



To: Gorge Transit Strategy Working Group

Date: November 15, 2020

From: Kathy Fitzpatrick, Mobility Manager

**Subject: Gorge Regional Transit Strategy: Existing Framework Memo**

---

**Gorge Regional Transit Strategy: Background**

The purpose of the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy phase 1 is to combine the goals, policies, and prioritizations of local transportation planning efforts in the Columbia Gorge to establish a foundation for a regional strategy and vision for public transportation. Phase 1 objectives include strengthening partnerships, completing local plan assessments, and synthesizing goals and policies into a high-level regional vision. Phase II of the Strategy will focus on an implementation strategy with additional data analysis, ridership forecasts, financial planning, and operational assessments.

The USFS (Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area) offered assistance from the US DOT Volpe Center for the Gorge Transit Strategy. The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Project Management Team worked with the Volpe Center Team to build on their recent transportation plan research work.

**Existing Framework Memo**

The Existing Framework Memo summarizes and synthesizes existing local, regional, statewide public transportation plans, studies, and programs to identify common or conflicting goals, policies and strategies. This will create an awareness of inconsistencies and endorsement of commonalities but does not seek to amend or revise current or adopted plans.

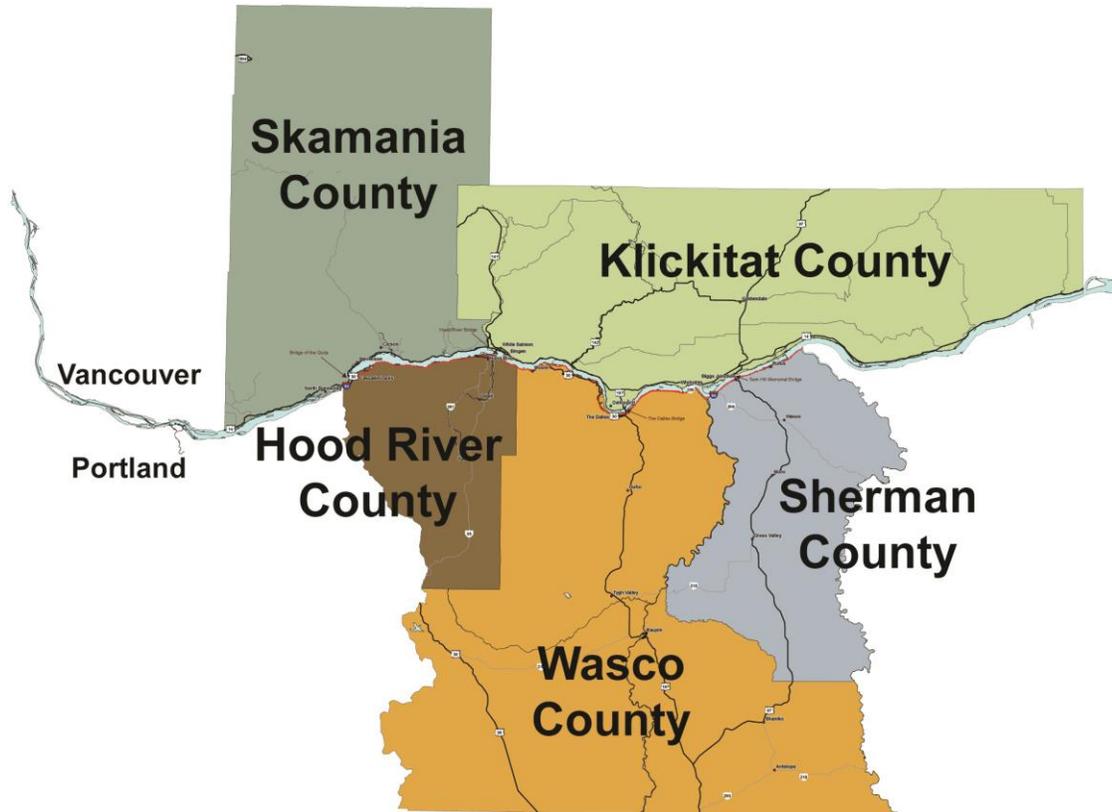
The Existing Framework Memo includes an overview of the planning area, a summary of existing services, and summaries of the existing local, regional, and statewide public transportation plans reviewed.

**Strategy Area**

The strategy area is located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the five transportation providers whose partnership forms the Gorge TransLink Alliance. Providers include Mt Adams Transportation Service (Klickitat County), Skamania County Transit, Columbia Area Transit (Hood River County), the Link (Wasco County), and Sherman County Community Transit.

Although the authorities of the transportation providers end at each of their county lines, transit connections made outside of these borders are important. These counties share a common workforce and a common geography. Residents may cross jurisdictional borders daily to meet multiple needs. While most of the communities have some basic amenities, residents must access the larger metropolitan areas of Portland/Vancouver for specialized services (medical, higher education, shopping) that might not be available in the small towns of the Gorge.

Also important to recognize is that residents of the metropolitan areas travel east into the Columbia Gorge for both work and recreation. The Columbia River Gorge’s unique attributes and recreational opportunities attract more than 2 million visitors a year.<sup>1</sup> According to the Columbia River Gorge Scenic Area 2011 Visitor Use Report, over 40% of visitors come from the Portland Metro area. The same report notes that a full 60% of those visiting the Gorge National Scenic Area come from less than 50 miles away.



---

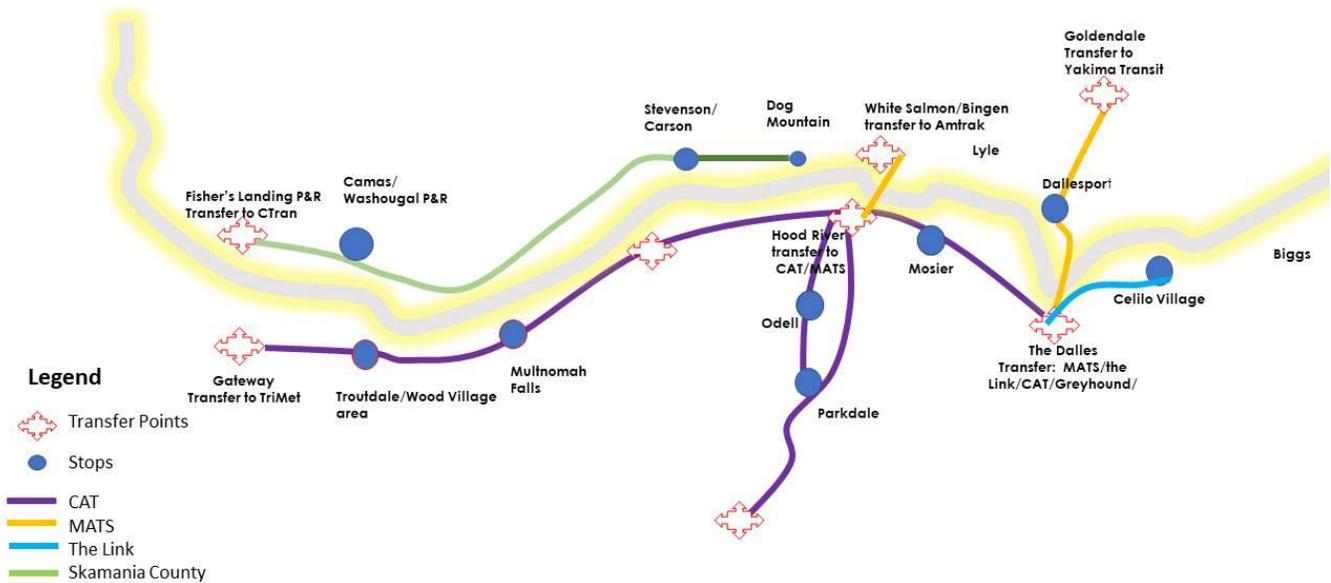
<sup>1</sup> <https://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/crgnsa/home/?cid=STELPRDB5385766>

**Summary of Existing Public Transportation Services**

Transportation Provider	Entity Type	Services	Ridership	Office Days/ Hours	Fares	Connections	Funding sources
Klickitat County Senior Services: Mt. Adams Transportation Service	Community Transportation Provider operated by a County Department	Dial-a-Ride, Fixed route, Non Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT)	DAR: seniors, persons with disabilities, general public. Priority for medical and essential needs purposes. Fixed: general public	M-F 8-5pm	Fixed: \$1 each way Dial-a-Ride: depending on location. Cash, Mobile App. tokens	Amtrak, Greyhound, CAT, the Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA 5311, 5310, 5339, 5317</li> <li>• Klickitat County funds</li> <li>• State/Fed Senior Funds</li> <li>• Fare Revenue</li> <li>• Foundation Grants</li> <li>• United Way</li> <li>• Donations</li> </ul>
Skamania County Senior Services: Skamania County Transit	Community Transportation Provider operated by a County Department	Dial-a-Ride, Fixed route, Non Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT), seasonal trailhead shuttle	DAR: seniors, persons with disabilities, low income Fixed: general public	M-F 8am-4:30 pm	Zone 1-2: \$1-2 each way DAR: varies Cash	C-TRAN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA 5311, 5310, 5339</li> <li>• Local funds</li> <li>• State grants</li> <li>• Fare Revenue</li> <li>• Highly Rural Veterans grant</li> </ul>

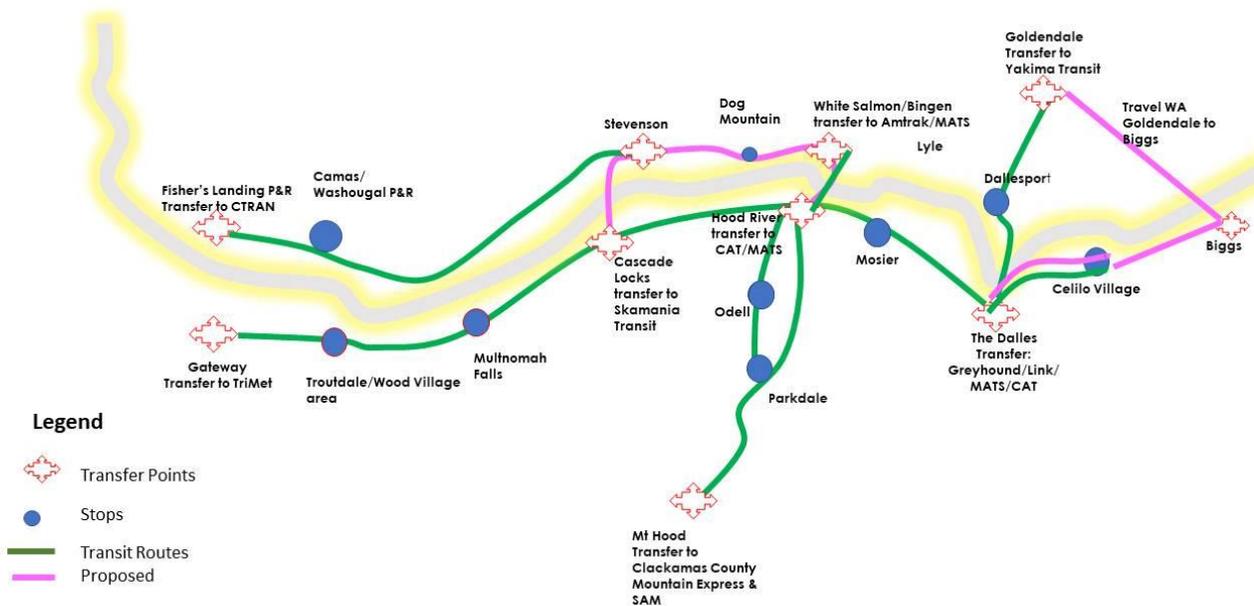
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• United Way and other foundation grants.</li> </ul>
Hood River County Transportation District: Columbia Area Transit	Transportation District (Special District)	Dial-a-Ride, Fixed Route, Non Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT)	Seniors, persons with disabilities, general public	M-Sun 7:30 am-5:30 pm	Annual Gorge Pass: \$30/\$15 youth Gorge Pass--DAR: \$60 Local: \$1 DAR: \$2  Cash, Mobile App	MATS, The Link, TriMet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA 5311, 5310, 5339</li> <li>• Local property Taxes</li> <li>• State grants</li> <li>• Fare Revenue</li> <li>• Partner grants and funds</li> </ul>
The Link Public Transit	Wasco County department operated by MCEDD	Dial-a-Ride, Shopping bus, Fixed Route, Non Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT)	Seniors, persons with disabilities, general public	M-F 6 am-6pm Sat 9-4 pm	Fixed: \$1.50 DAR: \$1.50  Cash, Tickets, Mobile App	CAT, MATS, Greyhound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA 5311, 5310, 5339</li> <li>• State grants</li> <li>• Fare Revenue</li> <li>• Local grants and City funds</li> </ul>
Sherman County Community Transit	Sherman County department	Dial-a-Ride, Shopping bus, Non Emergent Medical Transportation (NEMT)	Seniors, persons with disabilities, general public	M-Thurs 8 am-5 pm	Donation-Based  Cash	The Link, MATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FTA 5311, 5310, 5339</li> <li>• State grants</li> <li>• Donations</li> <li>• Veterans grant</li> </ul>

# Gorge Transit: Existing Routes



Map of existing fixed route services. Gorge public transportation providers also provide Dial-A-Ride, shopping bus, and other services.

# Gorge Transit: Existing and Proposed Routes



Map of existing fixed route services proposed and recently submitted for grant funding.

**Transit System Goals**

Key transit system goals emerged from the Working Group Survey #1 and the Working Group Session #1. These goals start to build the framework for a collective vision of public transportation in the Gorge. Categories include Community Vitality, Built Environment and Connectivity, Access and Equity, Environment/Climate/Resiliency, Regional Coordination, Financial Sustainability, and Regional Traffic Management.

**Community Vitality**

- Reduce cost of living expenses
- Provide Workforce Mobility and Commute Options
- Enhance Local and Visitor Experience of Recreational Resources
- Access to Community Health and Wellness Resources
- Congestion Management
- Address Parking Needs and Issues
- Support Traffic Safety Needs

**Working Group #1 Comments:**

*Achieve workforce equity by expanding regional transit to mean more than ‘the Gorge’. Why: 800-1200 existing workforce travel to East Klickitat County in 80-100 mile commutes. Anticipate transit needs at potential 1,000-worker construction projects in near-term.*

*A seamless transit network for the region that is easily understood by residents and visitors alike.*

*Provide equitable access to public lands.*

*Encourage the provision of alternate modes of transportation to recreation destinations to reduce resource impacts and facilitate visitation by all segments of the public. Manage and reduce congestion at recreation sites and in Gorge communities.*

*Transit can be a tool when considered with other strategies to reduce congestion and overcrowding.*

Plan	Relevance
Regional Transportation Plan for Skamania County	Vision and Values: Provide for viable and livable local communities. (Goal)
Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment	Purpose: to provide data to design and implement more new, innovative ideas to improve health and overall wellness in the Gorge that includes food, housing, transportation, sense of community, and access, along with traditional physical, mental, and dental health.

Columbia River Gorge Tourism Studio: Program Summary	Objective: Ensure the Gorge continues to offer high-quality experiences, while protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources. Vision: Regional transportation system is seamless with multimodal options for visitors and residents.
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MECDD)	Infrastructure (Transportation): “Plan for, maintain and re-invest in infrastructure, including attainable housing, to provide for current population demands and support future economic development opportunities.” (Goal)
Historic Columbia River Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan	Goal: Providing access for legal recreational and scenic enjoyment of natural and cultural resources adjacent to the Historic Highway corridor.
Transit Master Plan – Hood River County Transportation District (Update planned for 2021)	New Markets: Provide convenient service to developing markets and regional destinations. (Goal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve existing intercity services to Portland and The Dalles.</li> <li>• Leverage transit as a means to enhance existing businesses and complement future economic development opportunities.</li> <li>• Add new recreational destinations in the Columbia River Gorge and the Mt. Hood National Forest.</li> </ul> (Objectives)
Hood River to Government Camp Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study	Key Finding: Tap into places that have infrastructure to support visitors, like the ski resorts. Help promote their summer offerings and reduce the strain on natural areas that both cannot support many additional visitors and may not be safe for first-time recreationalists.
Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (update final 11/2020)	Goal: Provide a diversity of resource-based recreation opportunities that are accessible to all segments of the public and that emphasize the quality of the recreation experience.
Oregon Public Transportation Plan	Policy 2.3: Provide coordinated, seamless regional and intercity bus and rail public transportation services to enable trips for commuting and recreation, and assist rural residents to access services in larger communities.

	<p>Policy 5.1: Provide access to healthy lifestyle options by supporting the ability of people to reach goods and services such as groceries, recreation, parks and natural areas, health care, and social opportunities via public transportation.</p>
--	---

<p><b>Built Environment and Connectivity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bike/Ped Infrastructure</li> <li>• First Mile/Last Mile Infrastructure</li> <li>• Transit Infrastructure (Bus Shelters, ROW, park and ride)</li> <li>• Infrastructure can be used by people of all abilities (ADA)</li> <li>• Access to affordable housing</li> <li>• Connectivity to key regional destinations</li> </ul> <p><b>Working Group #1 Comments:</b></p> <p><i>Lack of supporting infrastructure is a concern.</i></p> <p><i>Seamless fixed routes to largest cities in each county; fully funded, well connected to first /last mile services.</i></p> <p><i>Need to have proper transit facilities for fixed route services such as ADA accessible covered bus stops, then just as important, proper ADA pedestrian facilities and routes throughout the communities to get to the bus stops. Also need adequate bicycle facilities as well.</i></p> <p><i>A supplement to solving/addressing affordable housing.</i></p>	
Plan	Relevance
<p>Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment</p>	<p>Finding: Transportation is the regional highest unmet need. Action Area: Built Environment, which provides the foundation for basic needs like mobility and transportation. Examples include access to sidewalks, bike lanes, bus stops.</p>
<p>Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties</p>	<p>Additional park-and-rides, transit shelters, and other amenities would attract additional riders to the existing system and provide more visibility to public transit services.</p>
<p>Historic Columbia River Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Goal: Reducing congestion, illegally parked cars, and delayed emergency response and rescue due to parked vehicles and vehicles accessing parking areas.</p>

<p>Transit Master Plan – Hood River County Transportation District</p>	<p>Goal: Support a transportation system in Hood River County that increases the use of transit, especially among choice riders.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide local bus service in downtown Hood River to offer an alternative to congestion.</li> <li>• Serve parking constrained areas of Hood River with transit.</li> <li>• Provide transportation options that are less detrimental to environment.</li> </ul> <p>(Objectives)</p>
<p>Columbia Gorge Express Expansion: Near-Term Service Plan</p>	<p>Goal: Relieve parking and traffic congestion at Multnomah Falls by encouraging car-bound visitors to park off-site and take a shuttle to Multnomah Falls.</p>
<p>Hood River to Government Camp Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study</p>	<p>Key Finding: Congestion on Highway 26 is affecting tourist and employee markets.</p>
<p>Columbia River Gorge Transit Study Final Report</p>	<p>Increasing visitation to Gorge recreation areas has resulted in negative externalities. Recent increases in visitation to Columbia River Gorge area destinations have been an economic boon for Gorge communities, but have produced negative effects for the natural environment, contributed to traffic congestion issues, and decreased visitor satisfaction due to resource competition. Visitation is expected to continue to increase, and the associated increased economic activity will further benefit Gorge communities, but demand needs to be managed effectively to maintain access to resources and promote sustainable growth.</p> <p>(Key Finding)</p>
<p>Mount Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan</p>	<p>Recommendation: Integrated ITS management plan with elements including traveler information for speed limits, parking, transit, and transportation demand management.</p>

<p><b>Environment/Climate/Resiliency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air quality issues</li> <li>• Mitigate crowding impacts on natural resources</li> <li>• Protect natural resources</li> <li>• Respond to disasters and emergencies like fire, flooding, pandemic</li> </ul>
--

Working Group #1 Comments:

*Leverage Climate Change mitigation interest with the state governors.*

*Protect and enhance scenic cultural, natural, and recreational resources (from multiple participants)*

*Encourage the provision of alternate modes of transportation to recreation destinations to reduce resource impacts and facilitate visitation by all segments of the public.*

*Transit can be a tool when considered with other strategies to reduce congestion and overcrowding.*

*Should include transition to electric vehicles and testing autonomous van services (also electric) to reduce operating costs.*

Plan	Relevance
Columbia River Gorge Tourism Studio: Program Summary	Objective: Ensure the Gorge continues to offer high-quality experiences, while protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources. Vision: Local residents live in a harmonious and symbiotic relationship with the environment and with visitors.
Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties	Finding: Public transportation plays a key role in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery, Skamania County and Klickitat County have each adopted a County Emergency Management Plan.
Transit Master Plan – Hood River County Transportation District (Update planned for 2021)	• Provide transportation options that are less detrimental to environment. (Objectives)
Columbia River Gorge Transit Study Final Report	Increasing visitation to Gorge recreation areas has resulted in negative externalities. Recent increases in visitation to Columbia River Gorge area destinations have been an economic boon for Gorge communities, but have produced negative effects for the natural environment, contributed to traffic congestion issues, and decreased visitor satisfaction due to resource competition. Visitation is expected to continue to increase, and the associated increased economic activity will further benefit Gorge communities, but demand needs to be managed effectively to maintain access to resources and promote sustainable growth. (Key Finding)

Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (currently being updated)	Goal: Maintain the diversity of Gorge landscapes to protect and enhance the Gorge's scenic beauty.
Regional Transportation Plans for Klickitat and Skamania counties	Goal: To enhance Washington's quality of life through transportation investments that promote energy conservation, enhance healthy communities, and protect the environment.

<p><b>Access/Equity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access: Recreation, Health Care, Higher Education, Essential Services, Jobs</li> <li>• Safety: Diverse community members feel welcome and safe</li> </ul> <p>Working Group #1 Comments:</p> <p><i>Some of In-Lieu or Treaty Fishing Access Sites are not included on the routes.</i></p> <p><i>Interested in having tribal residents aware of transportation options to them.</i></p> <p><i>Could help with Medical, Social Services and shopping in local and larger cities if able to connect. May provide transportation to other communities in Gorge.</i></p> <p><i>Provide alternative education access for students who did not complete high school. Provide access for employment and training opportunities to improve skills needed for employment</i></p> <p><i>Access to social activities is important.</i></p> <p><i>To welcome all kinds of race and ethnicity to ride the public transportation.</i></p> <p><i>Provide equitable access to public lands.</i></p> <p><i>Increase access to education/training for those who are experiencing transportation-related challenges.</i></p> <p><i>See more transit accessibility to specialty clinics in PDX.</i></p>	
Plan	Relevance
Hood River Transportation District Transit Master Plan	Ensure transit meets the needs of low-income populations, seniors, students, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations, transit dependent, Latino community, minorities, and visitors.

Hood River to Gov. Camp Feasibility Study	Key Finding: Importance of marketing and publicizing Highway 35 transit service, including Spanish language efforts on social media, radio, and print media.
Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (update final 11/2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Statement (TBD)</li> <li>• Commitment to consider equity in climate change adaptation and mitigation analysis, planning, decision-making, and project implementation.</li> <li>• Goal: Provide a diversity of resource-based recreation opportunities that are accessible to all segments of the public and that emphasize the quality of the recreation experience.</li> </ul>
Regional Transportation Plans for Klickitat and Skamania counties	Goal: Provide an integrated and coordinated transportation system that includes a variety of mobility options
Wasco County Coordinated Transportation Plan	Purpose: provide a framework to maximize transportation investments to assist four target populations: seniors, individuals with low incomes, individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency individuals.
Hood River County Coordinated Transportation Plan	Purpose: provide a framework to maximize transportation investments to assist four target populations: seniors, individuals with low incomes, individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency individuals.
Sherman County Coordinated Transportation Plan	Purpose: provide a framework to maximize transportation investments to assist four target populations: seniors, individuals with low incomes, individuals with disabilities and Limited English Proficiency individuals.
Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties	<p>Purpose: identify the transportation needs of the target population groups: individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with low incomes</p> <p>Priority: Maintaining both existing dial-a-ride and deviated fixed route service for the general public and disadvantaged populations is the region's top priority. This service is essential to the transit dependent and identified population groups.</p>
The Dalles Transportation System Plan Update	Goal 12 Policy Amendment: Provide adequate transit services to make shopping,

	health, and social services accessible to transportation-disadvantaged residents as funds are available.
Oregon Public Transportation Plan	Goal 4: Equity Public transportation provides affordable, safe, efficient, and equitable transportation to jobs, services, and key destinations, improving quality of life for all Oregonians.
Washington State Public Transportation Plan	Strategy: Develop recommendations to overcome barriers that prevent coordination and efficiency of special needs services
Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment	Finding: a lack of transportation impacts the ability of many Gorge residents to access health care, food, childcare, social activities, and exercise.

<p><b>Transit System Financial Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efficiency</li> <li>• Sufficient ridership</li> <li>• Diversity of funding sources</li> <li>• Organizational capacity</li> <li>• Leverage Tourism</li> </ul> <p>Working Group #1 Comments:</p> <p><i>Lack of sustainable sources of funding is a concern. (multiple participants)</i></p> <p><i>Efficiency and connectivity are important.</i></p> <p><i>Local TSP and Land Use planning without a transit vision or strategy for sustainability is challenging for community planning. (opportunity, need/aspiration).</i></p> <p><i>Resource coordination.</i></p> <p><i>A collective vision can provide more certainty for transit providers and partners and can provide foundation for sustainability of services.</i></p> <p><i>Transit service can meet demand, is sustainably funded, and is part of a broader, multi-modal transportation system.</i></p> <p><i>A seamless transit network for the region that is easily understood by residents and visitors alike. With Sustainable funding and predictable service.</i></p>	
<b>Plan</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties	Strategy: With limited resources, social service providers, transit providers, and other

	<p>agencies must work closely together to serve the targeted population groups.</p> <p>Strategy: Technology enhancements can lead to greater efficiency.</p>
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MECDD)	<p>4.6 Strategy: Coordinate transportation investments to support the region’s economies and communities. (Strategy)</p> <p>4.7 Strategy: Advocate to enhance federal, state and private investments into transportation. (Strategy)</p>
City of Hood River Transportation System Plan	<p>Action: Consider amending the City of Hood River Transportation Systems Charge ordinance to allow for expenditures toward projects constructing pedestrian, bicycle, or transit facilities.</p>
Oregon Public Transportation Plan	<p>Goal 9: Funding and Strategic Investment</p> <p>Strategic investment in public transportation supports the overall transportation system, the economy, and Oregonians’ quality of life. Sustainable and reliable funding enables public transportation services and infrastructure to meet public needs.</p> <p>Strategy 9.3A: Leverage existing state funding to achieve more cooperative and coordinated services, such as by partnering with human service agencies or other organizations that operate services related to public transportation.</p> <p>Strategy 9.3D: Enable local jurisdictions and public transportation providers to seek new dedicated funding sources or partnerships.</p>
Washington State Public Transportation Plan	<p>Strategy: Work with a broad range of partners to plan and invest based on systemwide needs, priorities and performance.</p> <p>Priority: the need to increase the person-carrying capacity of key transportation corridors to decrease congestion, support special needs transportation, connect communities with transit and expand local options for transit funding authority.</p>

**Regional Coordination**

- Coordination between Transit Providers
- Coordination between key stakeholders
- Service Connectivity
- Efficiency
- Universal Fare System

Working Group #1 Comments:

*Greater public transportation options and coordination across agencies can mean that trips previously not possible by transit before could become commonplace. This may lead to residents and visitors viewing the entire region as something that is seamless and more legible. For those of us working for organizations located within Metro's bounds, it could mean enhanced partnerships, and an expanded understanding of the regional travel patterns, and hopefully greater coordination across agencies.*

*Universal Fare System (from multiple participants)*

*Barriers need to be overcome to be seamless.*

*Linkage with agencies from CTRAN to other WA mass transit agencies and likewise from Trimet to Oregon side agencies. One fare linking times and schedules.*

*Integration of schedules between various transportation providers.*

*Integration of income for transit services.*

*Integrated public transportation programs into cohesive system where any rider/market is served. Funding solicited is coordinated and shared. RTA bi-state.*

Plan	Relevance
Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment	Action: We must break down silos that separate improving health from the work of education, business, transportation, community development, and other historically “non-health” sectors that form an integral piece of the health puzzle. We also must ensure that organizations representing traditionally vulnerable communities are actively included in dialogue and decision-making.
Columbia River Gorge Tourism Studio: Program Summary	Outcome: Collaboration stands as the most important benefit of the Gorge Tourism Studio.
Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plans: Skamania, Klickitat, Hood River, Wasco, Sherman counties	Strategy: The coordinated approach offers a key advantage over single-agency approaches. In that transit, human, and social service agencies will all benefit from cooperative

	strategies that assist disabled, low-income, and elderly to pursue activities and services.
Oregon State Parks: Columbia River Gorge Management Units Plan	Action Item: Provide a seamless recreation experience in the gorge through partnerships with other recreation providers.
Oregon Public Transportation Plan	Strategy 9.2G: Foster partnerships between public and private services to leverage private investment, including public transportation agencies, health service providers, and TNCs. Goal 10: Communication, Collaboration, and Coordination Public and private transportation providers and all levels of government within the state and across state boundaries work collaboratively and foster partnerships that make public transportation seamless regardless of jurisdiction.
Washington State Public Transportation Plan	Foster innovation to respond to emerging market opportunities and other system changes through public private partnerships and agency coordination
Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact	Strategy: Develop Universal Fare System

<p><b>Regional Traffic Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mitigate Congestion</li> <li>• Address Parking Needs and Issues</li> <li>• Support Traffic Safety Needs</li> </ul> <p>Working Group #1 Comments:</p> <p><i>A seamless transit network for the region that is easily understood by residents and visitors alike.</i></p> <p><i>Encourage the provision of alternate modes of transportation to recreation destinations to reduce resource impacts and facilitate visitation by all segments of the public. Manage and reduce congestion at recreation sites and in Gorge communities.</i></p> <p><i>Transit can be a tool when considered with other strategies to reduce congestion and overcrowding.</i></p>	
<b>Plan</b>	<b>Relevance</b>
Columbia River Gorge Tourism Studio: Program Summary	Objective: Ensure the Gorge continues to offer high-quality experiences, while protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources.

	Vision: Regional transportation system is seamless with multimodal options for visitors and residents.
Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (MECDD)	Infrastructure (Transportation): “Plan for, maintain and re-invest in infrastructure, including attainable housing, to provide for current population demands and support future economic development opportunities.” (Goal)
Historic Columbia River Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan	Goal: Providing access for legal recreational and scenic enjoyment of natural and cultural resources adjacent to the Historic Highway corridor.
Transit Master Plan –Hood River County Transportation District (Update planned for 2021)	New Markets: Provide convenient service to developing markets and regional destinations. (Goal) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and improve existing intercity services to Portland and The Dalles.</li> <li>• Leverage transit as a means to enhance existing businesses and complement future economic development opportunities.</li> <li>• Add new recreational destinations in the Columbia River Gorge and the Mt. Hood National Forest.</li> </ul> (Objectives)
Hood River to Government Camp Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study	Key Finding: Tap into places that have infrastructure to support visitors, like the ski resorts. Help promote their summer offerings and reduce the strain on natural areas that both cannot support many additional visitors and may not be safe for first-time recreationalists.
Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (update final 11/2020)	Goal: Provide a diversity of resource-based recreation opportunities that are accessible to all segments of the public and that emphasize the quality of the recreation experience.
Oregon Public Transportation Plan	Policy 2.3: Provide coordinated, seamless regional and intercity bus and rail public transportation services to enable trips for commuting and recreation and assist rural residents to access services in larger communities. Policy 5.1: Provide access to healthy lifestyle options by supporting the ability of people to reach goods and services such as groceries, recreation, parks and natural areas, health care, and social opportunities via public transportation.

## **Plan Summaries**

### Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plans

#### **Hood River County Coordinated Transportation Plan (2016)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

##### **Summary**

This 123-page plan, developed by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, focuses on the transportation needs of four target populations living in Hood River County: seniors, low-income, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). The plan offers an overview of existing public and private transportation providers in the region and analyzes strategies to address the identified needs, barriers, and gaps for each target population. This analysis addresses service delivery efficiency and priorities for the listed strategies. The high priority strategies included in the plan focus on sustaining existing transportation services, seeking additional federal and state transportation grants in order to provide funding for maintenance and to maintain affordable fares, and to improve outreach to the four target populations.

#### **Wasco County Coordinated Transportation Plan (2016)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

##### **Summary**

This 134-page plan, prepared by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, was developed to guide the investment of state Special Transportation Fund (STF) dollars and examines the transportation needs of four target populations living in Wasco County: seniors, low-income, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP). The plan focuses on gaps in transportation services and prioritizes needs to assist in improving mobility services and access for the target populations. The plan also provides a strategy for the investment of financial resources and guidance for the acquisition of future funds and grants. The high priority strategies identified in the plan were grouped into five categories, which include existing transportation services, operations, service expansion, stable funding, and marketing/education/outreach.

#### **Human Services Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties (2018)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

This 96-page plan, developed by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council was developed to meet the federal and state requirements for development of a locally developed coordinated human service transportation plan in order to obtain certain federal and state funds. The RTC is the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for the region consisting of Clark County, Skamania County, and Klickitat County. The plan was developed through a public process that includes representatives from transportation and human service providers and participation by the public. The purpose of the plan is to provide a framework for the coordination of transportation services for aging adults, persons with disabilities, and individuals with economic disadvantages within the region in order to ensure that communities coordinate transportation resources provided through multiple funding programs. The strategies listed in the plan to address area-wide needs include agency coordination, maintaining and expanding existing dial a ride and fixed route services, adoption of

appropriate technologies, continued engagement in the Gorge TransLink Alliance, and expanded outreach and education.

### **Sherman County Coordinated Transportation Plan (2020)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

This 96-page plan, prepared by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, was developed to meet state and federal requirements for Special Transportation Fund (STF) agencies and the State of Oregon's requirements for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) Qualified Entities. The plan examines the transportation needs of three target populations living in Sherman County: seniors, low-income individuals, individuals with disabilities. The plan focuses on gaps in transportation services and prioritizes needs to assist in improving mobility services and access for the target populations. The plan also provides a strategy for the investment of financial resources and guidance for the acquisition of future funds and grants. The high priority strategies identified in the plan were grouped into categories, which include maintaining existing transportation services, operations, service expansion, stable funding, marketing/education/outreach, planning and coordination, and building capacity.

#### Transit Master (or Development) Plans

### **Transit Master Plan – Hood River County Transportation District (2017)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transit)*

#### Summary

This 84-page report, prepared by the Hood River County Transportation District, provides an overview of the public and private transportation providers in the area, identifies opportunities for transit service expansion, and offers a long-term vision for transit in Hood River County. The project team conducted extensive public and stakeholder outreach during the development of the report, which helped to yield a number of findings and shape the plan. The plan found that Columbia Area Transit is suffering from decreased ridership and revenue, there is a need for coordination between transit providers, and the Columbia Gorge Express saw high ridership in its initial season. The plan continues by providing short, medium, and long-term recommendations for the area's transit service. These goals range from transitioning away from dial-a-ride in order to offer expanded service, providing a substantial increase in funding to achieve service improvements, and, in the long-term, developing a focus on full fixed-route service to decrease travel times, increase frequency, and relieve congestion in the area.

#### Transportation System Plans and Regional Transportation Plans

### **Regional Transportation Plan for Skamania County (2018)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

#### Summary

This 66-page plan, prepared by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, serves as the primary regional transportation planning document for Skamania County, Washington, and plans for the projected economic, population, and visitor growth for the area. The document discusses recent demographic and travel trends in order to analyze the impact that these changes may have on the transportation system. Additionally, this resource identifies regional transportation needs, provides a financial plan to cover expected costs and expenditures, and a system improvement and strategy plan to discuss transportation improvement projects in the county.

### **Regional Transportation Plan for Klickitat County, Washington (2018)**

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

## Summary

This 66-page plan, prepared by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, is Klickitat County's principal transportation planning document and was developed through a coordinated process between local jurisdictions to form regional solutions to transportation needs. The primary goals in Klickitat's plan center around safety, accessibility, environmental preservation, and economic development, all of which are in line with the goals established in the Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The plan notes a recent increase in congestion and recreational activity most noticed during the summer months, which is likely due in part to travel and tourism in the Gorge. This document also identifies general transportation plans for the region, summarizes Klickitat's financial plan, and provides the county's system improvement and strategy plan.

### Regional Transportation Plan for Clark County (2019)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

## Summary

This 358-page plan, developed by the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, serves as the primary regional transportation planning document for Clark County and was developed through a coordinated planning process between local jurisdictions and transportation agencies. The resource provides context on the area's land use patterns and existing transportation system, which may affect travel and development in areas near the National Scenic Area. The plan continues with the area's transportation finance plan to guide future investment, ongoing regional transportation programs and projects, and system performance monitoring and implementation.

### Multnomah County Transportation System Plan (2016)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

## Summary

This 137-page plan, prepared for Multnomah County, provides an overview of the existing conditions of the Multnomah County transportation system, the area's transportation goals and policies, and Multnomah's transportation system plan. The document includes a range of solutions that address future and existing transportation issues across the county, which fall into the four general categories of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, safety, signage and signal treatments, and transportation demand management. The plan notes increased congestion primarily in the areas near Sauvie Island and the Gorge and offers several strategies aimed at improving traffic flow in these heavily frequented areas. These strategies focus on optimizing parking permit pricing to manage parking demand, creating park-n-ride lots to encourage carpooling and reduce the need for parking at key destinations, and developing a shuttle service to offer access to popular locations during peak recreation periods.

### The Dalles Transportation System Plan (2017)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

This 198-page plan, prepared for the City of The Dalles, provides an overview of the existing conditions of The Dalles' transportation system and the City's transportation goals and policies. The document addresses the four main goals of Safety and Mobility, Accessibility and Connectivity, Integration, and Economic Development. The plan includes a public transportation plan chapter with a transit feasibility analysis for the Link Public Transit, Wasco County's public transportation system. The plan also includes a Bicycle and Pedestrian plan chapter.

## City of Mosier Transportation System Plan (2019)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

This 162-page plan, prepared for the City of Mosier, provides an overview of the existing conditions of the City's transportation system and transportation goals and policies. The document addresses the main goals of Safety and Community Health, Regional Connectivity, Economic Vitality, Environmental Protection, Access and Multimodality including transit. The plan includes a modal hierarchy of priorities: People walking, People biking, Transit, Freight, Single Occupancy Vehicles.

### **State Public Transportation Plans**

## Oregon Public Transportation Plan (2018)

*(Primary Topic Area: Public Transportation)*

This 129-page plan, prepared for the State of Oregon, establishes statewide policies and strategies relating to traditional public transportation modes. The document addresses the main goals of Mobility and the User Experience, Accessibility and Connectivity, Community Livability and Economic Vitality, Equity, Health, Safety and Security, Environmental Sustainability, Land Use, Funding and Strategic Investment, and Communication/Collaboration/Coordination. The OPTP describes public transportation conditions in Oregon today, sets out policies and strategies, and identifies investment scenarios and implementation concepts.

## Washington State Public Transportation Plan (2016)

*(Primary Topic Area: Public Transportation)*

This 88-page plan, prepared for the State of Washington, sets forth five goals for Washington's system of public transportation, strategies for supporting each goal, and a program of near-term actions for each goal to be complete by December 2017. The document addresses the main goals of Thriving Communities, Access, Adaptive Transportation Capacity, Customer Experience, and Transportation System Guardianship. The plan describes public transportation conditions in Washington State today, sets out policies and strategies, and outlines a decision-making framework focused on system performance and multimodal integration.

### **Other Relevant Plans**

## Historic Columbia River Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan (2019)

*(Primary Topic Area: Congestion Management/Parking)*

### Summary

This 46-page plan, developed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the United States Forest Service (USFS), the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD), the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Multnomah County, seeks to address the increased congestion along the Historic Columbia River Highway in order to improve safety and foster an improved experience for visitors. The plan indicates that the key issues in the area surround population growth and longer high seasons leading to increased vehicular traffic, a lack of safe bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, insufficient parking capacity, and a transit service unable to meet the region's demand. These issues have complicated access to the Columbia River Gorge and led to excessive delays for visitors and residents of the area. The plan offers a number of short, medium, and long-term recommendations

including but not limited to improving parking management, imposing large vehicle restrictions, reducing speed limits, and expanding park and ride facilities. The plan stresses the importance of involving all stakeholders in the region in order to develop effective and equitable implementation strategies.

## Columbia River Gorge Transit Study Final Report (2016)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transit)*

### Summary

This 109-page plan, developed by the Oregon Department of Transportation, seeks to better understand the existing transportation conditions in the Columbia River Gorge and develop recommendations for transit service options that will enhance mobility and access in the Gorge, address congestion, limit illegal parking, and protect cultural and natural resources. The plan offers an overview of the existing public transit providers serving the area including a service summary, ridership data, and rider surveys where available. The primary transit providers in the Gorge are Columbia Area Transit, which runs a transit service between Portland and Hood River; Gray line Tours, which began to offer a tourist-focused shuttle service departing from Portland and stopping at five locations in the Gorge in 2016; and Skamania County, which runs a new transit service from Fisher's Landing to Stevenson, WA. The plan also conducted stakeholder focus groups and an online survey in order to generate input on potential new transit routes, ideal service levels, and strategies to reduce congestion and improve safety. The plan concludes by detailing the Columbia Gorge Express, a pilot transit service in the Gorge that is managed and operated by the ODOT Rail and Public Transit Division and began operations in May of 2016.

***Elements not addressed in this plan:*** *Bicycling, Pedestrians, Safety, Road Network, Recreation, Freight, Commuters, Transportation System, and Community Vitality.*

## Columbia Gorge Express Expansion: Near-Term Service Plan (2018)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transit)*

### Summary

This 40-page report, developed by the Oregon Department of Transportation, discusses the service and operations plan for the Columbia Gorge Express, which began operations in 2016 and expanded spatially and temporally in May 2018. The goals of the transit service are to offer a car-free travel option in the Gorge between Portland and Hood River and to encourage car-bound visitors to park off-site and take a shuttle to Multnomah Falls. These goals hope to relieve the traffic and parking congestion that affects the Gorge area on a regular basis. The transit service markets to a number of different customers including local and non-local visitors to the Gorge, Portland metropolitan area residents traveling through the Gorge for utilitarian purposes, and Columbia River Gorge area residents traveling to the Portland metropolitan area for utilitarian purposes. The plan offers additional information on the design of the transit service, fares, schedules, operating cost, and potential future stops and routing.

## Hood River to Government Camp Transit Feasibility and Implementation Study (2019)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transit)*

### Summary

This 71-page report, developed for Columbia Area Transit, examines the public transit services available surrounding the Columbia River Gorge and Mt. Hood and sets forth a path to fill one of the existing gaps in the public transit network by connecting Hood River to Mt. Hood Meadows and Government Camp. The report provides information on the existing transportation services in the area, a market

analysis, and key recommendations from previous plans. The proposals in the report were developed from conversations with partners and stakeholders in the region, which led to the recommended service design and proposed transit schedules included in the document. The plan mentions a focus on balancing the needs of tourists with residents in the area, both of whom emphasized a greater interest in using the transit service for travel on winter and summer weekends. The report concludes with recommendations on different service level options, priority stop locations, and preferred routing for the system.

## Multnomah Falls Pedestrian Circulation Study (2019)

*(Primary Topic Area: Pedestrian)*

### Summary

This 28-page report, prepared by the Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Forest Service, and Oregon Department of Transportation, identifies safety measures that will facilitate the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians and vehicles to ensure an improved recreational experience at Multnomah Falls. The report highlights increased congestion and limited parking, most prevalent in the summer months, which complicates access to the Falls. The report continues by discussing the primary transportation alternatives available to access the area as public transportation provided by the Columbia Gorge Express and cycling. The report identifies the four primary areas with pedestrian circulation issues at Multnomah Falls as the Historic Highway pedestrian crossing, the Multnomah Creek pedestrian bridge, the I-84 and Historic Highway parking pedestrian plazas, and the I-84 pedestrian pathway. The plan concludes with a number of recommendations and alternatives to improve pedestrian circulation surrounding Multnomah Falls by repurposing underutilized space and it provides details on the costs and agencies involved with the planned improvement projects.

***Elements not addressed in this plan:*** *Congestion Management/Parking, Public Transportation, Safety, Recreation, Economic/Financial, Bicycling, Resource Protection, Road Network, Freight, Commuters, Transportation System, Community Vitality, and Other.*

## Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (2016)

*(Primary Topic Area: Land Use)*

### Summary

This 467-page management plan, prepared by the Columbia River Gorge Commission and U.S. Forest Service, provides direction to ensure that the land in the National Scenic Area is used with the purposes and standards of the National Scenic Area Act. The plan is organized into four parts: part one provides the goals and objectives for resource protection, part two addresses land use designations, part three outlines an action program, and part four focuses on the roles of the Gorge Commission, U.S. Forest Service, and Native American tribal rights. The plan includes the land use and resource protection standards for the area, non-regulatory approaches to achieve enhancement objectives, and steps for protecting and enhancing Columbia River Gorge resources. The plan also offers guidance on the roles and relationships of the varying agencies and governments that play a role in implementing the National Scenic Area Act.

## Columbia River Gorge Management Units Plan (2015)

*(Primary Topic Area: Resource Management)*

### Summary

This 234-page report, created by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, combines the input from many of the stakeholders in the Columbia River Gorge to develop common resource management and

planning goals. The plan proposes a number of specific improvements throughout the Gorge corresponding to improving access and safety for the five different recreation types of hiking, cycling, water recreation, camping, and automobile touring. The plan outlines the values and goals of the Gorge area that were generated during the public involvement process for the report, before offering a series of recommendations for the Gorge area. The plan highlights the increased traffic congestion in the Columbia River Gorge and recommends that stakeholders study transportation alternatives including the potential for ferries and shuttles using National Park Service models along with the promotion of carpooling, rideshare, and public transportation options.

## Mount Hood Multimodal Transportation Plan (2014)

*(Primary Topic Area: Transportation)*

### Summary

This 8-page report, created from a partnership between the Oregon Department of Transportation, the U.S. Forest Service Mt. Hood National Forest, Clackamas County, and Hood River County, identifies a number of projects to improve safety and relieve congestion along the Mt. Hood corridor. The partnership developed a multimodal collection of 38 projects that represent safety improvements, bike and pedestrian improvements, transit options, and Intelligent Transportation Systems options. The plan lists the projects and divides them based on their priority level. These projects seek to provide solutions to the array of congestion-based and safety issues that affect the area. The plan also includes a series of appendices covering a range of topics including the area's implementation plan, outreach plan, TMA case studies, and a park and ride analysis.

## Columbia Gorge Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (2017)

*(Primary Topic Area: Economic Development)*

### Summary

This 78-page document, written by the strategy and steering committees of the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD), provides the comprehensive economic development strategy for 2017-2022 for the MCEDD, which serves five counties in a bi-state region of Oregon and Washington surrounding the Gorge. A diverse workgroup of 100 local representatives informed the plan, which offers an outlook on the region's economic conditions and an action plan for future years. The region is contending with an aging population, a shortage of affordable housing, infrastructure limitations, and a complex regulatory environment, all of which complicate economic growth and negatively affect the area's economic resiliency. The plan offers strategies to improve economic conditions by leveraging partnerships and collaboration across state lines, expanding tourism, improving broadband connectivity, addressing public transportation, and extracting natural assets. The plan concludes by outlining the top ten priority infrastructure projects in Oregon and the top ten in Washington.

## Transportation Innovations Through Collective Impact

*(Primary Topic Area: Public Transportation)*

### Summary

This 6-page document is the final report for a project that convened Columbia Gorge transportation providers and health and wellness organizations to engage in a collaborative process to identify and implement innovative transportation solutions to create improved mobility access to essential services and increase the quality of life in the Columbia Gorge. Over 57 organizations from both Washington State and Oregon were invited and over 40 representatives attended four group sessions to discuss

improved mobility access to essential services that would help to increase the quality of life in the Columbia Gorge, especially for vulnerable populations, including rural, low income, elderly, young, disabled, undocumented, and low English proficiency residents and actual or potential users of public transportation. The Collaborative agreed to focus on those populations who are not eligible for transportation subsidies and/or are not covered for non-medical ‘wellness’ destinations (e.g. places to play, socialize, etc.). They defined ‘essential services’ to include all places for which wellness is being supported (including and beyond medical appointments). Mobility Barriers were identified, including infrastructure gaps, cultural and language gaps, operational coordination gaps, and door-through-door needs. Strategies were identified that included better coordination between transit agencies and health organizations, creating a universal fare system, and creating a more coordinated regional transit system.

## Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment

*(Primary Topic Area: Public Health)*

### Summary

This 63-page document is developed by the Columbia Gorge Health Council in partnership with other health organizations. The Regional Columbia Gorge Community Health Assessment is updated every 3 years in collaboration with local hospitals, counties, public health departments, county mental health, early learning and United Way. The purpose of the community health survey and assessment is to provide statistically valid estimates of health and health needs throughout the community, including needs related to the social determinants of health. The 2019 CHA found that transportation is the highest unmet need in the Columbia Gorge Region, which includes Klickitat, Skamania, Hood River, Wasco, and the tri-county area of Sherman, Gilliam, and Wheeler counties. Survey responses described that a lack of transportation impacted the ability to access health care, food, childcare, social activities, and exercise. Of low income households, 26% report going without transportation, an increase of 4.3% since the 2016 update.

### **Conclusion**

During the first Working Group Session, participants identified public transportation goals that can help to address regional challenges. The goals have been grouped in categories: Community Vitality, Built Environment and Connectivity, Access and Equity, Environment/Climate/Resiliency, Regional Coordination, Financial Sustainability, and Regional Traffic Management.

A review of the relevant existing transportation and public transportation plans show that although the plans are geographically restricted to county, city, or site boundaries, the goals and strategies of each plan prioritize or support one or more of the system goals identified by the Working Group in Session #1.

The plans all highlight the importance of coordination between stakeholders. Transit can be a successful tool to address regional challenges when there is coordination between partners and in combination with other actions.

For example, the goals to provide public transportation access to recreational resources in the Gorge and to protect natural resources that are being degraded because of overcrowding can be addressed with public transportation resources when public transportation agencies coordinate with other agencies like the US Forest Service. One example of a successful alignment of these two goals is the Dog Mountain

Shuttle project which decreased overcrowding of a popular trailhead by providing a public shuttle bus as a tool in combination with other agency partner permit and enforcement systems.

The summary of existing transportation plans creates a foundation for the next step in the Gorge Transit Strategy process, which is to identify gaps and opportunities in the regional public transportation system. The goals that have been identified by the Working Group will build towards a high-level collective vision of a regional public transportation system.