

**THE**

# **GORGE REGIONAL**

## **TRANSIT STRATEGY**



**GORGE TRANSLINK**

**JUNE  
2023**

# Acknowledgments

The Gorge Regional Transit Strategy was prepared by the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District in coordination with state, regional, and local partners in both Oregon and Washington including Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Mt. Adams Transportation Services (MATS), Columbia Area Transit (CAT), Sherman County Transit, The Link, Skamania County Transit, and SW WA Regional Transportation Council.

The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District would like to thank the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy Advisory Committee, Stakeholder Advisory Group, and everyone who participated in the outreach events and surveys and provided insights and feedback.

The Advisory Committee included members of the Gorge TransLink in addition to other members to form a diverse, bistate group. A full list of people and groups that were engaged can be found at <https://gorgetranslink.com/gorge-transit-strategy/>.

The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District would also like to thank the Gorge TransLink transportation providers for their significant contribution to this process and for their heroic efforts each and every day to provide mobility and access to their communities. This project is partially funded by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and WSDOT.

## Project Management Team

Don Morehouse, ODOT Region 4  
 Bill Baumann, WSDOT SW Region  
 Kathy Fitzpatrick, MCEDD Mobility Manager  
 Susan Wright, Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

## Advisory Committee

WSDOT: Chelsey Martin  
 ODOT: Valerie Egon  
 MATS: Sharon Carter, Norma Pickett  
 CAT: Amy Schlappi  
 Sherman County Transit: Kelsi Phillips  
 The Link: Jesús Mendoza  
 Skamania County Transit: Sophie Miller  
 ODOT Region 4 Transit Coordinator: Jovi Anderson  
 SW WA Regional Transportation Council: Dale Robins, Adam Fiss

## Stakeholder Advisory Group

Public and Private Transit Providers  
 Tribal Representatives  
 Local Governments and Ports  
 Land Managers  
 Veterans Services Organizations  
 Hood River County Energy Council  
 State and Federal Government and Agencies  
 Health and Wellness Organizations  
 Higher Education  
 Local Employers  
 Local, Regional, and Federal Planning  
 Tourism and Outdoor Recreation  
 Historic Columbia River Highway  
 USDA Forest Service  
 Active Transportation Liaisons  
 Nonprofits and Community Based Organizations

# Table of Contents

- 1. Introduction ..... 5
- 2. Vision ..... 11
- 3. Implementation ..... 13
- 4. Conclusion ..... 27

## Appendices

- Phase 1: Foundations Memo
- Memo 1: Public Involvement Plan
- Memo 2: Existing Framework
- Memo 3: Regional Travel Patterns, Transit Gaps, and Opportunities Analysis
- Memo 4: Vision and Funding
- Memo 5: Regional Transit Solutions
- Memo 6: Key Initiatives

## The Gorge TransLink Providers



Columbia Area Transit (Hood River County)  
 Skamania County Transit  
 Mt. Adams Transportation Services  
 The Link Public Transit (Wasco County)  
 Sherman County Transit



Bingen, WA

Source: Wikimedia Commons, by Zach Dischner - Endless Possibilities, CC BY 2.0

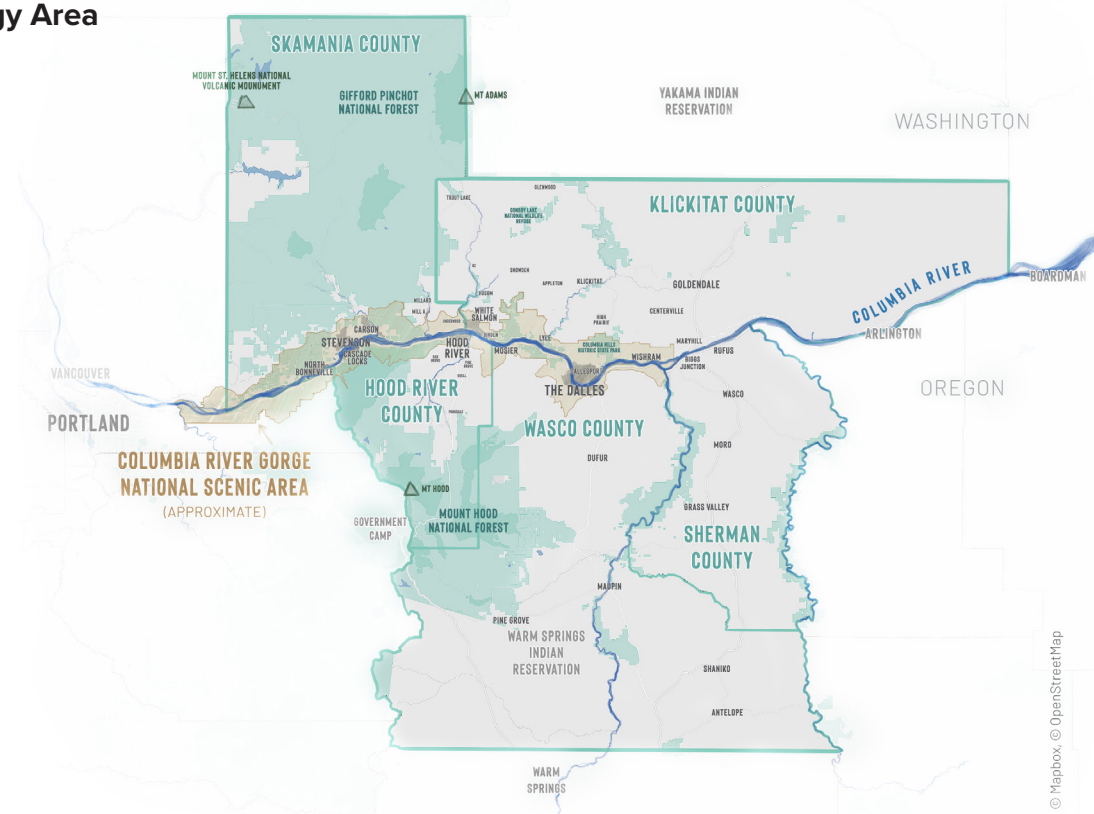
# 1 / Introduction

## A CONNECTED, ACCESSIBLE GORGE

### Why Do We Need to Expand Public Transit in the Region?

Transit is key to helping the region respond to the growing challenges of housing affordability, congestion, environmental degradation, workforce mobility, and the ever-increasing population in the Portland metro area. Aging populations in all five counties will continue to increase the need for transit access.

#### Strategy Area



### What We Heard

- “Achieve workforce equity by expanding regional transit.” *Member of the Goldendale Chamber of Commerce*
- “Public transit can increase access to education and training for those who are experiencing transportation-related barriers.” *Staff at Columbia Gorge Community College*
- “One challenge is reducing the jurisdictional barriers regarding funding and bistate services.” *Staff of Southwest WA Regional Transportation Council*



## Why Do We Need This Plan?

This project develops a roadmap for a regionally coordinated and integrated public transportation system in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge, a rural five-county, bistate region.

Although each transportation provider's authority ends at its county line, transit connections to neighboring counties are important. The region shares a common workforce and common geography. Residents regularly cross jurisdictional borders for many reasons.

For that reason, Columbia Area Transit (Hood River County), The Link (Wasco County), Sherman County Community Transit, Mt. Adams Transportation Services (Klickitat County), and Skamania County Public Transit formed the Gorge TransLink Alliance in 2010.

## What Stands in the Way of Taking Transit in the Gorge Today?

Transit in the Gorge region today is limited mostly by service gaps. This might mean service that doesn't run early enough or late enough, that doesn't reach desired destinations, or that fails to make timely connections with other service lines.

Transit gaps and opportunities in the region were identified through an inventory of existing conditions; by assessing current and future resident or visitor travel patterns within and connecting to the project area; through public input from an online open house; and by reviewing gaps from the Phase 1: Foundations Memo.

- There is limited service on evenings and weekends and there are long headways that can make it difficult to catch the bus when you need to or transfer smoothly between routes (the public's highest priority is to help residents access places they need to go).
- There are gaps in local services and regional connections across the region.
- There are gaps in first mile/last mile access and geographical constraints that make it challenging for people to ride transit in the Gorge.
- There's a need for a better platform for coordination between public and private providers and community partners to improve transit service and delivery.

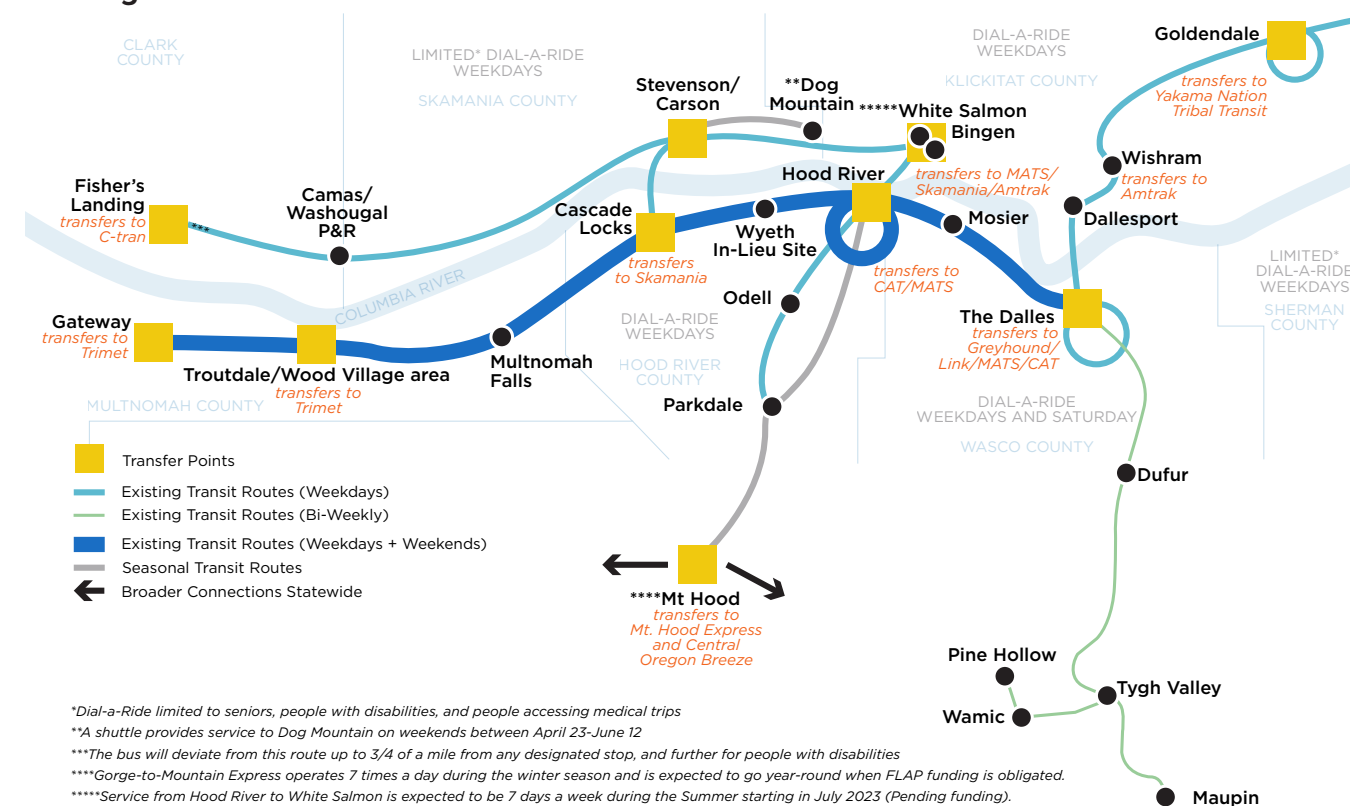
### PRIORITY DESTINATIONS THE PUBLIC IDENTIFIED NEEDING BETTER TRANSIT ACCESS INCLUDE:

- Columbia Gorge Community College campuses
- Native American In-lieu and Treaty Fishing Access Sites
- Healthcare facilities in the Portland Metro Area, particularly for medical rides that are not reimbursable
- Lyle, Warm Springs, and Trout Lake

### ADDITIONAL GENERAL DESTINATIONS THAT NEED TRANSIT ACCESS INCLUDE:

- Urbanized areas throughout the five counties to provide regional transit opportunities
- Local circulators to expand access within communities and facilitate connections between local and intercity routes
- Recreational areas including trailheads, wineries, and museums

## Existing Transit Service



\*Dial-a-Ride limited to seniors, people with disabilities, and people accessing medical trips  
 \*\*A shuttle provides service to Dog Mountain on weekends between April 23-June 12  
 \*\*\*The bus will deviate from this route up to 3/4 of a mile from any designated stop, and further for people with disabilities  
 \*\*\*\*Gorge-to-Mountain Express operates 7 times a day during the winter season and is expected to go year-round when FLAP funding is obligated.  
 \*\*\*\*\*Service from Hood River to White Salmon is expected to be 7 days a week during the Summer starting in July 2023 (Pending funding).

## THERE ARE BARRIERS TO PROVIDING COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT IN THE REGION INCLUDING:

- Lack of transit and active transportation infrastructure
- Lower population density in rural areas
- Lack of new funding sources
- Dispersed geography and limited parallel routes within the region
- The seasonality of tourism and recreation
- A need for more marketing, branding, and public awareness of existing services
- Limited staff resources

## What We Did in Phase 1

Phase 1 concluded in Winter 2021. This first phase focused on strengthening partnerships, analyzing local transportation plans in the Columbia Gorge, and developing a collective regional vision.

The main objective of Phase 1 was to combine the goals, policies, and priorities of local transportation planning efforts. Together, these serve as the foundation for the work of the regional collaborators to develop the vision and goals that guide the implementation strategies for Phase 2.

## Phase 2 Objectives

Based on the Phase 1 vision and goals, Phase 2 focused on a more comprehensive implementation strategy. This included further data analysis, funding and financial planning, assessment of potential regional organizational structures, and operational and policy strategies.

This strategy focuses on planning for regional transit service, decisions about local routes and dial-a-ride service are made by individual providers.

## LEARN MORE

Learn more about the outcomes of Phase 1 in the [Phase 1: Foundations Memo](#).

## GORGE TRANSLINK'S PURPOSE

- 1 Enhance the ability of members and their respective governing bodies to work towards **improving connections** within and between Hood River, Wasco, Sherman, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties.
- 2 **Address gaps** in public transit routes and barriers to using public transit in the Gorge.
- 3 **Improve public education** and understanding of transit services.
- 4 Provide **seamless, high-quality transit service** to all residents and visitors.

This document includes prioritized and actionable strategies and recommendations, including a transit map that clearly articulates the Region's vision of a successful regional transit system.

This plan is a flexible, living document developed with input from state, regional, and local partners. The strategies focus on enhancing the regional network and coordination activities. They are intended to support the current and future plans of each of the five transportation providers of the Gorge TransLink and not conflict with local planning documents.

## GORGE TRANSLINK HAS ACCOMPLISHED A LOT IN THE LAST FEW YEARS!

Klickitat County launched fixed routes in 2018 and has already expanded their hours and frequencies.

The Link Public Transit (Wasco County) launched its first fixed route service in 2019 and is now running three routes.

Skamania County extended its routes to Klickitat County and across the river into Cascade Locks, Oregon in 2021, providing connections to the regional system.

CAT (Hood River County) increased the number of routes providing access to essential destinations and recreation, seasonally and year-round in 2019.

The Gorge TransLink developed a fare system (GOrge Pass) for riders to use for fixed-route transit across providers in 2021.

Sherman County Community Transit has recently received more grant funds to expand their facilities and their services.

With additional resources and streamlined decision-making, Gorge Translink can accomplish even more.

**Dog Mountain, WA**



## 2 / Vision

### VISION

*Public transit supports thriving Columbia River Gorge communities by providing access to critical services, higher education, jobs, and outdoor recreation while protecting the natural wonders of the Gorge.*

### Goal Area: Community and Economic Vitality

Public transit in the Columbia River Gorge supports community livability and economic vitality by supporting business and housing development, the multimodal transportation system, workforce mobility, and regional resiliency.

- Transit provides workforce mobility.
- Transit supports the local and regional economies.
- Transit provides access to outdoor recreation for residents and visitors.
- Transit reduces the need for expensive parking infrastructure within communities.
- Transit mitigates traffic congestion and dangerous traffic conditions.
- Transit supports multimodal connectivity.
- Transit supports local and regional disaster response.
- Transit supports local planning efforts to develop affordable communities.

### Goal Area: High-Quality Service and Experience

Public transit in the Columbia River Gorge provides all residents and visitors with seamless and equitable access to community resources and to key connection points.

- Transit service is reliable, seamless, and coordinated.
- Transit service is as convenient as driving a private vehicle.
- Transit provides service to key connection points within and outside of the region.
- Transit service is equitable and affordable, prioritizing underserved and diverse communities while making them feel welcome and safe.
- The transit network of providers has high organizational capacity.

### Goal Area: Environmental Stewardship

Public transit in the Columbia River Gorge protects the natural environment.

- Transit is used in combination with other tools to protect our natural resources by reducing overcrowding at popular recreation areas.
- Transit reduces Green House Gas emissions by moving more people with efficient and low/no-emission vehicles.
- Transit reduces the need for large parking lots in our pristine natural areas.

### Goal Area: Financial Sustainability

Public transit in the Columbia River Gorge is financially sustainable, expanding operations with increased capacity and new funding sources.

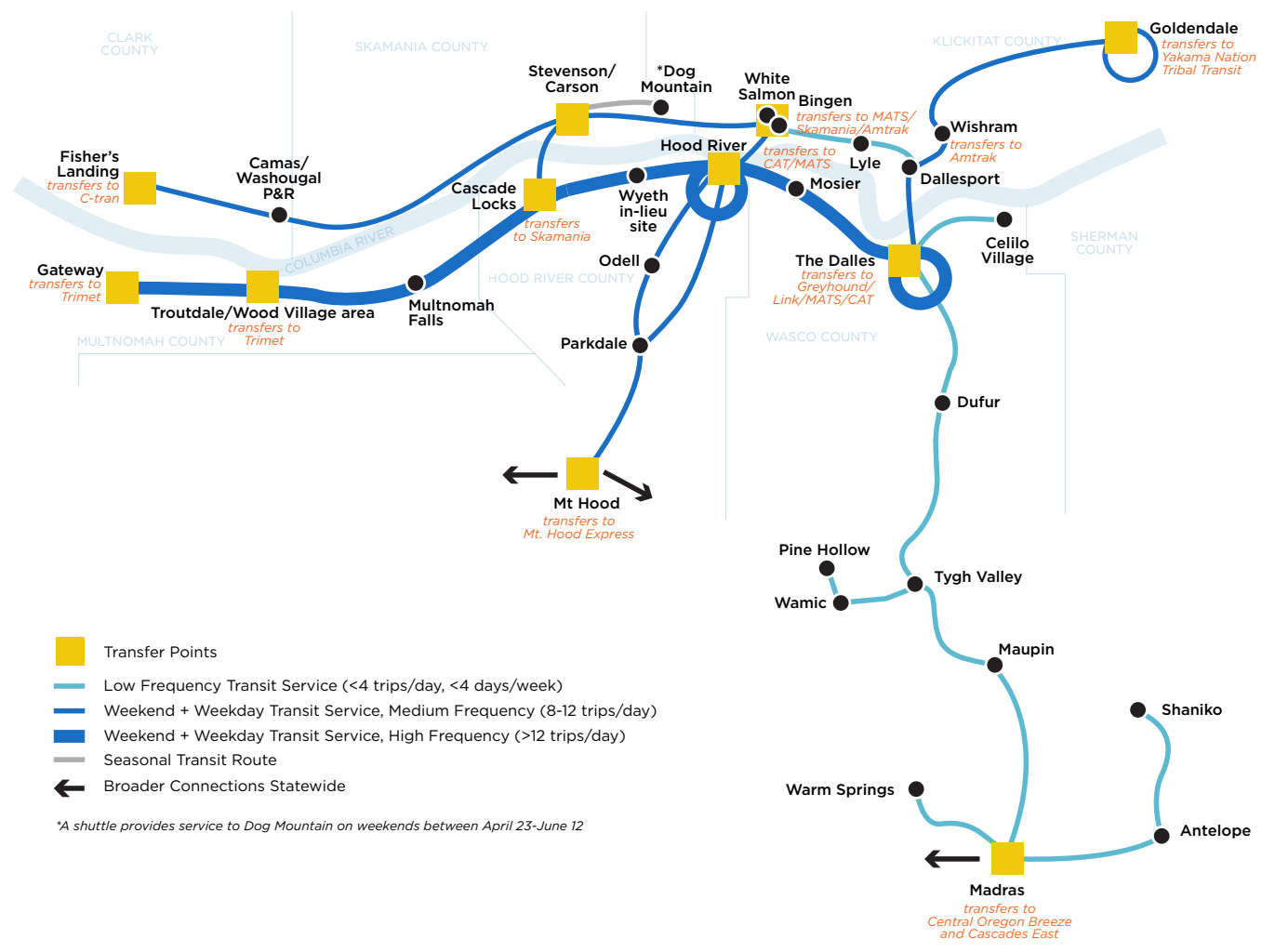
- Transit has new, sustainable, and diversified funding sources.
- Transit providers coordinate services, providing cost efficiencies.
- Transit has the capacity and funding levels necessary to achieve other goal areas.



**White Salmon, WA**

## MAKING THE VISION A REALITY

### Preferred Regional Transit Strategy Map



- Transfer Points
- Low Frequency Transit Service (<4 trips/day, <4 days/week)
- Weekend + Weekday Transit Service, Medium Frequency (8-12 trips/day)
- Weekend + Weekday Transit Service, High Frequency (>12 trips/day)
- Seasonal Transit Route
- ← Broader Connections Statewide

\*A shuttle provides service to Dog Mountain on weekends between April 23-June 12

The map above illustrates the preferred strategy for making progress towards the vision. The map was developed based on an analysis of gaps and opportunities and discussions with the project advisory groups.

Cities and communities that are already served by transit or that were included in adopted local planning documents were included on the map. Additional key stop locations/communities to serve were added through the vision refinement process conducted with advisory groups.

### The Strategy: Accessibility

This preferred strategy map represents a potential service level vision that includes service seven days a week on most routes, with a target of 60-90 minute frequency service along each route and a new direct

connection from White Salmon to Dallesport. To achieve this level of service, additional funding is required. Higher levels of service are needed to fully implement the vision in the longer term.

To implement the regional vision, the Gorge TransLink partners and local agencies need to work together to expand local transit routes; coordinate timetables with each other; increase the area that can be reached by carshare, vanshare, and carpools; and expand access to local taxis to provide connections to/from regional transit.

Gorge TransLink is constantly working to improve transit in the region. They are already working on some of the initiatives included in this document, and some may be complete before the plan is adopted!

# 3 / Implementation

## SUPPORTING TRANSIT ACCESS THROUGH GOVERNANCE

This section documents short- and long-term implementation actions to expand governmental capacity to provide transit service. Five governance scenarios (described on p 14) were explored and screened with reference to the Status Quo according to their ability to:

- Improve system clarity for customers and the general public
- Provide government accountability, oversight, and policymaking
- Support regional equity
- Improve operational efficiency
- Reduce agency staff burden and share staff expertise
- Increase funding opportunities

Each scenario would have to be explored further before long-term implementation. **Forming a policy level board, such as a Regional Transit Advisory Board, is a key short-term action needed to help implement the vision and make decisions about longer term governance.**

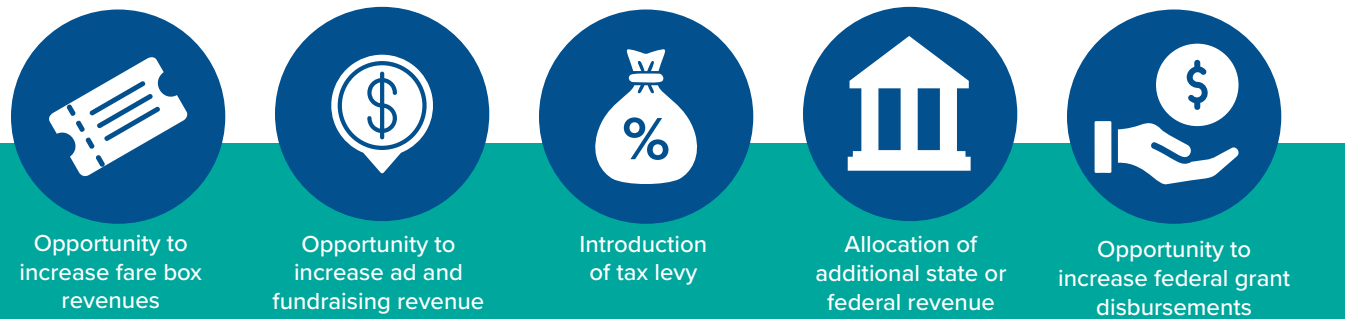
### LEARN MORE

Memo 5: Regional Transit Solutions provides details on potential governance scenarios and documents their evaluation.



**Wasco County, OR**

## Governance Scenarios Considered to Help Facilitate Coordination, Decision-Making, and Increase Funding



### ENHANCED STATUS QUO

The Gorge TransLink would update guiding documents and provide modest changes to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and oversight. The increased clarity of roles could help with regional decision-making. The updates could provide an established format for elected officials to interact. The enhanced status quo would provide sustainable funding for Gorge TransLink staff.



### TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD

A Regional Transit Advisory Board (TAB) would be established. There are levels of oversight and authority that could be given to the TAB based on the consensus of all parties involved. The TAB would improve elected oversight of regional decision-making processes and provide a central forum for prioritizing transit initiatives and projects.



### JOINT DISTRICTING OR SINGLE-COUNTY DISTRICTS

Joint or Single-County Districts would be formed. These districts would continue to be separate agencies with transit management responsibilities but would have potential to increase local revenue generation across the region. These options could be combined with the TAB or the Regional Cooperative or Transportation Management Organization (described below).



### REGIONAL COOPERATIVE OR TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION

A Regional Cooperative or Transportation Management Organization would be formed as a separate legal business entity and could encompass counties in both Oregon and Washington. These entities could centralize many functions, improve public transparency, and enhance stewardship and oversight by regional elected officials in a single forum. There could still be a separate co-op board and staff and the current transit agencies could be the owners of the co-op.



### BISTATE GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY

A Bistate Governmental Agency would be an entity created through legislation rather than an interagency agreement. The legislation could designate the agency as the region's service provider, rather than having a separate agency for each county. This option would provide enhanced elected oversight at the regional level and centralize all planning and operating decisions. Creating a bistate district would require legislation in both states.



## Short-Term Action

### FORM A TRANSIT ADVISORY BOARD (TAB)

Forming a TAB would create a policy-level forum for the region to help implement the short-term aspects of the regional strategy and further explore options for a centralized transit organization for the region, such as a regional cooperative, transportation management organization, or new bistate governmental agency.

The board would be created with memorandums of understanding or interagency agreements signed by all partners that would define its roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authorities for the regional transit program. The board's purpose would be to provide policy-level input on regional transit plans, programs, and initiatives; to prioritize regional transit projects; and to recommend plans and strategies for ultimate adoption by each county's decision-making body.

Alternatively, the board could be vested with the authority to approve regional transit plans and projects outright. Bylaws would be written to describe board member eligibility and expectations, member dues, officers, meetings, and rules of procedure. Decisions for forming a TAB and by the TAB would be achieved through the consensus of all parties involved.

Identifying sustainable funding sources for a mobility manager is critical to ongoing work of the TransLink Alliance and an essential goal of the governance implementation actions.

### LEARN MORE

[Memo 6: Key Initiatives](#) documents why forming a TAB is recommended, a potential process for forming one, what steps the TAB could take to increase funding, and actions the TAB can support to improve regional coordination and transit service opportunities.



Hood River, OR



## STEPS FOR FORMING A TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD (TAB)

1	<b>Appoint Facilitator</b>	Identify a formational coordinator who will facilitate initial work sessions until the TAB is approved and a TAB manager is selected.
2	<b>Work Session 1: Regional Transit Summit</b>	The Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) will convene a Regional Transit Summit. The first work session will include presenting the background and recommended key initiatives from the Gorge Regional Transit Strategy (GRTS) project, explaining "Why a TAB?" and discussing proposed TAB structure and representation.
3	<b>Draft TAB Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)</b>	Prepare a Draft MOU based on Work Session 1.
4	<b>Final TAB MOU</b>	Finalize MOU and coordinate signatures.
5	<b>Draft TAB Bylaws</b>	Prepare draft to include with agenda packet for Work Session 2.
6	<b>Draft TAB Biennial Work Plan</b>	Prepare draft to include with agenda packet for Work Session 2.
7	<b>Draft Technical Committee Charter</b>	Prepare draft and circulate to existing staff-level group for review and comment.
8	<b>Work Session 2: Initial TAB Meeting</b>	The agenda for Work Session 2 would include discussing the draft TAB bylaws, work plan, and Technical Committee charter.
9	<b>Final Draft Bylaws, Work Plan, Technical Committee Charter</b>	Refine draft documents to reflect Work Session 2 discussions and circulate to parties for review and comment.
10	<b>Work Session 3: TAB Meeting</b>	The agenda for the third work session would include approving the bylaws, biennial work plan, Technical Committee's charter, and TAB manager, establishing a regular meeting schedule and having a presentation on a regional issue.
9	<b>Begin Monthly Technical Committee Meetings</b>	A typical agenda would include coordinating any route, schedule, stop changes, working on topics in the charter, or as assigned by the TAB, and preparing for upcoming TAB meetings.
10	<b>Begin Quarterly TAB Meetings</b>	A typical agenda would include reviewing the TAB manager's report, the Technical Committee chair's report, and presentations/updates/ discussion on work plan topics.



Wasco County, OR

### Long-Term Actions

#### EXPLORE OPTIONS FOR A CENTRALIZED TRANSIT ORGANIZATION FOR THE REGION

Options for a more centralized transit organization for the region, such as new transportation districts, a regional co-op or transportation management organization, or a new bistate governmental agency, would lift the administrative burden of transit programs from existing partner agencies.

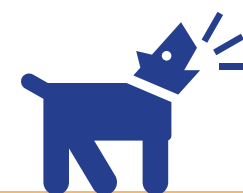
Benefits of this approach include:

- Potentially greater staff-level expertise than is currently possible, since staff at county agencies must often wear multiple hats.
- Economy of scale for the region in nearly all aspects of transit program delivery: planning, purchasing, operating, contracting, maintenance, etc.
- Potential to increase local funding

The TAB would be responsible for further exploring opportunities to form a new centralized transit organization for the region and the counties would be responsible for exploring opportunities to create county transportation districts to increase local funding generation opportunities.

#### LEARN MORE

[Memo 5: Regional Transit Solutions](#) provides details on the full list of potential initiatives to address gaps and opportunities. It also identifies which governance model(s) facilitate these initiatives and the recommended implementation time frame.



## WORKING TOGETHER ON THE KEY STOPS AND PLANNING DECISIONS

This section documents regional coordination, infrastructure, and information implementation actions.

### Regional Stops

Transit travel between communities across county lines can require long waits or overnight stays in remote areas to make a transfer between service providers. When providers change the location of a stop or make schedule adjustments at that stop, it can have partner system impacts that create problems for intercounty travelers.

There are limited local transit and active transportation infrastructure connections supporting connections to local and regional transit. Dial-a-ride, park-and-rides, mobility hubs, electric bikes, electric carshares, and carpools, particularly at regional stops, can help provide these connections and serve rural areas. Active transportation improvements should be made to transportation infrastructure so it is comfortable for people of all ages and abilities and meets Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility standards.

Although greater frequency is needed to optimize transfers and minimize wait times, coordinating between Gorge TransLink members, Amtrak, and Greyhound can improve the ability to travel between counties and increase the number of trips that do not require a transfer. The table below describes steps for establishing and maintaining regional stops and increasing service coordination at these locations.

### STEPS FOR REGIONAL STOP COORDINATION

1	<b>Identify Regional Stops</b>	Hold a work session across providers to identify regional stop locations.
2	<b>Create New Regional Stops</b>	Provide a standing agenda item on TAB Technical Committee agendas for route and schedule coordination.
3	<b>Enhance Regional Stops</b>	Provide branded shelters, timetables, and other amenities at each regional stop location by 2025.
4	<b>Maintain Regional Stops</b>	Create a regional procedure for who will maintain the regional stops.
5	<b>Coordinate before Relocating Stops</b>	Create a regional procedure for communicating and coordinating upcoming schedule changes.



Stevenson, WA

## Data Collection

A uniform process for collecting, recording, storing, and reporting passenger information and operational data across counties should be created. This data could help support applications for grant funding and inform route planning. The table below describes steps for standardizing and utilizing data collection.

### STEPS FOR DATA COLLECTION

<b>1</b>	<b>Inventory Existing Data Collection</b>	Inventory existing data collection tools and methodologies.
<b>2</b>	<b>Standardize Data Collection</b>	Identify performance metrics and create consistent methodologies for tracking those metrics across providers.
<b>3</b>	<b>Track Regional Performance</b>	Create a performance monitoring process that tracks regional ridership, costs, and benefits of transit travel in the region.  Each member agency will provide consistent, periodic data on ridership, routes, and vehicles to track performance.
<b>4</b>	<b>Distribute Data</b>	Establish data accessibility and management responsibilities.

## INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION OPTION AND HOW TO USE IT

This section documents the actions needed to increase the public's awareness of public transit and make it easier for people to understand how to use transit.

### Consistent Branding and Policies

Implement consistent branding of buses and stops, naming conventions for transit routes, and rider policies. The table below describes steps for establishing consistent branding and policies.

### STEPS FOR ESTABLISHING CONSISTENT BRANDING AND POLICIES

<b>1</b>	<b>Branding</b>	Consistent branding of vehicles and bus stops supports public awareness of services. Provide consistent design standards and/or level of amenities at bus stops.  Branding can include service area and phone numbers (e.g., include the cities served and share the phone number of the TransLink Phone Platform).
<b>2</b>	<b>Route-Naming Conventions</b>	Establish route-naming conventions across providers that inform riders about the service the route provides.
<b>3</b>	<b>Policies</b>	Create consistent rules and guidelines regarding rider behavior, pets and service animals, bicycle transport, holiday service days, and operation schedules. Appendix C summarizes existing rider policies across service providers and recommends draft-aligned policies.

## Marketing and Education

Additional strategies are needed to improve public recognition of the transit system.

The customer experience can be improved by enhancing marketing and education materials and consolidating transit resources so riders can gather information across services from a single, printable web page. The steps for implementing this strategy are described in the table below.

### STEPS FOR ENHANCING MARKETING AND EDUCATION

<b>1</b>	<b>Gather Information about Existing Transit Service</b>	Gather detailed information about existing transit service and policies across providers.
<b>2</b>	<b>Create Clear and Concise Transit Resources</b>	GORge Pass: Continue offering the GORge Pass to facilitate paying for transit across providers.  Simplify Fare Payment: Align fare payment systems and prices across providers.  Gorge TransLink Online Platform: Continue building a stronger online presence for travel resources at <a href="http://www.gorgetranslink.com">http://www.gorgetranslink.com</a> . Ensure that information about all providers' routes is available directly on the website for smooth user experience. Improve the ease of using the trip planning tool, and support route integration across providers in Google Maps.  Gorge TransLink Phone Platform: Implement an automated phone information system with the same call-in number for all five transit agencies. This automated phone system can make it easier for passengers who use dial-a-ride to get pickup times and cancel appointments. It can also provide information about routes and schedules, such as the next time a bus is scheduled to be at a specific stop. This will likely require all providers to use the same dispatch software for demand-response services.
<b>3</b>	<b>Educate Riders and Customer Service Representatives</b>	Travel Training: Continue offering travel training in Wasco and Hood River counties and expand the service to Klickitat, Skamania, and Sherman counties.  Customer Service Training Program: Provide an annual training session on regional pass sales and customer service strategies for staff at all Gorge TransLink member organizations and for staff of higher education, local businesses, recreation managers, tourism organizations, and human services..
<b>4</b>	<b>Advertise Services</b>	Marketing Campaigns: Market services through websites, social media, local newspapers, printed signs and banners, radio interviews, and/or direct mail.  Public Information Coordinator: Create an additional part-time position dedicated to managing outreach and external communication efforts. This coordinator would be responsible for working with media consultants on outreach materials, managing the Gorge TransLink website, drafting key public messages for review and approval, preparing periodic press releases, providing radio and television interviews, implementing and managing a single-call information service, presenting to local agencies and organizations, and serving as a community organization.
<b>5</b>	<b>Update Information about Existing Transit Service</b>	Ensure materials are kept up to date as routes, schedules, and policies are updated.

## FILLING THE GAPS IN REGIONAL TRANSIT

The table on the following pages summarizes existing service levels, service level increases needed to implement the regional strategy map, coordination needs, implementation needs, and paratransit requirements for each route according to the regional strategy map.

### The primary themes are summarized below:

- The service vision includes adding lifeline service (<4 trips/day, <4 days/week) for the following routes:
  - The Dalles – Dufur – Tygh Valley – Maupin – Madras (with connections to Warm Springs, Shaniko, and Antelope)
  - The Dalles – Celilo Village
  - Bingen – Lyle – Dallesport
  - Providing weekend service across routes and expanding service hours in the evening is a need for many routes.

### Each route update includes a time frame for implementation:

- The Short-Term Horizon includes updates that could be implemented by redistributing resources or identifying smaller grants, or that are already planned for near-term updates by agencies.
- The Medium-Term Horizon includes high-priority updates that would require substantial additional funding, such as adding weekend and expanding evening service.
- The Long-Term Horizon includes updates that require substantial additional funding and are secondary priorities.

## The Key Initiatives for enhancing service include:

- Expand capacity to provide transit service: identify public and private partners that support expansion of transit service.
- Provide service seven days a week across the I-84 and SR-14 routes within all counties. This includes:
  - Increasing service along The Dalles – Hood River route to match the frequency of the Columbia Gorge Express
  - Adding weekend service to the Bingen – Vancouver, Goldendale – The Dalles, and White Salmon – Bingen – Hood River routes
  - Taking action to creating routes between Bingen – Lyle – Dallesport and The Dalles – Celilo Village routes with weekend service
- Explore opportunities for fleet electrification: converting vehicle fleets to hybrid and electric vehicles requires vehicles with sufficient range and proper charging stations. In the long term, electric vehicle fleets can help reduce both maintenance and fueling costs. Pursuing grant funding to support electrification initiatives and constructing charging and alternative fueling facilities supports the purchase of hybrid or fully-electric vehicles.

## The Vision for Future Service: Coordination and Implementation

Route	Existing Service Level	Vision for Future Service Level	Coordination and Implementation Needs	Paratransit Requirements	Time frame for Implementation (Short-Term, Medium-Term, and Long-Term)
<b>Hood River – Local Routes</b>	Hood River Every day 7:45 a.m.-7:15 p.m. 16 trips/day	• Expand evening service • Create new local routes • Increase frequency	• Coordinate major stops and schedules to facilitate transfers between services	• Local fixed-route service: Paratransit service is required • Currently met by providing complementary paratransit	Medium-Term
<b>Hood River – Mosier – The Dalles</b>	The Dalles 6:45 a.m.-6:15 p.m. Service hours and frequency are reduced on weekends. 4 trips/day	• Add evening service • Increase frequency to at least 12 trips/day	• Coordinate schedule to maximize efficiency transferring to the Columbia Gorge Express • Identify funding to provide additional frequency and evening service	• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required	Medium-Term
<b>Hood River – Cascade Locks – Multnomah Falls – Troutdale – Portland</b>	Columbia Gorge Express Every day 5:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Up to 11 trips/day	• Expand evening service • Add strategic stops	• Identify funding and expand staff to extend evening service	• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required	Long-Term
<b>Hood River – Odell – Parkdale</b>	Upper Valley Weekdays 7:10a.m.-6:30 p.m. 7 trips/day	• Add weekend service • Expand evening service • Increase frequency	• Identify funding and expand staff to extend evening service and add weekend service	• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required	Medium-Term
<b>Hood River – Bridge of the Gods</b>	Cascade Locks Weekdays 11:25 a.m.-12:15 p.m. and 6:30-7:20 p.m., 2 trips/day <sup>1</sup>	Understand local needs better	• Identify funding and expand staff to extend evening service	• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required	Medium-Term
<b>Hood River – Parkdale – Mt. Hood</b>	Gorge-To-Mountain Express Seasonal <sup>2</sup>	Provide year-round service	• Identify funding and expand staff to provide year-round service	• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required	Short-Term
<b>Hood River – Dog Mountain</b>	Dog Mountain Shuttle Seasonal Weekends 6:50a.m.-5:50 p.m. 2 trips/day between Hood River–Dog Mountain, every 30 min between Skamania Fairgrounds – Dog Mountain	Increase frequency between Hood River-Dog Mountain	• Identify funding and provide more frequent service between Hood River-Dog Mountain • Coordinate schedule to maximize efficiency transferring to and from the Columbia Gorge Express	• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required	Short-Term

<sup>1</sup> This route includes overlapping segment with the Columbia Gorge Express.  
<sup>2</sup> CAT recently received a grant to convert this service to year-round.

Route	Existing Service Level	Vision for Future Service Level	Coordination and Implementation Needs	Paratransit Requirements	Time frame for Implementation (Short-Term, Medium-Term, and Long-Term)
<b>White Salmon – Bingen – Hood River</b>	White Salmon to Hood River Loop Weekdays 7 a.m.-7 p.m. 9 trips/day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add weekend service</li> <li>• Expand weekday service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate providers to contract weekend service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required</li> </ul>	Medium-Term
<b>The Dalles – Local Routes</b>	Blue Line Weekdays 16 trips/day 7:00 a.m.-5:25 p.m. Saturday 5 trips/day 9:00 a.m.-3:25 p.m.  Red Line Weekdays 10 trips / day 7:00 a.m.-5:25p.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add weekend service</li> <li>• Expand weekday service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate major stops and schedules to facilitate transfers between services</li> <li>• Coordinate schedule to maximize efficiency transferring to and from the Columbia Gorge Express</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local fixed-route: Paratransit service is required</li> <li>• Currently met by providing deviations</li> </ul>	Medium-Term
<b>Maupin – Wamic – Pine Hollow – Tygh Valley – Dufur – The Dalles</b>	South County Shuttle Tuesdays and Thursdays 2 trips/week	—	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required</li> </ul>	N/A
<b>Madras – Maupin – Wamic – Pine Hollow – Tygh Valley – Dufur – The Dalles (with connections to Warm Springs, Shaniko, and Antelope)</b>	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add service</li> <li>• &lt;4 trips/day, &lt;4 days/week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue funding for lifeline service, time to facilitate regional transfers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required</li> </ul>	Long-Term

Route	Existing Service Level	Vision for Future Service Level	Coordination and Implementation Needs	Paratransit Requirements	Time frame for Implementation (Short-Term, Medium-Term, and Long-Term)
<b>The Dalles – Celilo Village</b>	—	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add service</li> <li>• &lt;4 trips/day, &lt;4 days/week</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue funding for lifeline service, time to facilitate regional transfers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required</li> </ul>	Medium-Term
<b>Goldendale – Local Route</b>	Goldendale to The Dalles Weekdays 7a.m.-7p.m. 4 trips/day	Add weekend service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate providers to contract weekend service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local fixed route: Paratransit service is required</li> <li>• Currently met by providing dial-a-ride</li> </ul>	Medium-Term
<b>Bingen – Vancouver</b>	Bingen - Stevenson - Vancouver Route Weekdays Service hours and frequency vary by route segment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add weekend service</li> <li>• Increase frequency to at least 8 trips/day</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate providers to contract weekend service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required</li> <li>• Deviations are still provided to expand service area</li> </ul>	Medium-Term
<b>Bingen – Lyle – Dallesport</b>	—	Add service <4 trips/day, <4 days/week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursue funding for lifeline service, time to facilitate regional transfers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intercity route: Paratransit service not required</li> </ul>	Medium-Term



Source: Wikimedia Commons, by Mark Wagner - Own work, CC BY 2.5

# 4 / Conclusion

## A THRIVING, ACCESSIBLE REGION

- ...For the workers needing access to jobs
- ...For the recreation sites congested with vehicles
- ...For the students seeking higher education
- ...For our veterans, our older adults, our youth, and our residents with permanent or temporary mobility challenges
- ...For the people who want to reduce their environmental impact

Providing high-quality transit service to critical destinations, higher education, jobs, and outdoor recreation promotes community, economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and financial sustainability. By working together, members of the Gorge TransLink Alliance can coordinate services and leverage one another's work to create a more connected Gorge region for all their riders.



**Klickitat County, WA**



**Gorge Translink**

<https://gorgetranslink.com/>