding to carry out above-described planning efforts for Grays Harbor agency providers and for the county, cities and Grays Harbor Transit.
h. **Establish a County-Wide Identification System.** Establish an identification system that is recognized by police, sheriff, county and state emergency management providers that allows transportation providers to gain access to regions needing evacuation assistance.
i. **Establish Fuel Agreements.** Grays Harbor Transit and other emergency evac/transport providers need to have access to available fuel supplies outside of their normal supply chain during times of emergency. Agreements that allow fuel providers to supply GHTA and other evac transporters should be put into place before disaster strikes.
j. **Mobilize School Busses.** Use the large fleet of existing school busses in each community for emergency evacuation transportation. Remove insurance roadblocks.

Analysis of Demographic Data

Figure 11: Grays Harbor County Trip Attractors shows that most of the county trip attractors are on one of the county wide transit routes; this service serves almost all communities in the county. **Figure 12: Grays Harbor County Transit Dependent Population** shows that transit dependent populations are concentrated in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. There are also concentrations of transit dependent people in Ocean Shores, Westport and less so in Central Park and Satsop.

Figure 11: Grays Harbor County Trip Attractors

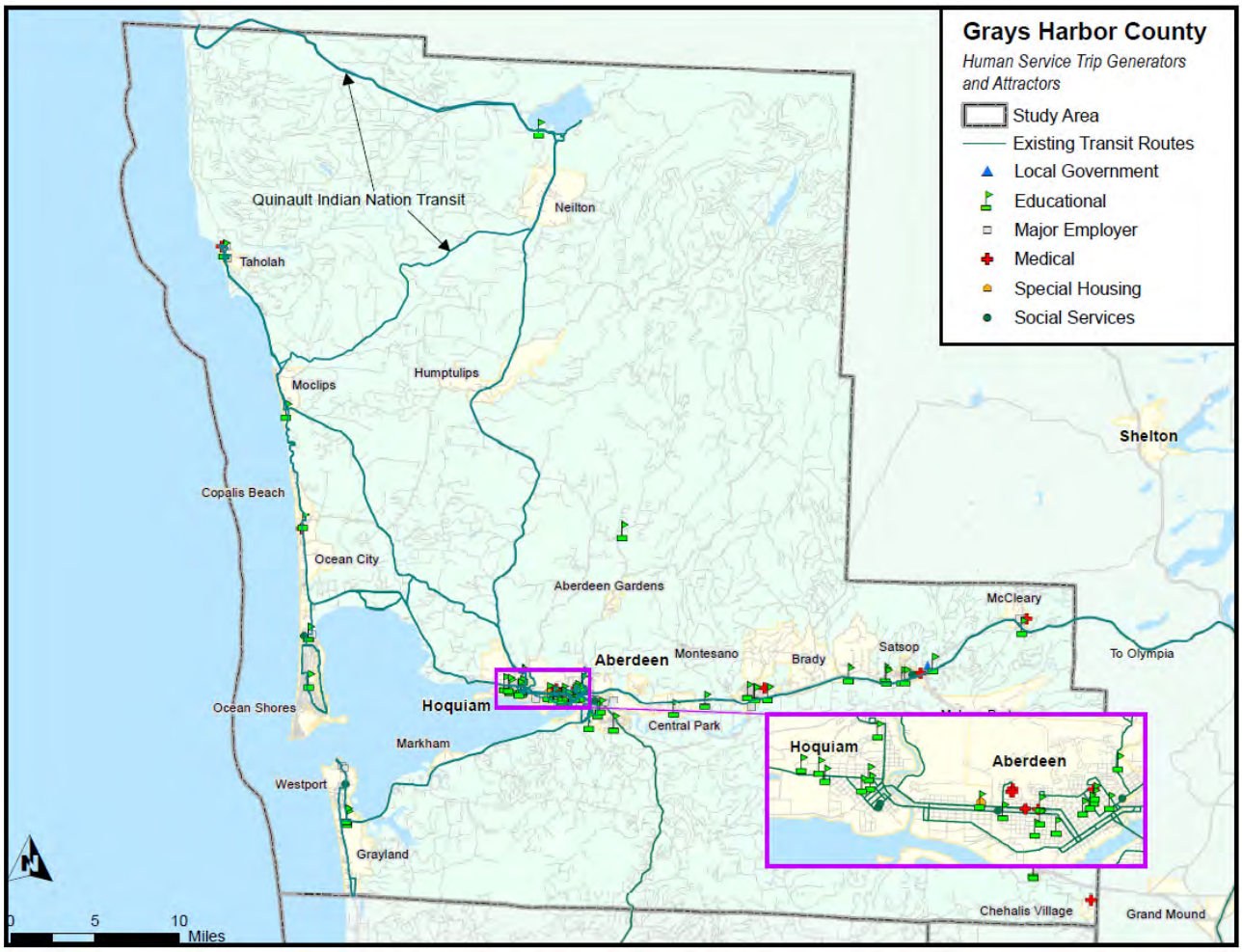
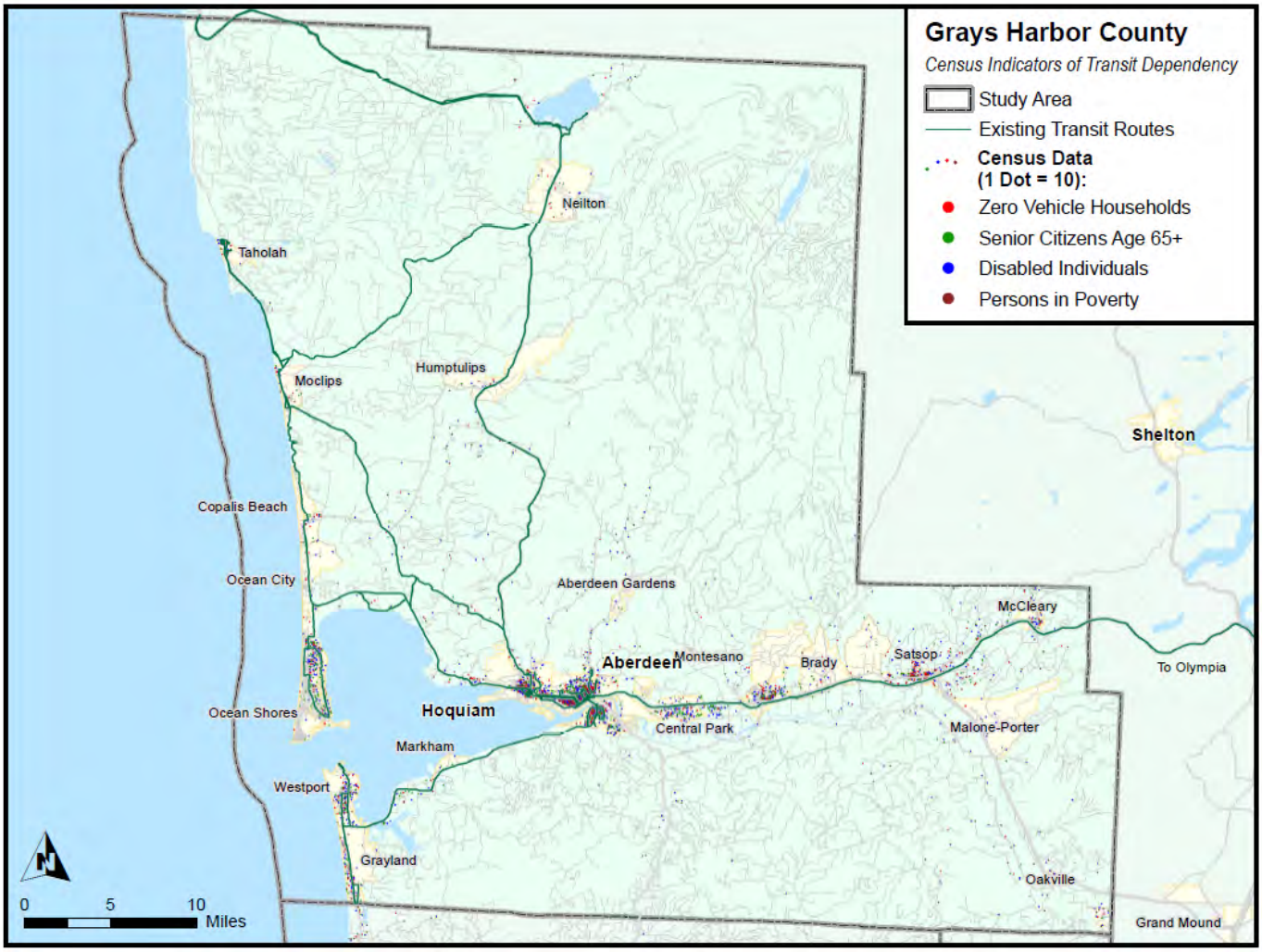


Figure 12: Grays Harbor County Transit Dependent Population



Unmet Needs and Issues

Grays Harbor Transit Authority
In 2009 Grays Harbor Transit Authority (GHTA) lost $1.22 million in sales tax revenue. Federal and state grants received by the Agency were reduced by $800,000. By November of 2009 the Agency had no choice but to reduce services by a total of 16%. In January of 2010 fares were doubled (zone one from .50 to $1.00; zone 2 from $1.00 to $2.00). In February the Agency laid off five drivers. Between July of 2009 and July of 2010 GHTA reported loosing 25% of its total ridership. GHTA management attributes the loss in ridership to increased unemployment in the region and to the increase in fares. GHTA is struggling to maintain its current levels of service without implementing further reductions.

The Grays Harbor Transit Authority has identified the following issues that create barriers to providing much needed service:

- Currently operating on a 16% reduction in services.
- Vanpools are not funded under the Consolidated Transit Grant program.
- Emergent need to hire a vanpool coordinator.
- Employers on fixed route service are not using GHTA – Shifts and scheduled trips aren't in sync.
- Due to a change in the way grant funds for vehicle replacement was handled and WSDOT not establishing a clear process during transition, GHTA missed out on two years of vehicle replacement.
- Public transit cannot get reimbursed for Medicaid client transport. A new policy is needed to allow GHTA to provide service.
- Grays Harbor Transportation Authority has outgrown their current facility & needs to expand or replace existing administration and maintenance facility, constructed in 1974.

The Quinault Indian Nation
The Quinault Indian Nation is implementing a new inner-Reservation transit service scheduled to begin in December of 2010. This route only has enough operational funding to continue for one year. Funding is needed to continue operation of services. This service benefits all populations on (and off) the Reservation, especially individuals without other viable options. These populations have to travel long distances to access employment opportunities, needed governmental services, primary health care, and social services.

Elderly populations (age 60 or higher) are a significant national transit-dependent population and make up approximately 9.8% of the Reservation's entire population. The highest concentrations of elder residents are in Taholah, east of Taholah, and Queets. Approximately 3% of Reservation population has some form of mobility impairment with the greatest mobility-limited population concentrated in Taholah. Reservation population is approximately 6% low-income with the highest concentrations of low-income residents in Taholah and Queets. Approximately 8% of Reservation households reported no vehicle available for use in the year 2000. These populations are concentrated in Taholah, Amanda Park, and Queets. The Reservation also has a youth population of about 18% with the highest concentration of youth in or near Taholah and Queets.

The Quinault Indian Nation has identified the following issue as a barrier to providing service on the Reservation:

- The current program has only enough operating funds for one year. $200,000 in additional funding is needed to ensure this new service continues.

Overall Issues

Throughout the course of this study several issues were raised by both public and private transportation providers alike. Both service sectors have been impacted by these across the board issues.

Overall issues voiced by both public and private providers included:

- Incompatible funding silos, cannot share across programs. This complicates programs, creates unnecessary waste and barriers to participation.
- There are different standards to meet in order to put Medicare/Medicaid transport vehicles on the road – standards should be uniform.
- Medical transportation coverage for non-Medicaid population is needed.
- Better networking/coordination among transportation providers is needed to ensure that services are not being duplicated and dependant populations are being served.
- Demand is growing faster than most Agencies can meet. More volunteer drivers are needed to meet the demand.
- Paratransit wait times are unacceptably long. Paratransit can't handle the volumes. New brokerage systems and/or increased staffing are critical.

Medicaid

During the course of this study several issues directly linked to Medicaid service provision were voiced by both public and private transportation providers.

Issues related to Medicaid:

- Medicaid transport cost of attendants is paid for but cost of escorts such as family members is not.
- Short routes don't pay because only the trip is reimbursed, not mileage and time from the point of origin.
- Medicare and Medicaid clients cannot ride in the same vehicle.
- National/DSHS Issue – Medicare vs Medicaid funding silos.

Strategies to Address Unmet Needs:

A group meeting was held with both public and private transportation providers as well as and

- 211 services should be expanded to seven days a week and include medical transport contact information.
- In rural areas establish transportation "hubs". Bring off system & stranded populations to these connection points and private providers can transport to and from the hub.
- Pierce County transportation providers are currently experimenting with a different funding model that changes the way reimbursements are funded. Examine Pierce County model for possible emulation. Following their lead, form a similar Southwest Washington joint transportation committee.

- Vanpool programs need to be expanded. More funding sources need to be established for this type of flexible transport.
- More volunteer drivers are needed. Launch a public education/ad campaign to educate the community and inform of volunteer opportunities.
- Begin a national dialogue regarding Medicaid coverage and reimbursement. Examine ways for those funds to partner better to reduce trips and costs. Create gap coverage.
- Work with Federal and State agencies to establish a dedicated funding source for transit operations.

Conclusion

The reliance on public transportation is growing and has continued to grow in both the fixed route public transit and human services/non-profit groups. This can be attributed to any number of things including the downturn in the economy, the increase in the number of elderly, or more people seeking job retraining and going back to school. Coordinating existing transportation services is a necessity and agencies are looking for ways to save resources in order to continue providing transportation to services the elderly, disabled and low-income rely upon. At this point the majority of the service providers are looking only to sustain existing services – partly due to the fact that reviewers of the consolidated grants typically support continuing projects over expansion projects. This doesn't mean that there isn't a need for expansion of those existing services to continue to support the existing need.

Most people and many transit dependent people in the five county SWRTPO live in rural areas. This is true in each of the counties except Grays Harbor County which has more people living in incorporated areas than unincorporated ones. Providing fixed route transit services is very difficult to do in rural areas and therefore many people have difficulty getting where they need to go. As a result, we have a network of rural transportation providers that have started in an effort to fill that gap. There is a need for county wide service in both Lewis and Cowlitz Counties. Without a countywide system, many of the smaller communities receive no service at all and others only limited service. Transportation in urban areas is easier than in rural areas. This is particularly true in Lewis and Cowlitz Counties where the transit serves only the major population centers of Chehalis/Centralia and Longview/Kelso. While social service organizations have done outstanding jobs to fill the gaps, they receive no sales tax funding so **must rely on grants** and they are not able to meet all needs. County wide service can become a part of existing PTBAs or can be provided through establishing new ones to serve the areas not currently included. Twin Transit and the Community Urban Bus Service (CUBS) should continue to explore options to provide service outside the boundaries of the cities they serve, especially when the local economic climate improves.

While each county has unique characteristics, other issues emerged as common in all of them:

- Transportation in urban areas is easier than in rural areas. This is particularly true in Lewis and Cowlitz Counties where transit serves only the major population centers of Chehalis/Centralia and Longview/Kelso. Twin Transit and the Community Urban Bus Service (CUBS) should continue to explore options to provide service outside the boundaries of the cities they serve, especially when the local economic climate improves.

- There is a need for countywide service in both Lewis and Cowlitz Counties. Without a countywide system, many of the smaller communities receive no service at all and others only limited service. While social service organizations have done outstanding jobs to fill the gaps, they receive no sales tax funding so they must rely on grants and they are not able to meet all needs. Countywide service can become a part of existing Public Transportation Benefit Areas (PTBAs) or can be provided by establishing new ones to serve the areas not currently included.

- While transportation may be easier in the urban areas, there are several transportation services throughout the five-county RTPO that serve the rural areas and provide an extremely important connection to medical, shopping, and social opportunities in the urban areas. It is important to continue to support and maintain these transportation services as they provide a vital link to services and regional transportation connections and they continue to experience an increased demand.

- Coordination between social service agencies and transit agencies needs to continue beyond this plan. These efforts must be continued so that the transit dependent can lead active productive lives. Therefore, the SWRTPO will establish transit committees made up of both providers and users or advocates to meet on a quarterly basis in order to continue the sharing of information and explore coordination possibilities.

- There are riders who would like to use public transit, or who will soon be relying on public transit that are unfamiliar with how each system works and are nervous and intimidated by the public transit system. There is a need for travel training or a 'bus buddies' program to provide rider education, especially to the elderly population.

- While transportation providers understand the need for emergency coordination and are willing to provide services when called upon, there is a lack of formal coordination between emergency management departments and transit in the majority of jurisdictions within the RTPO.

- There is no central source of ride information that makes it easy for riders to see all transportation options available in their area.

- Social service and other organizations have managed to fill transit gaps by providing an array of services. This is especially true in those counties that do not have a countywide Public Transit Benefit Area (Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Lewis Counties).

Throughout the Coordinated Plan process it is clear that many community groups and organizations are concerned about transit issues. This planning process continues to bring them to the table to discuss needs and solutions and coordination between social service agencies and transit agencies needs to continue beyond this plan. These efforts must be continued so that agencies that may be unaware of community transportation options can accurately provide information on the resources available to the transit dependent. Therefore, the SWRTPO will establish transit committees made up of both providers and users or advocates to meet on a quarterly basis in order to continue the sharing of information and explore coordination possibilities.

CHAPTER 4
PROPOSED PROJECT LIST FOR
FY 2011-13 FUNDING REQUESTS

Ranking Strategy

Due to federal mandates, transportation for human services must now be coordinated across the region. The State of Washington is using its statewide system of Regional Transportation Planning Organizations to identify and prioritize the projects submitted by transit agencies, non-profits and tribes to the State for funding through its Consolidated Transit Grant process. The ranked list of prioritized projects then compete for funding on a statewide basis**.** Local rankings are a percentage of the total points available for each project.

WSDOT has allocated the five-county SWRTPO a total of 19 ranking spots; 7 A's, 6 B's, 6 C's and an unlimited number of D's. To rank these projects SWRTPO developed a ranking strategy, listed below in descending order of importance.

- Top priority: Existing projects meeting community needs
- Level 2 priority: Projects providing lifeline service to currently un-served geographic areas with transit dependent population
- Level 3 priority: Projects coordinating services to increase use or improve efficiency of existing services
- Level 4 priority: Projects that expand existing services
- Level 5 priority: Projects the upgrade quality of existing service

A ranking committee comprised of representatives from the tribes, non-profit groups, the brokerage, and a transit agency and the RTPO met and ranked the 21 submitted projects based on the priorities identified above. The following tables represent the list of projects as priorities for the fiscal 2011-2013 funding cycle. The A projects are the highest priority, D the least. Listing within the groups is random -- projects are not ranked within the groups.

Many of the services throughout the five-county RTPO span multiple counties and are listed in multiple pages within this plan. Consolidated grant applicants were required to list what page number they are listed in this plan. They are all listed on the following pages with exact project titles and brief project descriptions. The description column identifies the other pages in this plan where program information and project need can be found.

Ranking	Project Title	Provider	Category	Type	Description
A	Funding to sustain paratransit services for special needs population of Centralia and Chehalis, Washington	Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area dba Twin Transit	Sustain existing services	Operating	Provide Dial-A-Ride and route deviation services to special needs passengers within the Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area, encompassing the Cities of Centralia and Chehalis Washington. Requesting $189,505. Additional information on page 3-18,24.
B	Funding to sustain route deviated services with Rt 41 (Grand Mound) and Rt 42 (Express Route)	Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area dba Twin Transit	Sustain existing services	Operating	Continue to provide route deviated services. Requesting $247,817. Additional information on page 3-18,24.
C	Scheduled replacement of two (2) 30 ft. buses with two (2) medium duty truck based cutaway buses	Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area dba Twin Transit	Sustain existing services	Capital	Scheduled replacement due to age and mileage. Requesting $260,548. Additional information on page 3-18,24.
D	Scheduled replacement of two (2) 24 ft. cutaway buses that serve routes throughout Centralia, WA	Lewis Public Transportation Benefit Area dba Twin Transit	Sustain existing services	Capital	Scheduled replacement due to age and mileage. Requesting $155,831. Additional information on page 3-18,24.
A	Rural Community Connections Project (RCCP): Sustain 3-round trip,weekday fixed-route, (3/4 mile ADA deviation), public transit bus service connecting 9 rural eastern Lewis County communities along 85 miles of State Hwy.(SR) 12, SR 508 and I-5 from Packwood to Centralia/Chehalis	White Pass Community Services Coalition d.b.a., L.E.W.I.S. Mountain Hwy. Transit	Sustain existing services	Operating	Continue to provide the only public transportation option to passengers in Eastern and Central Lewis County in the communities along State Hwy 12 and 508 offering transportation connections to Amtrak, Greyhound, Twin Transit and CAP in Centralia/Chehalis. Requesting $619,500. Additional information on page 3-18,24.
A	Continue Reserve-A-Ride in Cowlitz & Wahkiakum to provide dial-a-ride services for people who do not qualify for Medicaid transport or who cannot access transit to get to life-sustaining medical appointments and if possible to general medical appointments, nutrition sites, and shopping trips.	Human Services Council	Sustain existing services	Operating	Continue to sustain dial-a-ride services in Cowlitz and Wahkiakum Counties that serve a growing number of individuals who are not eligible for transportation under the Medicaid Medical Transportation Program and who do not have access to local transit. Requesting $400,000. Additional information on page 3-4,9,10,13,16.

Ranking	Project Title	Provider	Category	Type	Description
B	Driven to Opportunity	Coastal Community Action Program	Sustain existing services	Operating	G.H. & Pacific Counties Transportation for low-income, TANF, and underemployed individuals during off-transit hours and in off-transit grid situations. 4 existing vans provide services for over 500 individuals per month for 24 months. Requesting $475,000. Additional information on page 3-25,28,29,30,38.
D	Opportunity Capital	Coastal Community Action Program	Sustain existing services	Capital	Replacement vehicle for existing high mileage, high maintenance (beyond replacement date) vehicle with one accessible vehicle. Requesting $54,373. Additional information on page 3-25, 28, 29, 30, 38.
B	Sustain current levels of fixed route Public Transportation in Grays Harbor County	Grays Harbor Transit Authority	Sustain existing services	Operating	Preserve current levels of fixed route service operating seven days per week throughout Grays Harbor County. Service extends to Olympia six (6) times daily and Centralia/Chehalis on Monday and Friday and makes connections with neighboring counties-Thurston, Lewis, pacific, Jefferson, and Clallam. Requesting $2,156,702. Additional information on page 3-30,37,38.

Ranking	Project Title	Provider	Category	Type	Description
A	Sustain current levels of Demand Response Public Transportation in Grays Harbor County	Grays Harbor Transit Authority	Sustain existing services	Operating	This project will sustain demand response door to door paratransit disabled service in Grays Harbor County. This service operates seven days per week and encompasses four general public door to door dial-a-ride services in four rural communities in Grays Harbor County; Elma, Montesano, Westport, and Ocean Shores. Requesting $1,138,196. Additional information on page 3-30,37,38.
B	Wahkiakum on the Move - Capital Grant application 2011-2013	Wahkiakum Health and Human Services for Wahkiakum on the Move	Sustain existing services	Capital	Purchase 14 passenger (12-2) ADA cutaway bus. This would replace current vehicle #102 which is a year 2000 14 passenger (12/2) ADA cutaway which is has in excess of 230,000 miles. Vehicle # 102 would be placed in permanent reserve. Requesting $65,000. Additional information on page 3-12,16,17.
A	Wahkiakum on the Move - Operating Grant application 2011-2013	Wahkiakum Health and Human Services for Wahkiakum on the Move	Sustain existing services	Operating	This service allows for continued transportation for commute, educational, medical, social and other purposes into the Cowlitz County area. Additionally this service provides passengers with access to other service providers such as CUBS, CAP, Amtrak, Greyhound, DAV and Pacific Transit. This service would also restore 2 additional runs to residents living at the west end of Wahkiakum County on Tuesday and Thursday, allowing for a five day service. Requesting $504,647. Additional information on page 3-12,16,17.

Ranking	Project Title	Provider	Category	Type	Description
B	To provide public transportation including fixed route and Dial-A-Ride services to citizens of Pacific County, and providing Intercity connections to Aberdeen, WA, Naselle, WA, and Astoria, Oregon	Pacific Transit	Sustain existing services	Operating	Operate five fixed routes, Monday through Friday from 5:30am to 7:30pm, and one fixed route and one deviated route on Saturdays, 10:00am through 6:00pm. Operate the Dial-A-Ride services during the same hours as the fixed route. Requesting $1,332,000. Additional information on page 3-25, 28, 29.
C	Replace the entire 17 year old 2 way radio communication system for the entire fleet.	Pacific Transit	Sustain existing services	Capital	Requesting funds to replace the 17 yr old 2 way radio system in 16 vehicle fleet and two bases as the current units are experiencing frequent problems and are becoming less reliable. The units have to be sent to Olympia for repair and finding parts has been increasingly difficult. Requesting $88,000. Additional information on page 3-25,28,29.
C	One 35' Gillig Diesel Bus	Community Urban Bus System, CUBS. Operated by City of Longview	Sustain existing services	Capital	This capital request is for the replacement of one diesel bus used to continue to provide fixed route services to the Longview/Kelso community and those riders who access our system via other area providers, including CAP, Columbia County Rider, Cowlitz Tribe, and Wahkiakum on the Move. Requesting $450,000. Additional information on page 3-1,9,10,11.
C	Two 28' Ford El Dorado Mini Buses	Community Urban Bus System, CUBS. Operated by City of Longview	Sustain existing services	Capital	Request for two mini-buses to replace existing high mileage buses used to provide dial-a-ride service in the Longview/Kelso community. Requesting $165,000. Additional information on page 3-1,2,9,10,11.

Ranking	Project Title	Provider	Category	Type	Description
C	Capital to meet the demand of our rural Dial-A-Ride Service Area riders	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Expand services	Capital	Capital request to add an additional Mini Van or Cross Over to better serve the rural areas in tight spots and in inclement weather. This will also allow for the increased request for rides that are currently turned down due to lack of the staff or vehicles. Requesting $48,500. Additional information on page 3-4, 9,10,11,19,24.
A	Operating Assistance to Sustain Dial-A-Ride Services in Cowlitz and S. Lewis County	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Sustain existing services	Operating	To sustain existing services in the rural areas 15 miles off the I-5 Corridor in South Lewis County and Cowlitz County and reinstate the Contract Administers hours for this grant to 50% time. Requesting $251,887. Additional information on page 3-4, 9,10,11,19,24.
C	Operating Assistance for Capital Purchase to meet the demand of our rural Dial-A- Ride Service Area riders	Cowlitz Indian Tribe	Expand services	Operating	The expansion of service is to meet the needs in the current service area. As the economy continues to lag, our request for rides is continually increasing. Our current drivers are to the point of overtime. The additional funds will be for the operation of the new vehicle, full time driver with full benefits, training and supplies. This is a much needed expansion as there is no other public transit service in most of S. Lewis County and Cowlitz County. We are also considering operating on Saturdays to meet the need of the Dialysis patients. This can not be done without the additional driver. Requesting $156,670. Additional information on page 3-4, 9,10,11,19,24.

Ranking	Project Title	Provider	Category	Type	Description
A	Connecting the I-5 Corridor: Vancouver to Longview to Chehalis	Lower Columbia CAP	Sustain existing services	Operating	Operating grant to provide general public, fixed route service along the I-5 corridor between Longview/ Vancouver and Longview/Chehalis. Lower Columbia CAP will provide 6 trips per weekday between Longview and Salmon Creek with stops in Kalama and Woodland; and 4 trips per day between Longview and Chehalis with stops in Castle Rock and Toledo/Winlock. Saturday service will include 2 trips to Salmon Creek and Chehalis each. Requesting $680,958.75. Additional information on page 3-2, 9, 10, 11, 19, 24.
B	Fleet Replacement: Rural Public Transportation Service Connecting the I-5 Corridor in SW Washington	Lower Columbia CAP	Sustain existing services	Capital	Capital grant to replace two (2) 14 passenger cut-away vans. Current vans are at the end of their useful operating life due to high mileage (380,000+ and 325,000+ miles respectively) and have frequent, costly breakdowns. New vans will allow us to provide safe and more cost efficient transportation services to the residents of Clark, Cowlitz and Lewis Counties. Requesting $130,000. Additional information on page 3-2, 9, 10, 11, 19, 24.

Appendix A

COWLITZ CO. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- AARP
- CAP
- CUBS
- Catholic Community Services
- Cowlitz County Health Department
- Disability Resources of SW Washington
- Family Health Center
- Highlands Neighborhood Association
- Longview Goodwill Center
- Monticello Park Retirement and Assisted Living
- PeaceHealth Dialysis Center
- Youth and Family Link
- Worksource Washington
- Veterans Van
- Department of Human Services
- Center for Independent Living
- DAPC-Drug rehab
- Senior Connections Fair
- St. Johns Hospital

GRAYS HARBOR CO. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Catholic Community Services
- Coastal Community Action Program – JARC and Senior Services RSVP
- Grays Harbor County Department of Emergency Management
- Grays Harbor County Social Services
- Grays Harbor Transit Authority
- Grays Harbor Workforce Center (Worksource)
- Housing Authority of Grays Harbor
- Olympic Area on Aging-Planning and Local Services
- Quinault Indian Nation – Senior Services and Planning Department

LEWIS COUNTY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Catholic Community Services
- Centralia College
- Providence Centralia Hospital
- Community Action Council of Lewis, Mason and Thurston Counties
- Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Lewis County Senior Transportation
- Lewis County Social Services
- LMT Area Agency on Aging
- Morningside Rehabilitation Program
- Morton General Hospital

- Lewis County Senior Services
- Twin Transit
- White Pass Community Services Coalition (Lewis Mountain Hwy Transit)
- WorkSource of Lewis County

PACIFIC COUNTY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Catholic Community Services
- Coastal Community Action Program
- Department of Social and Health Services
- Ocean Beach Hospital
- Olympic Area Agency on Aging
- Pacific Transit
- Paratransit Services
- Pacific Co. Health & Human Services Department
- Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe
- Willapa Harbor Hospital
- Willapa Counseling Center
- WorkSource Pacific County

WAHKIAKUM COUNTY STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

- Wahkiakum on the Move
- County Commission
- Mayor of Cathlamet
- St. James Family Center
- Columbia View Care Center
- Lower Columbia Economic Development Council
- Wahkiakum School District
- CAP – Lower Columbia Community Action Council
- Human Services Council – Brokerage

Appendix B

COWLITZ COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

PURPOSE

Develop a strategic, functional planning approach for responding to persons with special needs before, during and following a disaster. This includes populations which have functional limitations in the following areas:

- Maintaining independence
- Communication
- Transportation
- Supervision
- Medical Care
- Persons with disabilities who are:
    - Living in institutionalized settings
    - Elderly
    - Children
    - From diverse cultures
    - Limited English proficiency or are non-English speaking
    - Transportation disadvantaged.

A functional need refers to a restriction or limited ability to perform activities normally considered routine.

PROCESS

1. Conduct a Community Assessment & demographic analysis – general info, estimate and distribution of people with special needs in the community.
2. Establish a Special Needs Advisory Committee. Appoint persons that have experience working with special needs populations to develop, review, and oversee the plan.
3. Identify potential partners in developing a response network.
4. Solicit expertise from individuals, organizations and agencies in all stages of the planning process.
5. Evaluate resources and needs as outlined in the Human Services Transportation Plan.
6. Create or access an inventory of congregate facilities to determine:
    a. Number of special needs populations that would need assistance during an emergency
    b. Status of evacuation/shelter-in-place/continuity plans
    c. Strategies for transfer of staff, medical records and equipment & supplies, food and linens
    d. Alternative housing plan for extended periods with memoranda of understanding in place
    e. Procedures to alert emergency personnel when conditions or events require evacuation

f. Evaluate the need for Emergency Response Plans and Continuity of Operations plans for community partners and organizations serving people with functional needs

7. Create an "Emergency Response Plan for Special Needs Populations" Annex to the Cowlitz County Emergency Preparedness Plan, developed with periodic review and input by stakeholders, the Special Needs Advisory Committee and Cowlitz County Department of Emergency Management.

DELIVERABLES

1. Develop an annex in the local Emergency Operations/Response Plan devoted specifically to special needs populations following the FEMA strategic universal functional planning approach to initiate special needs planning.
2. Integrate special needs considerations within each Emergency Support Function (ESF) to ensure they are part of overall planning.
3. Create templates for broad community use to establish or encourage:
    - Emergency Operations and/or Continuity of Operations Plan
    - Shelter-In-Place for congregate facility use
    - Coordinated Response Plans and/or Memoranda of Understanding
    - Preparation of Evacuation Supply Kits

COWLITZ COUNTY EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN FOR SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS

SUGGESTED PLAN CONTENTS

ESF: Emergency Support Function

ESF #2: Emergency Alert Delivery Mechanisms

1. Identify FCC rules and requirements concerning accessibility of emergency broadcast information. Examine Executive Order 13166 and identify methods to comply with providing information to persons with limited English proficiency.
2. Identify methods that can help ensure that everyone in the community receives emergency preparedness messages.
3. Identify the messages needed to help people with functional needs prepare for emergencies.
4. Identify the size of the constituency and any barriers to reaching them effectively.
5. Determine appropriate formats that will reach the widest possible audience. Include backup 9-1-1 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP)
6. Identify the best venues in which to convey the message. Identify notification and delivery mechanisms that will be used to convey the message.
7. Explore methods that can help get emergency preparedness messages accepted and acted upon.
8. Evaluate the feasibility of creating/managing a Special Needs Registry to provide emergency alerts and to assist with reunification efforts

ESF #6: Sheltering & Mass Care

1. Shelter Designation & Assessment
    a. Evaluate public areas and facilities to ensure they are accessible for a variety of functional needs populations (visual, hearing, mobility, environmental sensitivities)
2. Outline Methods Shelters will use to Obtain Resources
    a. Shelter plans for obtaining and distributing resources
3. Identify Process to Direct People to the Appropriate Shelter
    a. Shelter Intake & Assessment/Triage processes
4. Training for Shelter Workers & Volunteers
    a. Consult NGOs to identify training needs for addressing special populations
5. Shelter-In-Place for Congregate Settings
    a. Identify status of each congregate facility's emergency plan
    b. Determine if the facility meets the standards for a special needs shelter
    c. Prepare a SIP template for facility use
    d. Address power concerns to ensure functionality of life-sustaining equipment
6. Shelter-In-Place Planning for Individuals Living at Home & Requiring Home Health Care and/or Personal Care Assistance
    a. Identify businesses and agencies providing these services to help develop personal emergency plans

ESF #1: Transportation & Evacuation of Special Needs Populations

1. Identify legal and regulatory requirements of coordinating special needs transportation
2. Identify issues related to evacuation of special needs populations
3. Evaluate resources and needs as outlined in the Human Services Transportation Plan
4. Identify groups and neighborhoods that may require transportation assistance
5. Identify available resources, e.g.: schools, transit, ambulance, fire-aid vehicles, charter busses, NOP vans, Parks dept. Vans, Senior Citizen vans, casino vans, congregate care vans
6. Evaluate and Outline Vehicle Availability Factors
    a. Inventory vehicle occupant capacity and capability to transport people with disabilities
    b. Quantify the need for vehicles, by type
    c. Identify vehicle availability for emergency use, giving consideration to:
        i. Location of transit vehicles and routes
        ii. Time of day/day of week as it affects availability
        iii. Advance notification requirements for use
    d. Evaluate formal/informal transportation agreements to determine actual availability
7. Examine issues involved with different types of evacuation
    a. Define the roles and responsibilities of first responders
    b. Articulate a strategy for evacuating individuals that have little or no access to transportation
    c. Identify and coordinate transportation options that will allow special needs populations to transport their mobility devices, durable medical products, or service animals
    d. Establish a system to track equipment when life safety considerations require separation from the owner during an evacuation
    e. Identify a process to access interpreters for those with limited English proficiency to help them access transportation to a safe place
    f. Develop a plan for evacuating service animals with their owners
    g. Determine the extent to which special needs can be accommodated at shelters vs. the need to be transferred to a more specialized facility
8. Develop a template for Coordinated Response Plans and/or Memoranda of Understanding
9. Develop a template to encourage preparation of Evacuation Supply Kits
10. Coordinate transportation resources

ESF #6: Human Services, Medical Management and Congregate Settings

1. Review existing Emergency Response plans developed by public and quasi-public entities to determine gaps in planning:
    a. Determine the need for assistance to assist public and private medical providers with developing a strategy to maintain backup copies of medical records that are stored outside of the region on electronic and paper media.

    b. Determine the need for assistance to public/private providers with developing a system to track patients during an emergency
    c. Determine the need to designate a shelter for emergency workers and their families
2. Review existing Medical Surge Programs to determine the extent of personnel and practitioners available to assist with special population needs during and after an event
    a. Develop a system to identify volunteer staff and validate their credentials, regardless of affiliation
3. Identify private, non-profit and governmental human service agencies who can provide essential economic and social supports for special needs populations.
4. Outline the process to access federal assistance for mass care, emergency assistance, and housing and human services through ESF #6, as well as a strategy to deliver:
    a. Coordination of care (case management services)
    b. Coordination of donated goods and services
    c. Coordination of voluntary agency assistance
    d. Crisis counseling
    e. Disaster-related dental and medical costs
    f. Disaster unemployment assistance and food stamps
    g. Housing, including specialized and medical shelters
    h. Legal services
    i. Non-conventional shelter management
    j. Support to medical and specialized shelters
5. Identify resources for medical supplies necessary to support individuals during an incident:
    a. Durable medical equipment
    b. Pediatric equipment and pharmaceuticals used by children
    c. Personal care medical supplies not typically found in emergency facilities or on ambulances
    d. Prescription drugs (including assisting with insurance program prescription limitations)

ESF 14: Recovery

1. Identify a system to reunify families and support networks
2. Develop a strategy to ensure continuity of communications between emergency planners, special needs organizations and individuals with functional needs during the recovery phase
3. Outline a process to receive feedback from special needs populations following a disaster to identify improvements for future efforts
4. Identify a process to assess critical infrastructure necessary for individuals with special needs during the recovery phase:
    a. Accommodation of attendants, home health aides, visiting nurses, service animals and others who provide health care for persons with functional needs
    b. Establish priorities for restoring utility service to specific locations serving people with functional needs

    c. Examine transportation and commuting options for people with functional needs
    d. Outline a process to ensure that accessibility improvement is considered in long-term redevelopment/mitigation of future impacts on the community
5. Identify accessible long-term housing/sheltering options for persons in special needs communities as well as social services to support them:
    a. Review congregate facilities to determine if a plan for alternate housing options over an extended time period exists and if it is supported by formal agreement(s)
    b. Identify existing plans from the child welfare system or the McKinney-Vento Toolbox (for homeless children) to determine readiness to respond to the needs of special needs children
6. Review and augment the Donations Management Plan to identify special needs organizations that can process and match donated goods and services with those who need them most
    a. Designate one organization to establish and maintain a phone bank, web site and database to manage and distribute donations and volunteer support for special needs organizations
    b. Designate a geographically accessible organizations or agencies that can serve as receiving and distribution points