

MEMO #2: EXISTING SYSTEM

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To: Jessica Metta, Kate Drennan; MCEDD
Devin Hearing, Theresa Conley; ODOT
Tyler Stone, Wasco County

From: Susan Wright, Krista Purser, and Amy Griffiths; Kittelson & Associates, Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

This memorandum summarizes and assesses existing public transportation services in Wasco County, including fixed-route, demand-response, deviated fixed-route, and intercommunity services provided by Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) and other private and public entities. The information was obtained and assembled from data sources provided by MCEDD, Wasco County, transit providers serving the county, U.S. Census, National Transit Database (NTD), and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

Figure 1: Existing Transit Service**Figure 1**

KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings are supported by the analysis documented in this memorandum:

- High proportions of transit-dependent populations live in rural areas; many of these rural areas do not have access to fixed-route transit. The rural nature (low-density land use, limited roadway connections) makes these populations hard to efficiently serve with transit services.
- The commute analysis shows that there is a relatively low number of commuters between incorporated cities, except between The Dalles – Hood River and The Dalles – Portland. The data suggests many commutes are starting or ending in rural, unincorporated areas.
- A majority of deviated fixed-route and demand-response transit trips during the study period started and ended in The Dalles, with several extending beyond the formal service area to complete trips (i.e. beyond the ¼ mile that The LINK sets as its deviation boundary for fixed-route services). The LINK provides demand-response transit via Dial-a-Ride for any trips that start and end within Wasco County.
- The LINK's connections to other regional transit services are gaining momentum through coordination with the Gorge TransLink Alliance. For example, the GORge Pass program, which launched July 2021, allows riders to use Columbia Area Transit, Mt. Adams Transportation Services, Skamania County Transit, and the LINK through a calendar year. Continuing to connect at physical bus stops and coordinate programs will help promote regional and local travel and meet residents' needs.
- Bus stops on the fixed routes in The Dalles are improving with amenities, sidewalk access, and more. Transit stops are not widely used by the system, in part due to The LINK operating as a Dial-a-Ride system for more than two decades and many riders unfamiliar with how to plan a trip using a fixed route. Establishing trip planning software for users and marketing the availability of stops would help improve efficiency of the LINK's services.
- A majority of trips along The LINK's services during the analysis period were 10 minutes or less in duration. Half of the trips were less than 5 miles long and 90% of trips were less than 10 miles long. This is due to most trips starting and ending in The Dalles, a generally small geographic area.
- Trip purpose shifted during the COVID-19 pandemic. A higher percentage of trips were coded as "personal/miscellaneous" in 2019 than in 2020 and 2021. The share of trips with the purpose of "work" increased between 2019 and 2021. Riders are currently using transit services for more essential trips rather than recreational or personal trips.
- Monthly ridership dropped by over 50% between February 2020 and April 2020. In late 2020 and early 2021, ridership has gradually begun to increase but has not returned to pre-pandemic levels.
- Transit services in Wasco County have high use by elderly individuals (over the age of 65).
- The LINK provides operating costs per hour, rides per hour, and rides per mile that are near the average of its peers.
- Seven out of the eleven active vehicles are beyond their expected useful life (EUL) timelines; all vehicles are in adequate or excellent condition. Five new vehicles were purchased in 2021 and will be used to replace older vehicles.
- Additional findings related to survey data and outreach are provided in the "Outreach Findings" section of this report.

Additional findings and supporting information are provided in the following sections.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

The following describes the general population characteristics, Title VI populations, and other demographic characteristics of Wasco County. The TDP aims to examine how to improve access to low-income, senior, and youth populations, people of color, people with disabilities, tribal communities, and other potentially vulnerable and transit-dependent groups.

General Population

Wasco County is home to 26,130 residents spanning over almost 2,400 square miles.¹ The county is bounded by the eastern slopes of Mt. Hood on the west, the Columbia River to the north, the Deschutes River on the east, and a portion of Warm Springs tribal land to the south. Wasco County has a wide diversity of cities and communities ranging from The Dalles (population 15,448) – the largest city, County seat, and home to about 60% of the County's population – to Shaniko (population approximately 30).

Table 1 shows the population growth in the City of The Dalles, Dufur, Maupin, Mosier, and Wasco County as a whole. The cities of The Dalles and Maupin have experienced increases in population greater than the population percentage growth rate for the county in the same time period.

According to the Population Forecast, prepared by the Portland State University's Population Research Center (PSU PRC):

"Wasco County's total population has grown slowly over the last half century. The exception to this trend was the tumultuous 1980s, related to both the deep recession that hit Oregon and to the sudden appearance, growth, and decline of the Rajneeshpuram commune in southern Wasco County. Over the last two decades, demographic patterns settled into a trend of slow growth. Within the county, however, sub-areas experienced different growth patterns. The Dalles grew steadily at 0.6 percent annually during the 2000s, but its growth slowed to an average of 0.2 percent during the 2010s. Meanwhile, smaller UGB areas tended to add (or lose) a few dozen people but mostly remain unchanged. The exception to this was Mosier, which reliably grew at 0.5 percent annually over the last two decades, perhaps benefiting from vacation appeal and its accessibility on the Columbia River Gorge between Hood River and The Dalles.

*The Population Research Center forecasts that despite natural population decrease, Wasco County will continue its steady growth pattern, gaining over 3,000 residents by 2045 and another 3,000 by 2070 (Figure 1). This growth will depend on net in-migration, with natural decrease expected to persist throughout the forecast period. The population is forecast to grow fastest in The Dalles and Mosier, with those sub-areas gaining in share of the total county population throughout the forecast period."*²

¹ 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Wasco County Profile, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=0500000US41065>

² "Coordinated Population Forecast for Wasco County, its Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB), and Area Outside UGBs 2016-2066" <https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/opfp/12/>

Table 1. Service Area Population

Jurisdiction	Population (2000)	Population (2010)	Population (2019)	% Change (2000 – 2019)	Annual % Change	Forecasted Population (2045)
The Dalles	12,230	13,275	15,448	26%	1.4%	18,823
Dufur	615	563	572	-7%	-0.4%	639
Maupin	459	374	508	11%	0.6%	446
Mosier	454	465	455	0%	0.0%	574
Wasco County	23,791	25,211	26,130	10%	0.5%	29,728

Source: U.S. Census 2000 and 2010. ACS 2019 Population Estimates Program. Forecasted Population: PSU Population Research Center "Coordinated Population Forecast for Wasco County, its Urban Growth Boundaries (UGB), and Area Outside UGBs 2020-2070"

Figure 2 and Figure 3 show the population density (people per square mile) of Wasco County and the City of The Dalles by block group.³ Population density is generally low throughout the county and concentrated in the incorporated cities of The Dalles and Mosier.

Title VI Populations Overview

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. 2000d-1) states that "no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." In combination with subsequent federal nondiscrimination statutes, agencies receiving federal financial aid are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, age, economic status, disability, or sex (gender). Other relevant federal statutes include the Federal-Aid Highway Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Executive Order 12898 Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations, and Executive Order 13166 Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency.⁴

Table 2 summarizes the Title VI populations in the City of The Dalles, Wasco County, and the State of Oregon as a whole.

Table 2: Service Area Title VI Populations

	The Dalles	Wasco County	State of Oregon
Population	15,448 ⁵	26,130 ⁶	4,217,737 ⁷
Percent under 18 years old	23.2 ⁵	22.5 ⁶	20.5 ⁷
Percent above 65 years old	20.7 ⁵	20.2 ⁶	18.2 ⁷
Percent Minority Populations ⁷	25.5	25.4	24.3

³ Census Block Groups are the smallest demographic unit for which 5-year American Communities Survey (ACS) data are available. While they provide valuable information for this planning process, they do not necessarily coincide with jurisdictional boundaries for the communities of Wasco County.

⁴ Title VI populations include individuals who identify as minorities (both racial and ethnic), low-income, disabled, elderly (65+), and youth/children (under 18). (FTA. 2015. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, available at <http://www.fta.dot.gov/civilrights/12328.html>).

⁵ 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, The Dalles city Profile, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=1600000US4172950>

⁶ 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Wasco County Profile, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=0500000US41065>

⁷ Hispanic/Latino or People of Color, FTA Definition. 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates, Oregon Profile, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?q=0400000US41>

	<i>The Dalles</i>	<i>Wasco County</i>	<i>State of Oregon</i>
Percent Hispanic or Latino ⁷	19.6	18.2	13.0
Percent below poverty line ⁸	10.7	11.6	13.2
Percent who speak a language other than English at home (population 5 years and over)	17.0	15.5	15.4
Percent with disability	20.5 ⁵	18.2 ⁶	14.7 ⁷

POC: People of Color

⁸ 2019 ACS 5-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, "Ratio of Income to Poverty Level in the Past 12 Months", Table C17002. Ratio of 1.0 income to poverty level or less

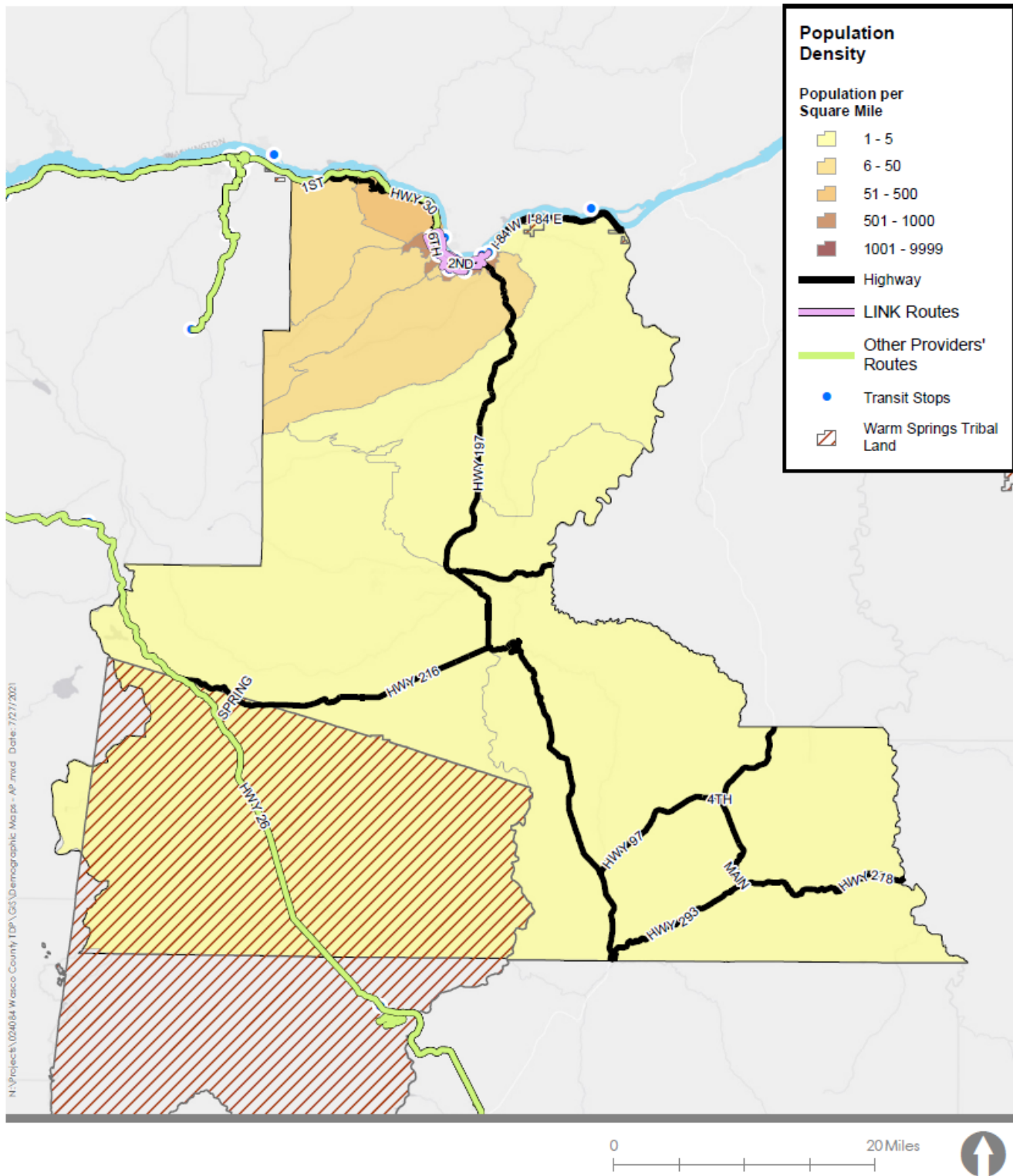
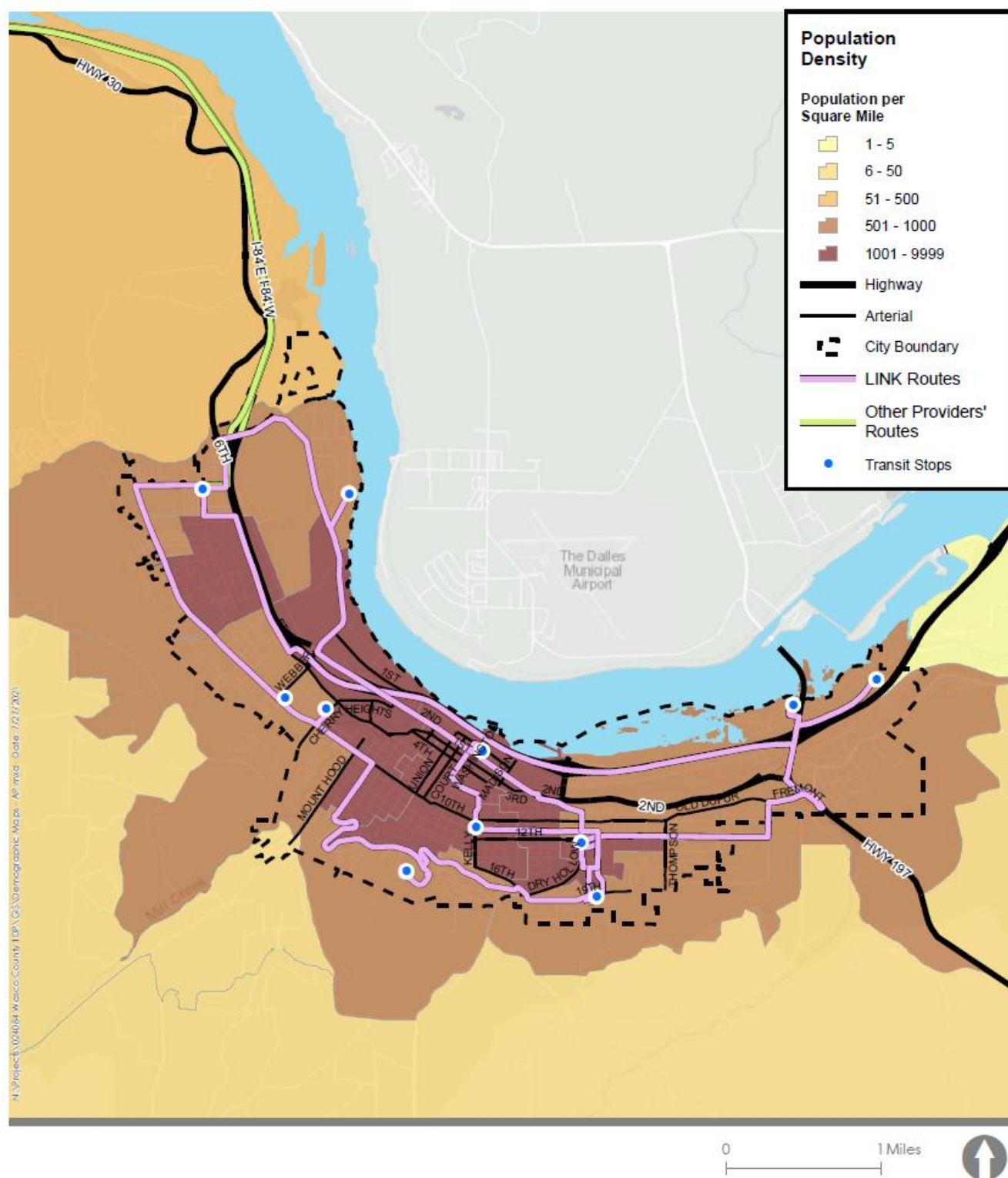
Figure 2: Service Area Population Density (People per Square Mile) by Block Group, Wasco County

Figure 3: Service Area Population Density (People per Square Mile) by Block Group, The Dalles

Age

Figure 4 and Figure 5 illustrate the proportion of youth (under age 18) by block group within Wasco County and the City of The Dalles. As shown, a significant portion of the youth population (about 30%) is found in the southwest area of the county, near lands of the Warm Springs, Wasco, and Paiute Native American Tribes. These areas are served by Cascades East Transit's (CET's) Warm Springs-Madras route and The LINK's Dial-a-Ride services.

Figure 6 and Figure 7 illustrate the proportion of elderly individuals (over the age of 65) by block group within Wasco County. Over 25% of the population in the central-west block group near Mt. Hood is over the age of 65, with additional concentrations located in east and southwest edges of The Dalles. Dial-a-Ride services are available to populations outside of The Dalles.

Household Income

Figure 8 and Figure 9 display the percentage of households in poverty within Wasco County, based on the ratio of income to the poverty level. The federal poverty level is calculated by the size of the household and is adjusted annually – the federal poverty level for an individual is \$12,490 in annual earnings, and \$25,750 for a household of four.⁹ While the majority of Wasco County's ratio of income to poverty is over 1.5, high concentrations of persons in poverty (ratio of less than 1.0) are located in the southern and central portions of the county, as well as in the western block groups adjacent to the Chenoweth Connection No. 2. There is currently no fixed-route transit service provided to the southern portions of the county besides CET's Warm Springs-Madras route.

Race and Ethnicity

Figure 10 and Figure 11 illustrate the locations of households with minority populations. In the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, minority populations include non-white racial groups as well as people identifying as Hispanic or Latino. As shown, concentrations of black, indigenous, and community of color are located to the southwest (the land of the Warm Springs Native American Tribe) and northwest, east of the Chenoweth Connection No. 2 route, and around the unincorporated community of Chenoweth. There are also concentrations of indigenous populations living just outside the Dalles at Celilo Village and the Lone Pine In-Lieu Site.

Populations with a Disability

Figure 12 and Figure 13 illustrate the locations of households with people with disabilities within Wasco County. These populations are concentrated within the City of The Dalles (in the block groups containing the central area of the city and the northwest portion of the city), but other parts of the county contain a high proportion of residents with disabilities as well – albeit at low population densities.

⁹ <https://www.healthcare.gov/glossary/federal-poverty-level-fpl/>

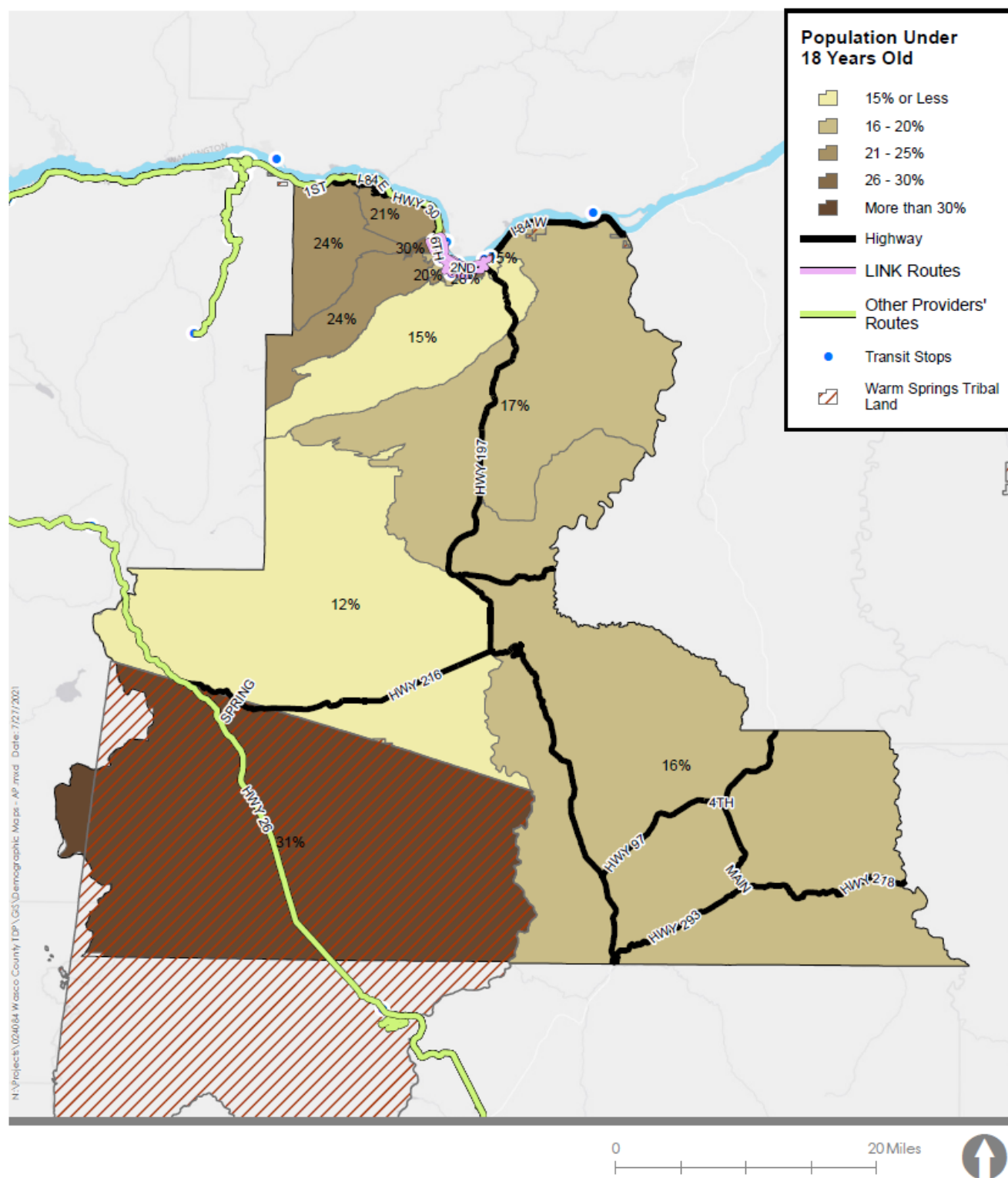
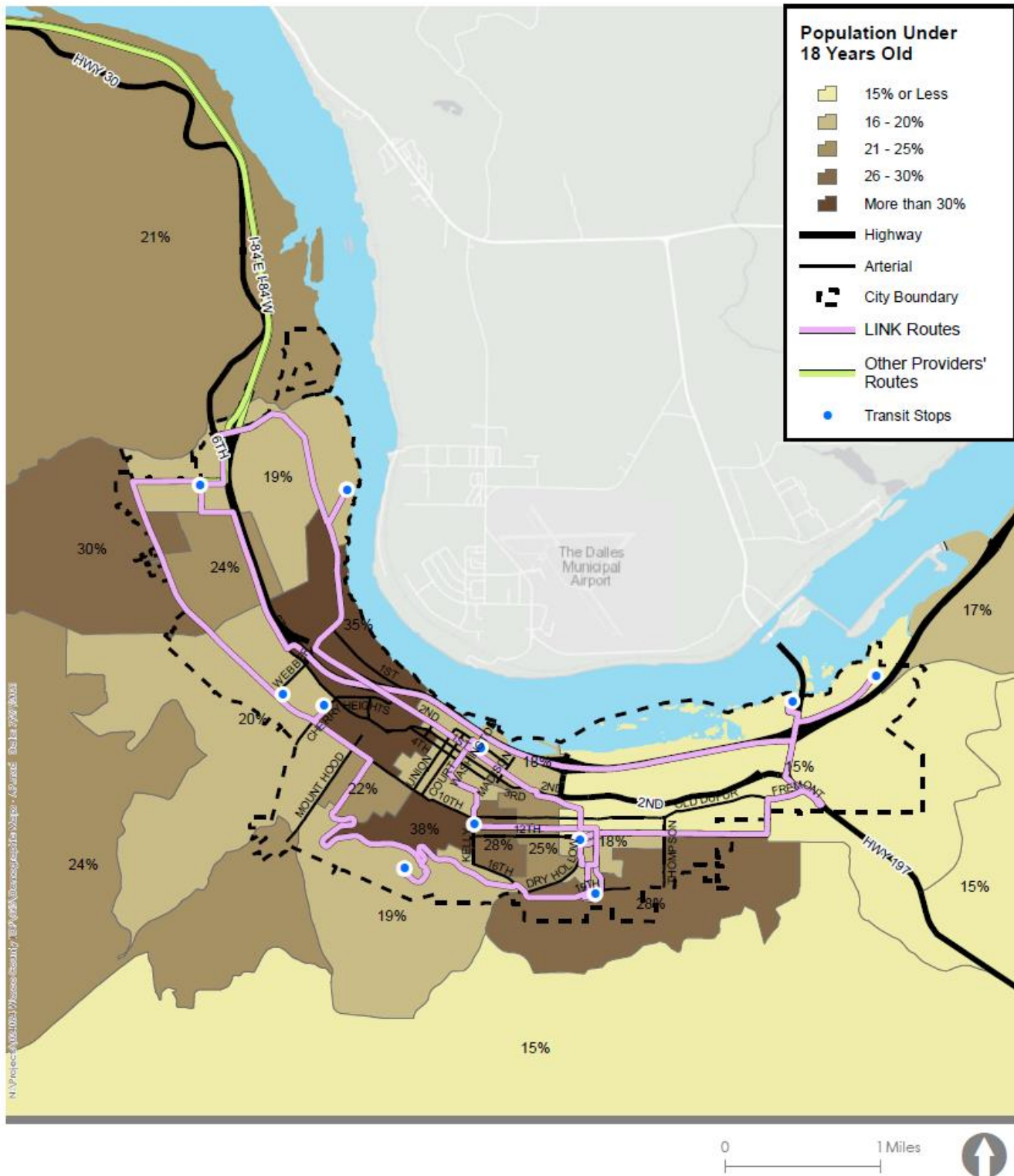
Figure 4: Service Area Density of Persons Age 18 and Under, by Block Group, Wasco County

Figure 5: Service Area Density of Persons Age 18 and Under, by Block Group, The Dalles

Population 65 Years and Older

- 10% or Less
- 11 - 15%
- 16 - 20%
- 21 - 25%
- More than 25%

Highway

LINK Routes

Other Providers' Routes

Transit Stops

Warm Springs Tribal Land

0 20 Miles

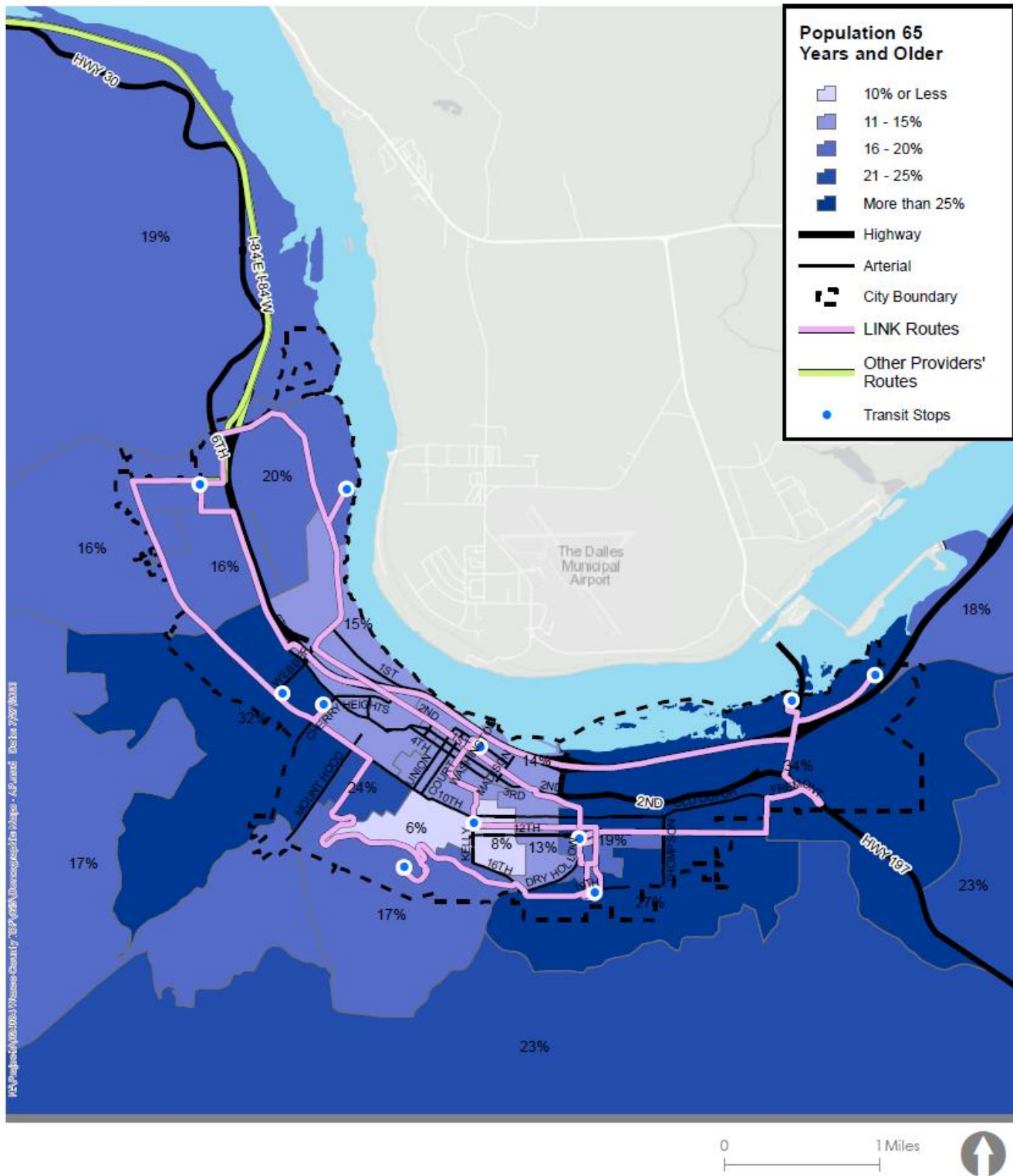
Figure 7: Service Area Density of Persons Age 65 and Over, by Block Group, The Dalles

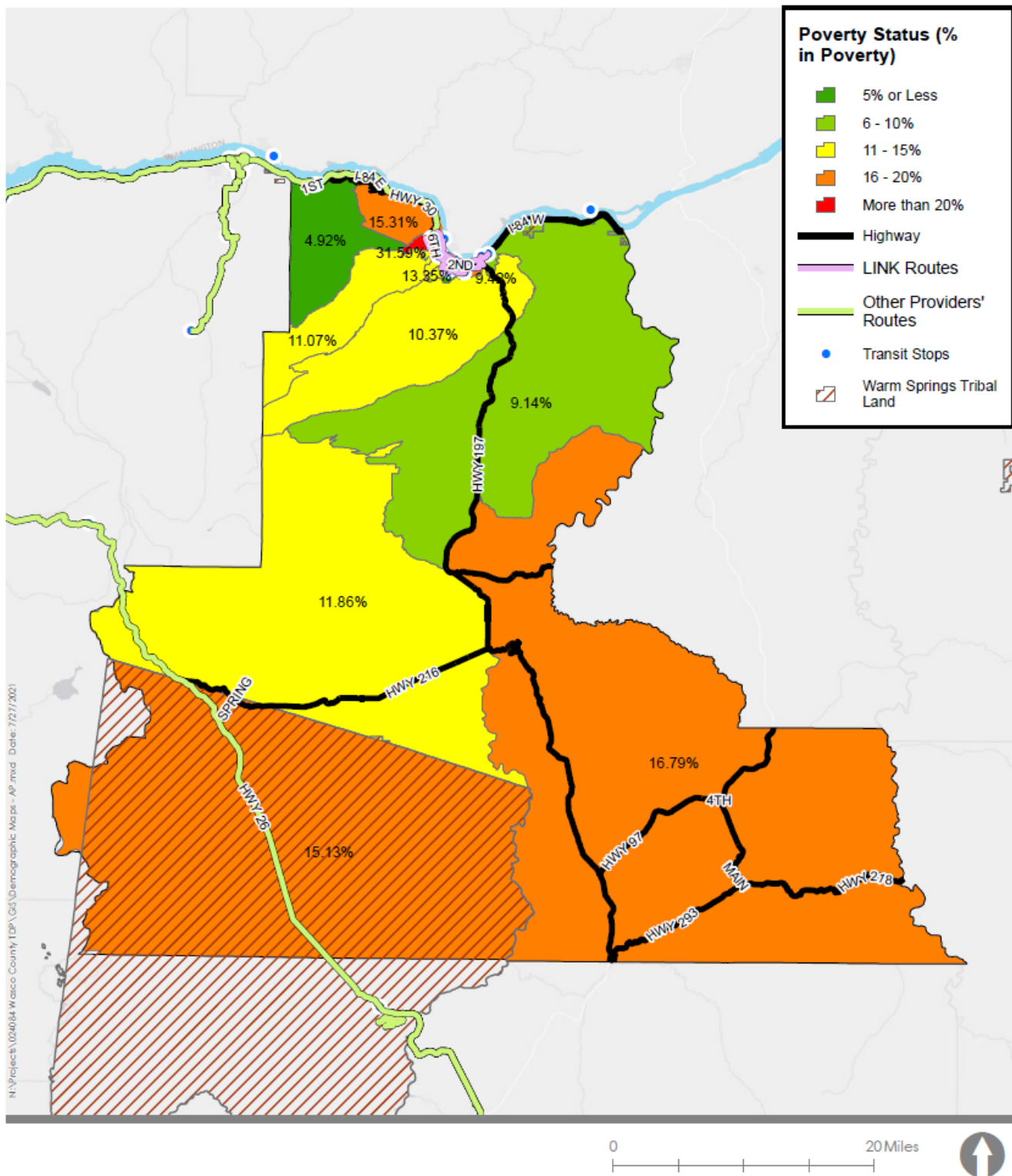
Figure 8: Service Area Density of Persons in Poverty, by Block Group, Wasco County

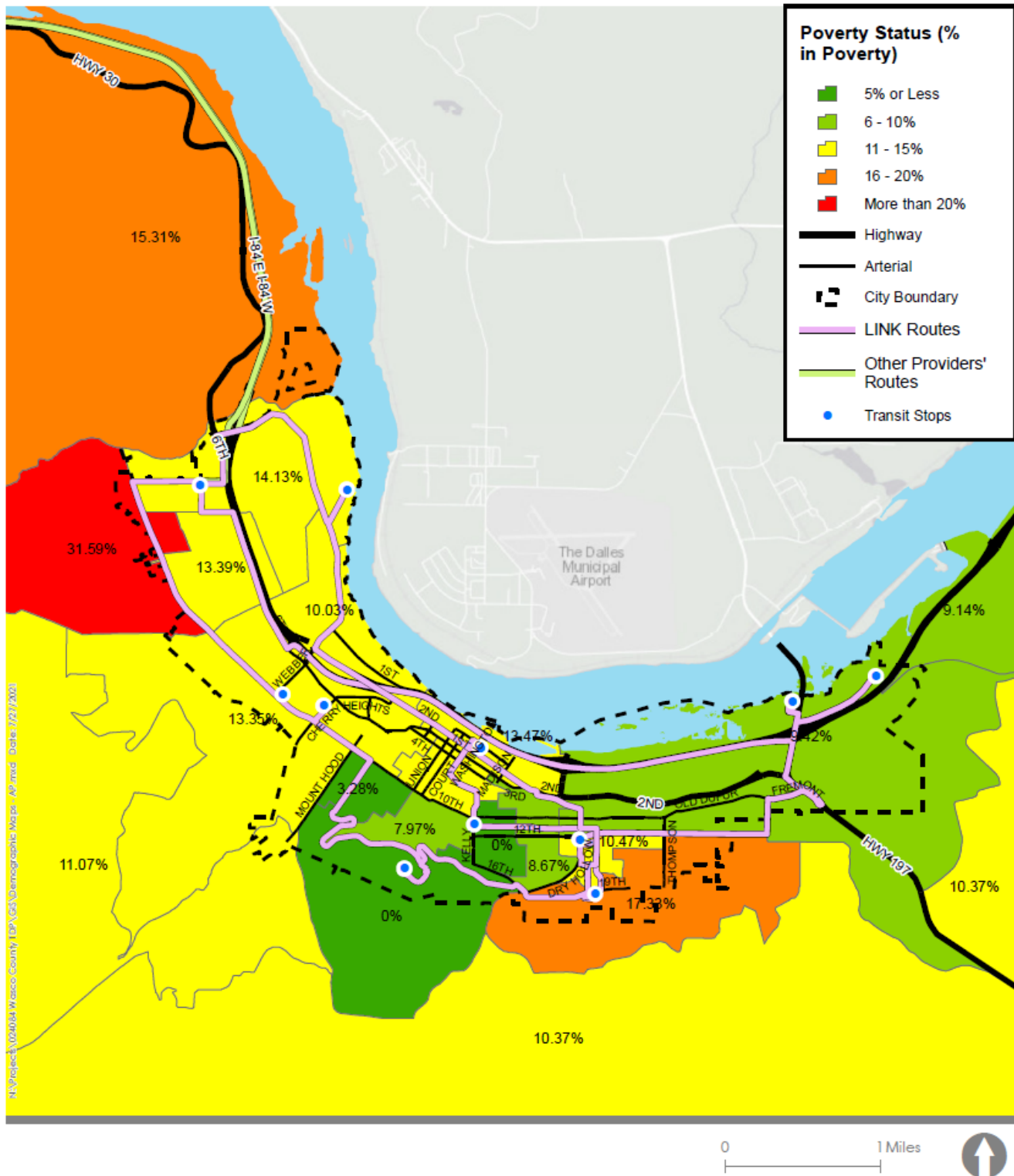
Figure 9: Service Area Density of Persons in Poverty, by Block Group, The Dalles

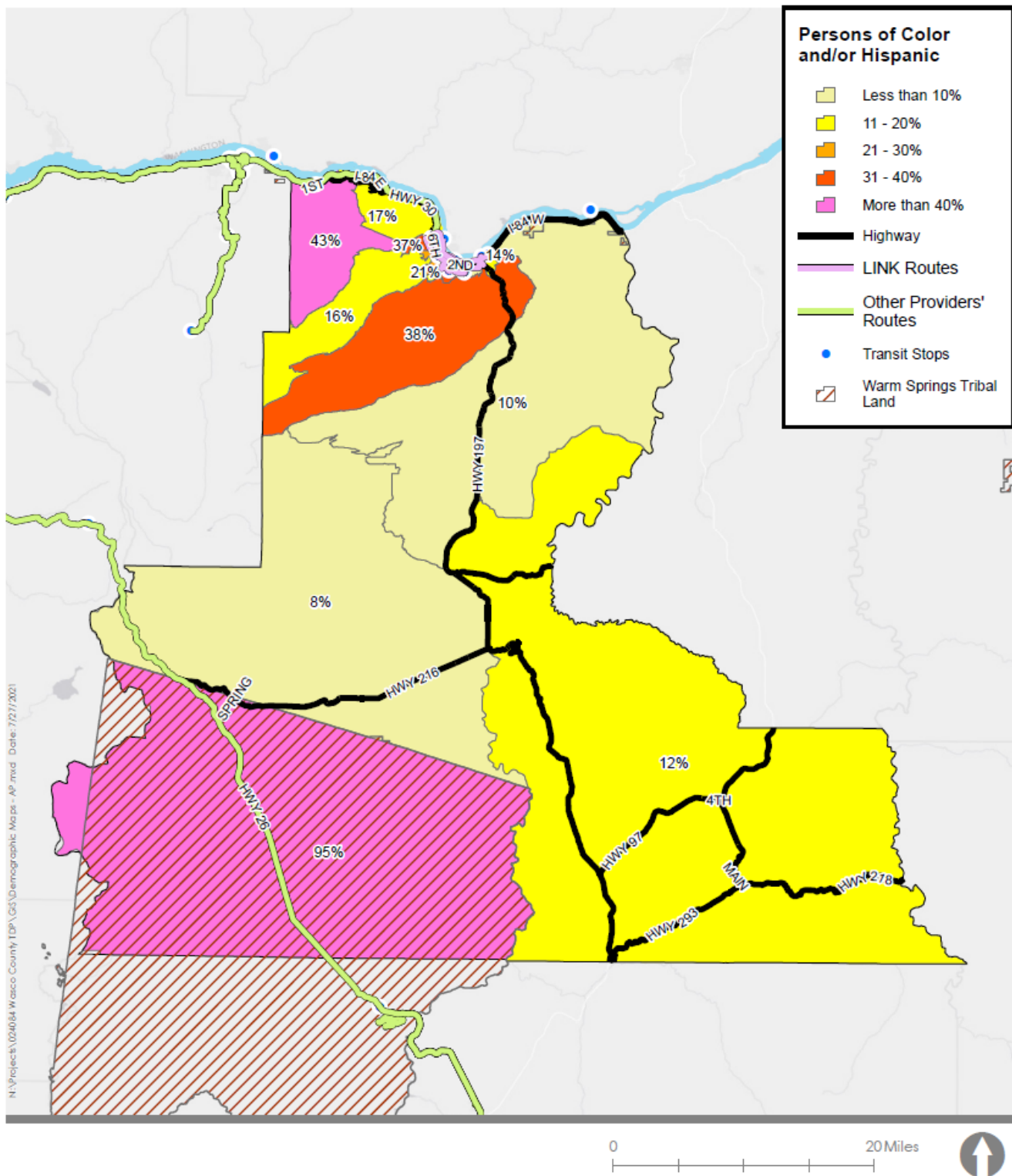
Figure 10: Service Area Density of Persons of Color and/or Hispanic Ethnicity, by Block Group, Wasco County

Figure 11: Service Area Density of Persons of Color and/or Hispanic Ethnicity, by Block Group, Dalles

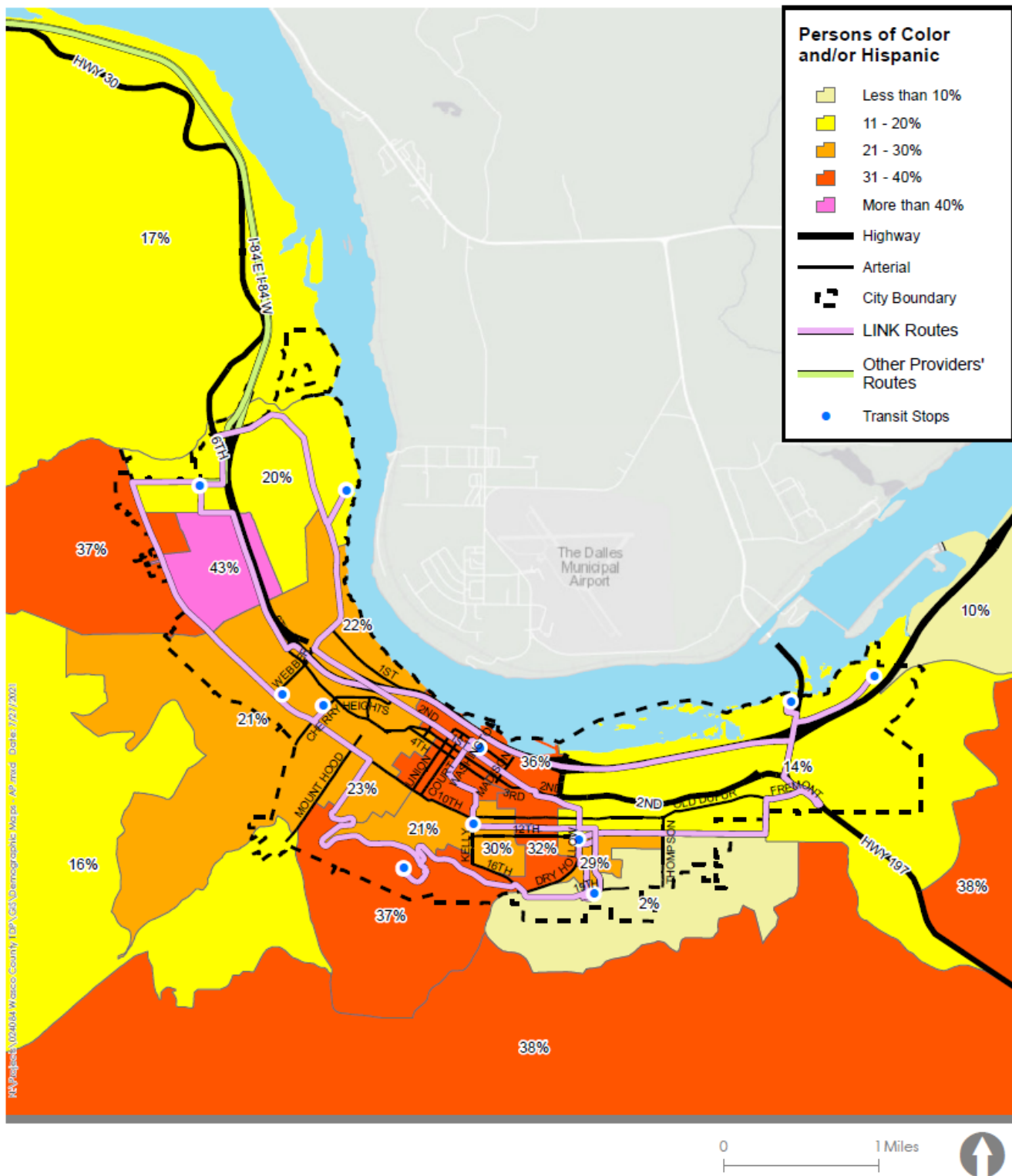


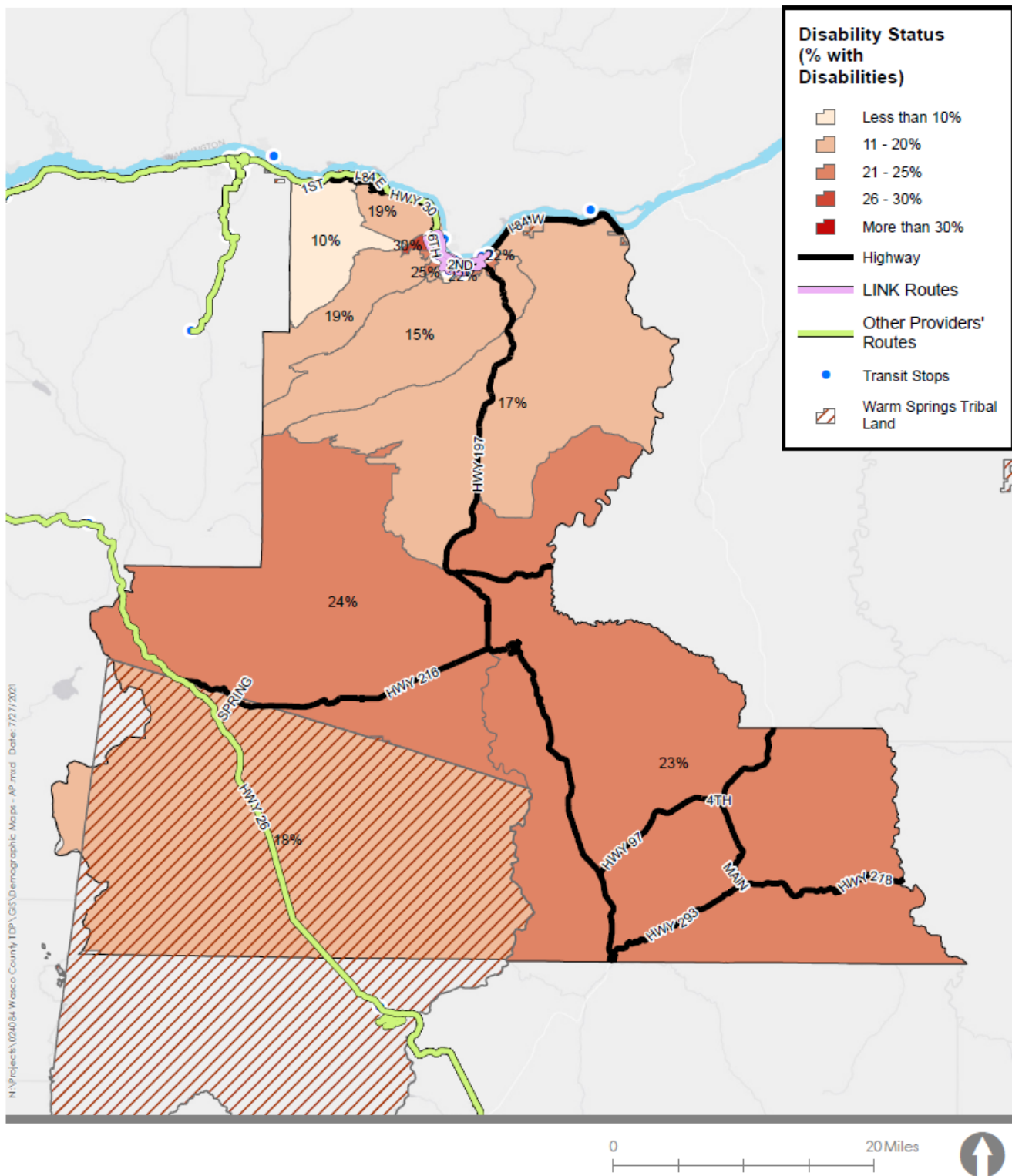
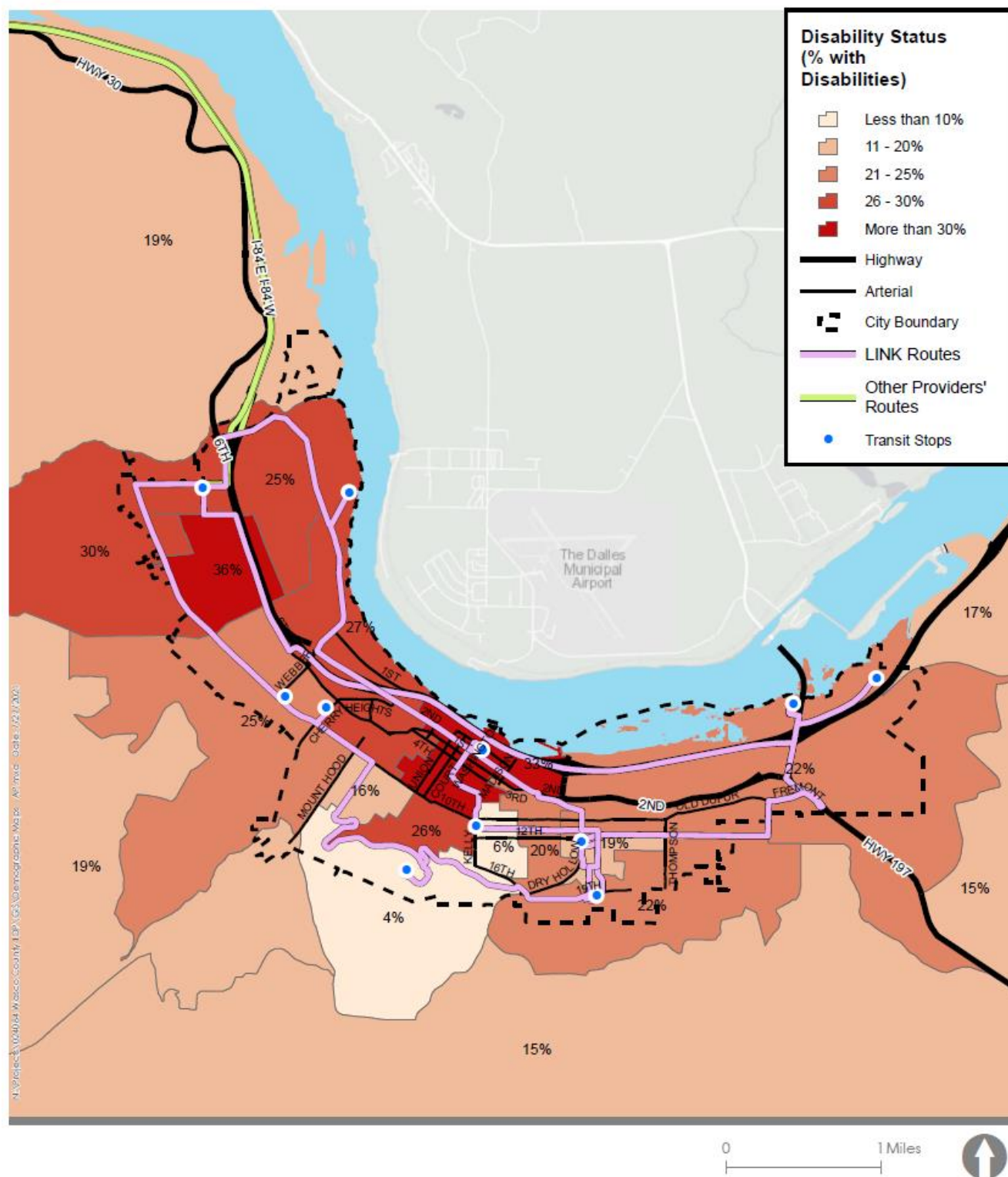
Figure 12: Service Area Density of Persons with Disabilities, by Block Group, Wasco County

Figure 13: Service Area Density of Persons with Disabilities, by Block Group, The Dalles



Jobs and Employment

This section describes employment and commuting patterns for Wasco County and for several cities within Wasco County. This information is largely based on Longitudinal Employer–Household Dynamics (LEHD) employment data from the U.S. Census Bureau. This dataset provides valuable information about where workers live and work. Since this dataset is generated based on administrative records, some work locations may be over- or underrepresented. For example, if workers in The Dalles have their paychecks processed with an address in Salem, their job site may be shown in Salem instead of The Dalles, if no local address is given in the administrative data. All data in this section are from 2018, which is the most recent year with complete data.

Key findings include:

- The Dalles is the most common destination for employed county residents, as well as the most common home location for employees working in Wasco County.
- Five of the top 10 locations for employed county residents are in Wasco County.

In 2018, approximately 12,361 employed persons lived in Wasco County.

- Over one-third (38.5%) of these persons worked in The Dalles.
- Five of the top 10 employment destinations for employed persons living in Wasco County were cities within the County: The Dalles, Chenoweth, Pine Hollow, Dufur, and Mosier.

In 2018, approximately 10,345 employees worked in Wasco County.

- Over one-third (37.7%) had home locations in The Dalles.
- Seven of the top 10 home locations for persons working in Wasco County were outside of the county.

In 2018, 10,345 people were employed in Wasco County. 5,995 individuals live and work in the County, 4,350 employees who live elsewhere commute to Wasco County, and 6,366 individuals live in Wasco County and commute elsewhere for work (see Figure 14: Wasco County Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2018). Table 3 shows the largest employers in Wasco County, Oregon.

Table 3: Largest Employers in Wasco County, Oregon

<i>Employer Size</i>	<i>Employers</i>
Over 500 Employees	Mid-Columbia Medical Center
251-500 Employees	Northern Wasco County School District 21, Oregon Cherry Growers, Fred Meyer
101-250 Employees	Oregon Veteran's Home, Columbia Gorge Community College, Azure Standard, Google, Wasco County, City of The Dalles
50 to 100 Employees	Cousin's Country Inn, Orchard View Farms, Columbia Basin Care Facility, Powder Pure, Mill Creek Point Assisted Living, Crestline Construction, Northwest Aluminum Specialties-Hydro, Bonneville Power Administration, One Community Health, Columbia Gorge Toyota/Honda Motors, Northern Wasco PUD
25-49 Employees	AmeriTies, Columbia State Bank, Goodwill Industries, Precision Lumber, Dufur School District, South Wasco County School District, Post Office, Sunshine Mill (includes vineyard), Younglife/Big Muddy, Flagstone Senior Center

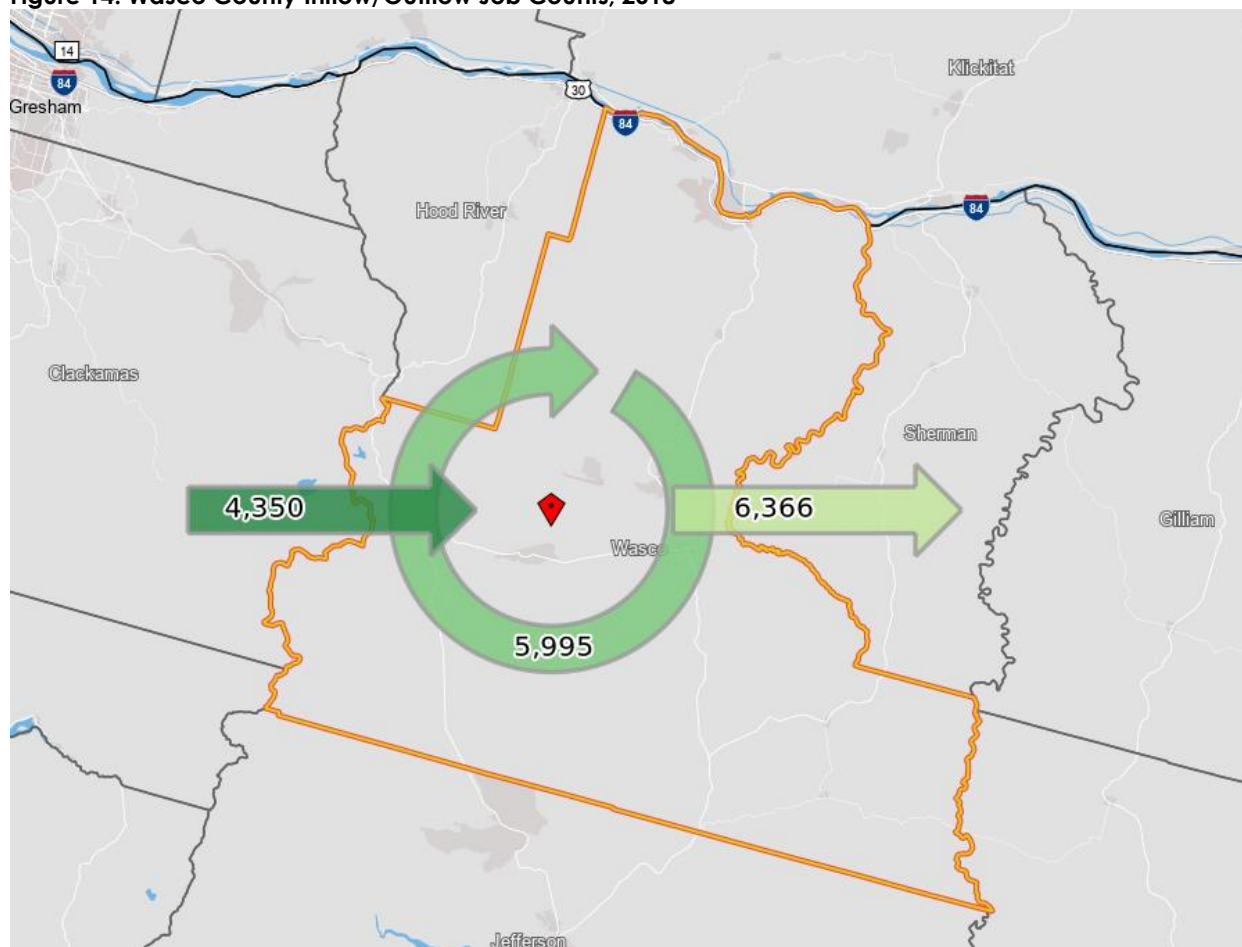
Source: MCEDD May 2021 Report

Figure 15, Figure 16, and Table 4 provide greater detail regarding the work locations of Wasco County residents and the home locations for those who work in Wasco County. As shown, key commute pairs exist between Wasco County and Hood River, Odell, Portland, Bend, Warm Springs, and Salem, in addition to Wasco County destinations.

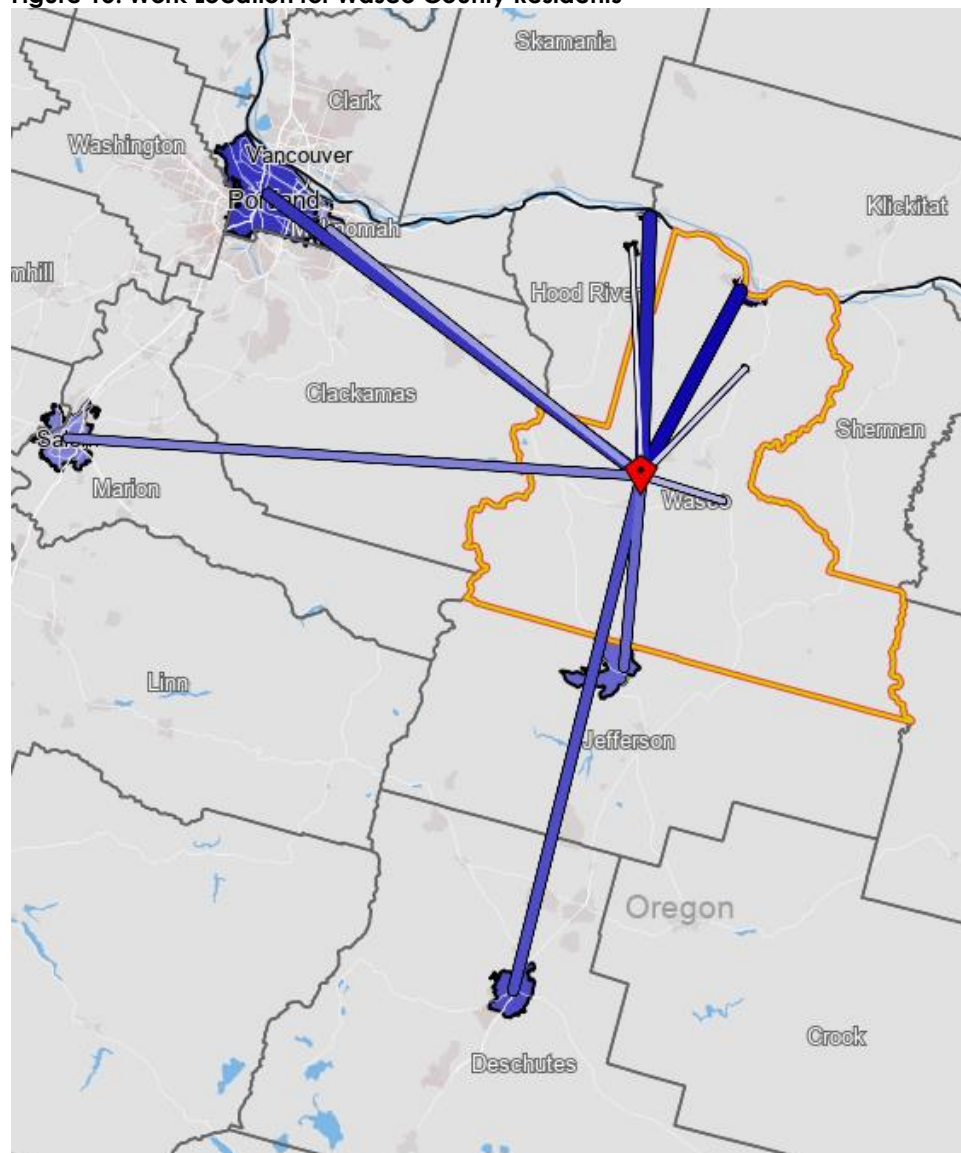
Table 4. Employees Coming To and Going From Wasco County

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	3,980	38.5%	The Dalles	4,663	37.7%
Chenoweth	327	3.2%	Hood River	804	6.5%
Hood River	316	3.1%	Portland	702	5.7%
Portland	245	2.4%	Bend	222	1.8%
Pine Hollow	101	1.0%	Warm Springs	166	1.3%
Dufur	91	0.9%	Salem	164	1.3%
Mosier	86	0.8%	Gresham	157	1.3%
Salem	85	0.8%	Maupin	140	1.1%
Goldendale	79	0.8%	Dufur	103	0.8%
Eugene	69	0.7%	Odell	102	0.8%
All Other Locations	4,966	48.0%	All Other Locations	5,138	41.6%

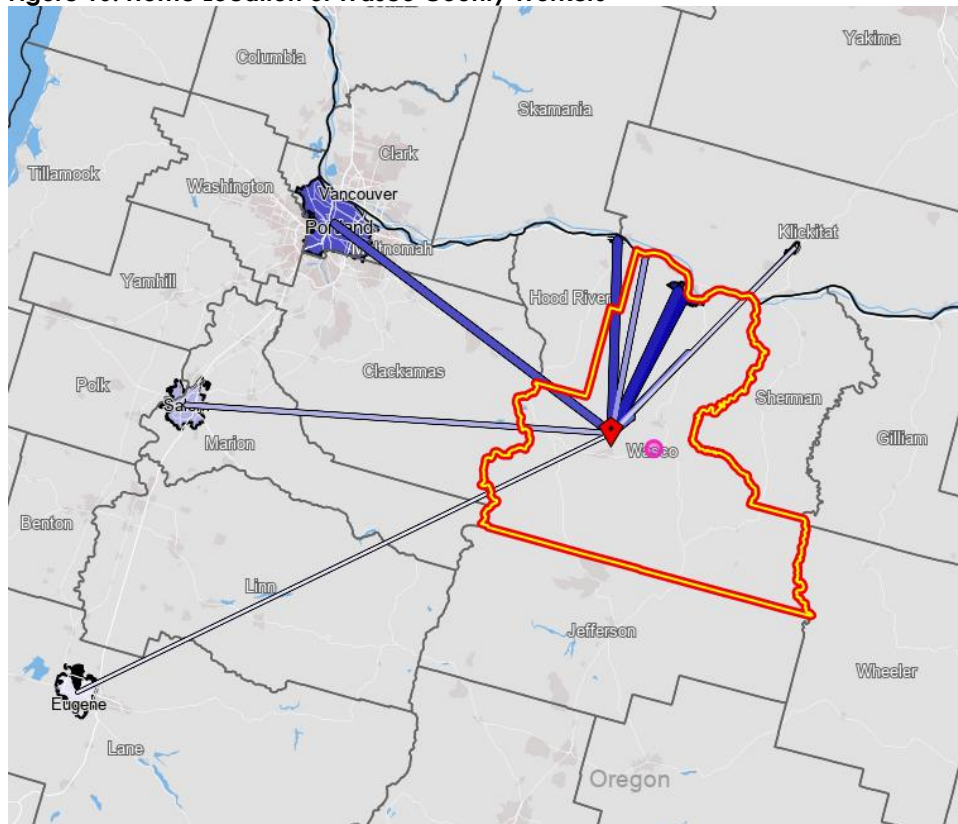
Figure 14: Wasco County Inflow/Outflow Job Counts, 2018



Source: 2018 LEHD On-The-Map Analysis

Figure 15: Work Location for Wasco County Residents

Source: 2018 LEHD On-The-Map Analysis

Figure 16: Home Location of Wasco County Workers

Source: 2018 LEHD On-The-Map Analysis

Commuting Patterns by Place of Residence

Wasco County residents commute relatively long distances to get to their workplace. Table 5 shows the distance the Wasco County residents commute. Approximately 44% commute less than 10 miles and 34% commute more than 50 miles. The Dalles and Chenoweth contain the primary concentrations of homes and jobs within Wasco County, with additional hubs in Hood River, Pine Hollow, Wasco, Dufur, and Maupin. Thus, Wasco County residents tend to either live and work in or around The Dalles or commute long distances to reach employment further away.

Table 5: Distance Home to Work

Distance Home to Work	Count	Share
Total All Jobs	12,361	100.0%
Less than 10 miles	5,427	43.9%
10 to 24 miles	2,085	16.9%
25 to 50 miles	579	4.7%
Greater than 50 miles	4,270	34.5%

Source: 2018 LEHD

Commute Needs by Community

Few commutes occur between the other communities in Wasco County, given the low populations of many areas. Most smaller communities reflect the countywide findings, with commutes generally to The Dalles, Chenoweth, Hood River, and Portland. Key commute pairs between the larger communities and cities include Hood River – The Dalles (fixed-route transit available), The Dalles – Mosier (fixed-route stop at Mosier upon request), and The Dalles – Maupin (weekly shuttle, or Dial-a-Ride upon request).

Table 6: Employees Coming To and Going From Antelope

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
Portland	6	8.2%	The Dalles	5	33.3%
The Dalles	5	6.8%	Dufur	3	20.0%
Keizer	4	5.5%	Bend	1	6.7%
Pine Hollow	3	4.1%	Portland	1	6.7%
Aloha	2	2.7%	Warm Springs	1	6.7%
Forest Grove	2	2.7%	All Other Locations	4	26.7%
Hillsboro	2	2.7%			
Vancouver, WA	2	2.7%			
San Jose, CA	1	1.4%			
Albany	1	1.4%			
All Other Locations	45	61.6%			

Table 7: Employees Coming To and Going From Dufur

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	18	10.8%	The Dalles	35	17.4%
Dufur	12	7.2%	Portland	15	7.5%
Pine Hollow	12	7.2%	Dufur	12	6.0%
Maupin	5	3.0%	Maupin	12	6.0%
Madras	4	2.4%	Warm Springs	9	4.5%
Goldendale, WA	4	2.4%	Hood River	6	3.0%
Antelope	3	1.8%	Pine Hollow	5	2.5%
Pine Grove	3	1.8%	Bend	4	2.0%
Tygh Valley	3	1.8%	Redmond	4	2.0%
Albany	2	1.2%	Eugene	3	1.5%
All Other Locations	100	60.2%	All Other Locations	96	47.8%

Table 8: Employees Coming To and Going From Maupin

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
Pine Hollow	21	10.0%	The Dalles	27	18.5%
Maupin	16	7.6%	Maupin	16	11.0%
The Dalles	15	7.1%	Portland	15	10.3%
Dufur	12	5.7%	Warm Springs	8	5.5%
Tygh Valley	8	3.8%	Bend	5	3.4%
Pine Grove	6	2.9%	Dufur	5	3.4%
Portland	5	2.4%	Eugene	3	2.1%
Vancouver, WA	4	1.9%	Tigard	3	2.1%
Beaverton	3	1.4%	Hood River	2	1.4%
Tigard	3	1.4%	Kennewick, WA	2	1.4%
All Other Locations	117	55.7%	All Other Locations	60	41.1%

Table 9: Employees Coming To and Going From Mosier

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	27	42.2%
Chenoweth	7	10.9%
Hood River	3	4.7%
Gresham	2	3.1%
Rowena	2	3.1%
Pepperell, MA	1	1.6%
Bend	1	1.6%
Cascade Locks	1	1.6%
Crooked River Ranch	1	1.6%
Eugene	1	1.6%
All Other Locations	18	28.1%

<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	64	30.0%
Hood River	21	9.9%
Portland	14	6.6%
Eugene	4	1.9%
Gresham	4	1.9%
Odell (CDP)	4	1.9%
Bend	3	1.4%
Bingen, WA	3	1.4%
Richland, WA	3	1.4%
Chenoweth	2	0.9%
All Other Locations	91	42.7%

Table 10: Employees Coming To and Going From Shaniko

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	3	50.0%
Portland	1	16.7%
All Other Locations	2	33.3%

<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
Albany	1	8.3%
Antelope	1	8.3%
Dufur	1	8.3%
Gresham	1	8.3%
Madras	1	8.3%
Oakridge	1	8.3%
Redmond	1	8.3%
The Dalles	1	8.3%
Warm Springs	1	8.3%
Kennewick, WA	1	8.3%
All Other Locations	2	16.7%

Table 11: Employees Coming To and Going From The Dalles

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	3,397	42.2%
Hood River	271	3.4%
Chenoweth	269	3.3%
Portland	187	2.3%
Salem	73	0.9%
Mosier	64	0.8%
Goldendale, WA	61	0.8%
Eugene	56	0.7%
Odell	53	0.7%
Gresham	47	0.6%
All Other Locations	3,573	44.4%

<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
The Dalles	3,397	43.5%
Hood River	528	6.8%
Portland	437	5.6%
Bend	144	1.8%
Salem	102	1.3%
Gresham	97	1.2%
Odell	61	0.8%
Beaverton	53	0.7%
Yakima, WA	48	0.6%
Redmond	45	0.6%
All Other Locations	2,905	37.2%

Table 12: Employees Coming To and Going From Tygh Valley

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
Dufur	2	18.2%	The Dalles	10	15.4%
The Dalles	2	18.2%	Maupin	8	12.3%
Gresham	1	9.1%	Warm Springs	6	9.2%
Pine Hollow	1	9.1%	Portland	4	6.2%
Tualatin	1	9.1%	Dufur	3	4.6%
Goldendale, WA	1	9.1%	Killdeer, ND	1	1.5%
All Other Locations	3	27.3%	Baker City	1	1.5%
			Corvallis	1	1.5%
			Hillsboro	1	1.5%
			Hood River	1	1.5%
			All Other Locations	29	44.6%

Table 13: Employees Coming To and Going From Pine Hollow

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
Dufur	5	12.5%	The Dalles	41	21.6%
The Dalles	5	12.5%	Maupin	21	11.1%
Pine Hollow	2	5.0%	Dufur	12	6.3%
Hermiston	1	2.5%	Portland	11	5.8%
Maupin	1	2.5%	Warm Springs	7	3.7%
Metzger	1	2.5%	Bend	5	2.6%
Portland	1	2.5%	Salem	5	2.6%
Prairie City	1	2.5%	Beaverton	4	2.1%
Redmond	1	2.5%	Antelope	3	1.6%
Five Corners, WA	1	2.5%	Hood River	3	1.6%
All Other Locations	21	52.5%	All Other Locations	78	41.1%

Table 14: Employees Coming To and Going From Wamic

<i>Resident Work Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>	<i>Employee Home Locations</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Share</i>
Dufur	2	12.5%	The Dalles	7	14.6%
Pine Hollow	2	12.5%	Portland	4	8.3%
Chenoweth	1	5.0%	Maupin	3	6.3%
Hood River	1	2.5%	Salem	3	6.3%
Maupin	1	2.5%	Cascade Locks	2	4.2%
Pendleton	1	2.5%	Anaheim, CA	1	2.1%
Pine Grove	1	2.5%	Islamorada, FL	1	2.1%
Salem	1	2.5%	Bend	1	2.1%
Tygh Valley	1	2.5%	Burns	1	2.1%
White Center, WA	1	2.5%	Canby	1	2.1%
All Other Locations	14	52.5%	All Other Locations	24	50.0%

CURRENT PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

The LINK is the primary transit service provider within Wasco County. Columbia Area Transit, Mt. Adams Transportation Services, Skamania County Transit, and Sherman County Community Transit also provide transit connections throughout the Mid-Columbia River Gorge and beyond.

Transit Services within Wasco County

Summary

Table 15 summarizes public and private transportation services within Wasco County that are available to everyone. Additional transit options for people with disabilities, seniors, veterans, individuals with low income, and individuals with Limited English Proficiency as documented in the Human Services Coordinated Plan are described in Appendix A.

Table 15. Transportation Service Options within Wasco County

Transportation Provider	Public/ Private	Service Type	Operating Hours	Service Area
The LINK	Public	Deviated Fixed Route	7 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday - Friday	City of The Dalles
The LINK	Public	Dial-a-Ride	6 a.m. – 6 p.m. Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday	City of The Dalles and select areas in Wasco County
The LINK	Public	Dial-a-Ride: The Dalles and Hood River Shopping Bus	10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Monday & Wednesday	City of The Dalles and Hood River
The LINK	Public	South County Shuttle	8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Tuesday	City of the Dalles, Maupin, Tygh Valley, and Dufur
Tygh School Community Center Bus (TSCC bus)	Private; contracts to provide NEMT rides	Volunteer drivers servicing South Wasco; shopping bus	As needed Monday – Friday	South Wasco County to the Dalles
The Dalles Explorer (Blue Bus)	Visitor-focused/Seasonal	Partnership of The Dalles Chamber of Commerce, The Dalles Dam Visitor Center, and Grayline of Portland	Variable Hours Monday-Friday, Summer only	Hood River to The Dalles and The Dalles Dam
Five Dollar Taxi, The Dalles	Private company serves the public	Taxi: door-to-door	24/7 7 days a week	City of The Dalles; will transport outside city limits at a charge of \$2/mile.

Transportation Provider	Public/ Private	Service Type	Operating Hours	Service Area
The Dalles Taxi, LLC	Private company serves the public	Taxi: door-to-door	24/7 Tuesday – Saturday 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sunday & Monday	City of The Dalles; will negotiate long trips with interested individuals or under contract to area Human Services Agencies.
Gorge Taxi	Private company serves the public; contracts to provide NEMT rides	Taxi: door-to-door	Monday-Sunday, hours are changing due to COVID-19	The Dalles and Hood River
Get There Oregon	Public – Free to participate	Carpool/Ride Share	As arranged	Sponsored by State of Oregon (ODOT)
Enterprise Rideshare	Private company serves the public	Vanpool	As arranged	The Dalles and Portland metro

Sources: Wasco County Coordinated Transportation Plan, Travel Oregon

The LINK

The LINK¹⁰ is operated by MCEDD, the primary public transportation provider in Wasco County. The LINK provides two deviated fixed-routes, Dial-a-Ride service, and shuttles to select shopping centers and appointments. All of following services are open to the general public:

- Deviated Fixed-Route:** The LINK provides two deviated fixed-routes in The Dalles, the Red Route and the Blue Route. The Blue Route and Red Route began operating in April 2019 and October 2020, respectively. Buses operate along these routes with a regular schedule, but can leave their route for “off-route” drop-offs or pick-ups.¹¹ Riders can “flag down” the bus and board anywhere along the route, so long as it is safe for the bus to pull over. The deviated fixed-routes operate on one-hour loops to key destinations in The Dalles on weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The fare is \$1.50 per trip.
- Dial-a-Ride:** The LINK provides Dial-a-Ride, door-to-door public transportation, for riders in the communities of The Dalles, Dufur, Mosier, Celilo Village, Lone Pine, and in unincorporated Wasco County. This service operates Monday through Friday, 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Trips cost \$1.50 each way, may be scheduled up to 30 days in advance, and may include other passengers going to different destinations. This service is open to all people for any trip purpose on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- The Dalles and Hood River Shopping Bus:** The shopping bus offers door-to-door service to grocery stores and shopping centers in The Dalles on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The cost is \$3.00 for unlimited stops.
- South County Shuttle:** The LINK operates a shuttle on Tuesdays that picks up riders in Maupin, Tygh Valley, and Dufur for shopping and appointments in The Dalles. This service costs \$5.00 round trip for pickups in Maupin and Tygh Valley and \$3.00 round trip for pickups in Dufur.

As of July 1, 2021, The LINK participates in the GORge Pass. This annual pass costs \$30 for adults and \$15 for children, allowing unlimited rides during a calendar year on The LINK, CAT, MATS, and Skamania

¹⁰ <https://gorgetranslink.com/transit-agencies/the-link-Dial-a-Ride/>

¹¹ Deviations within ¼ mile of the route are allowed.

County Transit. The pass can be purchased as either a physical wallet-sized pass or downloaded onto a smartphone. Dial-a-Ride trips are not included in the GORge Pass.

COVID-19 requirements & safety measures: Face masks covering the mouth and nose are required on the bus for all drivers and riders (except those under the age of two).

Transit Connections to the Mid-Columbia River Gorge

Wasco County enjoys a well-established level of coordination between the area's transportation providers through The LINK's participation in the Gorge TransLink Alliance. The alliance is a bi-state coalition of five counties' transportation providers: The LINK, Columbia Area Transit (CAT) in Hood River County, Sherman County Transit, Skamania County Transit in Washington, and Mt. Adams Transportation Services (MATS) in Klickitat County, Washington. Figure 17 shows the extent of transit services serving the Mid-Columbia River Gorge.

Figure 17: Gorge TransLink Alliance



Columbia Area Transit | Skamania County Transit | Mt. Adams Transportation Services | The LINK | Sherman County Transit

Source: Gorge TransLink Alliance

Columbia Area Transit

Hood River County Transportation District does business as Columbia Area Transit (CAT) and provides public transit services within Hood River County and along the I-84 corridor.¹² CAT has a strong regional presence offering a variety of services to the communities within Hood River County and providing regional services and connections within the Gorge including The Dalles, Stevenson, and White Salmon. In addition, CAT operates the Columbia Gorge Express route seven days a week, which connects Gorge communities (including the Dalles) to Portland. CAT operates several services on Saturdays and Sundays. During the winter CAT operates the Gorge-To-Mountain Express which connects Mt. Hood Meadows to Hood River. CAT offers a bus tracker allowing riders to track the location of the bus. CAT also provides Dial-a-Ride services within Hood River County.

Fare: Local one-way rides cost \$1, while travelling between The Dalles and Cascade Locks costs \$2. The Columbia Gorge Express One-Way Ride fare costs \$10 and allows riders to travel between Portland, Troutdale, The Dalles, Hood River, Multnomah Falls, and Cascade Locks. CAT participates in the GORge Pass program.

COVID-19 requirements & safety measures: Passengers must wear a face mask, observe physical distancing, tell the driver if assistance is needed, and be responsible for personal safety. CAT provided

¹² <https://www.ridecatbus.org/>

hand sanitizer on each bus, enhanced daily cleaning procedures, reduced vehicle capacity, and posted clear signage and communication relating to COVID-19 in English and Spanish.

Planned improvements: In the fall of 2021 CAT plans to offer Dial-a-Ride service from Gorge communities to medical facilities in Portland. CAT is currently updating their Transit Master Plan, which will identify future improvements and opportunities. The Hood River County Coordinated Transportation Plan Update 2020 identified community priorities including the need for permanent bus stops with places to sit at each stop and pursue outreach and partnerships with vulnerable populations.

Mt. Adams Transportation Services

Mt. Adams Transportation Services (MATs) provides Dial-a-Ride service and regular bus routes in Klickitat County, Washington and travels into The Dalles and Hood River in Oregon.¹³ MATs operates weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. The Goldendale–The Dalles route stops at 21 locations, with direct connections to The LINK's deviated fixed-route services in The Dalles.

Fare: The fixed-route service costs \$1 and is free for children ages 5 and under. MATs participates in the GORge Pass program.

COVID-19 requirements & safety measures: Face masks are required and a maximum of six passengers are permitted on the bus at one time.

Planned improvements: The Human Services Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties identified the general need for additional transit service and hours; transit facilities such as park-and-rides, transit shelters, and other bus stop improvements; expanded outreach and education; employment, education, and youth services; and inter-county routes. No specific improvements were identified.

Skamania County Transit

Skamania County Public Transportation provides two transportation programs: Dial-a-Ride and Transit. None of its services connect directly to other providers in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge, though service will directly connect with CAT in Cascade Locks and with MATs in Klickitat County. The Skamania County Transit bus operates Monday through Friday and travels between Carson, WA and the Fisher's Landing Transit Center in Vancouver, WA. With 24 hours notice, the Transit bus will deviate up to 3/4 miles off Wind River Highway and SR 14 to accommodate persons with disabilities. The early morning and evening runs operate Monday – Friday. The mid-day run operates on Friday only. Skamania County Transit also operates a seasonal (April 24 to June 13 in 2021) shuttle on weekends from Stevenson to the Dog Mountain trailhead.

Fare: Fares range from \$0.50 to \$2.00 based on age and distance travelled. An all-day pass costs \$4.00. Skamania County Transit participates in the GORge Pass program.

COVID-19 requirements & safety measures: Face masks are required per Federal Transit Authority. No information is posted on Skamania County Transit's website regarding COVID-19 requirements and safety measures.

Planned improvements: Skamania County Transit will begin offering a noon route Monday – Friday that connects Vancouver, Carson, and Cascade Locks. The Human Services Transportation Plan for Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties identified the general need for additional transit service and hours;

¹³ <https://gorgetranslink.com/transit-agencies/mt-adams-transportation-services/>

transit facilities such as park-and-rides, transit shelters, and other bus stop improvements; expanded outreach and education; employment, education, and youth services; and inter-county routes.

Sherman County Community Transit

Sherman County Community Transit, also known as Sherman Transit or Community Transit, provides bus services for Sherman County, connecting to The Dalles for shopping and medical appointments, and to Portland and other cities for medical appointments.¹⁴ It also serves special scheduled events. Service prioritizes transportation for seniors and peoples with disabilities, while service for the general public is provided as space allows. Rides must be reserved a minimum of 24–48 hours in advance.

Fare: There are no required fares. However, donations are gladly accepted and encouraged for all rides. The suggested donation is \$5 per rider. Sherman County Community Transit does not participate in the GOrge Pass program.

COVID-19 requirements & safety measures: None listed on the website.

Planned improvements: Sherman County's Coordinated Transportation Plan calls for expanded Dial-a-Ride service area coverage, transportation to employment and higher education providers, and additional trips for shopping in Portland, recreational trips, weekend transportation, and intra-county transportation.

Greyhound

Greyhound, a private intercity transportation provider, offers service along the I-84 corridor, connecting passengers from The Dalles to Hood River, Portland, and points east.

Greyhound currently stops in The Dalles once per day in each direction. It departs The Dalles Transit Center heading west at 4:40 p.m. and east at 11:20 a.m.

Fare: The cost of service depends on the destination and travel date.

COVID-19 requirements & safety measures: Greyhound increased the frequency of cleaning, provides fresh air from outside circulating inside the cabin, requires passengers wear face coverings, and provides travel flexibility for people who wish to postpone travel plans for concerns related to the pandemic.

Amtrak

Amtrak, an intercity passenger rail service, provides service from the Washington side of the Columbia River (in Wishram, Washington) to Portland and Spokane.

Amtrak stops at 7:30 a.m. in Wishram and arrives in Portland at 10:10 a.m. Riders who would like to return in the same day can depart Portland at 4:45 p.m. and arrive back in Wishram at 6:55 p.m.

Fare: The cost of service depends on destination, travel date, and type of seat.

COVID-19 requirements & Safety measures: Amtrak reinforced its disinfection protocols and enhanced cleaning on commonly used surfaces. Amtrak utilizes onboard filtration systems with a fresh air exchange rate every 4–5 minutes, and requires customers and employees to wear masks.

Opportunities for Coordination between Public Transportation Services

The cost of public transportation services varies between transit providers, and riders who connect using multiple transit services for the same trip have to pay for each service used. The cost per direction for

¹⁴ <https://gorgetranslink.com/transit-agencies/skamanian-county-transit/>

each public service provider ranges between \$1 and \$2 for local service, with the exception of Sherman County Community Transit, which recommends a donation of \$5. Transportation between Portland, Troutdale, The Dalles, Hood River, Multnomah Falls, and Cascade Locks via CAT is \$10 each way.

The GOrge Pass program allows riders to use four providers' services in the Mid-Columbia River Gorge throughout a calendar year. For riders making longer trips involving two or more providers, the pass quickly pays for itself. In addition, riders avoid having to pay multiple fares for a single round trip.

Trip planning support helps riders navigate schedules and fares across services. The MCEDD Mobility Manager currently builds and manages the GTFS data sets for both Skamania County Transit and Mt. Adams Transportation Services (MATS) in Remix, a transportation planning software platform provided by ODOT. The Mobility Manager also manages the Google dashboard for Skamania County and hosts the GTFS data set on the Gorgetranslink.com website, which allows those transit services to appear in Google Transit and other online map services. In July of 2021, Washington State DOT (WSDOT) contracted with Trillium Transit to build and manage the GTFS data sets for public transportation providers in Washington State. By September 2021, Trillium will take over the management of the GTFS data sets and the GTFS online map company agreements for both Skamania County Transit and MATS.

Sherman County Community Transit provides demand-response services and shopping bus services to The Dalles three times a week. The Gorgetranslink.com uses Google's trip planner, which currently only reads in GTFS and not in GTFS-Flex, the demand-response format. An opensource trip planning tool like the OpenTripPlanner would be able to present all of the regional flexible transit services, serving those residents who cannot use fixed-route services or whose remote location requires using a demand-response service to reach the nearest fixed-route stop.

The service hours and days of operation differs between transportation service providers:

- The CAT operates "The Dalles" route daily, stopping in the Dalles at 7:00 a.m., 10:05 a.m., 12:40 p.m., and 4:45 p.m. on Weekdays and at 10:05 a.m. and 12:40 p.m. on weekends.
 - The closest potential connections to this stop along the Red Line occur at 7:00 a.m., 12:20 p.m., 1:20 p.m., and 5:40 p.m.
 - The closest potential connections to this stop along the Blue Line occur at 7:00 a.m., 9:40 a.m., 10:20 a.m., 12:40 p.m., 4:40 p.m., and 5:40 p.m.
- MATS operates weekdays between 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., stopping at three stops in the Dalles three times per weekday at Goodwill and The Dalles Transit Center and six times per weekday at Water's Edge (between 8:02 and 8:37, 12:02 and 12:37, and 5:22 and 5:57, depending on the stop).
 - The service connects to the Red Line at the Dalles Transit Center and Water's Edge.
 - The service connects to the Blue Line at the Dalles Transit Center and Goodwill.
 - For both the Red and Blue Line, the best-timed connections are pulsed connection at the transit center for the midday and evening run, where the MATS service arrives before and departs after the Red and Blue Line, allowing transfers in both directions. The morning MATS run has a 1-minute transfer¹⁵ at Goodwill with the Blue Line, and a 10-30 minute transfer at Water's Edge with the Red Line, depending on transfer direction.

¹⁵ The LINK transit is instructed to wait for the MATS bus to ensure that riders are able to make the connection.

- Skamania County Transit operates weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. and does not directly connect to the Dalles. Skamania County Transit plans to offer a service starting in September that connects to Cascade Locks, where riders could transfer and ride CAT into the Dalles or Portland and to Bingen in Klickitat County, where riders could transfer and ride MATS.
 - There are no direct connections between this transit service and the LINK's transit service.
- Sherman County Transit provides a shopping and medical appointment service on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday.
 - If requested, Sherman County bus will drop off riders at the Dalles Transit Center or at Water's Edge, where they can connect to the LINK's fixed route services.

There are opportunities to provide better overlap to facilitate the connections between services. Additional providers represented in trip-planning tools would also help riders to make connections across services.

Transit Centers and Major Stops

Transit centers are major transit hubs where numerous transit services converge. The LINK moved into The Dalles Transit Center in 2016. The transit center houses the dispatch and operations for The LINK. ODOT defines Key Transit Hubs, which identify transit facilities crucial to the statewide network, as "a stop or stop cluster where three or more transit providers connect. Transit providers whose service areas are entirely captured by another, such as the Portland Streetcar within the TriMet system, are not counted toward the minimum of three providers to be considered a key transit hub.". With connections between CAT, MATS, Greyhound, and The Link, The Dalles Transit Center is a Key Transit Hub.

Table 16 provides an overview of existing amenities and walking and biking access at each of the designated bus stops along The LINK's deviated fixed-routes. These stops generally have walking and biking connections via sidewalks, pedestrian ramps, low-volume neighborhood streets, and bike lanes. Several stops have recently installed shelters, with other shelters planned for implementation in the coming months. Almost all other stops have temporary signs, while a few have sandwich boards. These stops could be improved by adding permanent signage, shelters, route maps, benches, bike parking, and improving the general walking and biking network in the area.

Table 16: Existing Transit Stops

Stop	Amenities	Walking Access	Biking Access	Notes
The Dalles Transit Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent bus sign Bus shelter with bench Park-and-ride lot Trash can 	Good	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps are located in all directions from the stop. The stop connects to a main street with bike lanes and local streets with ample space and low vehicle volumes. Both the Blue and Red routes stop at this location.
One Community Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary bus sign Covered area 	Good	Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps connect the stop to the area along the One Community Health Building. The parking area has striped pedestrian aisles. The stop is located in a parking lot with no bike lanes. The Blue Route stops at this location.
Goodwill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent bus sign Bus shelter with bench Route schedule and map Trash can 	Fair	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps are located in all directions from the stop. The pedestrian ramps need improvement. The stop connects to a main street with bike lanes and local streets with ample space and low vehicle volumes. The Blue Route stops at this location.
Columbia Gorge Community College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent bus sign Bus shelter with bench Route schedule, but no route map 	Fair	Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks lead to the stop from the west, but the parking lot does not have walk aisles or sidewalks. The stop is located in a parking lot with no bike lanes. The Blue Route stops at this location.
Mid-Columbia Medical Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary bus sign Bench Covered area Bike parking 	Fair	Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks connect to the stop from the medical center; however, there is a gap in sidewalk facilities through the parking lot to 19th Street. The stop is located in a parking lot with no bike lanes, and the stop is located at the stop of a steep incline. Both the Blue and Red routes stop at this location.

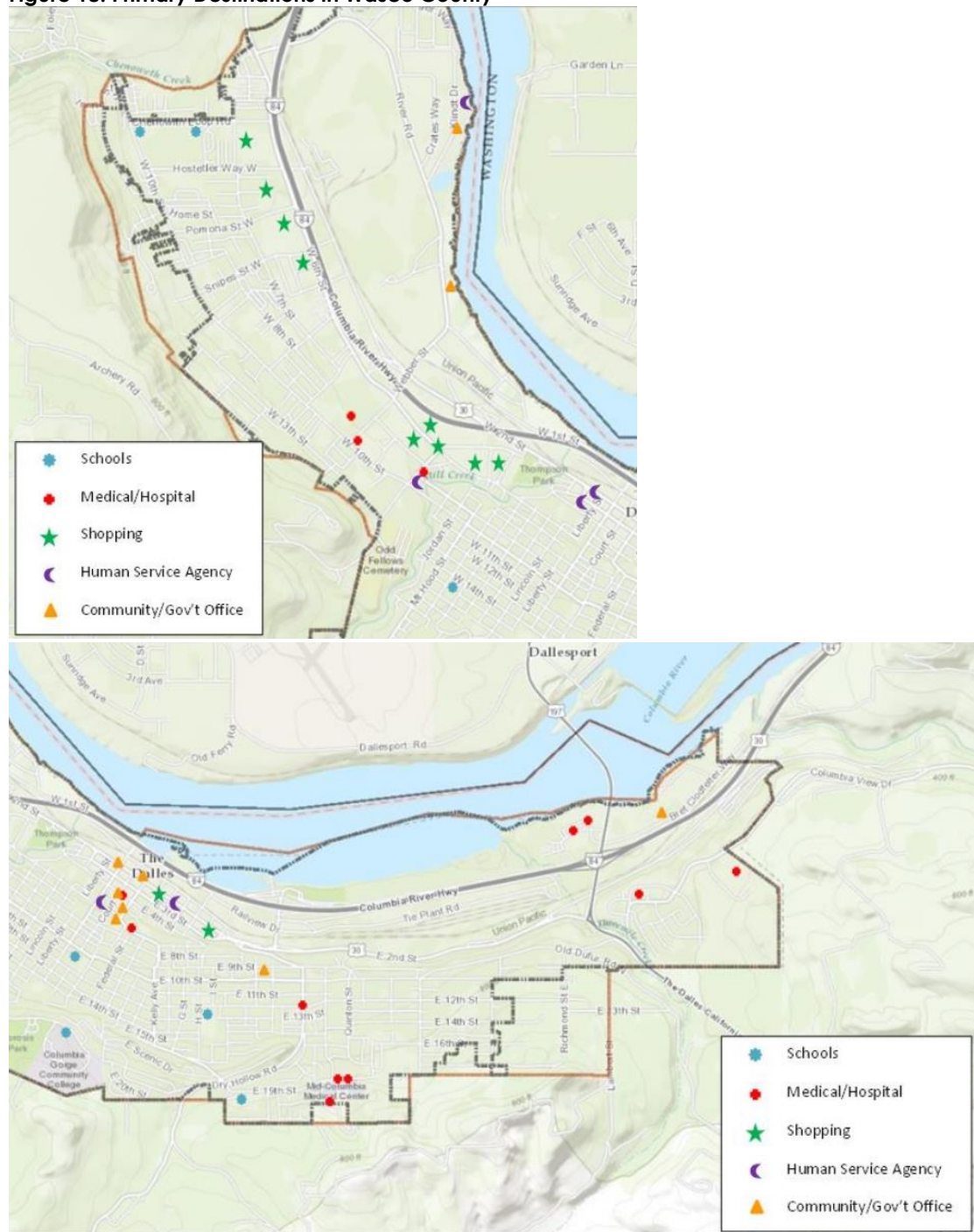
Stop	Amenities	Walking Access	Biking Access	Notes
Veteran's Service Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary bus sign • Park-and-ride lot • Trash can • Water fountain • Benches 	Fair	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps are located in all directions from the stop. The pedestrian ramps need improvement. • There are no bike lanes; however, the stop connects to local streets and to Trevitt Street, which is a designated bicycle-friendly route. • Both the Blue and Red routes stop at this location. • This location is also the site of the former The Dalles Transportation Center and has park-and-ride facilities.
Pallet House Shelter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandwich board sign 	Good	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps connect to the stop. • The Riverfront Trail connects to this stop. • The Blue Route stops at this location.
Port of the Dalles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No signage 	Poor	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks connect to the transit stop, but the stop is on the street rather than providing immediate access to any buildings. • The Riverfront Trail connects to this stop. • The Blue Route stops at this location.
Seufert Park at Lone Pine/ DMV	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary bus sign located at the DMV • Bus loops around Seufert Park to check for riders and then dwells at the DMV 	Poor	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no sidewalks in the vicinity of the transit stop. • The Riverfront Trail connects to this stop. • The Red Route stops at this location.
Water's Edge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary bus sign • Uncovered benches • Trash can 	Good	Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps connect the stop to the area along the Columbia River and Water's Edge building. The parking area has striped pedestrian aisles. • The stop is located in a parking lot with no bike lanes. • The Red Route stops at this location.

Stop	Amenities	Walking Access	Biking Access	Notes
4-Corners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Temporary bus sign 	Fair	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps are located in all directions from the stop. The pedestrian ramps need improvement. There are no bike lanes; however, the stop connects to local streets and to Dry Hollow Road, which is a designated bicycle-friendly route. The Red Route stops at this location.
Kelly Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwich board sign 	Good	Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sidewalks and pedestrian ramps are located in all directions from the stop. The pedestrian ramps need improvement. There are no bike lanes; however, the stop connects to local streets and to Kelly Ave, which is a designated bicycle-friendly route. The Red Route stops at this location.

Transit Destinations and Access

A majority of transportation needs in Wasco County originate in the City of The Dalles, the major population center of Wasco County. Common origins include medical care, work, shopping and pharmacy locations, elementary and middle schools, Columbia Gorge Community College, veterinarians and dog groomers, the Wasco County Library, the Community Action Program, The Post Office, the Mid-Columbia Senior Center, other residences, and marijuana dispensaries.

Figure 18: Primary Destinations in Wasco County



Source: Coordinated Human Services Transit Master Plan

EcoLane trip data¹⁶ was provided for the Wasco County transit services between May 1, 2019 and May 15, 2021. During this period, a total of 37,723 trips were recorded across all of the LINK's services: Dial-a-Ride, deviated fixed-route, and shopping shuttles. The Blue Route was operational for this entire period, however the Red Route was launched in 2020. A two-year data period is used to understand the impacts COVID-19 had on transit use in Wasco County.

Figure 19 shows the transit pick-up and drop-off locations for these trips. As shown in Figure 19, a majority of trips started and ended in The Dalles, with several extending beyond the formal service area to complete trips. Although there are clusters of pick-ups and drop-offs at transit stops, most trips were deviations or Dial-a-Ride trips. The current dispatch software has assigned passengers to demand-response and deviations as the default, which has resulted in limited efficiency benefit compared to a traditional fixed-route system.

Survey Data

Key findings from the survey related to transit destinations and access include the following:

- Most respondents did not transfer between transit services, those that did mostly transferred to other LINK services. The Dalles Transit Center is the most commonly used stop, with high use also at the Mid-Columbia Medical Center, Water's Edge, and Goodwill.
- Over half of all respondents stated that all of their rides start or end at spots that are not a signed bus stop; they use deviations on the fixed-route services or dial-a-ride service.
- Most of respondents' trips started or ended at home or at a healthcare-related location. Trips also started or ended at school, work, and social locations.

Transit Purpose

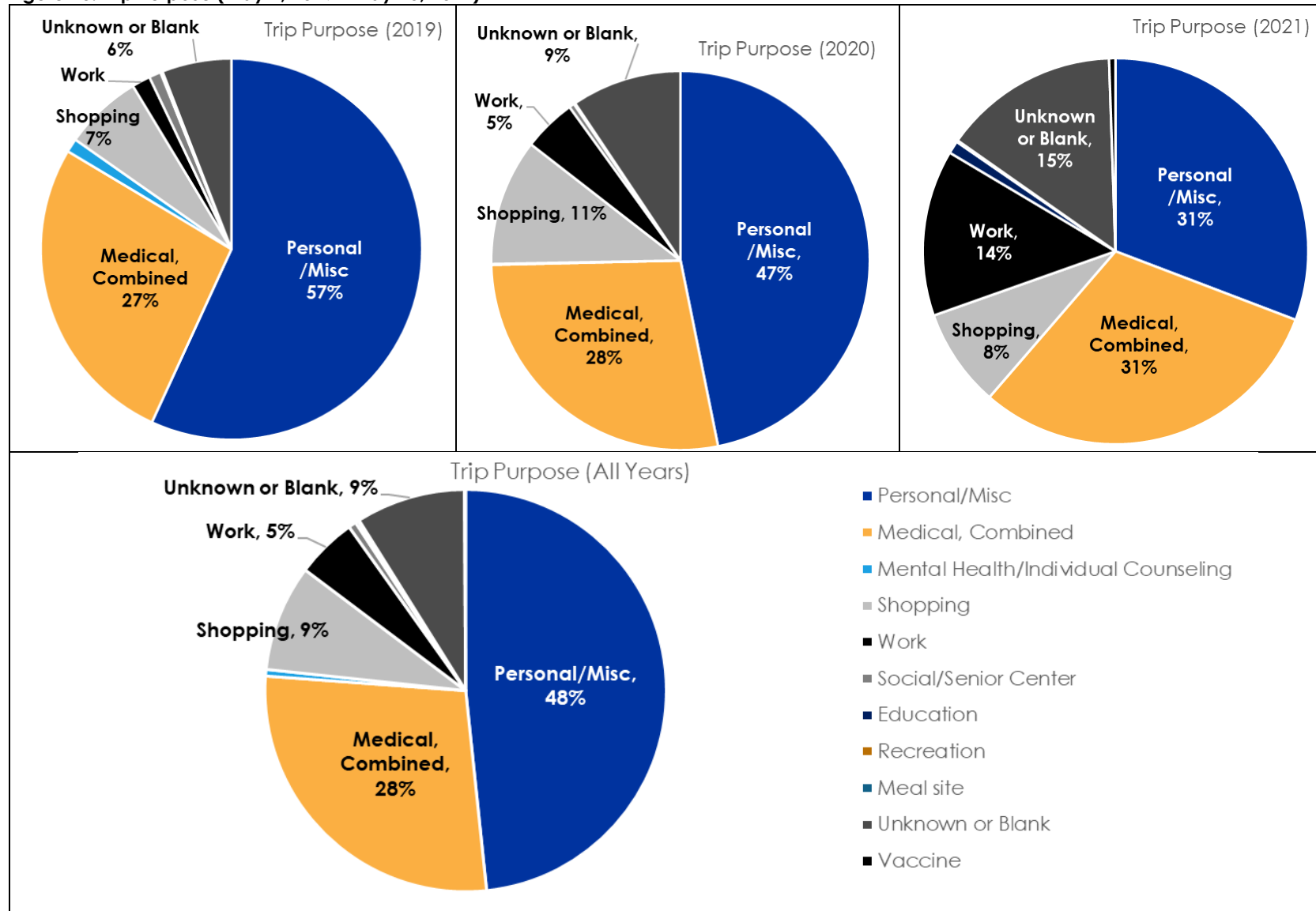
EcoLane data included a description of trip purpose; this data is summarized in Figure 20.

Approximately one-third of trips have a medical purpose such as a doctor's appointment, lab work, or dialysis. The portion of trips that were coded as "personal/miscellaneous" was higher in 2019 (before the COVID-19 pandemic) than in 2020 and 2021; with the overall share dropping from 57% in 2019 to 47% in 2020 to 31% in 2021¹⁷. The share of trips with the purpose of "work" increased between 2019 and 2021 from 2% to 14%. The remaining trips were related to shopping, social/senior center, meal site, vaccine appointments, education, recreation, or mental health/counseling.

¹⁶ EcoLane is a transit and paratransit scheduling software provider. It is used to schedule Dial-a-Ride trips and deviations along the deviated fixed-route. Trip data for the LINK's services is recorded by EcoLane.

¹⁷ The number of trips with a purpose coded as "unknown" or left blank was 6% in 2021, 9% in 2020, and 15% in 2019, which may have a moderate impact on the relative proportions of trip purpose.

Figure 19: Transit Origins and Destinations (May 1, 2019 - May 15, 2021)

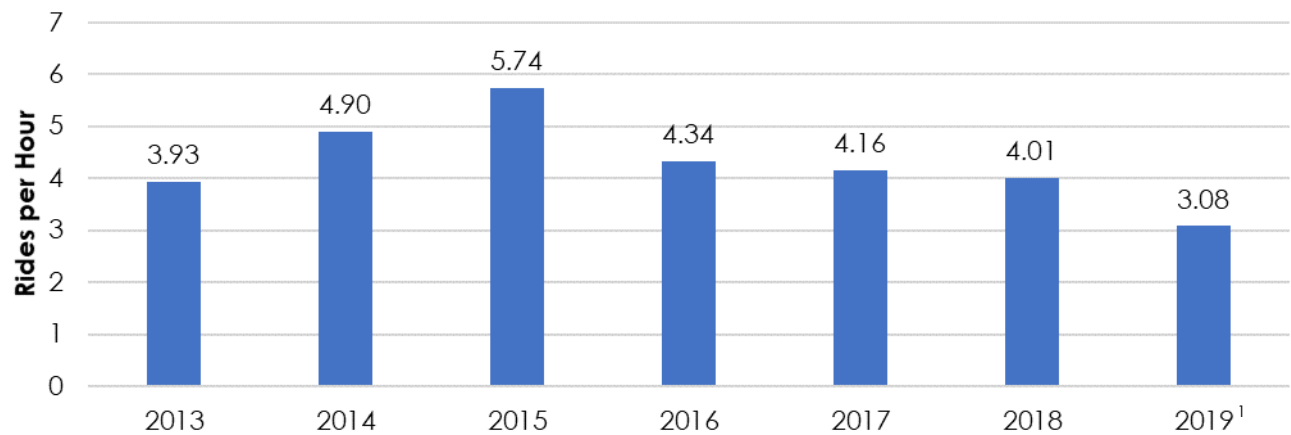
Figure 20: Trip Purpose (May 1, 2019 - May 15, 2021)

Note: Other trip purposes identified that comprise less than 1% of trips include recreation, mental health/individual counseling, vaccine, and education

TRANSIT SERVICE ASSESSMENT

This section describes existing service demand, use, and gaps for Wasco County's transit services. Transit agencies receiving federal funding are required to report information about service miles, service hours, and ridership to the National Transit Database (NTD). The most recent available year of NTD data, 2019, was obtained for The LINK and peer providers. Figure 21 shows the average number of rides per hour between 2013 and 2019. On average, MCEDD served 4.3 rides per hour over this time period. MCEDD started the Blue Route in 2019. The Red Route was started in 2020 and therefore not represented in the NTD data.

Figure 21. The LINK Rides per Hour



¹The LINK began offering deviated fixed-route service in April 2019. The number of rides per hour on the LINK's transit services decreased in 2019, which likely is due to the novelty of the new service.

Source: NTD

Safety, Security and Public Health Considerations

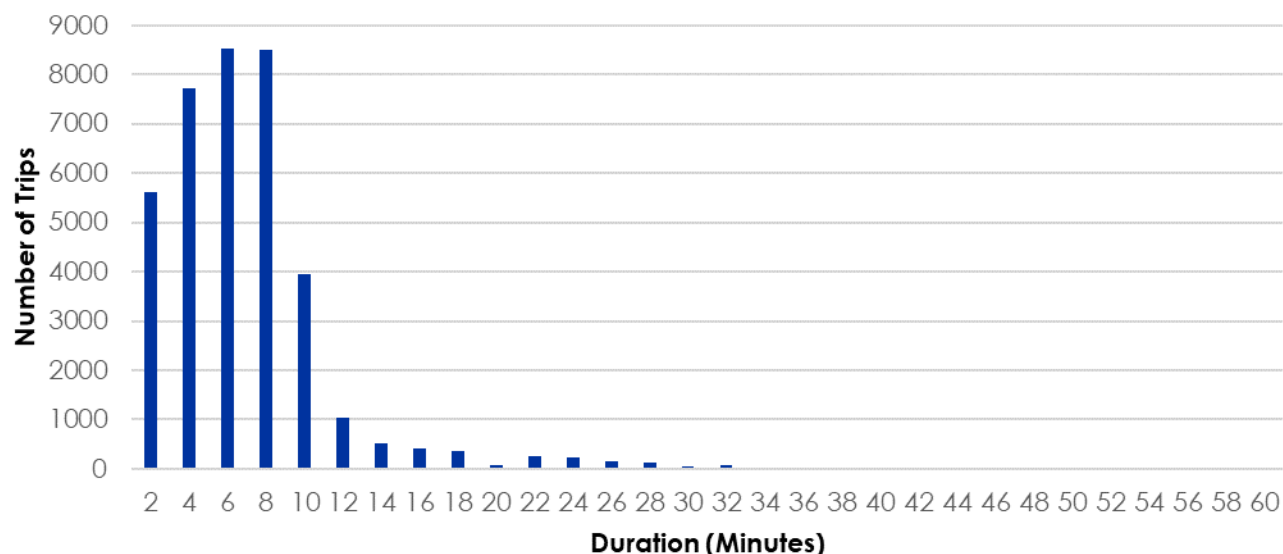
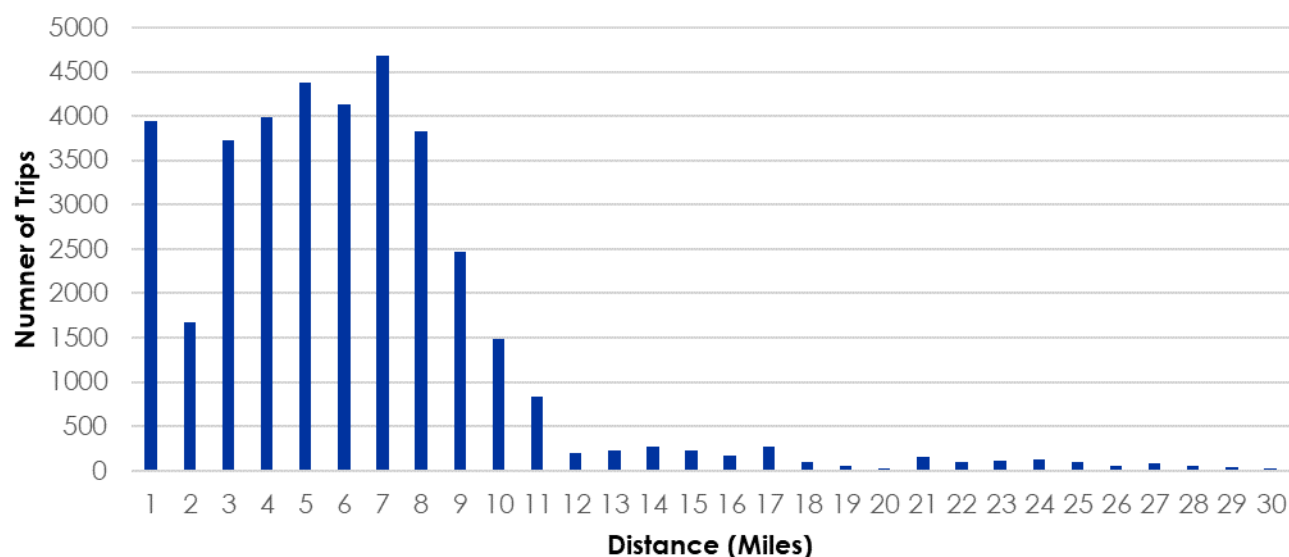
Safety, security, and public health considerations were explored through outreach efforts. Several respondents to the survey indicated that COVID-19 was a reason they had not rode transit services. Respondents also reported that they intended to ride transit services after COVID-19, or ride services more often. Other concerns, such as walking and biking access to stops, lighting, or physical safety did not emerge from the survey.

Trip Characteristics

This section summarizes the trip characteristics according to duration and distance according to the EcoLane data. Figure 22 shows the duration of trips during this period. Most trips (90%) are less than 10 minutes long.^{18,19} Figure 23 shows the trip length during this period. Half of the trips were less than 5 miles long, and 90% of trips were less than 10 miles long.

¹⁸ Note that according to EcoLane data, approximately 15% of trips are less than 2 minutes long, which is an unrealistic value for the duration of a transit trip.

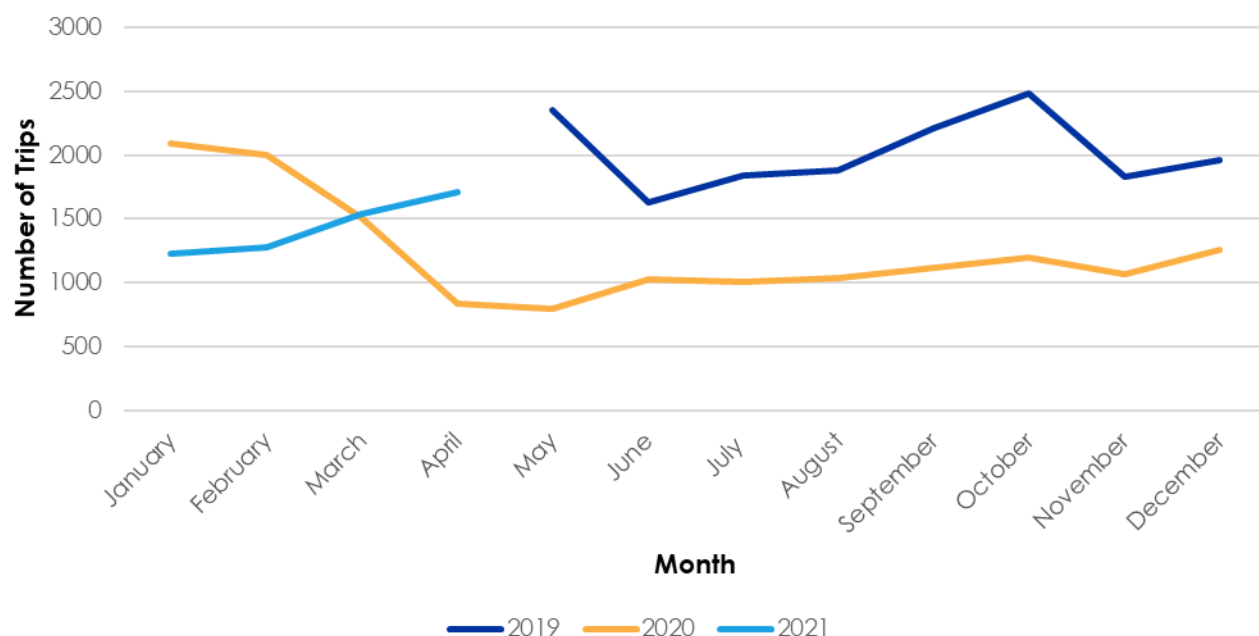
¹⁹ Trip duration only accounts for the duration of the ride; it does not account for time spent waiting for the bus or transfer between services.

Figure 22: Trip Duration (May 1, 2019 – May 15, 2021)**Figure 23: Trip Distance (May 1, 2019 – May 15, 2021)**

Boarding and Alighting Patterns

The hourly, daily, and monthly boarding and alighting patterns according to the EcoLane Trip Data for the period between May 1, 2019 and May 15, 2021 is provided in Figure 24, Figure 25, and Figure 26 below.

As shown in Figure 24, trip ridership dropped during the COVID-19 Pandemic. The number of trips taken per month dropped by over 50% between February 2020 and April 2020. In late 2020 and early 2021 ridership has gradually begun to increase but has not returned to the number of trips per month before the pandemic.

Figure 24: Trip Month of Year (May 1, 2019 – May 15, 2021)¹

¹Trips from May 2021 were excluded from this graph because only a partial month of data was available at the time of analysis.

As shown in Figure 25, there is a relatively consistent ridership across weekdays, with slight peaks on Mondays and Wednesdays. The deviated fixed-route and Dial-a-Ride services operate Monday – Friday from 7 a.m. – 6 p.m. The Dial-a-Ride service also operates Saturday from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m., which accounts for the small proportion of trips that occurred on Saturdays. There is a shopping bus that is operated on Monday and Wednesday, which accounts for the slight peaks in ridership observed on those days. There is no service on Sundays. As shown in Figure 26, ridership was highest between 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. It should be noted that trips appear as early as 5 a.m., earlier than advertised service hours.

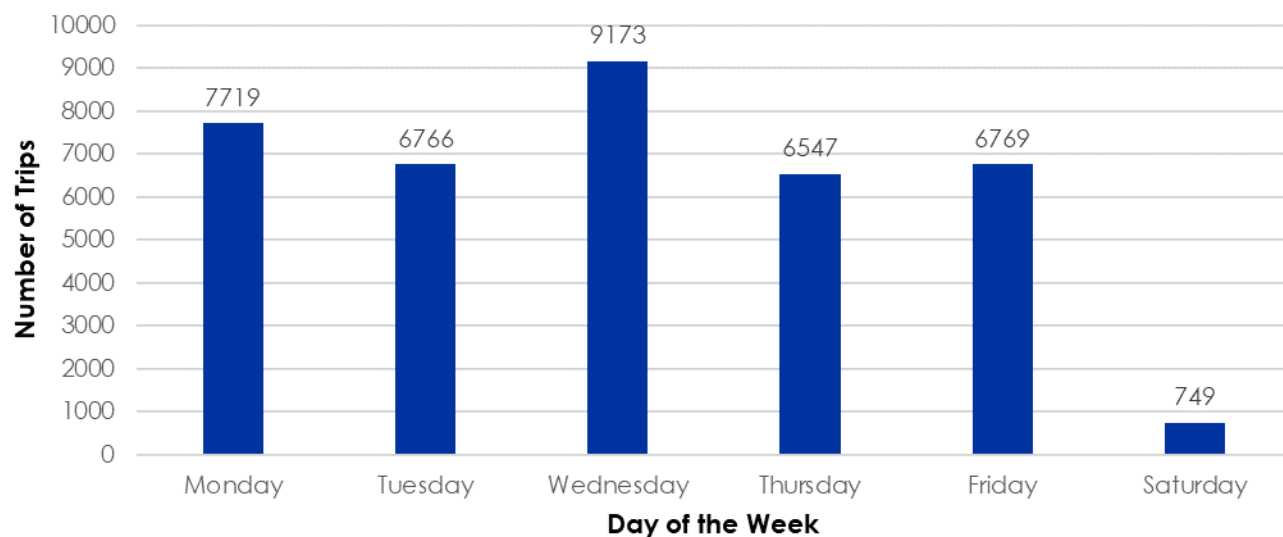
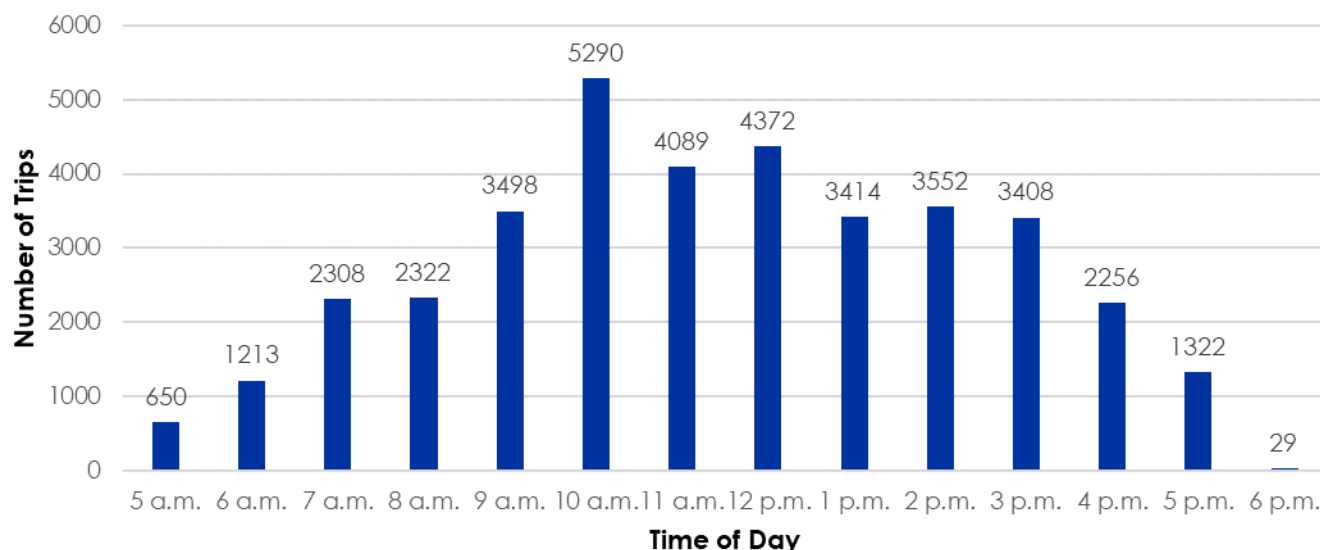
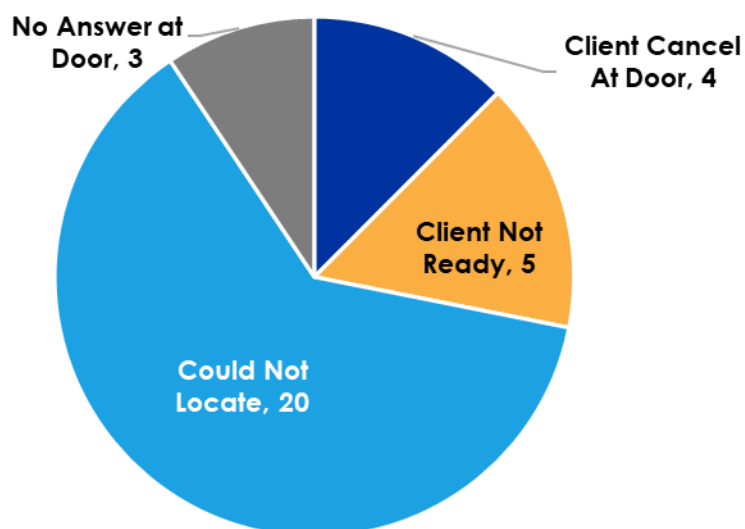
Figure 25: Trip Date (May 1, 2019 – May 15, 2021)

Figure 26: Trip Time of Day (May 1, 2019 - May 15, 2021)

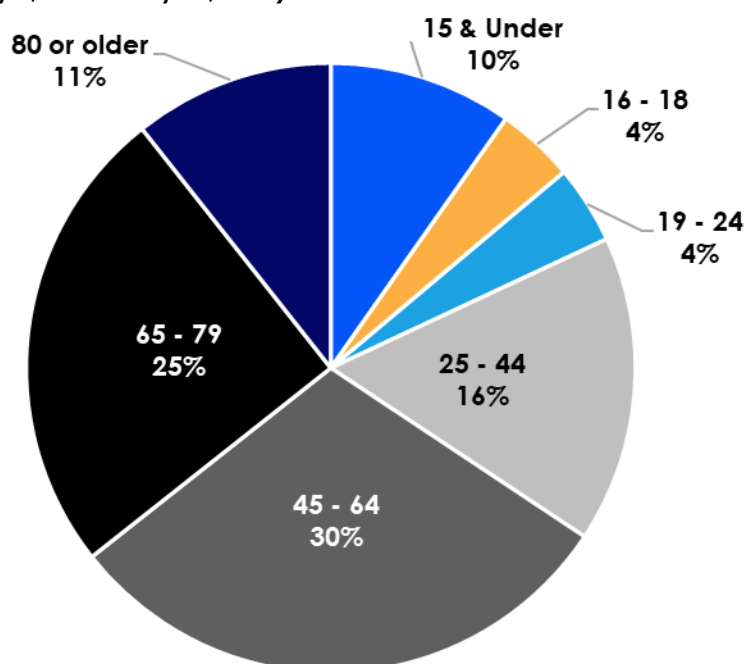
Trip Cancellations

During this period, 32 trips were recorded as cancelled. This is less than 1% of the total 37,723 recorded trips. As illustrated in Figure 27, a majority (62%) of these cancellations occurred because the driver could not locate the rider (client).

Figure 27: Trip Cancellation Reason (May 1, 2019 – May 15, 2021)

Rider Demographics

Figure 28 and Table 17 present the demographics of people who used the LINK's transit services. Table 17 compares the rider demographics from EcoLane data to the overall population demographics in The Dalles and Wasco County. The percent of trips taken by individuals over the age of 65 is greater than the percent of the population that is over 65. The percent of trips taken by individuals under the age of 18 is lower than the percent of the population under 18. The percent of trips that involved someone using a mobility device such as a wheelchair, walker, cane, or crutches is similar to the percent of the population that has a disability.

Figure 28: Age of Riders¹ (May 1, 2019 – May 15, 2021)

¹The age of riders is based on the percentage of trips taken by individuals of different ages. Trip data per unique rider is not available.

Table 17: Rider Demographics

Category	The Dalles	Wasco County	EcoLane Data ¹
Population	15,448	26,130	37,723 trips
Percent under 18 years old	23%	23%	13%
Percent above 65 years old	21%	20%	34%
Percent with disability	21%	18%	20% ²

¹Ecolane Data is provided between May 1, 2019 and May 15, 2021. Data is provided per trip, and as individuals may take more than one trip the percentage of trips taken by individuals in a certain category is not the same as the percent of riders in a certain category. Note, trips with blank fields were removed from percentage calculations.

²Although less than 1% of trips were reported as having a visual, physical, or mental disability, 19.6% of trips involved someone with a mobility device such as a wheelchair, walker, cane, or crutches.

Of the 33 riders who responded to the onboard and online survey, approximately 50% of them were 65+ years old. Only 1 was under 18. In addition, about 50% of riders reported a disability affecting their mobility.

Peer Comparison

Efficiency and effectiveness service metrics were compared between The LINK and peer agencies for 2018. Considering operating cost per hour, rides per hour, and rides per mile, The LINK is operating near the average of its peers.²⁰

²⁰ Peers considered were City of Cottage Grove, Hood River County Transportation District, City of Lebanon, Colusa County, and Churchill Area Regional Transit.

TRANSIT CAPITAL ASSETS ANALYSIS

This section summarizes the fleet, park and ride facilities, and transit technologies for MCEDD and The LINK services.

Fleet

MCEDD currently owns and operates eight buses and three minivans. In 2021, MCEDD purchased five new buses which will be used to replace four of the current buses and add one additional bus to the fleet. The average age of the active fleet is 7.0 years of use. Of the active fleet, four vehicles are in excellent condition, five are in good condition, and two are in adequate condition. Seven vehicles are beyond their expected useful life (EUL) timelines of four or five years, several of those are also past their EUL in mileage. Table 18 summarizes the fleet information.

Table 18: Transit Fleet

Asset Model	Year	Seats	ADA Seats	Bike Racks	Condition	Odometer Reading	EUL Category	Fuel Type	Status
Van #22	2011	7	-	-	Good	104,592	4 yrs/100,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Van #28	2012	7	-	-	Good	138,681	4 yrs/100,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Van #29	2018	4	1	-	Excellent	33,305	4 yrs/100,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #17	2007	12	2	-	Adequate	145,533	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #18	2010	12	2	-	Adequate	183,018	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #23	2011	16	1	-	Good	106,092	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #24	2011	16	1	1	Good	185,327	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #26	2014	12	2	1	Good	141,480	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #30	2020	12	2	1	Excellent	35,956	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #31	2020	12	2	1	Excellent	11,693	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active
Cutaway Bus #32	2020	12	2	1	Excellent	13,645	5 yrs/150,000 mi	Diesel	Active

Park and Ride Facilities

Park and ride facilities are available at The Dalles Transit Center located at 802 Chenoweth Loop Road, The Dalles, OR 97058.

Transit Technologies

The LINK provides mobile ticketing through the GORge Pass fare system and through the HopThru app. The LINK joined the GORge Pass fare system on June 28, 2021, allowing fare reciprocity with CAT, MATS, and Skamania County Transit.

Additionally, The LINK's deviated fixed-route services are formatted in GTFS, which allows for its use in trip-planning applications such as Google Maps or Gorge Translink's trip planner. GTFS feeds for demand-response services are built in GTFS-flex, which is not currently supported in Google Maps or Gorge Translink's trip planner. The LINK does not currently have GTFS-realtime, which would provide real-time bus arrival information. This technology can help facilitate a more efficient and convenient user experience and have the potential to better serve riders in the future.

TRANSIT BUDGET AND FUNDING SOURCES ANALYSIS

This section summarizes the cost and revenue sources for The LINK, as provided by MCEDD's most recent information. This section will be used to consider future changes to funding sources, funding opportunities, and cost estimating for potential new or modified services.

Table 19 shows the annual cost allocations for MCEDD by expense type. As shown for Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), operations expenses accounted for the majority of expenses, followed by capital expenses. Dial-a-Ride and deviated fixed route services accounted for most of the operations expenses. Capital expenses are typically driven by fleet replacement and upgrade needs, which was the case for MCEDD, which allocated \$348,044 for vehicle purchases.

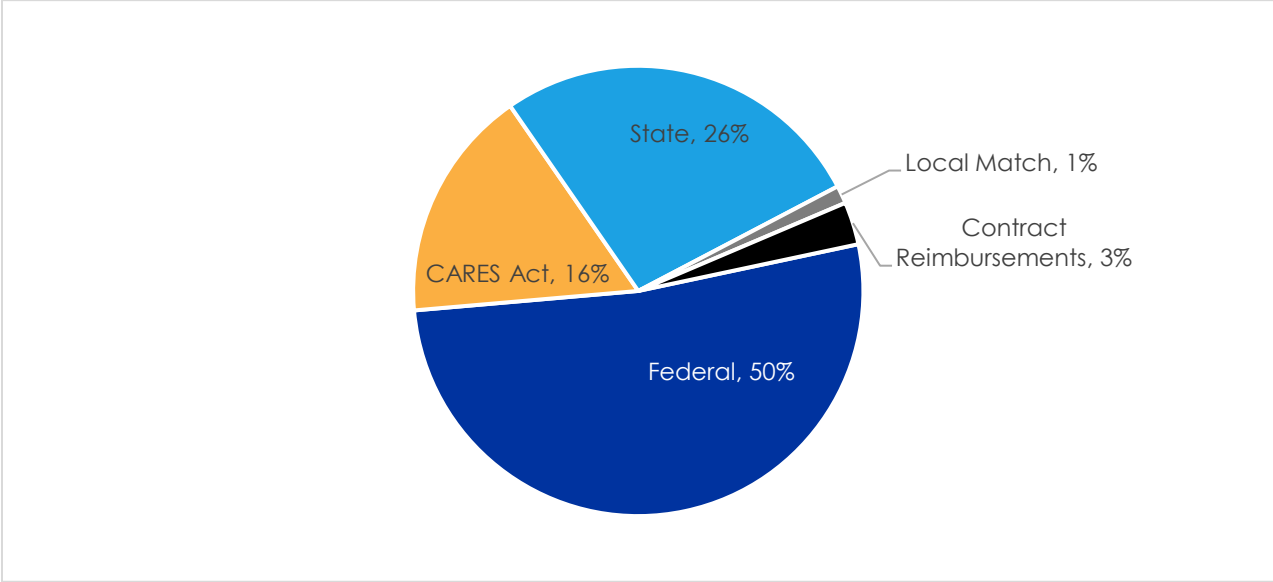
Table 19. 2021–2022 Cost Allocation by Expense Type

	Operations	Administration	Maintenance	Total (without Capital)	Capital
Allocation Amount	\$890,784	\$339,573	\$34,569	\$1,264,926	\$448,455
Percent of Budget	70.42%	26.85%	2.73%		

The \$1,613,000 in funding available to the MCEDD in 2021–2022 came from federal, state, local, and contract sources. Figure 29 shows the amount provided from each of the sources, with CARES Act funding separated out. Federal funding was by far the largest contributor, including almost \$302,000 in vehicle grants. Other federal funding included formula grants, which would be anticipated to remain stable in future years. In comparison, CARES and vehicle grant funding are discretionary grants that are not anticipated to be provided every year in the future.

It should be noted that non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) revenues have been declining over the last two years, which are used as match for state and federal dollars. MCEDD will need to identify supplemental funding to fill this gap, should revenues continue to decline.

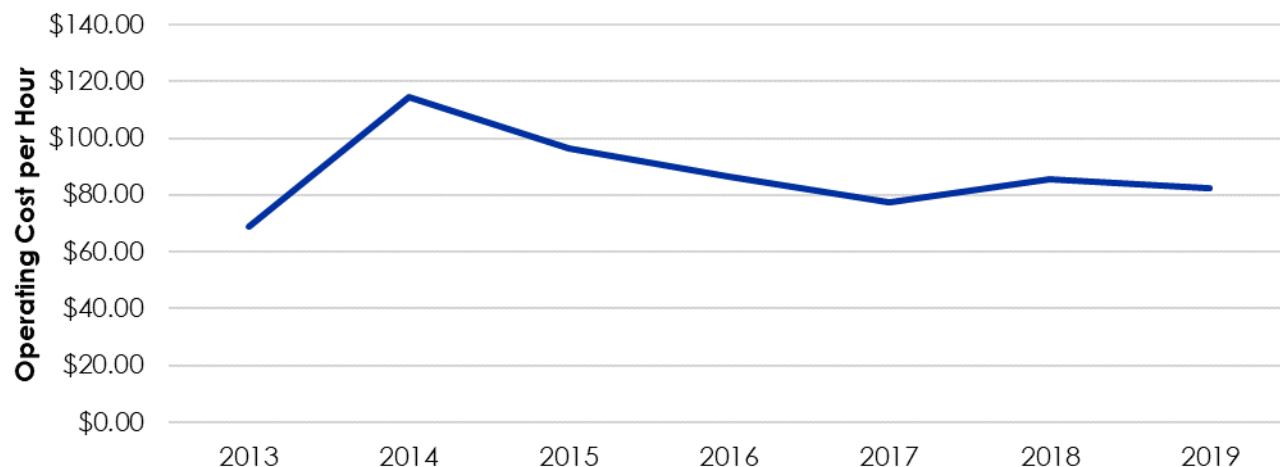
Figure 29. Funding Type



Source: MCEDD

Figure 30 shows The LINK's operating cost per hour, based on 2013–2019 NTD data. The cost was lowest in 2013, at \$69.03, and highest in 2014, at \$114.51. In the last few years, costs have averaged close to \$80 per hour. Operating costs have increased at an average of 3% per year over the seven-year period.

Figure 30. Operating Expense per Vehicle Revenue Hour 2013–2019



Source: NTD

OUTREACH FINDINGS

This section summarizes the findings from outreach efforts conducted prior to the Wasco County TDP, as well as the surveys, stakeholder outreach, and Advisory Committee (AC) conducted for this TDP.

Onboard and Online Survey

An onboard and online survey was available to the general public from July 5 to August 4, 2021. The surveys asked about bus use, awareness of local and regional transit service, frequency of use for different services, trip purpose, locations where respondents would like to use transit, tools that would make riding the LINK more convenient, improvements the LINK transit service needs, reasons people do not use transit services and what would encourage them to use transit, how respondents rate the link, and demographic information. There were 24 responses to the onboard survey and 23 responses to the online survey. Key findings from the survey are provided below; a detailed summary of the survey is provided in Appendix B.

- Most respondents are satisfied with the LINK's services, rating service quality as 'Fair' to 'Very Good'.
- The highest priority improvements for survey respondents include increased frequency, extended service hours, and weekend service. Online respondents also ranked service to more destinations highly. Customer service, improvements to bus stops, and information and technology tools ranked low.
- Tools respondents feel would increase the convenience of their trip include more fare payment options, mobile trip planning tools, real-time vehicle arrival information, park-and-rides, and updated bicycle racks.
- Most respondents feel that they have a 'Fair' to "Very Well" understanding of the services. Respondents are generally aware of most transit services in the County with the exception of The

Dalles Shopping Bus, South County Shuttle, and Celilo-Lone Pine Shuttle: Only 20-40% of respondents are aware of each of these services.

- Most respondents did not transfer between transit services, those that did mostly transferred to other LINK services. The Dalles Transit Center is the most commonly used stop.
- Over half of all respondents stated that all of their rides start or end at spots that are not a signed bus stop; they use deviations on the fixed-route services or dial-a-ride service.
- Most of respondents' trips started or ended at home or at a healthcare-related location. Trips also started or ended at school, work, and social locations.
- Ridership frequency is expected to increase for both onboard and online respondents after COVID.
- Non-riders stated that they do not use transit services due to service coverage, frequency, hours of operation, a lack of information about service or difficulty planning trips, a general preference for driving, COVID-19, and cost.

Outreach Calls

Outreach and coordination calls are intended to gain information from cities, adjacent transit agencies, counties, other government bodies, community organizations, businesses, and more regarding existing plans, special populations, growth plans, future transit needs, and potential service needs. This outreach will build on the outreach efforts from the Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan Update by asking additional questions and focusing on groups that did not provide input in that outreach process. Outreach calls will occur throughout the project, and findings be updated as completed. Key findings to date are as follows:

- Eastern Oregon Support Services Brokerage
 - Their clients, people with disabilities, have reported that The LINK has been late for them in the past, or not shown up entirely.
 - Their clients have trouble understanding how to use the services.
 - Their clients have used CAT's service and enjoy the annual GORge Pass. They will share with their clients that The LINK and MATS have joined the GORge Pass.
- Wasco County Business Alliance
 - Lower-income employees need affordable and reliable transportation, especially later in the evening and on weekends.
 - The shuttle that the Wasco County Business Alliance started operating between hotels, restaurants, and music venues has been successful so far and well-received by the community.
 - Sunday service is a major need, in addition to the late-night service.

Previous Outreach Efforts

Previous outreach efforts summaries are focused on the Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plans from 2016–2020 and 2020–2024. Another relevant plan is the 2017 The Dalles Transportation System Plan (TSP) that outlined the feasibility for deviated fixed-route services, which have since been implemented.

The Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan Update (2016–2020)

The Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan Update (2016–2020) surveyed the public and various organizations. A total of 451 responses were received: 150 from agency clients, 86 from agency staff, 52 from riders making trips on The LINK services, and 163 from other members of the public.

The survey asked where respondents lived, what type of transportation services they use, and how often they ride the bus. It also asked about respondents' primary destination, the city where their primary destination is located, other trips they use public transportation for, how they rate the service, additional places they would like to go, and whether they would ride a fixed-route service. Additionally, the survey asked what time they want to use the bus, what days they want to use the bus, how much they would be willing to pay, where they need to stop for work, what would prevent them from using a fixed-route bus service, and what is working well and what needs improvement in terms of Wasco County's public transportation service.

The public requested to add a fixed route and stated that service could be improved by adding more routes, buses, and stops, by improving customer service of drivers, by expanding hours, by improving the scheduling system by reducing the window/waiting time, and by advertising more to help improve awareness of what is available.

The Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan Update (2020–2024)

The Wasco County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan Update (2020–2024) offered a survey to the public and to various organizations. A total of 92 responses were received. An onboard paper survey was developed and printed for riders of The LINK, but distribution was halted when the Governor's Stay at Home order was implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This survey asked where participants lived, what trip types and destinations they use public transportation for, how often they need public transportation, and what days and times they need public transportation. It also asked which stops they currently use, how they rate the service, how much they would be willing to pay, and what the easiest ways for them to pay are. Finally, it asked what barriers they have to using transportation services and how they think the transportation system can be improved to overcome those barriers.

There was consistency in the service needs, gaps, and barriers identified by various groups in the survey responses, stakeholder meetings, and interviews. Respondents identified needs to expand service times and locations, reduce the window/waiting time for Dial-a-Ride, improve coordination with regional services, improve awareness of transit services, and update management of fares.

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

This memorandum was reviewed with the Project Management Team (PMT) and Advisory Committee (AC) and will be used to inform the Transit Development Plan by evaluating existing services and summarizing transit needs.

Appendix A Wasco County Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan

Appendix B Survey #1 Summary