



**Sunset Empire Transportation District
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS/TRANSPORATION
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
BOARD ZOOM WORKSHOP AGENDA
THURSDAY OCTOBER 22, 2020
9:00 AM**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83544514840>

1-877-853-5247

AGENDA:

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. CHANGES TO AGENDA
3. NEW BUSINESS
 - a. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan
4. ADJOURNMENT

Date: October 16, 2020

To: Board of Commissioners and Transportation Advisory Committee

From: Jeff Hazen

Re: Work Session Agenda Item 3.a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

The attached draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan will be presented by Christy Campoll from RLS and Associates. This updated plan was funded by STIF Formula Funds and will be used to assist in the prioritization of future projects included in STIF and other grants that we receive.

These plans are generally updated about every five years and we are pleased that we were able to use STIF money to engage a consultant to assist us with our update. Jason and I enjoyed working with Christy and appreciated the input we received from local stakeholders.

This updated plan is also included for adoption on the Board's agenda for the meeting following the joint work session. Christy and the staff would appreciate any feedback that the Board and TAC has on this plan.



Sunset Empire Transportation District Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan

DRAFT Final Report



Prepared for Sunset Empire Transportation District

October, 2020

Prepared by:
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INTRODUCTION

This plan serves to update the Sunset Empire Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan—developed in 2007 updated in 2011 and 2015—to meet the transportation authorization requirements for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Enhanced Mobility for Seniors and People with Disabilities (Section 5310) grant program. The original plan was created under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) regulations, and subsequent plan updates and amendments were implemented under Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) and the current Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act legislation. A recipient of FTA funds under the Section 5310 Program shall certify that the grant-funded projects were derived from a locally developed, human services transportation coordination plan; and the plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public.

This Coordinated Transportation Plan Update includes an analysis of demographic and socio-economic conditions in Clatsop County; an inventory of transportation resources; a needs assessment; and, a list of prioritized goals and strategies to be implemented in an effort to address unmet needs and gaps in services. Funding for this plan update was provided by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and involved active participation from local agencies and organizations that provide and/or utilize transportation to the general public, older adults, and individuals with disabilities.

The Section 5310 Program provides formula funding for the purpose of assisting public and private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting those needs. The FTA apportions Section 5310 Program funds to the States annually. As the designated recipient of these funds, ODOT awards funds to public and nonprofit organizations for eligible projects through a grant application process. The grants require matching funds, which may be derived from any combination of non-U.S. Department of Transportation Federal, State, or local resources.

METHODOLOGY

The fundamental element of the planning process is the identification and assessment of existing transportation resources and local/regional unmet transportation needs and gaps in service. This was accomplished by receiving input from stakeholders through community meetings open to the public, telephone interviews, and email correspondence.

The plan update incorporated the following planning elements:

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1. Update of the inventory of existing transportation services provided by public, private, and nonprofit organizations;
2. Review of the previous Sunset Empire Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan and other recent transportation plans to develop a basis for evaluation and recommendations;
3. Evaluation of existing economic/demographic conditions in Clatsop County using U.S. Census data;
4. Conduct of local meetings for stakeholders and the general public for the purpose of updating transportation needs, determining service gaps, and developing goals, objectives, and implementation strategies; and,
5. Development of an updated implementation plan that includes current goals, strategies, responsible parties, and performance measures.

PROVIDER INVENTORY

A variety of transportation providers serve Clatsop County residents and visitors. These providers include public transit agencies, non-profit organizations, and for-profit providers. Some are local, while others provide regional or nationwide service. The following section describes the types of transportation available within the county.

Types of Providers

Public transportation is service that is open to the general public. This service is usually subsidized by government funding sources that are set aside for public transit. The passenger typically pays a fare to use the service. Passengers fares represent only a portion of the cost of operations. Sunset Empire Transportation District is the sole public transit operator for Clatsop County, although some of the neighboring counties' transit systems also have bus stops in the county.

Human service transportation is service that is offered to individuals within a certain population, or provided by agencies to their clients alone. A senior transportation program for people aged 60 and over is an example of human service transportation. Another example is an agency that provides in-home care, with care providers who transport clients in their personal vehicles to grocery stores or medical appointments, and receive mileage reimbursement.

Taxi service is private, for-hire transportation. In some areas, taxi companies cooperate with public or human service transportation providers as “gap fillers”, in which the public or human service agency subsidizes taxi service for individuals with certain transportation needs.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) is a service that is funded by Medicaid. Medicaid beneficiaries are entitled to receive transportation to their medical appointments if they need it. There are several local providers that hold contracts through Medicaid to transport these beneficiaries. Some of these providers may also accept passengers who not qualify for Medicaid NEMT as “private pay” clients.



School bus service provides transportation for pupils between local schools and their homes.

Intercity transportation offers long-distance rides on regular schedules, via rail or bus.

Information and referral services are offered by several local human service agencies, which provide information to their clients about existing transportation options. These agencies may also purchase bus passes for clients.

Other forms of transportation include ferries, charter bus companies, services that meet recreation/tourism needs, vehicle or bicycle rentals, and park and ride lots.

The following tables list all known local providers by service type.

Table 1: Human Service Transportation Providers	
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)
Astoria Senior Center	Non-Profit
Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare	Non-Profit
Columbia Memorial Hospital	Non-Profit
DAV Vans	Non-Profit
Northwest Seniors and Disabilities Services	Non-Profit
NW Community Alliance	Non-Profit
Providence Community Care	Non-Profit

Table 2: Taxi Providers	
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)
Aalpha Taxi	For-Profit
Coast Shuttle	For-Profit
Downtown Coffeeshop Taxi	For-Profit
Mom's Cab	For-Profit
Royal Cab	For-Profit
Royal Cab (Long Beach Peninsula)	For-Profit

Table 3: Information and Referral Providers	
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)
Clatsop Community Action	Non-Profit
Clatsop County Veterans Service Officer	Non-Profit
Consejo Hispano	Non-Profit
Vocational Rehabilitation	Public



Table 4: Intercity Providers	
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)
Amtrak	Public
Greyhound	For-Profit
Northwest POINT	Public

Table 5: Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Providers	
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)
K&M Medivan	For-Profit
Medix Medivan Service	For-Profit
Ryan's Transportation	For-Profit

Table 6: School Bus Providers	
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)
Astoria School District	Public
Jewell School District	Public
Knappa School District	Public
Seaside School District	Public
Warrenton/Hammond School District	Public

Table 7: Other Providers		
Agency	Agency Type (Public, Non-Profit, or For-Profit)	Transportation Service Type
Wahkiakum Ferry	Public	Ferry
Astoria Warrenton Chamber of Commerce	Non-Profit	Park and Ride
Astoria Riverfront Trolley	Non-Profit	Recreation/Tourism
Chinook Winds Fun Bus	For-Profit	Recreation/Tourism
Lor's Tours	For-Profit	Recreation/Tourism
Seaside Best Tour	For-Profit	Recreation/Tourism
Sundial Charter Service	For-Profit	Recreation/Tourism
Bikes & Beyond	For-Profit	Rentals
Enterprise Rent-a-Car	For-Profit	Rentals
Family Fun Cycles	For-Profit	Rentals
Lum's Toyota Rental	For-Profit	Rentals
Clatsop Care Center/Retirement Village	Private	Residential Home

Provider Survey

In July 2020, each of the providers identified above were invited to complete a survey about their transportation services and participate in a brief interview about transportation needs in Clatsop County. Five providers took the survey, although three of the respondents submitted only partial



responses. Several human service transportation and information and referral providers participated in interviews. The organizations who provided information about their role in transportation were:

- ◆ Astoria Senior Center
- ◆ Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce
- ◆ Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare
- ◆ Clatsop Community Action
- ◆ Clatsop County Veterans Service Officer
- ◆ Columbia Memorial Hospital
- ◆ Consejo Hispano
- ◆ Helping Hands
- ◆ Lor’s Tours
- ◆ NorthWest Senior and Disabilities Services
- ◆ Providence Community Care
- ◆ Sunset Empire Transportation District
- ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation

Provider Focus

Of the agencies that participated in the survey or interviews, two – Sunset Empire and Lor’s Tours – focus primarily on providing transportation. Two other agencies provide transportation but have primary missions that are not transportation-related. The respondents selected the focus areas displayed in Table 8.

Table 8: Provider Focus		
Transportation is Primary Focus	Provides Transportation, but Primary Mission is not Transportation	Does not Provide Transportation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Lor’s Tours ◆ Sunset Empire Transportation District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Astoria Senior Center ◆ Columbia Memorial Hospital ◆ Providence Community Care 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce ◆ Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare ◆ Clatsop Community Action ◆ Clatsop County Veterans Service Officer ◆ Consejo Hispano ◆ NorthWest Senior and Disabilities Services ◆ Vocational Rehabilitation

Manner of Providing Transportation and Ridership

There are many ways of providing transportation, including scheduled bus routes, demand-response services requiring advance reservations, volunteer-operated services, and others. Five providers indicated their manner of providing transportation:

- ◆ Sunset Empire operates public bus routes and demand response service;



- ◆ Lor’s Tours operates demand response service; and,
- ◆ Astoria Senior Center uses volunteer drivers for scheduled shopping trips and other types of trips.
- ◆ Providence Community Care provide demand response service through a combination of volunteer drivers and paid drivers.
- ◆ Columbia Memorial Hospital has a contract with a taxi provider to provide urgent rides to patients, such as patients who are discharged from the hospital and have no other way to get home.

Only two providers provided ridership figures. Sunset Empire provided approximately 250,000 one-way passenger trips during the previous 12 months. Providence Community Care reported that they provide about 30-40 trips per week. A “one-way passenger trip” represents each instance of a passenger boarding a vehicle.

Operating Expenses and Funding Sources

Three providers gave their annual operating expenses:

- ◆ SETD expends \$105 per revenue hour of service;
- ◆ Lor’s Tours had \$6,000 of transportation expenses in the previous year; and,
- ◆ Astoria Senior Center used approximately \$1,200 to operate their service.

Sunset Empire has multiple sources of funding. These include Clatsop County, the State of Oregon, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Veterans Administration (VA), and Medicaid. Lor’s Tours funds its transportation expenses through charging customers. Astoria Senior Center uses its general local funds. Providence Community Connections is funded by Providence Seaside Hospital.

Service Area and Days/Times of Availability

Sunset Empire’s service area is Clatsop County. Astoria Senior Center did not provide a specific service area, but they indicated that they do travel to the State of Washington. Providence Community Connections provides rides within Clatsop County, to the Rinehart Clinic in Wheeler (Tillamook County), and to medical facilities in Portland.

Sunset Empire operates Monday through Sunday, from 5:30 AM to 11:45 PM, although the amount of service that is in operation at any given time is variable, with peak service offered at the times of highest demand. Demand response service is provided according to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations, which require that customers call at least one day in advance to schedule rides.

Astoria Senior Center provider transportation on Tuesdays and Fridays between the hours of 9:00 AM and 11:00 PM. To use the service, customers sign up at the Senior Center in advance.

Providence Community Connections operates on weekdays depending on volunteer availability. Rides to Portland are provided Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Fleet and Personnel Information



Sunset Empire has a fleet that consists of 18 “cutaway”-style small transit vehicles, 11 medium transit vehicles, one wheelchair-accessible mini-van, and one other vehicle. All SETD vehicles can accommodate wheelchairs, including oversized/bariatric devices. Astoria Senior Center has one wheelchair-accessible small transit vehicle.

Sunset Empire maintains a workforce 49 full-time equivalent positions:

- ◆ 35 drivers;
- ◆ 7 administrators/managers;
- ◆ 3 vehicle maintenance staff;
- ◆ 2 reservationists/dispatchers; and,
- ◆ 2 front office staff.

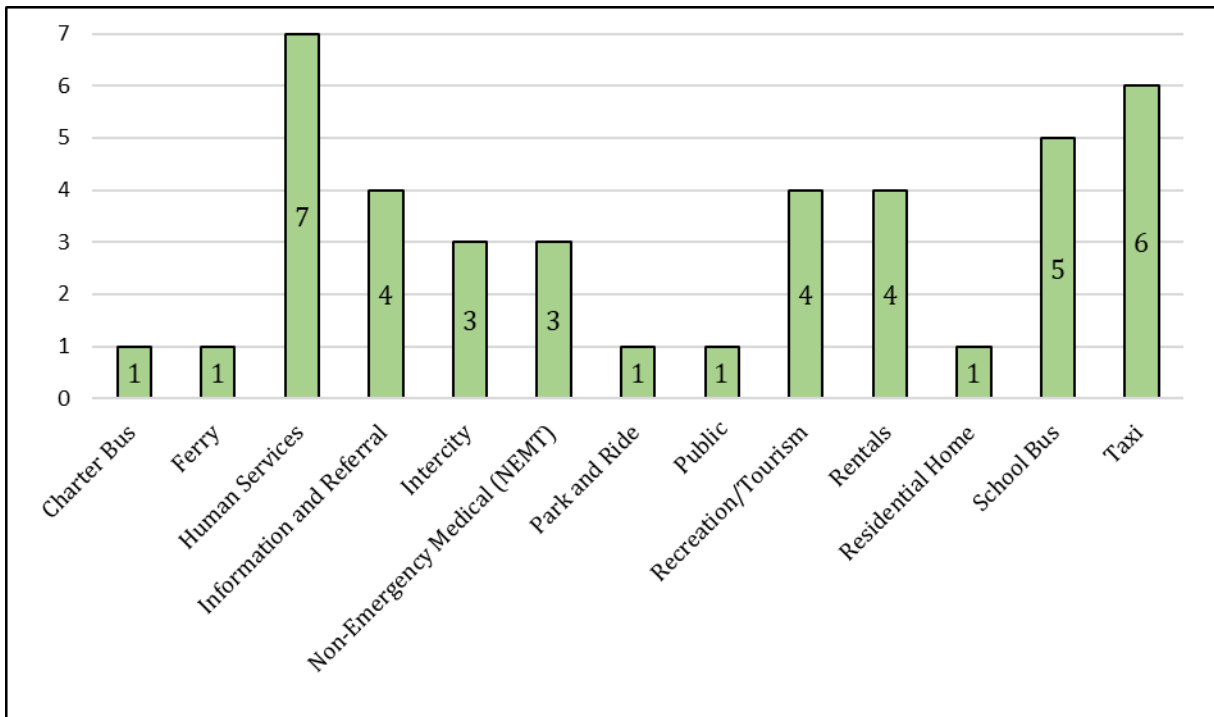
Astoria Senior Center’s transportation program is staffed by the agency’s administration personnel. The drivers are volunteers.

Providence Community Connections employs a part-time coordinator and one part-time driver. There are 20 to 25 volunteer drivers.

Summary and Conclusions

There are many transportation resources available to Clatsop County residents. A total of 38 public, non-profit, and for-profit agencies deliver transportation services in the county. Figure 1 displays the number of each transportation provider service type.

Figure 1: Clatsop County Transportation Service Types



The challenge of coordination is to determine ways that providers can work together to expand overall mobility for the community's residents and visitors. The intent of this Coordinated Plan Update is to identify unmet needs and propose creative solutions and potential new partnerships to enhance the access of older adults and people with disabilities to employment, health care, shopping, and other necessities.

PREVIOUS TRANSPORTATION PLANS

Over the past five years, three transportation plans have established strategies for mobility in Clatsop County. These plans are the 2015 Sunset Empire Coordinated Plan Update, the Sunset Empire Transportation District Long-Range Comprehensive Transportation Plan, and the North by Northwest Connector Management Plan.

PREVIOUS COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The project's consultants met with Sunset Empire management staff on May 21, 2020, to discuss the previous Sunset Empire Coordinated Plan (the Plan). The group discussed the strategies listed on pages 33 through 42 of the November 2007 Coordinated Plan, which was updated in 2011 and 2015. Discussion notes are provided below for each topic covered in the Plan.

Medicaid Brokerage

At the time of the previous plan, Sunset Empire operated the NEMT brokerage, which was called Northwest Ride Center, now run by Tillamook County Transportation District (TCTD) and called Northwest Rides. It serves Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties. Sunset Empire paratransit is a provider of NEMT.

Fixed-Route Stops at Human Service Agencies

Sunset Empire values providing service that is useful to clients of human service agencies. It is important to always have an eye toward improving outreach to those organizations and keeping up an understanding of the needs of the local communities and areas. Sunset Empire is always looking toward bringing more services to those areas if needed.

Service to Portland

Oregon Coachways is no longer in service, having been replaced by Oregon POINT (NorthWest Route). The service is sustainable, even doing well during COVID times. Keeping it sustainable needs to be part of any plan moving forward. Sunset Empire operates the Lower Columbia Connector from Astoria to Portland three times per day. This route is funded by the STIF Discretionary Fund.



System Accessibility Needs (Fixed-Route and Demand Response)

The previous plan used the word “accessibility” to mean the geographic availability of service. There have been various service extensions over the past several years. It was noted that Dial-a-Ride service for the general public has experienced a reduction in demand. The system currently offers Dial-a-Ride in two underserved areas within the District, but ridership is very low. Sunset Empire continually evaluates the feasibility of running service in various areas of the county, including in small rural communities.

System Capacity Needs (Fixed-Route and Demand Response)

For fixed-route service, the plan focused on bigger buses, and it looks like frequency was increased on certain routes at one time. Sunset Empire indicated that their buses are appropriately sized for their particular service area, but that they are constantly looking at what the next bus is going to be like. They are taking great consideration to ensure that they choose the correct size, and staff is confident that Sunset Empire is on the right track with that. They are looking to replace buses, and note that some bus sizes on the market are not compatible with the hilly topography in the Sunset Empire service area.

Affordability of Non-Medicaid Demand Response

The Plan wanted to address the gap where if you don’t have Medicaid to cover a trip, it is difficult to find funding that will sponsor the ride. In 2009, some seniors could receive free dial-a-ride transportation. Sunset Empire is using a new fare of \$1.00 each way for general public fixed-route service. Since they made that decision on the fare, the expense for a ride was dramatically reduced. They have noticed because of this shift, that by reducing the fares, they really helped a lot of riders out. It is \$2.00 per trip for ADA paratransit.

Senior Center System Capacity

Sunset Empire was providing vehicles, fuel, and maintenance for senior center transportation in 2009. They no longer provide fuel, but they do provide preventive maintenance. During the planning process, we will get an update on transportation that is being provided by the senior center.

Public Input to Sunset Empire on Transportation Needs

The previous plan called for more input on the needs of special needs populations. The current advisory committee and board are effective in providing input. The system’s outreach is strong whenever they are doing a route/service change. Staff thinks it would be worthwhile to explore how they can do better on getting input. But, Sunset Empire should certainly preserve all of the good outreach processes they are currently conducting.



Travel Trainer/Mobility Manager

There has been a focus on travel training which has been expanded. The program is not widely known as Ridepal anymore: It is now called Mobility Management/Travel Training. The rebranding campaign focusing on Ridepal kind of fizzled out, and it is referred to as “Mobility.”

Identify Better and Safer Stops for Fixed Routes

Progress was made that improved safety and took care of the issue at Fred Meyer (a major ridership destination). Since then, Sunset Empire has either retrofitted, improved care of, or added shelters/stops to make conditions safer, ensuring that people in mobility devices are safe. This remains a point of focus going forward.

The district had several difficulties, administratively and financially, around 2009-2011. They have worked for a decade to get back to a good spot and are in much better fiscal condition than they were back then. When they talk about extensions and etcetera, they are often talking about services that were lost during the economic downturn.

Sunset Empire is using STIF money to put in five new bus shelters and are working with ODOT to improve stops for the Lower Columbia Connector. The Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA) will be submitting a STIF discretionary grant application for the next biennium to fund the construction of the new bus stops. NWOTA is a collaboration of Sunset Empire and four other transit agencies in the region addressing transit concerns from a regional perspective.

Coordination of Maintenance

Sunset Empire staff cannot speak to anything specific in terms of interest in shared maintenance between providers. In 2012 and 2013, there was some talk about an agreement with the school district, however, there is no current plan to go in that direction.

Prioritizing Concentrations of Employment Populations

Sunset Empire has a program called Transportation Options that was designed by ODOT, and a newer staff position that focuses on employee transportation. This position covers Columbia, Clatsop, and Tillamook Counties. The previous plan mentioned vanpools as a potential new service to meet employee transportation needs.

Further Analyze the Aging of the Population

The current planning process will focus on the needs of older adults in addition to people with low incomes and those with disabilities.



Partnering with Other Agencies

The Plan specifically mentioned veterans, and partnering with Columbia County Transit to improve service on the east side of the county. Sunset Empire runs the program for coordinating with veterans' services. The staff looks forward to a strong partnership between Columbia County Transit and Sunset Empire going forward. Sunset Empire has completed an application to ODOT for some new partnerships, aligning with a goal of the plan update to identify a set of goals and strategies for the next four years, which can include strategies for veterans' transportation.

AVL Technology; Security Cameras

Sunset Empire continues to have AVL, video surveillance, and passenger counters on all of their vehicles. The older vehicles have manual passenger counters while the newer buses have automatic counters, which may have issues with accuracy. The newest buses arriving this month have some automated annunciators on them. Sunset Empire is looking at other purveyors of AVL since they have had the same equipment for a number of years and there have been a lot of advancements in the industry. They do not have electronic fare media but they hope to make progress on updating that technology before the end of the calendar year. They use Ecolane for demand response dispatching and scheduling, piggybacking with two other counties for Ecolane products for the convenience of coordinating among the systems using the same technology vendor. The Ecolane license is through Tillamook County.

Ticket Bank Program

Sunset Empire still has a ticket bank program. Every once in a while, they get a request for a portion of ticket funding to go to a particular need. This is funding set aside to provide free tickets in some situations. (Also note, all K-12 school-age children ride the bus for free.)

Shop Truck

It was purchased and it only has about 16,000 miles on it.

Preparedness for Emergency Transportation for the Elderly and Disabled

Staff believes that Sunset Empire has moved in a different direction in the time since the completion of the previous plan. The county has made an effort to develop a Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, working cooperatively to put that plan together and submit it to FEMA. The plan involves working with the county emergency management system to use shared resources in an emergency. Sunset Empire, Columbia Memorial Hospital and Astor House (an assisted living facility) have memoranda of understanding to evacuate patients/residents during emergencies.

Solar Retrofits for Shelters and Solar Lighting for Signs

Sunset Empire's bus stop amenities currently have no solar installations, but the current procurement for new bus shelters includes solar lighting.



Upgrade Demand Response Software

They contract with Ecolane and that is going well.

Demand Response for Rural Area (53/Jewel/Elsie)

Sunset Empire's only demand response service is ADA paratransit. There were discussions about incorporating additional demand response service, but it is still in the "wishful thinking" phase.

More Frequent Service in Warrenton

Sunset Empire has increased service in Warrenton.

Extend Hours for Service to Clatsop Community College

Sunset Empire moved forward shortly after the previous plan and provided some service to a specific street (not into the college campus itself). Those hours of service were extended.

Employer Pass Program

This idea falls under the Transportation Options program. It has been a big challenge to get local businesses to buy into transit. This difficulty has 'softened' and they are now making progress.

Guaranteed Ride Home Program

This is a "wish list" item, that also concerns employment transportation and the Transportation Options program.

Purchase Bike Lockers

The City of Astoria purchased two bike lockers that are located at the Astoria Transit Center. Sunset Empire maintains them. Since bike riders don't often ride the bus the bike lockers do not get much use.

Marketing

Staff would like to include a strategy for marketing and advertising in the upcoming plan. This is always important to continue and improve upon. Sunset Empire is currently conducting a marketing push through NWOTA. It is important to me that the system focuses on electronic marketing, rather than traditional forms of marketing which have no way of tracking results.

Vehicle for Intercity Service

Sunset Empire does not receive 5311(f) funding for intercity service at this time. The Lower Columbia Connector provides intercity service, but it is funded by STIF Discretionary funds.



Systems Design Plan

A robust comprehensive transit plan was conducted in 2016. It will be reviewed as a part of this planning process.

Facilities Planning

There is a lot of discussion about facilities being moved and/or constructed. This is a topic that is important to the local area.

SUNSET EMPIRE LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE TRANSIT PLAN

The Sunset Empire Transportation District Long-Range Comprehensive Transit Plan was written in September 2016. This in-depth study included a transit needs assessment, analysis of Sunset Empire operations, and recommendations for service changes.

Market Analysis and Service Assessment

Demographic analysis revealed that growth along the U.S. 101 corridor, especially in Warrenton and Seaside, continues to increase population density, a key factor in transit ridership. The study cited the development of Walmart store in Warrenton as an incoming major trip generator. Parking is in short supply in Cannon Beach and, to a lesser extent, Seaside. This generates interest in transit from community stakeholders.

While jobs, especially in the tourism market, are growing, affordable housing is becoming scarce. People who work in Cannon Beach or Seaside are increasingly finding housing in Warrenton or Hammond. This housing-employment geographic separation is especially challenging for low-income residents. Tourism-based employment has been expanding beyond the traditional summer tourism season into year-long employment. This has increased the need for regional transportation to Clatsop County's coast.

Stakeholders and the public generally agree that current routes match where major population centers and trip patterns are today; however, bus service may not be running when people need it (such as in late evening or weekends) or at a frequency that can attract more riders. The study listed the county's largest employers and determined that while large concentrations of employment are generally located in proximity to transit, the schedules may not be matched to employee shift times. The area's largest employers were:

Astoria Employers

Columbia Memorial Hospital
Clatsop County
Tongue Point Job Corps Center
Clatsop Community College
City of Astoria



Clatsop Care Center
Bornstein Seafoods

Other Employers

Georgia Pacific/Wauna Mill (Clatskanie)
Providence Seaside Hospital (Seaside)
Fred Meyer (Warrenton)

Although not represented among the largest employers, tourism is a major industry in the county, particularly in coastal areas. The retail and leisure/hospitality sectors are both the largest and the fastest growing employment categories for the county. The plan includes detailed maps that display where workers are employed and where they live.

Demographic analysis showed that the highest levels of transit propensity are in Astoria and Seaside. Astoria-Warrenton, within Astoria and Warrenton, and along U.S. 101 including to Washington state, are highest travel demand in 2035. The study includes an analysis of density thresholds in the zoning codes of the county's largest communities. Astoria's density metrics all meet or exceed thresholds for 60-minute frequency on transit service, as do most of the moderate or higher density metrics in the other jurisdictions (Warrenton, Seaside, and Cannon Beach).

The study described all services provided by Sunset Empire, including regular and seasonal fixed routes, ADA complementary paratransit, and general public dial-a-ride service. The study also described regional providers, other providers in Clatsop County, and opportunities for walking and bicycling.

The performance assessment of Sunset Empire fixed routes noted that the most productive, in terms of boardings per revenue hour, and highest-ridership routes are Route 10, Route 101, and Pacific Connector. Route 10, with 34 percent of all of the system's fixed route ridership, provides weekday local service within Astoria, Warrenton, and Hammond, experiencing the system's highest level of productivity at 18.4 boardings per revenue hour. Route 101 provides six daily round trips on weekdays between Astoria and Seaside, with 15.6 boardings per revenue hour. The Pacific Connector is a weekend version of Route 101 with two round trips per day, with 10.6 boardings per revenue hour. All three routes were in year-round service.

The lowest-productivity Sunset Empire route was the year-round Lower Columbia Connector, with only 2.9 boardings per revenue hour. This is an inter-city, daily route that operates two round trips between Astoria and Portland each day. The bulk of ridership is on the segment between Astoria and the communities of Svensen and Knappa.

The year-round routes with moderate productivity and ridership were Routes 15, 20, and 21. Route 15 provided daily service through Warrenton, Hammond, and Astoria with six round trips per day. Route 20 provided weekday service on 60-minute frequencies connecting Seaside, Cannon Beach, and Manzanita. Route 21 provided weekend service in Cannon Beach and Seaside on irregular frequencies.



Sunset Empire also offers seasonal fixed route service due to higher levels of tourism. At the time of the study, Routes 11 and 12 provided service in Astoria and Warrenton based on cruise ship schedules. During the summers, Route 21 expanded to operate on weekdays in addition to weekends, serving Cannon Beach and Seaside. Finally, the Seaside Streetcar provided weekend service within Seaside.

The study noted that Sunset Empire collects property taxes, making up a quarter of the agency's annual budget, which in total is about \$3.2 million. Other funding sources include FTA Section 5311, fares, state timber revenue, Oregon's Special Transportation Fund (STF), other Federal and state grants, and miscellaneous sources. At the time of the study, fares ranged from \$1 to \$8 per ride, with day, month and annual passes sold. The study noted that NW Connector systems collaborated to offer regional 3-day and 7-day passes. Sunset Empire also offered reduced fares for the elderly, people with disabilities, members of the military, students (K-12 and college), and a summer youth pass. Passengers certified for ADA paratransit pay twice the regular fare. Dial-A-Ride customers paid by distance. One-way trips from zero to 10 miles cost \$8 and trips from 11 to 20 miles cost \$12.

The study documented the Sunset Empire fleet which had 21 vehicles; 15 for fixed routes with seating for up to 39 and two to four wheelchairs, and six cutaway demand response vehicles that seat 12. Sunset Empire's facilities included the Astoria Transit Center, the primary transfer location, and the Warrenton operations center. The study noted that the agency had recently opened a kiosk in the Seaside Factory Outlet for tickets and customer information. Given strong ridership on Route 101 and area growth, a facility for Seaside was under consideration. The study also covered technology in use by Sunset Empire, which has since been updated. The study documented the NW Connector regional group that encourages inter-county transfers; there were two regional transfer patterns:

- ◆ Transfers between Sunset Empire and Columbia County Rider occurred in Rainier. About 60 passengers per month transferred between the systems. Two trips per day were available.
- ◆ Sunset Empire coordinated with Tillamook County Transportation District with transfers occurring in Cannon Beach and Manzanita, however the report notes that the transfer timing was not good. Duplication of service between TCTD and Sunset Empire between Cannon Beach and Manzanita caused there to be very few transfers in Cannon Beach.

The study reported that many major Sunset Empire bus stops have shelters. The fixed routes operated on a flag stop system. Some scheduled stops had poles with signs, but most do not have signs.

Sunset Empire marketing and public information included a system schedule booklet and regional map, but no hand schedules with route-level maps.

Community Input

The planning process included a robust effort to gather community input. Stakeholder outreach consisted of four meetings and additional phone conversations with community organizations, government agencies, and non-profits. The study team also interviewed Sunset Empire staff, conducted surveys, and held community input meetings.



Stakeholder and Community Feedback

- ◆ Sunset Empire was seen as something used by those who have no other choice for transportation.
- ◆ Bus service was not feasible for many major employers due to shift times and the fact that the county has a culture of driving. Many retail and service employers have varying shift times.
- ◆ Clatsop Community College is major ridership generator. The college expressed interest in reinstating service to the MERTS campus. Bus schedules do not serve all class times. A transit pass program for students and staff would be beneficial.
- ◆ Awareness of where/when service runs needs to be more widespread.
- ◆ Access to transit was hampered in developing areas of the county (specifically, the Ensign Lane / Huckleberry area) by a lack of sidewalks. Hills also make walking to stops a challenge in some areas.
- ◆ Riding Sunset Empire was seen as taking too long as compared to driving.
- ◆ Cannon Beach, due to parking problems, strongly supported transit.
- ◆ In Seaside, the year-round residents live east of U.S> 101, and this area will develop.
- ◆ Hourly fixed route frequencies were seen as adequate.
- ◆ Lack of affordable housing in employment centers like Cannon Beach and Seaside meant people must commute from Astoria, Warrenton, and Hammond to work in these areas.
- ◆ Real time bus tracking and wifi at major stops would be beneficial, as would better lighting at stops.
- ◆ Consider a shuttle bus for parks.
- ◆ Expand travel training.
- ◆ Make monthly passes 30-day rather than calendar-month.
- ◆ Conduct more outreach to human service agencies and employers.
- ◆ Memorial Hospital will expand is already dealing with more demand for parking than it can meet. A transit pass program for employees could help.
- ◆ Some employers need workers so badly that they are willing to reimburse workers for their commuting mileage.
- ◆ Seaside would benefit from park and ride lots.
- ◆ There should be better availability of year-around and seasonal route information.
- ◆ Route 10 could be marketed as a tourism opportunity.

Staff Feedback

- ◆ Real-time schedule information at the Transit Center would be helpful.
- ◆ A shelter is needed at Sunset Beach.
- ◆ Paratransit demand is growing.
- ◆ System materials are needed in other languages, and they should be modified for non-readers.

Survey Feedback

- ◆ Current Sunset Empire riders want more weekend service (25%), more frequency of service (22%), and bus service later at night (17%).
- ◆ Respondents to surveys either take Sunset Empire today and highly value it, or do not take the bus but feel it is an important part of the community.
- ◆ Growth in Knappa and Svensen could support more transit service.
- ◆ Service should run later – e.g. the Rite Aid in Warrenton is open until 9:00 PM. On weekends, service should run until 7:00 PM or 7:30 PM.



- ◆ More frequency needed on weekend fixed route service.
- ◆ Having a big break in the Route 21 and Pacific Connector services mid-day on weekends hurts business since this is a key shopping time.
- ◆ Fares seem inequitable. Seaside to Cannon Beach costs \$1, but Sunset Beach to Fred Meyer costs \$2.
- ◆ Buses to Cannon Beach need to arrive before normal working hours and leave after stores close.
- ◆ Real-time information is needed, along with higher visibility stops and information signs. Larger shelters are needed at places like McDonald's in Seaside.
- ◆ People are confused by the SETD acronym; it sounds similar to the area recreation district.
- ◆ More access is needed to schedules and service information.
- ◆ **Riders** were primarily concerned with filling in specific *local* service gaps. For riders, shopper shuttles were given a high priority as a possible service enhancement. Increased service in Seaside and Astoria was given high priority. Riders were supportive of plans for later evening service. Riders were generally supportive of well-timed transfers.
- ◆ The **general public** was primarily concerned with *regional* coverage and transit performance. The performance and availability of regional service were key priorities of respondents. General frequency, time span, and reliability improvements were prominent desires among the public. Non-riders were particularly interested in learning about the bus system in general, highlighting the need to make service consistent and easy to understand and communicate.

Identified Needs

The system assessment, existing conditions analysis and community input process revealed the following transportation needs:

- ◆ **Target market:** Riders are predominantly low-income people without cars, especially frequent riders who are employed. The community's needs change in the summer in terms of travel patterns and times needed: riders are needed later, at least until 9:00 PM or 10:00 PM.
- ◆ **Locations:** most riders take in-town trips. Non-riders are interested in regional service. Veterans need to go to Portland VA and there are challenges with the local DAV service. Veterans in Tillamook County need to get to Camp Rilea in Warrenton. Medical trips out of county especially to Longview WA and Portland; middle of Astoria (N of Niagara Ave and S of northern W. Marine Dr); weekend service to major Astoria destinations like Safeway; SW portion of Seaside (W of Necanicum Dr and S of 1st St)
- ◆ **Temporal:** More frequent service is desired, especially on Route 101. More weekend service, including nighttime service on weekends, and evening hours through the week for necessary for low-income workers' jobs. Additional frequency in Warrenton is desired, although some of the issue is understanding the service that Warrenton has: Route 10 trips could be branded as Route 15 so people know they can board either bus. Eliminate the long break in weekend service on Route 21 during peak shopping times, particularly for Cannon Beach. Eliminate the long break in Pacific Connector service; offer an earlier schedule for Seaside residents traveling to Midtown in Cannon Beach to report for 9:00 AM shifts at stores. Cannon Beach employees who get off work between 10:30 PM and 12:00 AM need schedules.
- ◆ **Development and infrastructure planning** in the county must involve input from Sunset Empire.
- ◆ **Transit operations:** On-time performance needs improvement. Route and schedule variants between weekdays and weekends, and seasons, may unnecessarily increase system complexity and reduce legibility. Transportation costs is an issue for human service agencies. The costs for



short-distance trips should be more consistent. Route 21 and Pacific Connector duplicate service in Cannon Beach on weekends. Route 21 weekend service is confusing. Better Route 10 and 101 transfers are needed. Route 101 needs to speed up travel times. Route 15 operates at irregular intervals due to being tied to the Lower Columbia Connector schedule. More timed transfers should be designed with major trip generators, like the community college, in mind.

- ◆ **Capital needs:** Bus stops need signs, and some need shelters with better lighting and other security features. Seaside needs a transit facility. Buses shouldn't have to go over speed bumps causing discomfort to riders. Buses need better visibility out of the front window and quicker wheelchair lifts. Radio interoperability with TCTD and CC Rider would be helpful. Safer opportunities for riders to cross U.S. 101 and 30 are needed.
- ◆ **Information/Marketing:** The system needs better overall legibility. Route maps need improvement. Bus stops need clearer signage. Printed materials are important and need improvement. Real time information would be beneficial. More people need to be aware of paratransit.

Goals and Objectives

The study identified three general service types provided by Sunset Empire, each with their own performance measures – intercity routes, local routes, and demand-response. The study recommended that the agency create a policy framework that addresses service types, and determine the right balance of service coverage and productivity. This would allow the transit agency to defend decisions and justify service design. The study recommended that Sunset Empire abide by 11 service design principles:

- ◆ Service should be simple – quick and easy to understand how to use and how long trips will take.
- ◆ Routes operate along a direct path.
- ◆ Minimize route deviations, which makes routes easy to understand and reduces travel times.
- ◆ Operate major routes on arterials.
- ◆ Routes should be symmetrical, operating on the same street in both directions when possible.
- ◆ Routes should serve well-defined markets, stopping at areas of high demand.
- ◆ Service should be well-coordinated, with minimal redundancy and convenient transfers.
- ◆ Service should be consistent – for example, schedules should follow routine frequencies.
- ◆ Stops should be spaced appropriately for the type of service, and consistently– for example, every 1/8 mile.
- ◆ Use the right size of vehicle.

Based upon the above principles, the study provided a long-term service vision, illustrated by a revised route map and table describing each route's recommended span and frequency. The following paragraphs were provided in the study as service recommendation summaries.

Route 30 / Lower Columbia Connector

Rebrand service as Route 30 Lower Columbia Connector. Provide a more robust four round trips per day (which enhance service to Svensen/Knappa in addition to Rainier) and develop a weekly shopping shuttle in Svensen/Knappa. Differentiate routes by listing the destinations on the bus head signs.



Route 101 (Astoria-Seaside)

Minimize travel times (primarily through improving the directness of the route) on this regional, highly productive route to attract new riders.

- ◆ In Astoria, run along northern W. Marine Drive to the Transit Center, then operate a short round trip to Clatsop Community College. Eliminating the loop pattern in Astoria enhances legibility and provides opportunity for the bus to utilize U.S. Business 101 to avoid summer congestion on Youngs Bay Bridge. The northern W. Marine Drive routing means this detour will not skip any stops.
- ◆ Serve the developing Ensign Lane/SE 19th Street/SE Huckleberry Street area with local Route 15 Warrenton/Hammond rather than regional Route 101.
- ◆ In Seaside, operate bidirectionally on U.S. 101. Extend service beyond Avenue S in Seaside to a southern turnaround in the vicinity of Avenue U and Beach Drive (or a future, centrally-located transit center in Seaside).
- ◆ Run Route 101 at hourly headways all day.

Route 20 (Seaside-Cannon Beach)

Operate bidirectionally on U.S. 101 through Seaside (no service on Necanicum Drive or Wahanna Road). Implement pedestrian improvements (sidewalk infill and pedestrian crossings of U.S. 101) to facilitate this change. A Seaside Circulator local route (see below) would provide local circulation, including along Wahanna Road and serving Providence Hospital. Develop Park & Ride facilities in the north and south parts of Seaside. (Seaside Cinema in the north side and a to-be-determined location in the south), with an eventual goal of identifying a single, more central transit center location. Improve consistency of schedule/passenger information and transfers to Manzanita.

Cannon Beach–Manzanita

Negotiate with Tillamook County Transportation District (TCTD) to operate the Manzanita – Cannon Beach portion of weekday Route 20 and the weekend Pacific Connector consistently. One provider, preferably TCTD, would serve all trips on the Manzanita connection on both weekends and weekdays. This would enable re-timing of weekday Routes 20 and 101 to provide shorter transfers in Seaside. Operate four trips per day between Manzanita and Cannon Beach.

Route 10 (Astoria Local)

Break up into two short, focused routes. Serve eastern Astoria via 10 East, return to the transit center, then circulate through western Astoria on 10 West. Add service to the interior of Astoria, potentially in conjunction with new service on U.S. Business 101. Brand all Route 10 service in Warrenton/Hammond as Route 15. Consider viability of transitioning local Route 10 E/W to flex-route service, allowing deviations from the route.

Route 15 (Warrenton Local)

Enhance this route to provide more frequent service to the developing Warrenton retail area. Decouple Route 15 from Route 30 with its own vehicle and operate as two loops: one loop running around Warrenton/Hammond and one loop running along the Ensign Lane/SE 19th Street/SE Huckleberry area including Costco/Walmart. Time transfers at Fred Meyer for service to Astoria via Route 101.



New Seaside Local Circulator

Develop a local circulator focused on resident and employee needs, with timed connections to regional routes running along U.S. 101. This would help accommodate growth that is expected to occur on the east side of the city.

Seasonal Weekday Route 21

Rebrand as Route 20, since Route 21 service duplicates Route 20 once each hour. Stagger Route 21 with Route 20 to provide even headways. Work with Cannon Beach to evaluate adding a four-way stop sign at 1st and Hemlock Streets, which would improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow. Explore moving the Route 21 stop location serving Les Shirley Park to 1st and Beech Streets, with input from existing riders. This reduces running time to ensure a combined 20/21 stays on schedule.

Weekend Pacific Connector (including weekend Route 21)

Brand and operate the Astoria-Seaside and Seaside-Cannon Beach portions of the Pacific Connector as Route 101 (Pacific Connector) and Route 20 (Pacific Connector), respectively, using similar routing and stops on weekends as on weekdays. Weekend Route 21 would be rebranded as Route 20. Increase service frequencies to 8-10+ trips per weekend day. Work with Cannon Beach to evaluate adding a four-way stop sign at 1st and Hemlock Streets, which would improve pedestrian safety and traffic flow. Explore moving the Route 21 stop location serving Les Shirley Park to 1st and Beech Streets, with input from existing riders. This reduces running time to ensure a combined 20/21 stays on schedule.

New Route/Service on Business 101

Consider a new route to serve planned development in the Miles Crossing area and provide a more direct connection between Astoria and the Walmart/Costco area. This could be an extension/redesign of Route 15.

Implementation

The study provides four planning time frames and funding targets, allowing for phased implementation of the long-term service vision. Ultimately, the long-term plan is flexible, and not fiscally constrained. A group of cost-neutral, near-term actions were provided to serve as the initial phase of implementation. The other improvements were grouped into 17 projects. The projects are classified by priority (high, medium, low-medium, and low), operating and capital funding requirements, and time frame. Each project was evaluated according to five Sunset Empire goals and system benefits: efficiency, mobility (serve a wide range of mobility needs), service availability, reliability, sustainability (compete with single-occupancy vehicle travel times and reduce vehicle miles traveled), and capacity.

NORTH BY NORTHWEST CONNECTOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA) is an innovative partnership of five transit agencies working together to provide convenient regional transit connections. The partners are



Sunset Empire, Columbia County Rider (CCR), Tillamook County Transportation District (TCTD), Lincoln County Transit (LCT), and Benton County Transportation (BCT). These systems offer coordinated transit services under the North by Northwest Connector brand. The North by Northwest Connector Management Plan was created in 2016 to provide a set of goals and strategies to support the stability and growth of the Connector service.

The plan describes the Connector’s existing services, which consist of a forum for interagency coordination and planning, a regional visitor pass, inter-county transfers, cross-county bus routes, a website for regional transit information, and a basic branding and marketing effort. These services are sustained by a commitment of up to five percent of each system manager’s time and an annual contribution of \$10,000 per system. The plan attributes multiple benefits of the Connector program: greater ability to travel across county lines on public transit, enhanced capacity to market transit services to potential ridership, increased ridership on local transit services, the economic benefit of an affordable alternative to driving a personal vehicle, support for regional tourism through the regional visitor pass, the ability to attract competitive grants, availability of peer support, and the ability to provide a model for productive inter-agency relationships. The plan notes some weaknesses of the existing Connector partnership: because it consists of agency staff, elected officials are unable to provide the “voice of the people” in decision-making about regional transit; there are no regional performance measures; policies and procedures are inconsistent between Connector agencies; route schedule changes create complexity for accommodating scheduled inter-system transfers; and, online information and tools are insufficient for the public to understand the available resources.

The plan names four major regional needs: improved marketing and rider information, increased route frequency and coverage; improved bus stop safety features and amenities; and more connections to services beyond the Connector systems, including inter-city services and transit systems in nearby urban areas. To address these needs, five overarching goals are provided:

1. Improve Rider Access and Convenience;
2. Promote Connector Awareness;
3. Improve Regional Service Delivery;
4. Increase Organizational and Financial Stability; and,
5. Enhance Community Livability.

The plan also identifies opportunities to enhance regional transit integration through changes to governance and organizational structure. The NWOTA partners could update their existing intergovernmental agreement (IGA), or they could work with local elected officials to form a public body with a greater level of oversight over regional decision-making. The plan does not recommend changes to the organizational structure of the NWOTA members; it was determined that consolidation of any of the providers is not desirable or feasible. However, the plan notes that Columbia County, which does not currently have a taxing district, may consider future consolidation with Sunset Empire as a multi-county district.



Action Plan

The plan provides a five-year action plan for NWOTA to implement several strategies to address its five identified goals. It is recommended that the action plan be treated as a living document, with review and updates occurring quarterly. A major review and revision is recommended for approximately every 10 to 12 years.

The action plan includes the following goals and objectives. In addition, the plan lists out action steps for each objective, with a named responsible party and a target completion year.

Goal 1: Improve Rider Access and Convenience

- ◆ 1A: Develop a trip planning tool for the Connector website.
- ◆ 1B: Agree on major stops and amenities to be installed with Enhance (grant) funding.
- ◆ 1C: Provide branded shelter, timetables, and other amenities at each major Connector stop location by 2025.
- ◆ 1D: Develop consistent passenger comfort standards for bicycles, animals, luggage, food, and drink.
- ◆ 1E: Implement an automated phone information system specific to the Connector, with the same call-in number for all five transit agencies, Also, including Connector information as an automated phone menu option for all of the give Connector agency telephone services.

Goal 2: Promote Connector Awareness

- ◆ 2A: Develop a job description and fund a regional Public Involvement Coordinator position for the Connector.
- ◆ 2B: Develop and fund a regular, ongoing marketing and public information campaign that is done simultaneously throughout the five-county region.
- ◆ 2C: Establish a driver training and customer service training program for the sale of visitor passes. Provide an annual training session for staff at all five agencies beginning in 2017.
- ◆ 2D: Connect with local visitor attractions that can offer off-season discounts.
- ◆ 2E: Provide a website that is easy and intuitive for customers to use.
- ◆ 2F: Work with Travel Oregon to include the Connector in their “Seven Wonders of Oregon” marketing program.
- ◆ 2G: Provide presentations to update regional and statewide groups upon completion of the Management Plan.

Goal 3: Improve Regional Service Delivery

- ◆ 3A: Develop coordinated timetables for Connector service.
- ◆ 3B: Coordinate transfer times between Connector service and local service.
- ◆ 3C: Increase frequencies and service levels on the valley to coast corridors (Hwy 6, 20, 30).
- ◆ 3D: Expand the Connector systems into Yamhill County.
- ◆ 3E: Open a dialogue with other transit services such as Amtrak and POINT (starting with the Cascades POINT). Hold a meeting to share service and visitor pass information, and discuss ways to coordinate transfer times.
- ◆ 3F: Standardize data collection practices of Connector members.



Goal 4: Increase Organizational and Financial Stability

- ◆ 4A: On an ongoing basis, look for opportunities to jointly procure equipment, stop amenities, consulting services, and other major purchases.
- ◆ 4B: Complete a detailed study to look for additional regional operational cost efficiencies by 2020.
- ◆ 4C: Develop regional policies and procedures manual, and establish initial policies for topic areas recommended in the management plan.
- ◆ 4D: Reach out to the Oregon Transit Association (OTA) for assistance in lobbying for regional coordination funding.
- ◆ 4E: Convene representatives from each partner agency's board to discuss potential management strategies and resolve barriers to the IGA.

Goal 5: Enhance Community Livability

- ◆ 5A: Develop and implementation plan for a marketing concept similar to Sonoma County's "Transit to Trails" program, and build a page for it on the Connector website.
- ◆ 5B: On an annual basis, reach out to local community agencies, such as senior centers, to demonstrate how to ride the Connector.
- ◆ 5C: Partner with local jurisdictions to integrate the Connector into local planning and development approval processes.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

To obtain a more in-depth understanding of local transportation needs within SETD, the project consultant conducted a demographic analysis of Clatsop County. Data for this analysis were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. The data were analyzed at the Census Block Group level. Using the 2018 5-Year Estimates provides the most up-to-date information available from the U.S. Census Bureau.

POPULATION DENSITY

In Clatsop County, there was a total population of 38,562 in 2018. Exhibit 1 shows the population density within Clatsop County Census Block Groups. The density is calculated using the square mileage of each block group and its total population. The county seat of Astoria, along with Warrenton, Gearhart, and Seaside, has the highest population densities. Astoria and Seaside have the Census Block Groups with the highest densities, which range from 2,619 to 5,658 people per square mile.

OLDER ADULT POPULATION DENSITY

In 2018, Clatsop County had an Older Adult population (ages 65 and over) of 8,015, which consisted of 20.78 percent of the County's total population. It can be seen in Exhibit 2 that, similar to the county's population density, the areas with the highest densities of older adults are around Astoria,



Gearhart, and Seaside. The highest-density Census Block Groups can still be found near Astoria and Seaside, with their densities ranging from 803 to 1,320 older adults per square mile.

ZERO VEHICLE HOUSEHOLDS (ZVH)

Within Clatsop County, there were 15,910 households in 2018. Of those households, 1,228 of them did not have access to a vehicle. Exhibit 3 shows the percentage of zero-vehicle households (ZVH) in Clatsop County by Census Block Group. The areas of higher ZVH are more spread out than the Population and Older Adult densities as seen in Exhibits 1 and 2 but are still focused around the towns and cities within the County. The Census Block Groups with the highest percentages of ZVH can be found in Astoria and just east of Cannon Beach, ranging from 18.4 to 27.36 percent of households with zero vehicles.

HOUSEHOLDS BELOW POVERTY

Clatsop County had 1,639 households considered to be living in poverty in 2018, or 10.3 percent of all households in the County. The U.S. Census Bureau calculates household poverty based on a household's income and the number of people living in that household. Exhibit 4 illustrates the distribution of households in Clatsop County below poverty by Census Block Group. The areas of households below poverty are spread out throughout the county, with higher concentrations of poverty around Astoria and Gearhart, ranging from 16.59 to 24.48 percent of households. However, in those same areas, along with Census Block Groups near Gearhart and Seaside, there are places with the County's lowest percentage of households below poverty, ranging from 0 to 4.1 percent.

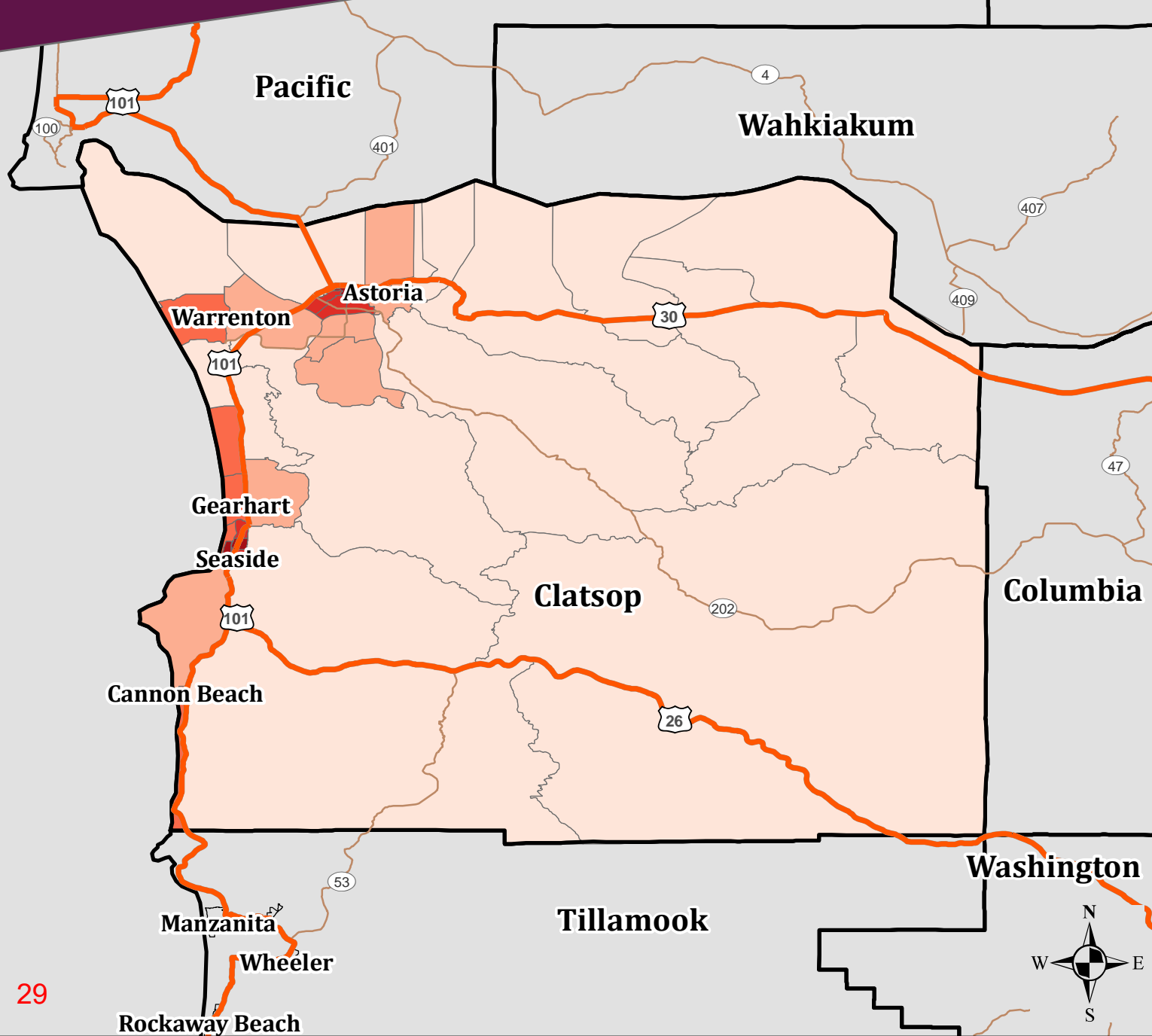
TRANSIT PROPENSITY

Transit propensity combines the four previously mentioned demographics (population density, older adult population density, zero-vehicle households, and households below poverty) to create an analysis of the areas that are most likely to need transportation services. Exhibit 5 shows transit propensity within Clatsop County by Census Block Group, ranging from "Low" to "High." The areas seen with "High" transit propensity are most likely to need transportation services and are found around Astoria, Gearhart, Seaside, and Cannon Beach. These are the areas that consistently had higher densities or percentages for the previous four demographics (Exhibits 1-4).



Exhibit 1: Clatsop County Population Density

SETD Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road

Population / Sq. Miles

	3.616 - 94.90
	94.91 - 314.7
	314.8 - 802.0
	802.1 - 2619
	2620 - 5658

Source: U.S. Census American
Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups

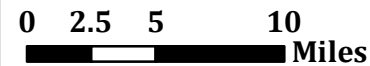
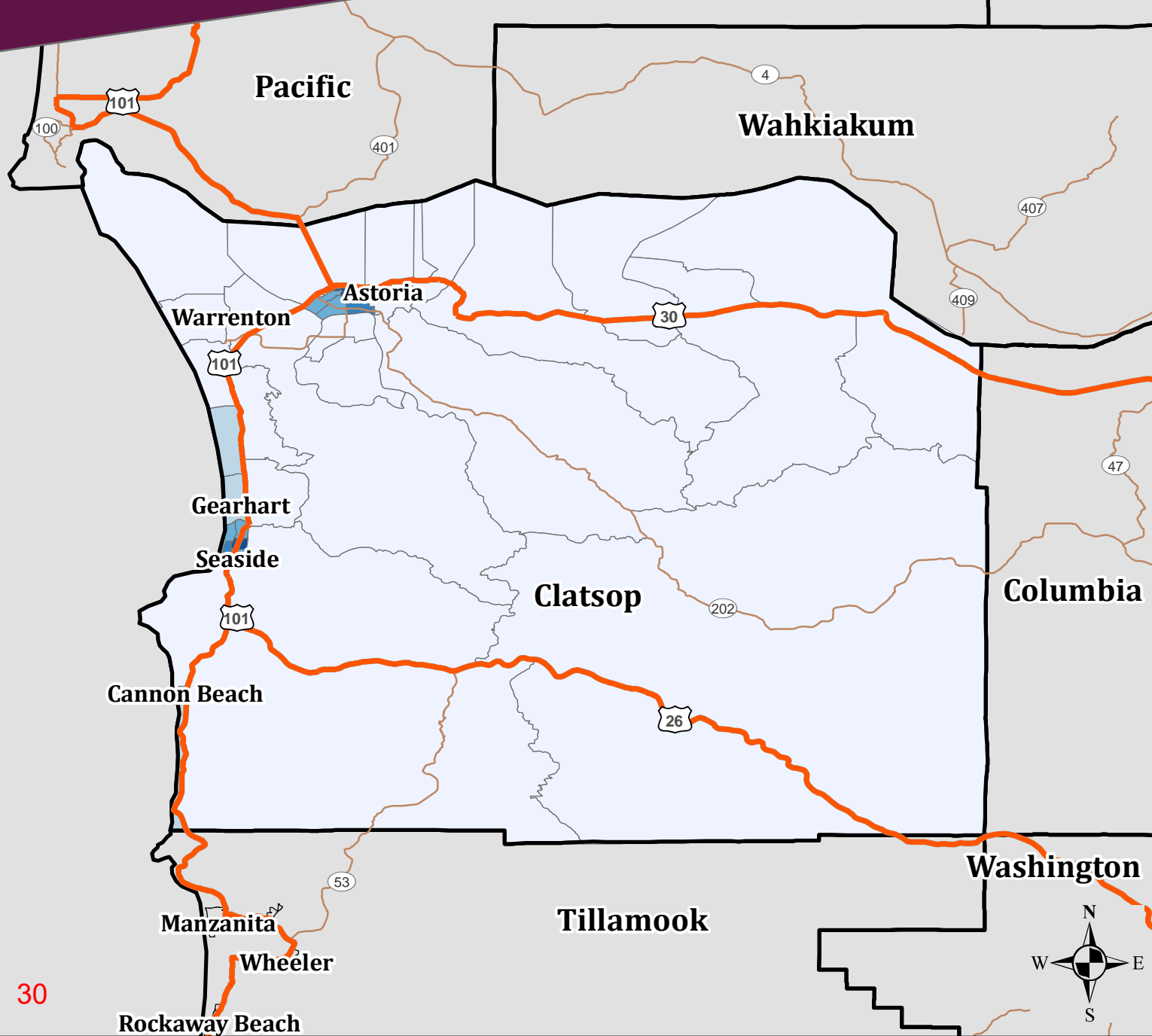


Exhibit 2: Clatsop County Older Adult Population Density

SETD
Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
 - Highway
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
- 65+ / Sq. Miles**
- 0.79 - 67.79
 - 67.8 - 172.48
 - 172.49 - 362.84
 - 362.85 - 803.47
 - 803.48 - 1,319.95

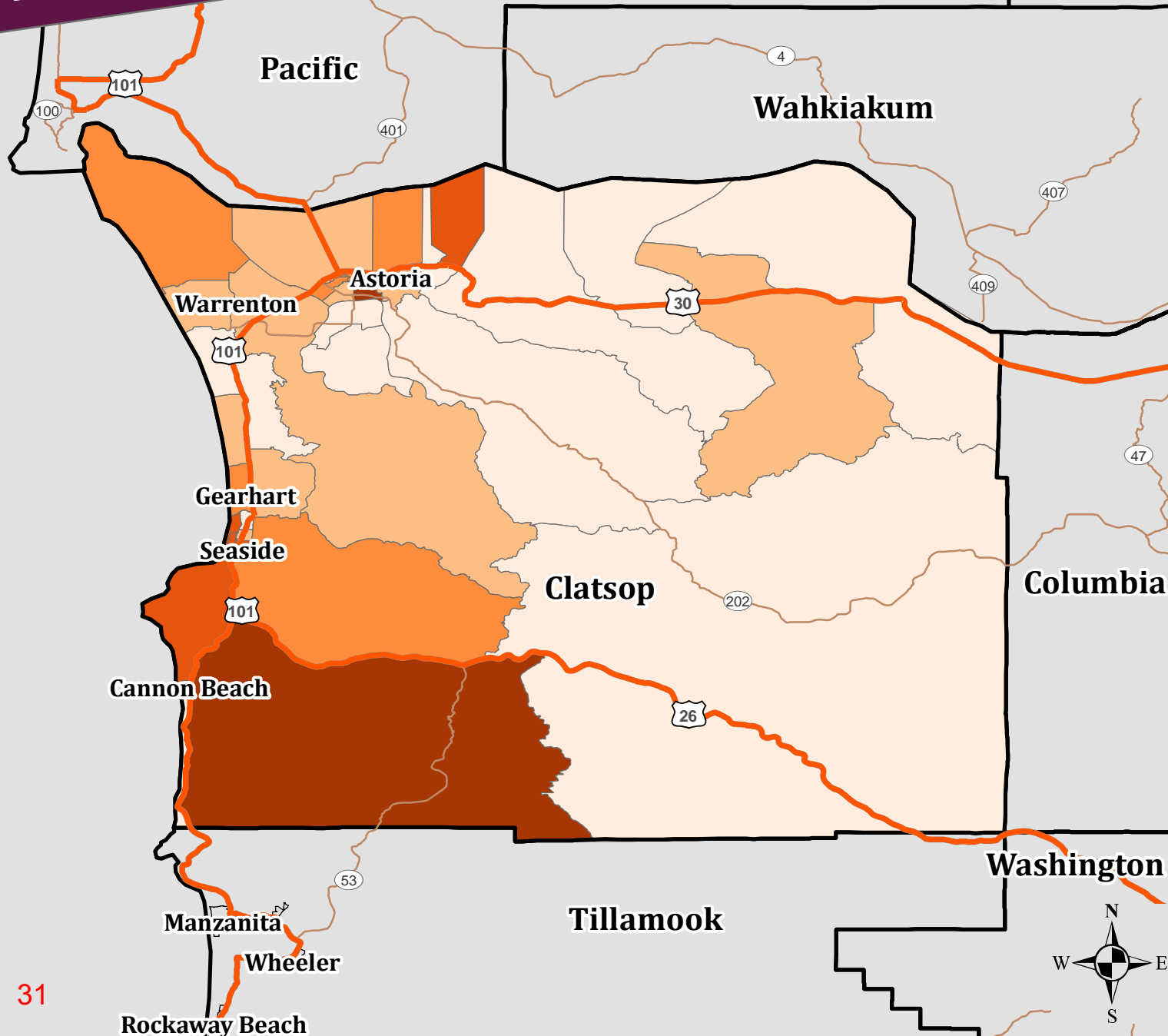
Source: U.S. Census American
Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups



30

Exhibit 3: Clatsop County Percent Zero Vehicle Households (ZVH)

SETD
Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
 - Highway
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
- ZVH / Household**
- 0% - 1.65%
 - 1.66% - 6.27%
 - 6.28% - 9.67%
 - 9.68% - 18.39%
 - 18.4% - 27.36%

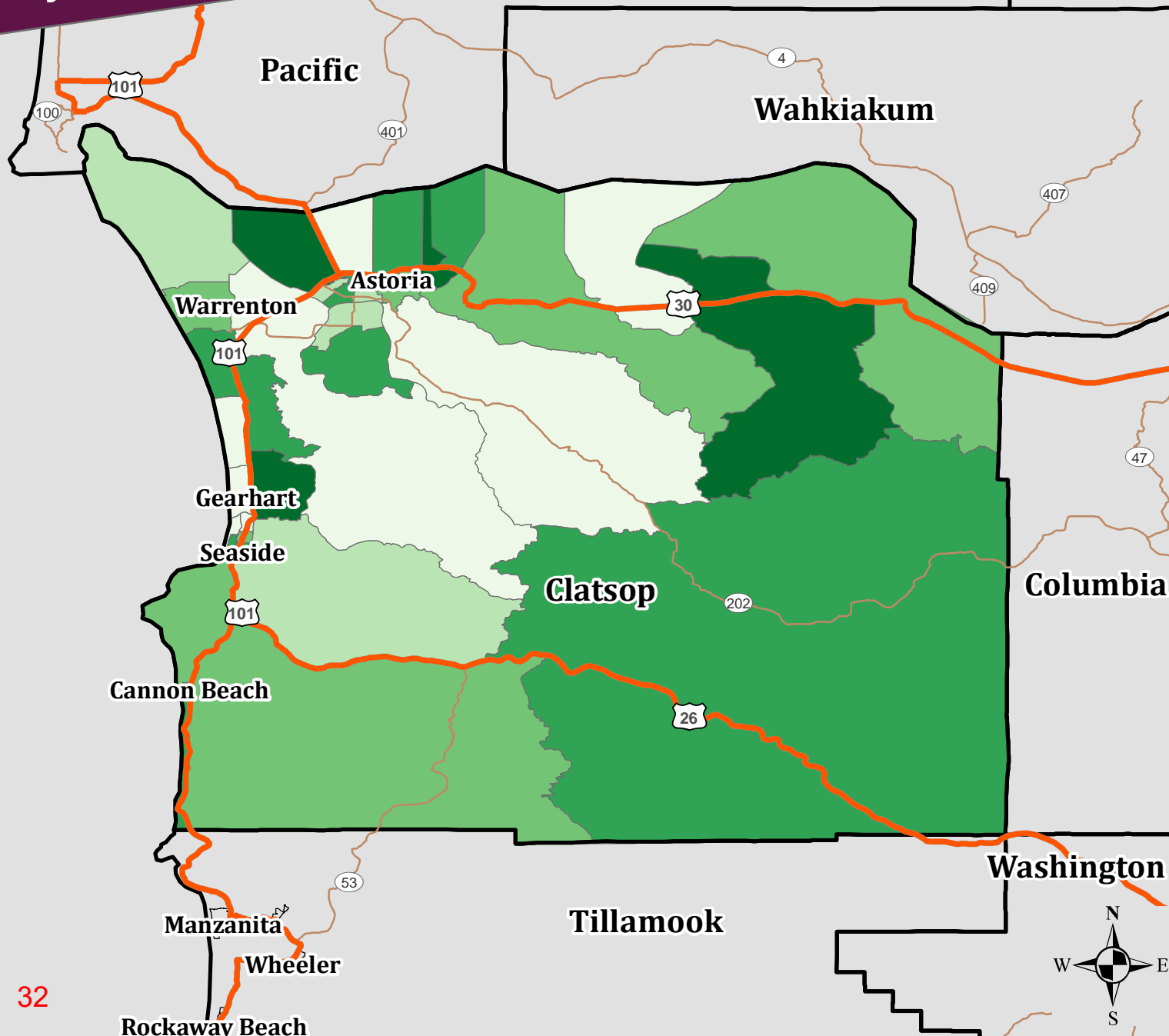
Source: U.S. Census American
Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups



0 2.5 5 10
Miles

Exhibit 4: Clatsop County Percent Households Below Poverty

SETD
Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road

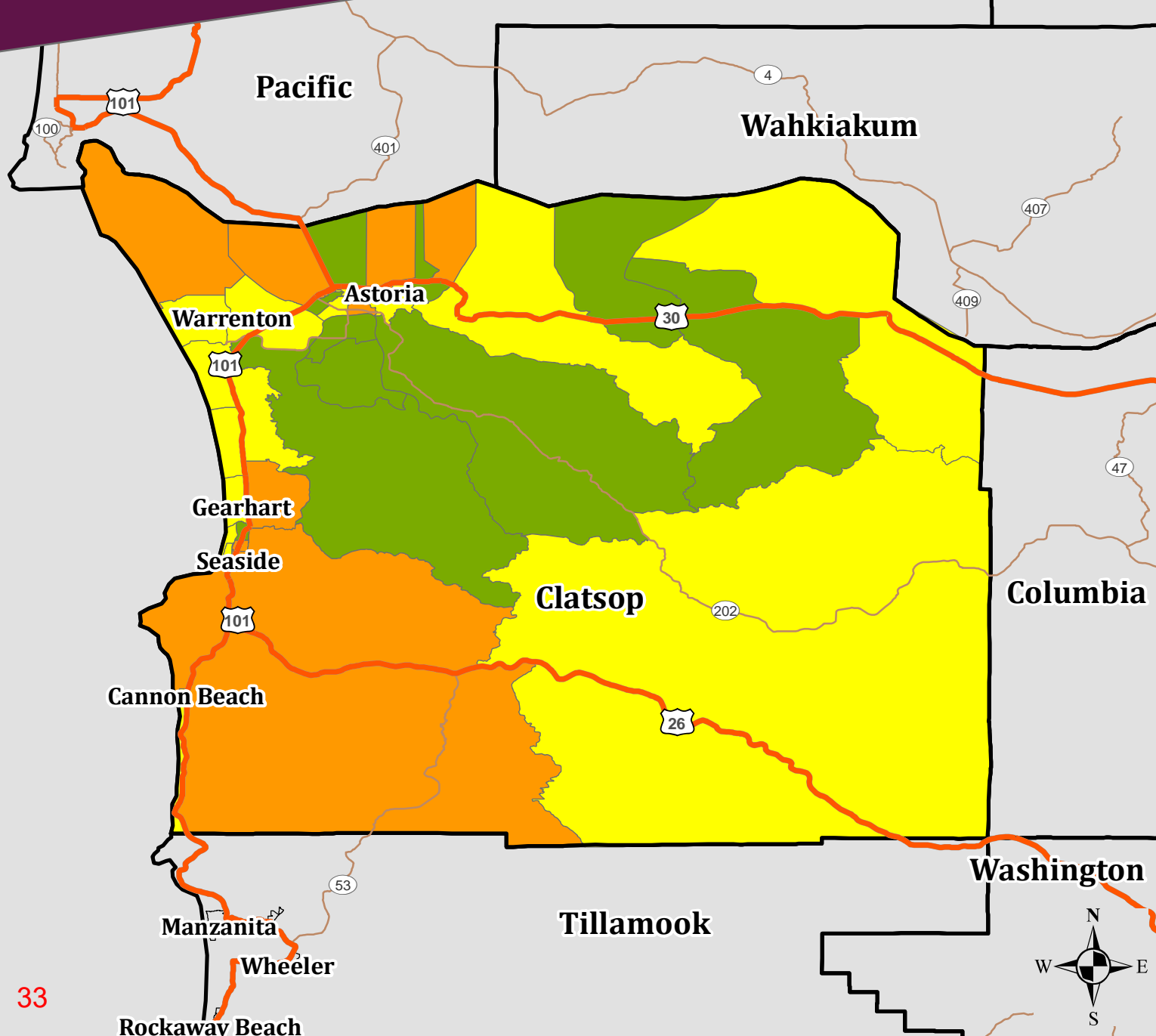
- Below Poverty / Household**
- 0% - 4.1%
 - 4.11% - 8.6%
 - 8.61% - 11.66%
 - 11.67% - 16.58%
 - 16.59% - 24.48%

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups



Exhibit 5: Clatsop County Transit Propensity

SETD Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road

- Propensity**
- Low
 - Moderate
 - High

Transit Propensity measures Older Adult density, and Zero Vehicle and Below Poverty Households. "High" areas are more likely to need transit services than "Low" areas.

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 5-Year Estimates Census Block Groups



MINORITY POPULATION

Of Clatsop County’s 2018 population of 38,562 people, 5,514 of them were minorities (14.3 percent). Within the ACS data, the most prevalent races included Hispanic or Latino, Black or African American, and Asian. Exhibit 6 shows the percent minority population throughout Clatsop County by Census Block Group. The areas with the highest percentages of minority populations are around Astoria and Seaside. In those Census Block Groups, the minority population ranges from 26.12 to 41.22 percent.

	Total	Percent
White	33,048	85.70%
Black or African-American	272	0.71%
American Indian and Alaska Native	116	0.30%
Asian	400	1.04%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	126	0.33%
Two or More Races	1,340	3.47%
Hispanic or Latino	3,260	8.45%
County Population	38,562	

PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

According to the ACS 2018 data, Clatsop County has a total of 6,784 residents with disabilities, accounting for 17.59 percent of the county’s total population. To determine the number of people with a disability, the ACS uses a six-part question that is based on the World Health Organization’s International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF). This six-part question asks about a person’s hearing, vision, mobility, cognition, among others. Within Clatsop County, Exhibit 7 shows that the Census Block Groups with the highest percentages of individuals with disabilities is around Astoria and Cannon Beach. In those areas, the percent of the population that has a disability ranges from 23.49 to 39.29 percent.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) is determined by using Census data that describe the language people speak at home. LEP combines the numbers of those who don’t speak English at home and speak English “not well.” Within Clatsop County, 507 people are considered LEP individuals. Exhibit 8 shows that the areas with the highest percentages of LEP individuals are around Warrenton, Gearhart, and Seaside, up to 20.89 percent of its possible LEP population be considered LEP individuals.



Table 10: Clatsop County LEP Population	
Language Spoken at Home	Speaks English “Not Well”
Spanish	467
Indo-European Languages	0
Asian and Pacific Island Languages	13
Other Languages	27
Total	507

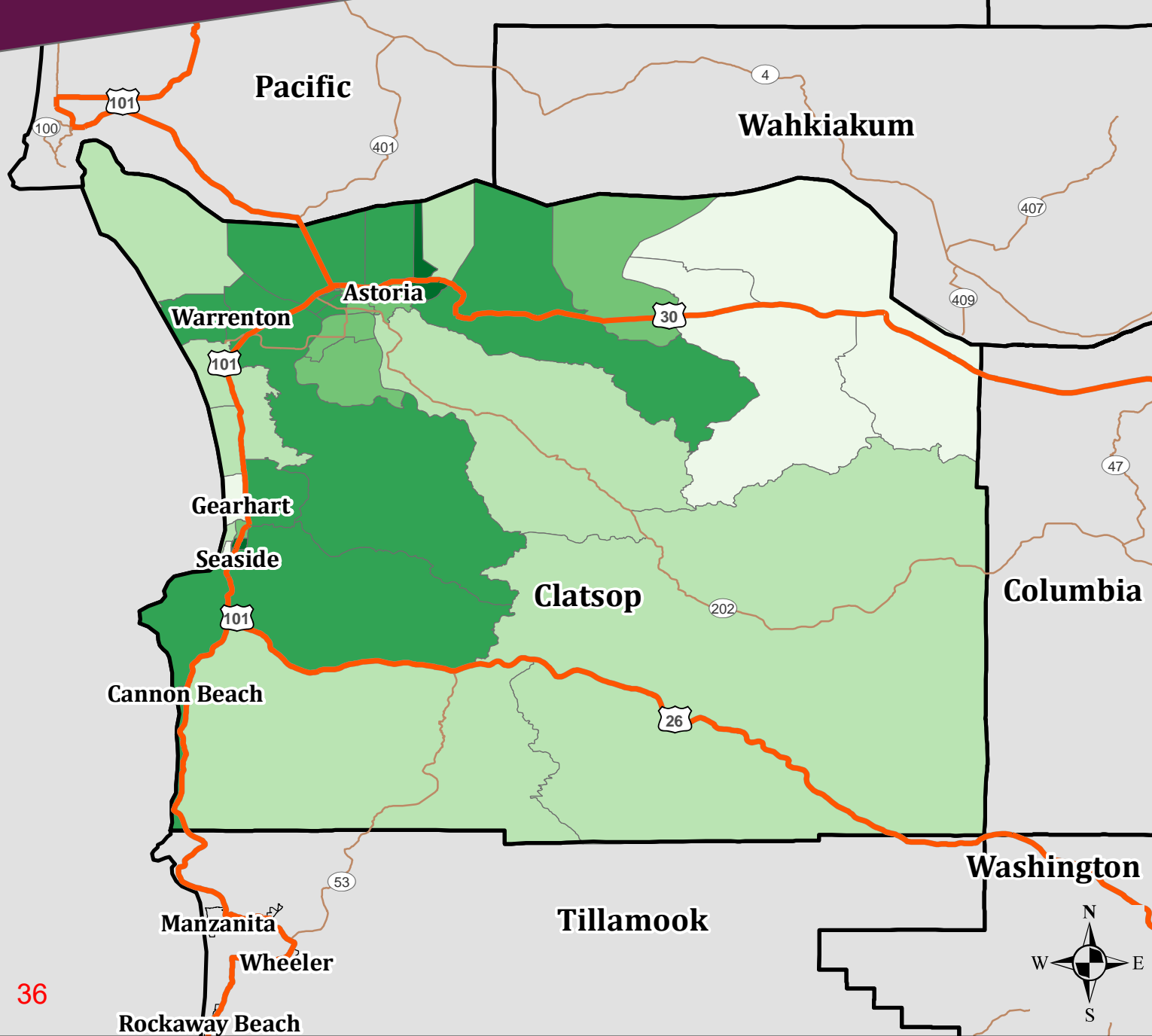
VETERAN POPULATION

Within Clatsop County, there are 3,668 veterans, making up 9.51 percent of the county’s total population. Exhibit 9 shows the areas surrounding Warrenton and east of Astoria as having the highest numbers of veterans residing in those Census Block Groups, ranging from 133 to 204 veterans. However, other Census Block Groups in the county have higher percentages of veterans, as seen in Exhibit 10. Those areas are near Cannon Beach, Gearhart, and Seaside, and have veteran populations that range from 13.19 to 16.36 percent of the total population.



Exhibit 6: Clatsop County Percent Minority Population

SETD Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
- Highway
- Major Road
- Local Road

Minority / Population

- 0% - 4.25%
- 4.26% - 7.93%
- 7.94% - 10.13%
- 10.14% - 26.11%
- 26.12% - 41.22%

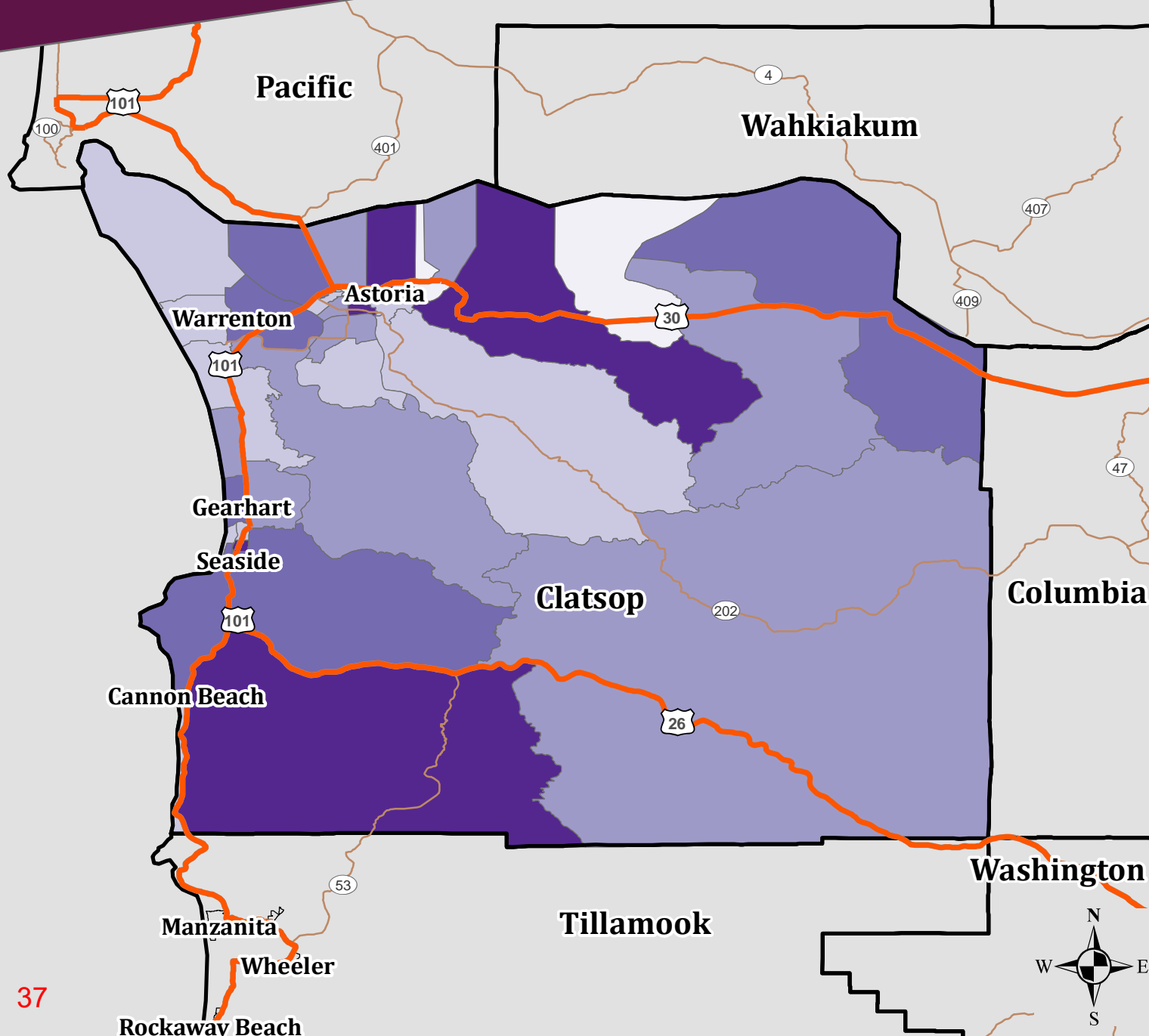
Minority includes:
 Hispanic or Latino,
 Black or African American,
 American Indian and Alaska
 Native, Asian, Native
 Hawaiian and Other Pacific
 Islander, Some Other Race,
 Two or More Races

Source: U.S. Census American
 Community Survey 2018
 5-Year Estimates
 Census Block Groups



Exhibit 7: Clatsop County Percent Disability Population

SETD
Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan



- Limited Access
 - Highway
 - Major Road
 - Local Road
- Disability / Population**
- 3.79% - 7.03%
 - 7.04% - 13.11%
 - 13.12% - 18.93%
 - 18.94% - 23.45%
 - 23.46% - 39.29%

Population with a
Disability 18 years
and older

Source: U.S. Census American
Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups

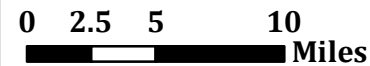
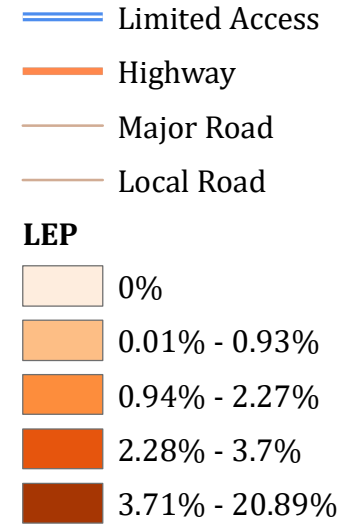
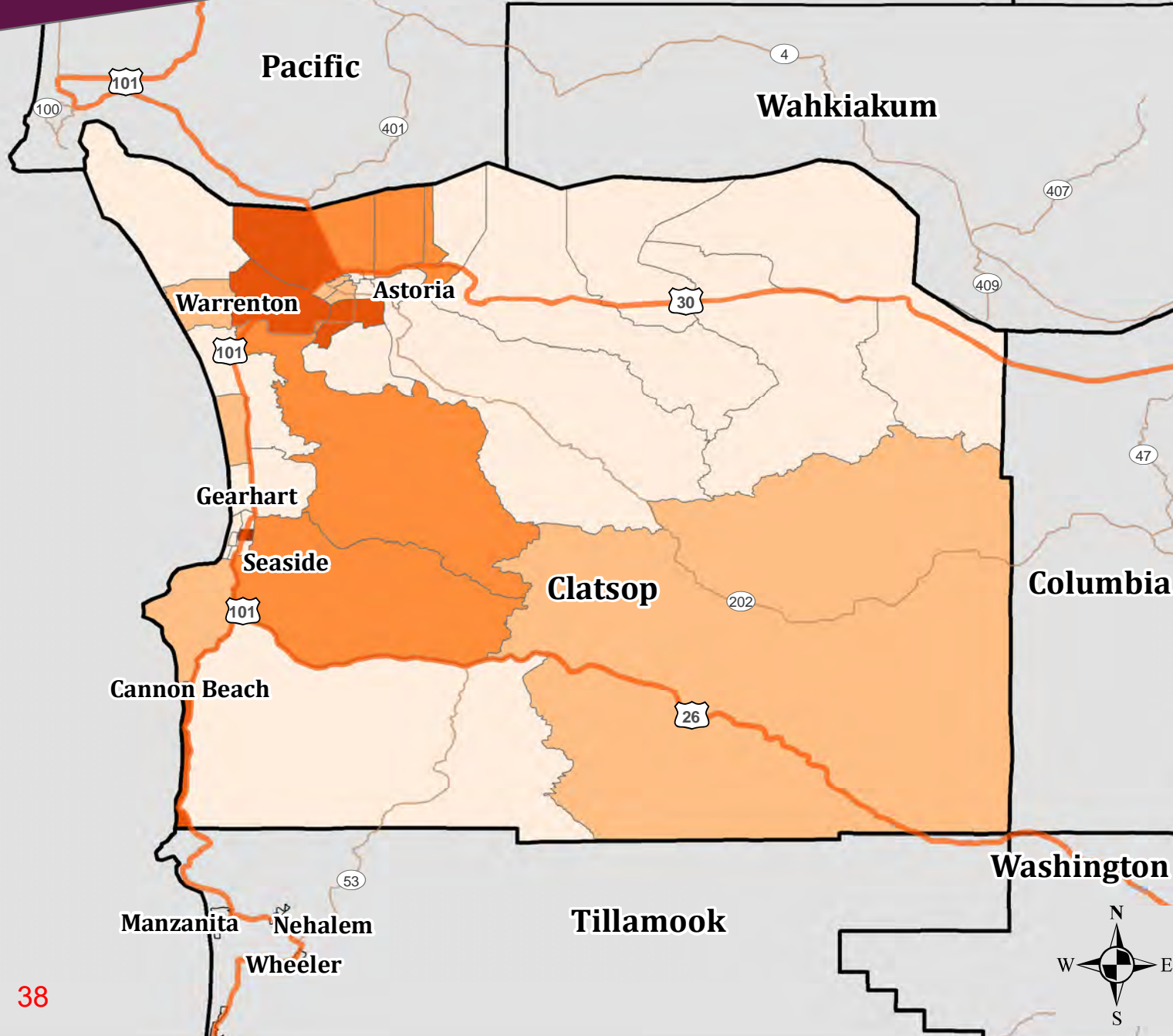


Exhibit 8: Clatsop County Percent Limited English Proficiency (LEP)

SETD
Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan



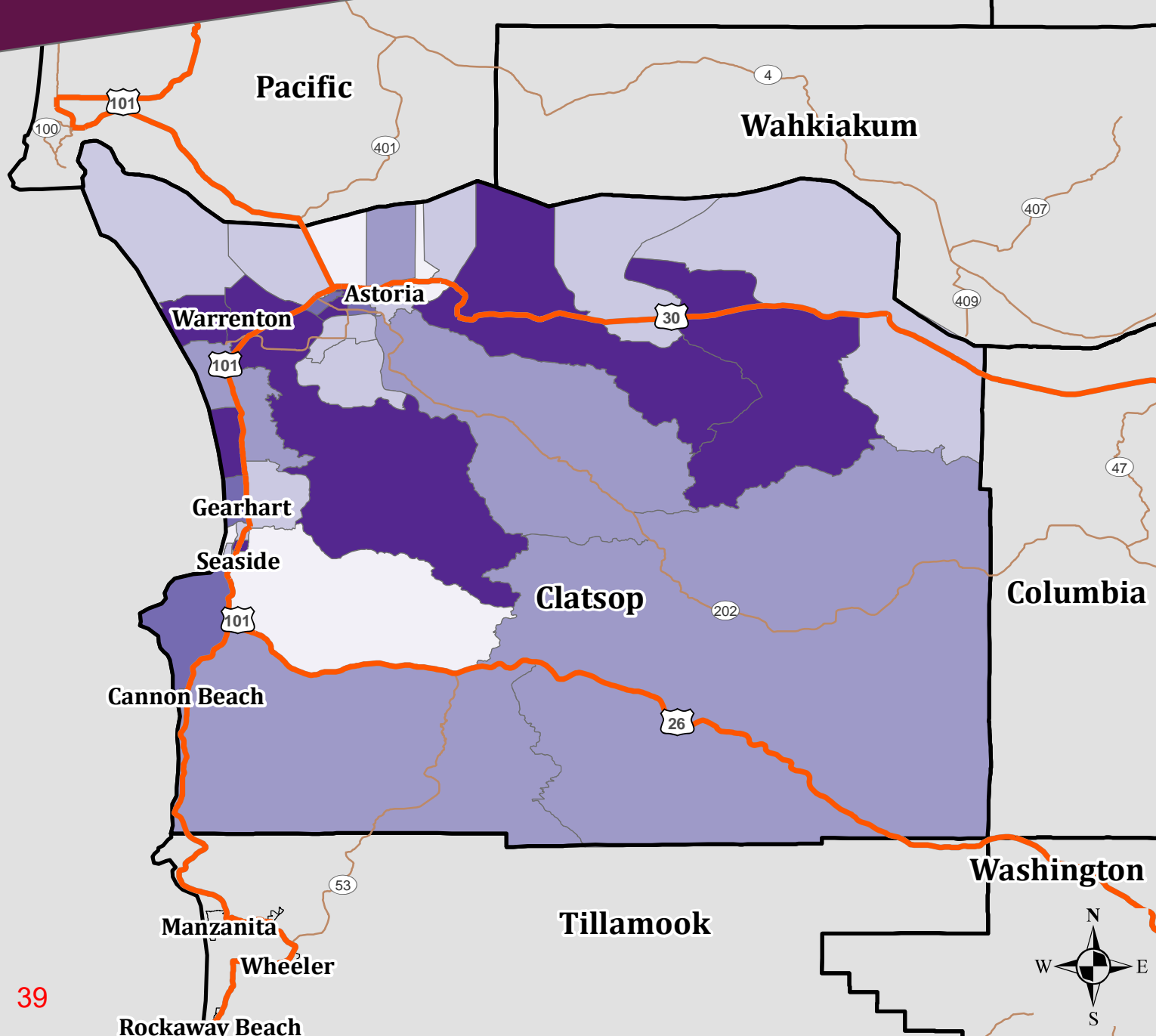
LEP measures those speaking a language other than English at home who speak English "not well."





Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018 5-Year Estimates Census Block Groups








Exhibit 9: Clatsop County Veteran Population

SETD Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan



-  Limited Access
-  Highway
-  Major Road
-  Local Road

Veterans

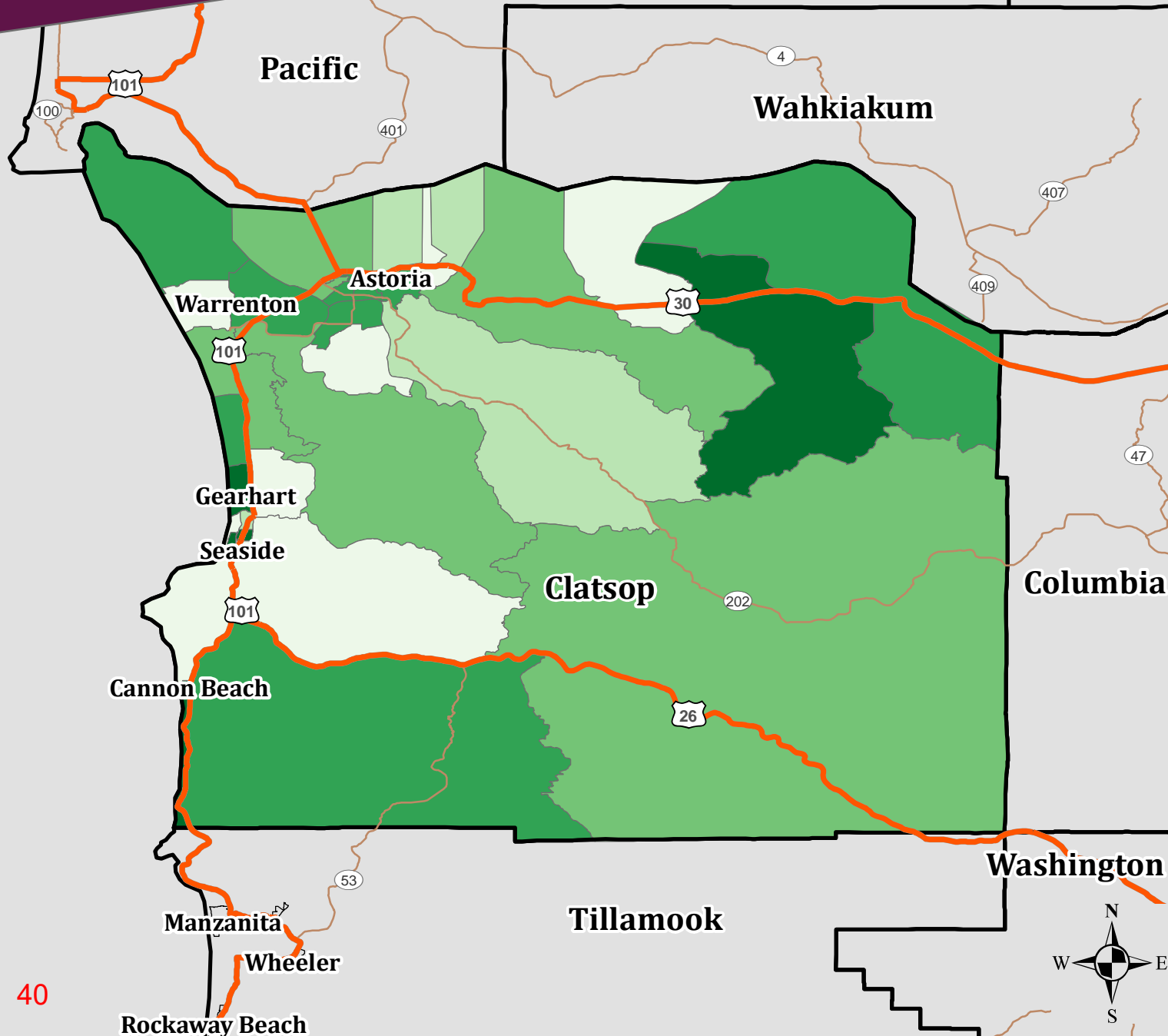
	12 - 48
	48.1 - 81
	81.1 - 105
	105.1 - 133
	133.1 - 204










Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups



Exhibit 10: Clatsop County Percent Veteran Population

SETD
Coordinated
Human Services
Transportation Plan



-  Limited Access
 -  Highway
 -  Major Road
 -  Local Road
- Veterans / Population**
-  4.51% - 6.41%
 -  6.42% - 8.47%
 -  8.48% - 10.67%
 -  10.68% - 13.18%
 -  13.19% - 16.36%

Source: U.S. Census American
Community Survey 2018
5-Year Estimates
Census Block Groups



Needs Assessment

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY INPUT

The primary method used to gather community input about unmet transportation needs was a stakeholder interview process. In August 2020, the project consultant interviewed 11 individuals about their understanding of the transportation needs of older adults and individuals with disabilities in Clatsop County. Ten of the individuals represented social services and economic development organizations. One interviewee was a Sunset Empire paratransit customer. Detailed interview notes are provided the appendix to this plan. Sunset Empire staff also provided input about community needs at several points during the project.

Analysis of the interview responses emphasized four gaps in transportation service in Clatsop County: the expansion of door to door transportation services beyond existing options, longer service hours for Sunset Empire, more geographical coverage for Sunset Empire, and the affordability of transportation, including easier access to Sunset Empire bus passes. Other needs were also identified, but were not mentioned by as many interviewees.

Door to Door Transportation

The subject that was most frequently mentioned was door to door transportation. Nine of 11 interviewees expressed that there is a need for this type of transportation. Many stakeholders expressed concern that county residents need transportation to medical appointments. This need exists in rural and in-town areas that are not served by Sunset Empire. Also, for some older adults and people with disabilities, fixed route public transit is not a feasible option due to difficulties with walking to bus stops and other barriers. County residents need in-county and out-of-county demand response transportation. The most common destination for out-of-county trips is Portland, where many residents need to go to obtain specialized medical care.

Sunset Empire provides complementary paratransit within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed routes, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Sunset Empire also operates general public demand response service in two rural areas of the county, though it is rarely used. Demand response transportation is costly to operate as compared to the agency's fixed route bus service. According to Sunset Empire's 2018 National Transit Database Agency Profile, the cost per one-way passenger-trip on its fixed routes was \$7.34. The cost per demand response trip was \$38.65. These per-trip costs are typical of small transit agencies. As a transit agency serving the general public, Sunset Empire must evaluate the costs of its various service types according to the level of benefit they provide.

Clatsop County has other demand response transportation services available to eligible individuals. Tillamook County Transportation District operates the NW Rides non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) brokerage for the Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization (CPCCO) to arrange rides for CPCCO members in Clatsop, Tillamook, and Columbia Counties to and from their Oregon Health Authority (OHA) covered medical appointments. Providence Health & Services, operator of the hospital in Seaside and affiliated providers, offers the Providence Community Care



transportation service for low-income members who need rides to medical appointments and, as capacity allows, basic needs such as grocery shopping. Disabled American Veterans (DAV) operates a van service to take veterans to appointments at Veterans Administration facilities, though this service has been suspended until a COVID-19 vaccine is available. Taxi services are available in the county, although they are unaffordable to people with low incomes. Columbia Memorial Hospital has a contract with a local taxi provider to provide rides in urgent situations, such as hospital discharges of patients who have no way home from the hospital. Astoria Senior Center operates a van to take older adults to senior center activities and appointments.

Public Transit Hours of Service

During the interviews, many stated that Sunset Empire services are needed for a wider span of hours. The most frequently mentioned need was late night hours for individuals who use the service to commute to jobs in the hospitality industry. These employees work until 10:00 PM or later. They can get to work on the bus, but there is no bus to get home. On the other hand, employees of fish canneries need transportation to work as early as 4:00 AM. Some fish canneries hire charter bus companies to transport their employees to work from outside of the county.

Public Transit Geographical Coverage

Several of the interviewees expressed a desire for bus service to reach more residential areas. Several individuals mentioned Warrenton, which is the county's fastest-growing community. Warrenton has more affordable housing than areas such as Astoria, Seaside, and Cannon Beach. Many Warrenton residents work in the latter communities, and need transportation to their jobs. The consensus was that there are several areas of Warrenton where the walk to the nearest bus stop is too long. Two interviewees mentioned Knappa. The Lower Columbia Connector provides limited schedules to Knappa and other eastern Clatsop County communities. These schedules do not fit well with the typical work shift for those working in the Astoria area.

Affordability and Improved Access to Transit Passes

Following door to door transportation, service hours, and geographical coverage, a frequently cited need was more affordable transportation and easier access to transit passes for human service agencies. Even though Sunset Empire has lowered its fares, the cost to ride is still a barrier for people with very low incomes. Sunset Empire offers a Ticket Bank program for human service agencies, which may need to be more widely advertised. This speaks to the need for improved communication between the transit agency and the social services community. Some human service agency personnel mentioned having difficulties purchasing bus passes for their clients. They felt that purchasing the passes was administratively burdensome.

Other Needs and Gaps in Service

The interviews revealed several other unmet needs and gaps in transportation service, although these were not mentioned as frequently, or viewed as critical, as the previous four needs.



- ◆ Improved Service to Employment: As noted previously, commuters who rely on public transit to get to work face several challenges. Transit service does not operate during all shifts at service industry employers and canneries. Service is not available in many of the county’s sparsely populated areas. Also, employees who use Sunset Empire for their commute are severely impacted by traffic congestion at peak times and during the tourism season. Congestion frequently causes buses to be delayed. At times, employees must choose between potentially being late for work, or leaving home up to one hour early to catch an earlier bus schedule (and arriving at work significantly early).
- ◆ Awareness of Existing Services and Understanding of How They Work: Sunset Empire’s travel training and mobility management program was praised by many of the interviewees. This program may be able to fill gaps in information that were documented during the interviews. For example, while many are aware that Sunset Empire provides service to Portland, community members need more education about using Portland’s transit system to get to their final destination. There was some confusion among interviewees about the availability of Dial-a-Ride service, how to buy passes, what types of passes are available, and whether the bus makes flag stops. Also, there is a general sense that communication between Sunset Empire and the human service agencies could be strengthened. Potentially, there is a role for the mobility manager in closing this communication gap.
- ◆ Bus Stop Accessibility, Safety, and Amenities: Some older adults and customers with disabilities are unable to use fixed routes because it is difficult to walk to them. The local topography is hilly, sometimes requiring customers to use stairs or walk on inclines to get to bus stops. The area gets a lot of rain, which means that some cover is needed at bus stops to protect customers from the elements.
- ◆ Fixed Route Frequency: People using Sunset Empire’s fixed routes, especially to go to work, would benefit from increased frequency. Some bus schedules only run every 60 minutes. Improvements to frequency give customers more flexibility in their daily life, because they have more choices about when they travel. Frequency also reduces travel time when customers must transfer between routes, because there is less waiting time between bus arrivals at transfer points.
- ◆ Delivery of Essential Items: The need for older adults and other people with vulnerable health status to stay home to reduce exposure to COVID-19 has highlighted the need for services that deliver food, supplies, prescription medications, and other essential items to people’s homes.
- ◆ Information for People whose Primary Language is Spanish: More than one percent of Clatsop County’s population speak Spanish and have limited ability to understand or speak English. It is critical that local transportation information is available in Spanish. Printed and online information should be translated to the greatest extent feasible, and transportation providers should make spoken information available in Spanish. Sunset Empire employs some staff who are bilingual in Spanish and English. Telephonic translation services are available to any organization for a fee.

Unmet transportation needs are summarized in **Table 1**.



Table 11: Summary of Unmet Transportation Needs and Gaps in Service

Door to Door Transportation
Expanded Public Transit Hours of Service
Expanded Public Transit Geographical Coverage
Affordability and Improved Access to Transit Passes
Improved Service to Employment
More Awareness of Existing Services and Understanding of How They Work
Bus Stop Accessibility, Safety, and Amenities
Improved Fixed Route Frequency
Delivery of Essential Items
Information for People whose Primary Language is Spanish

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

This chapter presents goals and strategies that could be implemented to address Clatsop County’s identified unmet needs and gaps in services. A goal represents a future or desired result that community stakeholders wish to achieve through their investments in transportation. Strategies are targeted activities that are implemented in support of goals. Each strategy was presented to the organizations and individuals that participated in the planning process either through an interview or a meeting. Participants were asked to assign a priority rating to each of the potential strategies. Criteria for prioritizing strategies include not only the importance of the associated goal, but the feasibility of implementing the strategy. For example, a strategy that is inexpensive to implement may be prioritized before a strategy that is more appealing, but high in cost.

The project consultant conducted an online presentation using GoToMeeting on October 8, 2020, to present the draft goals and strategies to stakeholders. Following the presentation, the stakeholders received a short online survey, asking how they would prioritize the strategies. Thirteen stakeholders participated in the meeting, and five participated in the priority rating activity. The priority rating scale used for each strategy is as follows:

- ◆ Low priority for coordinated transportation (1 point)
- ◆ Somewhat important priority for coordinated transportation (2 points)
- ◆ Important priority for coordinated transportation (3 points)
- ◆ Highly important priority for coordinated transportation (4 points)

Strategies receiving the highest numbers of “Highly important” and “Important” ratings will be the top priorities for coordinated transportation in Clatsop County. In the following section, each strategy is rated according to the average number of points received. The scale used is as follows:

- ◆ 1 – 1.3 = Low priority
- ◆ 1.4 – 2.3 = Somewhat important
- ◆ 2.4 – 3.3 = Important
- ◆ 3.4 – 4 = Highly important



GOAL 1: INCREASE AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Clatsop County residents are served by a number of transportation services, including fixed route public transit, paratransit options, school buses, NEMT, a hospital-based medical transportation provider, a senior center van, a DAV van program, taxi services, and tourist-oriented transportation. Sunset Empire offers a travel training program to orient residents to the public transit system, which is valued by community stakeholders. **Strategy 1A** is to continue this successful program.

Strategy 1A: Continue to Offer Travel Training	
Sunset Empire will continue to offer its travel training program. This program is coordinated by the agency's Mobility Manager, who focuses on education and outreach about public transit services.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	Human service agencies, schools, and other organizations that refer clients or arrange sessions
Budget/Resources Needed	Mobility Management program expenses
Potential Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	Ongoing
Performance Measures	Number of individuals trained; number of travel training sessions conducted
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work
Priority Level	Important

Strategies 1B and 1C address the need for clearer public transit information to be made available to residents. Bus stop signs, vehicle exteriors, bus pass procedures, and route maps/schedules need to be consistent and easy to understand. Strategy 1B includes a rebranding effort for Sunset Empire, including the implementation of consistent branding and signage throughout the system. Strategy 1C is to improve route and schedule printed and online information.

Strategy 1B: Implement Consistent Public Transit Branding and Signage	
Sunset Empire plans to conduct a rebranding project and update bus stop signage and vehicle markings. This branding effort is intended to increase awareness of the transit system, attract new customers, and enhance the appeal of the system to core user groups including older adults and people with disabilities.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	N/A
Budget/Resources Needed	\$15,000 – \$20,000 for branding/graphic design services; \$5,000 – \$10,000 for new bus wraps and \$50 per stop to replace bus stop signs
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	2021 – 2023



Strategy 1B: Implement Consistent Public Transit Branding and Signage	
Performance Measures	Rebranding study completed; number of bus stop signs and vehicle wraps installed; number of new customers following rebranding (as determined through ridership surveys)
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work
Priority Level	Somewhat important

Strategy 1C: Improve Route and Schedule Printed and Online Information	
Sunset Empire will design route maps and schedules that will reflect the new agency brand, and will incorporate the brand into its webpage on the NWOTA site.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire Transportation District
Supporting Parties	NWOTA
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable, depending on the number of schedules that are printed. Graphic design services would cost \$10,000 to \$15,000, but would depend on the exact scope of the design work and complexity of the maps/schedules.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	2021 – 2023
Performance Measures	Number of schedules distributed; number of website hits
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work
Priority Level	Important

Strategy 1D addresses the need for transportation information to be available in Spanish. Sunset Empire translates its basic documents into Spanish, and employs some staff with Spanish-speaking ability. These efforts should be maintained so that people who speak and read in Spanish only have equivalent access to information about how to use transit services.

Strategy 1D: Ensure that Transportation Information is Available in Spanish	
Sunset Empire will design route maps and schedules that will reflect the new agency brand, and will incorporate the brand into its webpage on the NWOTA site.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire Transportation District
Supporting Parties	NWOTA (for website information)
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable, depending on amount of printed information translated, number of bilingual staff hired, and scale of website/app translation.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	2021 – 2023
Performance Measures	# of Spanish schedules distributed; # of website hits
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Information for people whose primary language is Spanish
Priority Level	Important



GOAL 2: MAKE TRANSPORTATION MORE AFFORDABLE TO PEOPLE WITH LOW INCOMES AND IMPROVE ACCESS TO TRANSIT PASSES

The affordability of transportation and ease of public transit fare payment were two concerns frequently voiced during the needs assessment. Sunset Empire has a ticket bank program which allows human service agencies to obtain free bus passes that can be distributed to clients. Sunset Empire has recently lowered its fixed route fare to one dollar and simplified its fare structure for bus passes. The agency offers a \$3 day pass, a \$30 monthly pass, and a \$20 reduced fare pass. K-12 students ride for free. **Strategy 2A** is to maintain the ticket bank program and ensure that human service agencies have easy access to passes for their clients.

Strategy 2A: Maintain Ticket Bank Program and Improve Pass Sales to Human Service Agencies	
Sunset Empire will continue to offer the Ticket Bank to local agencies and make improvements to the process agencies use to purchase bus passes for clients.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	Human service agencies
Budget/Resources Needed	Up to \$13,000
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	Ongoing
Performance Measures	Number of passes distributed; feedback about ease of purchasing passes
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Affordability and improved access to transit passes
Priority Level	Important

Strategy 2B has a longer-term objective of implementing an electronic fare payment system that would allow human service agencies to load transit fares directly to a client’s account. This system would allow Sunset Empire customers to pay their fare with a smartphone app. Potentially, all NWOTA providers could adopt the same technology, incorporating regional fares for cross-county trips. There are several examples of early adopters of this type of technology throughout the U.S., including the EZfare mobile ticketing app implemented by NEORide, a group of northeast Ohio transit agencies.

The adoption of new technology presents the opportunity to promote the Sunset Empire to the public. The ability to conveniently pay for a bus ride with a smartphone may attract new riders to the service. This type of technology demonstrates the transit agency’s willingness to embrace innovation, which enhances community buy-in into the overall value of the service.

Strategy 2B: Electronic Fare Payment with Customer Accounts	
Sunset Empire will implement an electronic solution for fare payment that allows customers to pay fares with smartphones, and allows human service agencies to pay electronically for clients’ bus passes.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire



Strategy 2B: Electronic Fare Payment with Customer Accounts	
Supporting Parties	Human service transportation providers and NWOTA member public transit agencies
Budget/Resources Needed	Technology costs vary widely; costing depends on the desired functionalities. More research is necessary to determine the approximate costs of the technology.
Funding Source(s)	The FTA offers competitive discretionary grant funding for transit technology and innovations. FTA grant opportunities are described at https://www.transit.dot.gov/grants . Other potential funding sources include Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding.
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Performance Measures	Implementation of electronic fare payment; number of customers using the system; feedback from human service agencies about ease of use; customer satisfaction as measured through surveying
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Affordability and improved access to transit passes; awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work
Priority Level	Important

GOAL 3: EXPAND DOOR TO DOOR TRANSPORTATION THROUGH NEW COLLABORATIONS

Except in certain circumstances, residents of the county do not have access to affordable door to door transportation. Sunset Empire offers complementary paratransit service within a 3/4-mile radius of fixed routes as required under the ADA. Taxi rides outside of town centers are cost-prohibitive, and taxis do not typically operate ADA-accessible vehicles or provide door to door assistance to passengers. Customer-friendly, accessible, affordable door to door transportation was noted as the most critical unmet transportation need in the county.

Providing countywide demand response transportation service would be cost-prohibitive for Sunset Empire. The public transit agency is challenged with providing cost-efficient services with a limited budget, which is based on predetermined amounts of FTA Section 5311 funding, Oregon Department of Transportation funding, property tax revenue, and other sources. Fixed routes attract six to 12 passenger boardings per service hour, while demand response service provides between one and three rides per hour. This is the reason why there is a large difference in cost-per-trip between demand response and fixed route service. Sunset Empire is unable to make a significant expansion of its demand response service while maintaining existing levels of fixed route service.

Two strategies are provided to expand demand response transportation in the county. **Strategy 3A** is a voucher program that would fund door to door rides provided under contract with local human service transportation providers and taxis. Some rides could be provided by Sunset Empire within certain parameters to manage demand. Vouchers could be used on a limited basis for urgent needs. Sunset Empire or an alternate lead agency would house the program, which would be a partnership



with various human service agencies. The partnership would determine the eligibility and usage criteria for the program. The program would build on successful partnerships that already exist, which include:

- ◆ The partnership between Providence Community Care and Clatsop Community Action, in which Clatsop Community Action provides income verification services to determine customer eligibility for Providence Community Care transportation;
- ◆ The partnership between Sunset Empire and the DAV, in which the Sunset Empire Veterans' Enhanced Transportation Program provides local rides to the DAV van pick-up point; the DAV van then takes veterans to the VA Hospital in Portland; and,
- ◆ The contract between Columbia Memorial Hospital and a local taxi provider (Royal Cab), which provides taxi rides to patients in urgent situations, such as when they are discharged but have no ride home from the hospital.

Strategy 3A: Door to Door Voucher Program	
Sunset Empire or an alternate lead agency will establish a voucher program to fund door to door rides. The program would provide vouchers to older adults and/or individuals with disabilities in for medical, work or essential needs trips. Sunset Empire would form agreements with public, non-profit, and private transportation providers to accept the vouchers and provide trips. Vouchers could be offered on a sliding scale based on income in order to make the program affordable to low-income individuals.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire or an alternate lead agency
Supporting Parties	Clatsop Community Action, NorthWest Senior and Disability Services, and other human service agencies and health care providers; interested local taxi companies, NEMT providers, and human service transportation operators would accept the vouchers to provide rides.
Budget/Resources Needed	Budget is scalable based on the number of rides that the partners intend to provide.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5310, STF, or STIF
Timeframe	2021 – 2023
Performance Measures	Number of vouchers redeemed for transportation
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Door to door transportation
Priority Level	Important

Strategy 3B is to develop and implement trip-sharing arrangements. Trip-sharing is a type of joint use arrangement that may require a new level of policymaking and management. This strategy is a more intensive form of coordination than a voucher program; it could be phased in after the voucher program is established. All of the providers who accept the vouchers, or only some of them, could participate.

When one demand response provider operates with empty seats, the opportunity to develop trip-sharing is present. By matching unfilled seats with another participant's clients, vehicle capacity is maximized. This results in reducing the cost per one-way trip for all riders. To set up a trip-sharing program, a method to collect and share information about unfilled seats must be developed. That information will be used to identify the specific service areas, times of the day, and days of the week



when any unfilled seats are available. A lead agency – Sunset Empire or an alternate provider – would collect this information from each participating transportation provider, then distribute it to all participants. The participants would use this information to request a trip for a client on one of the other participant’s vehicles. Scheduling and dispatching software can be used to make the trip-sharing process more convenient, potentially making it possible to trip-share instantaneously in real time.

A more formalized approach involves the lead agency collecting information from all participants on available capacity and, also, *collecting information from all participants on transportation needs*. The lead agency is then responsible for matching unmet needs and available seats. One advantage of this approach is that often it is possible to identify service duplications. The lead agency can then work with the participants to eliminate duplicate service.

Trip sharing arrangements require detailed coordination. Due to liability issues and the need to share costs, it is recommended that this activity be formalized. Formal arrangements should include the following elements:

- ◆ A policy-making body should be selected to set overall policy for the joint use arrangement. The body may be a new entity established for transportation coordination, or it could be the Board of Directors of Sunset Empire or a partner organization. The policy-making body will be responsible for monitoring the performance of the trip sharing arrangement to determine if it is achieving its intended goals. The participating transportation providers should be represented on the policy-making body and/or should pass resolutions or adopt formal agreements that endorse the administrative structure.
- ◆ Guiding policies for the trip sharing arrangement should be established by the policy-making body. It must be someone’s responsibility to manage the trip-sharing arrangement and ensure that policies are followed. The actual operations of the trip-sharing arrangement may be performed by the managing entity, or by another participant. The structure should be what makes the most sense in the local context.
- ◆ A trip accounting system must be developed to ensure that shared trips are accurately billed to the appropriate agency. This system may be based, for example, on cost-per-passenger trip or cost-per-passenger mile. Each provider must determine the fully allocated costs of their transportation service, and bill at the appropriate unit rates. Fundamental principles for cost-sharing between Federally funded transportation providers are set forth in the Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Cost-Sharing Policy Statement, which is included as an appendix to this plan.

A helpful resource for agencies pursuing trip sharing arrangements is Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) Report 144: Sharing the Costs of Human Services Transportation, which explores issues and potential solutions for identifying and sharing the cost of providing transportation services for access to community-based human services programs. The report examines current practices and offer strategies for collecting necessary data, addressing administrative and policy-related issues, and establishing cost allocation procedures.

Strategy 3B: Trip-Sharing Arrangements

Sunset Empire, or an alternate lead agency, will develop and implement a trip-sharing program for Clatsop County.



Strategy 3B: Trip-Sharing Arrangements	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire or an alternate lead agency
Supporting Parties	Clatsop Community Action, NorthWest Senior and Disability Services, and other human service agencies and health care providers; interested local taxi companies, NEMT providers, and human service transportation operators would participate in the trip-sharing program as providers.
Budget/Resources Needed	The primary cost for the program will be salary/benefits for the staff member(s) of the lead agency that develop and launch the program. Software used to coordinate trip sharing presents a potential additional cost. Following the program launch, the lead agency will incur ongoing labor costs to operate the program. Potentially, the program could include a budget for purchased transportation to cover additional rides from the trip sharing “pool” of providers; however, the intention of the program is not to spend more on transportation, but to spend existing transportation funding in a more coordinated, efficient manner.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5310, STF, or STIF
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Performance Measures	Number of rides provided through trip sharing
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Door to door transportation
Priority Level	Important

GOAL 4: IMPROVE THE CONVENIENCE AND RELIABILITY OF FIXED ROUTES

The needs assessment found that while many county residents benefit from Sunset Empire’s fixed routes, customers would like to see improvements so that the service is more convenient and reliable. Traffic congestion during the tourist season (the summer and early fall months) frequently causes schedule delays. Employees who use the bus to commute must sometimes catch an earlier schedule, to avoid being late for work in the event of a delay. Increased frequency on routes (for example, providing 30-minute instead of 60-minute frequency) means that employees in this situation would need to leave only 30, rather than 60, minutes earlier for work.

Frequency also improves travel times when customers have to transfer between routes. With better frequency, less time passes between schedules, meaning lower wait times at transfer points between routes.

Frequent fixed route bus service allows for greater freedom in scheduling commutes, errands, appointments, and other daily life events. When a bus only comes every 60 minutes, the bus schedule has a large impact on the timing of an individual’s everyday life activities. When a schedule operates on shorter frequencies, such as 15 minutes, individuals are not forced to plan their lives around the schedule. However, budgetary constraints prevent most rural transit providers from



running 15-minute frequencies on their fixed routes. However, increasing from 60+ minutes to 30-45 minutes is both beneficial to customers and more attainable for rural transit system budgets.

Strategy 4: Increase Fixed Route Frequency	
Sunset Empire will increase frequency on its fixed routes.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	N/A
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable, depending on the number of revenue hours of bus service required to increase frequency for each route.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	2021 – 2025
Performance Measures	Ridership on routes with increased frequency
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Fixed route frequency, improved service to employment
Priority Level	Highly important

GOAL 5: INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY OF BUS STOPS

The safety and accessibility of bus stops are key for Sunset Empire customers. For some customers, it is difficult to use bus stops that don't have coverings, benches, or that do not offer accessibility features such as concrete pads or adequate clearance from parked cars. The local climate is rainy, so customers benefit greatly from sheltered bus stops. Physical, cognitive, and psychological barriers associated with bus stops can hamper bus ridership. When people with disabilities are unable to ride fixed route buses because of such barriers, their mobility is decreased, and reliance on paratransit may increase, leading to increased system costs.

Sunset Empire's Long-Range Comprehensive Transportation Plan (LRCTP) provides minimum standards for bus stop amenities. Shelters and seating are recommended for higher ridership bus stops, defined as stops with more than ten boardings per day. Currently, Sunset Empire has active plans to upgrade some of its stops to have shelters and seating. The agency plans to upgrade bus stops on an ongoing basis, though its ability to upgrade stops is dependent on available funding.

Strategy 5: Add Shelters and Seating to High Ridership Bus Stops	
Sunset Empire will upgrade bus stops with more than ten boardings per day to include seating and shelters. Sunset Empire will consult with human service agencies at committee meetings (see Goal 6) for input to support the prioritization of upgrades. Upgrades will also be prioritized based on ridership levels, costs, feasibility, and community input.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	N/A
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable, depending on the amenities added to existing bus stops.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	Ongoing



Strategy 5: Add Shelters and Seating to High Ridership Bus Stops	
Performance Measures	Number of bus stop upgrades completed; increases in boardings at upgraded stops.
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Bus stop accessibility, safety, and amenities
Priority Level	Highly important

GOAL 6: STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION BETWEEN SUNSET EMPIRE AND HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

Sunset Empire strives to keep an open line of communication with all community stakeholders. Communication with human service agencies is of critical importance, since human service agency consumers often rely on transportation services – especially older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes. To strengthen communication with human service agencies, Sunset Empire will establish a standing committee of agency representatives. This committee will be invited to meet on a quarterly basis to receive updates on Sunset Empire services, review progress made toward goals in this plan, and exchange information about unmet transportation needs in the community. Sunset Empire staff will publish and circulate meeting agendas in advance, facilitate the meetings, and record and distribute meeting minutes. It is suggested that the following agencies be included:

- ◆ Astoria Senior Center
- ◆ Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare
- ◆ Clatsop Care Health & Rehabilitation
- ◆ Clatsop Community Action
- ◆ Columbia Memorial Health
- ◆ Consejo Hispano
- ◆ Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
- ◆ Helping Hands
- ◆ Northwest Community Alliance
- ◆ Northwest Senior and Disabilities Services
- ◆ Providence Community Connections
- ◆ Oregon DHHS Vocational Rehabilitation
- ◆ Providers of Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation
- ◆ Taxi Companies

Strategy 6: Establish a Committee of Transportation Providers and Human Service Agencies	
Sunset Empire will establish a committee of transportation providers and human service agencies with an interest in improving mobility for older adults, individuals with disabilities, people with low incomes, veterans, people with limited English proficiency, and other groups. The committee will meet on a quarterly basis.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	Human service agencies and transportation providers
Budget/Resources Needed	No new resources or funding are necessary for this strategy.
Funding Source(s)	N/A



Strategy 6: Establish a Committee of Transportation Providers and Human Service Agencies	
Timeframe	Near-term: establish committee during current biennium, then ongoing
Performance Measures	Number of participants in quarterly committee meetings
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work
Priority Level	Important

GOAL 7: PROVIDE TRANSPORTATION FOR EARLY MORNING AND LATE EVENING COMMUTES

Commuters who use Sunset Empire to get to work for shifts that start in the early morning or end in the late evening need transportation options outside of the transit agency’s hours of operation. The largest group experiencing this need is hospitality industry employees working in Seaside and Cannon Beach. However, there are also hospitality jobs in other areas of the county. These employees’ work shifts that may end as late as midnight.

Employees of fish canneries in the Astoria area need transportation in the early morning. Some fish canneries hire charter bus companies to transport their employees to work from areas outside of the county, including Washington.

One way to meet this need would be for Sunset Empire to extend its hours of operation on certain routes. However, new transit service must meet performance standards that are used by Sunset Empire to monitor the cost-efficiency and productivity of its services. The LRCTP includes fixed route service standards of six to 12 boardings per revenue hour, meaning that for every hour a bus route runs, six or more customers should board. The standard for fixed route cost-efficiency is six to 12 dollars of operating costs per boarding. These standards are used to justify the expense of adding new service. Service in the late evening and early morning is not likely to generate adequate ridership to justify the expense of operating additional service. However, demand may increase in the future with population growth and the addition of more tourism jobs.

Strategy 7A is to implement a pilot employee transportation program to fill this gap in service. There are several alternatives to bus service for employee transportation:

- ◆ Vanpooling is a common, long-distance commute option for groups of five to 15 commuters headed to the same work site, for the same shift hours. Vanpools can be organized within a company for their employees or be self-organized. In self-organized vans, vehicles can be leased from a third-party vendor, or purchased or leased by an individual who maintains the van. Vanpooling costs are tax-deductible, which helps bring down the overall cost of this option.
- ◆ A taxi voucher program can fund rides for employees, although this is costly. However, taxi vouchers can serve as a short-term solution, such as for new hires who need to earn a few paychecks in order to save for a down payment on a vehicle. The taxi voucher program should use a shared ride model so that the cost-per-employee is reduced.
- ◆ Carpooling is a common form of ridesharing. Communities can promote carpooling by providing access to an online database that individuals can use to find other commuters with



whom they can carpool. There are many best practices for promoting carpooling available through associations such as ACT, the Association for Commuter Transportation.

- ◆ Employer-sponsored shuttles, similar to the charter services in use by local canneries, represent another option. Groups of employers can form associations that coordinate to provide employee transportation options. For example, Cannon Beach service industry employers could jointly purchase shuttle service to transport employees home after night shifts.

Strategy 7A: Provide a Pilot Shared Ride Transportation Service for Commuters Working Early/Late Shifts	
Sunset Empire recently established the Transportation Options program with funding from ODOT. The program staff will reach out to employers, human service agencies, economic development programs, and others to identify solutions for early morning/late night employee transportation. Potentially, a pilot vanpool, shuttle, or taxi voucher program could serve a small group of cooperating employers in Seaside or Cannon Beach.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	Service industry employers and human service agencies serving low income workers or employees with disabilities
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable, depending on the mode of transportation used and the size of the program
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310 (if the program serves people with disabilities or older adults), STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	2021 - 2023
Performance Measures	Number of rides provided; number of individuals who are hired because transportation is available
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Improved access to employment
Priority Level	Highly important

Strategy 7B is to extend the hours of service on Sunset Empire’s fixed routes. This would be feasible with additional governmental funding, or through a partnership with employers who benefit from the extended hours of service. For example, additional hours of service on Route 101 (connecting Astoria and Warrenton to Seaside) could be funded through contributions from employers. The extended hours would still have to be open to the general public.

Extended service hours could be implemented following the pilot service described in Strategy 7A. Successful pilot services may demonstrate a high level of demand that would justify the expense of extending Sunset Empire’s hours of operation.

Strategy 7B: Extend the Span of Sunset Empire’s Fixed Route Hours	
Sunset Empire will extend hours on specific bus routes to meet employment transportation needs. The extension would follow the implementation and evaluation of the Strategy 7A pilot service(s), which would demonstrate whether there is demand. Additional funding would be necessary; potentially, employers could contribute funding to support the extension.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire



Strategy 7B: Extend the Span of Sunset Empire’s Fixed Route Hours	
Supporting Parties	Service industry employers
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable depending on the number of revenue hours of service added. Sunset Empire’s operating cost per revenue hour may range between \$80 and \$130.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding including contributions from employers who benefit from the extension of hours.
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Performance Measures	Ridership during extended hours; cost-efficiency and productivity of routes during extended hours
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Public transit hours of service; improved access to employment
Priority Level	Important

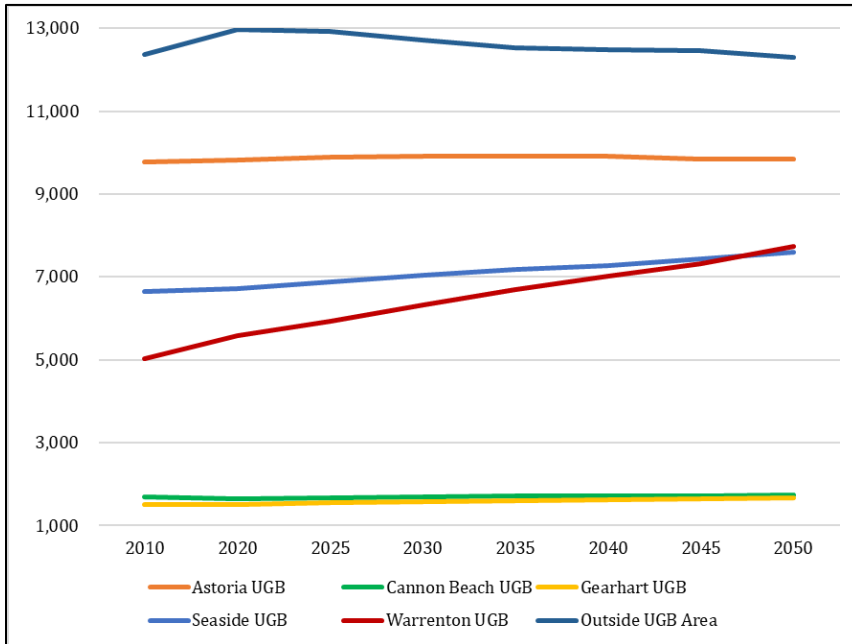
GOAL 8: EXPAND GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF SUNSET EMPIRE FIXED ROUTES TO MORE AREAS OF HIGH DEMAND

In recent years, Sunset Empire has focused on restoring fixed route service that was eliminated during a period of financial difficulty. Future expansions of service depend on changes in demand, as well as available revenue levels. Service expansions must meet the cost-efficiency and productivity standards described under Goal 7. This is true whether the expansion includes additional hours of operation or service to previously unserved geographical areas.

Many stakeholders expressed a desire for more fixed route coverage in Warrenton. The city has more affordable housing than Astoria, Seaside, and Cannon Beach. Many Warrenton residents work in the latter communities, and need transportation to their jobs. Warrenton is the fastest growing community in Clatsop County. Figure 1 shows projected population growth for all county Urban Growth Boundaries (UGBs) and the area outside of the UGBs. Warrenton’s growth is projected to dramatically outpace growth in all other places, rising from around 5,000 residents (2010) to almost 8,000 by 2050. Potentially, this growth will justify the expansion of bus service in the city in the future.



Figure 2: Population Growth Projections for Clatsop County UGBs



Strategy 8A is for Sunset Empire to continue to analyze transit demand in Clatsop County, and consider the best uses of limited funds for the expansion of fixed route service. The LRCTP provided detailed demographic information about transit demand at the Census block level, however, demographics may have changed since the plan was published. A regular practice of updating a transit development plan every three to five years would be useful for understanding changes in population, employment, and other factors that could impact transit demand. Potentially, Sunset Empire could work with ODOT or a local university to develop the plan.

Strategy 8A: Continue to Analyze Potential Transit Demand in Growing Areas	
Sunset Empire will develop a policy or procedure for regularly updating its service plan with current data about demographics, employment, and other factors that impact demand for fixed route service.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	ODOT and/or a local university
Budget/Resources Needed	Depending on the scope of the project, a plan that is outsourced to a consultant may cost between \$30,000 and \$50,000. Sunset Empire may be able to develop a plan with assistance from ODOT and/or a local university.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding including contributions from employers who benefit from the extension of hours
Timeframe	Near-term: establish policy/procedure during current biennium; a plan update would occur in 2021 – 2023.
Performance Measures	Development of a service plan



Strategy 8A: Continue to Analyze Potential Transit Demand in Growing Areas	
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Public transit geographical coverage; public transit hours of service; improved access to employment
Priority Level	Important

Strategy 8B is for Sunset Empire to add additional fixed route service in new areas of Warrenton and other areas where demand is high. Demand should be documented in a transit development plan as described under Strategy 8A.

Strategy 8B: Expand Fixed Route Service in High-Demand Areas	
Sunset Empire will add fixed route service in unserved areas of Clatsop County where there is high demand.	
Responsible Parties	Sunset Empire
Supporting Parties	N/A
Budget/Resources Needed	Cost is scalable depending on the number of revenue hours of service added. Sunset Empire’s operating cost per revenue hour may range between \$80 and \$130.
Funding Source(s)	Section 5311, Section 5310, STIF, STF, or local funding
Timeframe	2023 – 2025
Performance Measures	Ridership during extended hours; cost-efficiency and productivity of routes during extended hours
Needs or Gaps Addressed	Public transit geographical coverage; improved access to employment
Priority Level	Highly important

Table 12 summarizes the strategies, with prioritization and timeframes for implementation.



Table 12: Summary of Goals and Priorities			
Strategy	Need or Service Gap Addressed	2021 - 2023	2023 - 2025
1A: Continue to offer travel training	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work	Important	
1B: Implement consistent branding and signage	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work	Somewhat Important	
1C: Improve printed and online schedule information	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work	Important	
1D: Provide transit information in Spanish	Information for people whose primary language is Spanish	Important	
2A: Maintain Ticket Bank program/improve pass sales	Affordability and improved access to transit passes	Important	
2B: Electronic fare payment with customer accounts	Affordability and improved access to transit passes		Important
3A: Door to door voucher program	Door to door transportation	Important	
3B: Trip-sharing arrangements	Door to door transportation		Important
4: Increase fixed route frequency	Fixed route frequency; Improved service to employment	Highly Important	
5: Add shelters and seating to bus stops	Bus stop accessibility, safety, and amenities	Highly Important	
6: Transportation/human service agency committee	Awareness of existing services and understanding of how they work	Important	
7A: Pilot shared ride commuter transportation	Improved access to employment	Highly Important	
7B: Extend Sunset Empire fixed route service hours	Public transit hours of service; improved access to employment		Important
8A: Analyze transit demand in growing areas	Public transit geographical coverage; public transit hours of service; improved access to employment	Important	
8B: Expand fixed route service in high-demand areas	Public transit geographical coverage; improved access to employment		Highly Important



APPENDIX

- ◆ Stakeholder Interview Notes
- ◆ CCAM Cost Sharing Statement



INTERVIEW WITH VETERAN'S SERVICE OFFICER, HOUSED AT CLATSOP COMMUNITY ACTION

1. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

Veteran's Service Officer – he was not familiar with SETD, as he is new in his position. He is very interested in it, especially the Lower Columbia Connector.

2. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

The number one unmet need in the county for veterans is getting transportation to and from the facilities in Portland and Vancouver where compensation and pension exams are conducted. These are medical exams to verify a veteran's diagnosis so that they can receive benefits. There is no transportation provider that doesn't make the veterans jump through hoops to get a ride or become a member to be able to ride. This is an even more critical need in rural areas, and in the winter.

Sometimes the DAV can transport veterans to these appointments, but their schedules are limited. Often, family members provide transportation.

3. Do you have any feedback about services that help people travel outside of the county? For example: POINT, Greyhound, Amtrak, SETD connections to neighboring providers like TCTD or TriMet, DAV vans, etc.

He was not familiar with POINT.

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS FROM A SETD PARATRANSIT CUSTOMER

A paratransit customer had planned to attend the Project Development Workshop but missed it. This interview took place later in the week.

The customer used fixed route transit for years until it got too hard due to issues with walking and seizures. They moved into rural Astoria a couple of months ago, although they do not live there anymore. No transit or paratransit went out there. They just accepted it at the time that transit would not be available. However, they ran into some difficulties and ended up needing transportation, and there was no service that could help them with urgent needs or with getting to routine medical appointments. They had access to a discount on a taxi ride during a crisis situation, but even after the discount, it was very unaffordable to use a taxi.

The customer asked if there was a way to set aside budget to work with people in this type of situation. Potentially, Sunset Empire could work with an advocacy group with some funds to resolve urgent situations like this.



Even a service that picks people up in rural areas and takes them to the nearest a bus stop would be beneficial.

When asked for other feedback about using transportation, they said that they are happy to have the service that is available. Service on the weekends is not as robust as weekday service. For there to be more paratransit, you would first have to expand the fixed routes, since paratransit is based on fixed route service.

INTERVIEW WITH CLATSOP BEHAVIORAL HEALTH – DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY SERVICES

1. Can you describe your organization? Does it offer any transportation services?

This agency provides care coordination, such as referrals to housing and foster homes; they do in-home services; they provide mileage reimbursement for personal support workers; behavioral care services; assistive devices; and environmental and vehicle modifications. Rides for clients are commonly provided through natural supports (family and friends); mileage for personal support workers; some people may ride the bus on their own (they can buy bus passes for clients); occasionally taxis are used. They have worked with taxi services in the past for client transportation but this is cost-prohibitive.

2. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

Sunset Empire provides several options but they are not working well for many of our clients. The routes are very limited. The Dial A Ride and paratransit services are hard for most people to use because the service areas are so limited. Riding the bus can take a lot of time. A client who used the bus for work, riding from Seaside to Astoria, had to ride for almost an hour when the same ride by car would take only 20 minutes.

There's a big hole. The available services work for a very small, select group of our clientele. Everyone else doesn't have useful options. It would be great if more service reached rural areas like Knappa, more than once a day.

It would be nice to have more services that picked up at people's homes.

3. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?

A great service would be something like the current dial-a-ride but with a bigger service area. The times of when they'll take you to where you need to go need to have a wider range – for example, limiting service to daytime hours is very limiting to clients. Our agency buys bus passes for about 20-30 clients, but SETD's system for this doesn't work well. Getting the passes over the phone and through email was not working, so now we go to SETD in person.



4. What organizations do you believe should be coordinating to address gaps in services and unmet needs for transportation in Clatsop County? This list could include transportation providers, planning organizations, local governments, regional partners, and more.

It would be helpful if taxi companies and medical transportation providers would get involved with providing client transportation.

INTERVIEW WITH CLATSOP COMMUNITY ACTION

1. Can you describe your organization? Does it offer any transportation services?

Clatsop Community Action is a small nonprofit that accepts Federal and state dollars through grants, working with low income residents of the county. They provide services such as rental assistance, housing programs, supportive services for veteran families (including staffing the county veteran's service officer position), energy assistance, and information and referral. They are one of 2 places in Astoria that makes referrals for homeless shelters, and they run a regional food bank. They also provide personal care products for clients (stuff SNAP wouldn't cover), and general case management services.

2. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

That's tough, we don't have a lot of connections with transportation. We provide bus passes for clients. Some struggle with gas money.

They are hearing through the grapevine, and through reading the paper, that their cleaning standards/personal spacing are have been very good with COVID.

A lot of people ride bus to stay warm in cold weather.

3. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

Individuals need to free access to the bus. Paying the bus fare is just one more barrier for our clients, who have a lot of barriers. There are ways to get discounts, but the processes to obtain discounts are also barriers.

The government decided to move the local Social Security office to Warrenton from Astoria. Now, most people can't walk there. It's hard to go all the way there on the bus.

Many bus stops are on busy roads. This is true of the stop closest to the Social Security office. Crossing the 4-lane road and walking down to the office is hard. The area is really congested with traffic. A stop closer to the office would be helpful.



A daily bus pass would be helpful. People are having to transfer between routes and pay multiple times.

4. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?

At one time, Providence hospital offered transportation for medical appointments. It was a 1-person operation and they got overwhelmed. For medical appointments, a door to door service would be extremely beneficial.

The transit center office doesn't feel very welcoming. It feels sterile. The SETD staff are very professional and friendly. A more welcoming environment would be more customer-friendly.

5. Do you have any feedback about services that help people travel outside of the county? For example: POINT, Greyhound, Amtrak, SETD connections to neighboring providers like TCTD or TriMet, DAV vans, etc.

Doesn't know much about those. Clients mostly need to stay local.

6. Does your organization regularly work with SETD and/or any other transportation providers?

They don't work with any providers. On a regular basis, they are not helping clients with transportation. Once in a while, staff members have chipped in money personally to get a taxi ride for a client in need. This happens about twice a year. The agency is close to the bus station, and refers people there all the time.

7. What organizations do you believe should be coordinating to address gaps in services and unmet needs for transportation in Clatsop County? This list could include transportation providers, planning organizations, local governments, regional partners, and more.

NW Aging and Disability Services
Vocational Rehab with DHHS
Helping Hands

INTERVIEW WITH ASTORIA-WARRENTON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

1. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

SETD stretches their budget to provide the best service they can. They are very creative in providing solutions on a budget. They are very collaborative. They reach out well to other groups in the community. For example, they have participated very well in a recent tourism-related effort. They make a great effort to provide transit options to visitors to the area.



2. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

People need more frequent bus routes up and down the coast. Also, the routes could go deeper into the neighborhoods. For example, Warrenton is the county's fastest-growing town, though it is rather spread out. Some residents do not live within walking distance of a bus route.

3. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?

When cruise ships come in, the local population size can increase from about 10,000 to 20,000. Sometimes, two ships come in at the same time. The taxi companies become overloaded. It would be great to have some on-demand services available to help with this demand.

4. Do you have any feedback about services that help people travel outside of the county? For example: POINT, Greyhound, Amtrak, SETD connections to neighboring providers like TCTD or TriMet, DAV vans, etc.

Intercity services are really needed and important for the community. The initiatives that SETD and their partners take are getting better every year. It is critical for them to communicate how regional travel works, and to make it easier to travel across the region. They are working on a transit pass so that people who transfer between systems will not have to buy multiple tickets, but can use the ticket they buy when they board for the first leg of the trip. Getting the word out to people that they can visit the area car-free is important.

5. (For towns/cities/county/chambers) What development or changes in land use are projected in your area and what impact will those developments have on economic development?

Nothing big is coming up. There is slow and steady growth in places like Warrenton with housing, but those are infill developments.

6. Any insights into transportation needs for employees? What do you hear from the business community about difficulties with hiring because of transportation?

Cannon Beach (especially) and Seaside have a really robust tourist industry with many jobs at hotels and restaurants, but rent is very high so housing is not affordable for many of the people who work in service jobs. So, they need transit service that brings them in (at the hours of shifts). The fish processing plants struggle to hire; many employees are bused in from Washington. The plants hire charter buses for this purpose.

Because we're small and bounded by geography, we can't get much bigger. Rents and homes go up in price, and therefore it drives out the workers.

7. What other organizations should be involved in transportation coordination?



INTERVIEW WITH CONSEJO HISPANO

1. Can you describe your organization? Does it offer any transportation services?

Consejo Hispano services Spanish-speaking people in Clatsop, Columbia, and Tillamook Counties and Pacific County, Washington. She also serves on the SETD Board.

2. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

A lot of people need the service. The times needed vary. Astoria has many canneries. People working at them have very early shifts. She knows that SETD can't run buses at 4:00 AM because it is not financially feasible. Now that Cathy at SETD is working with NWOTA and on carpooling, and on other options for commuting, it will help provide other options aside from the bus. There are a lot of people who can't get driver's licenses at this point, though the law in Oregon is changing.

Bus stations are needed closer to the canneries. Right now, the bus stays on Hwy 101 or other main corridors. It can be a long walk to the canneries. The rainy season is hard for people who have to walk.

Further south in the county, in Seaside and Cannon Beach, a lot of jobs are in the hospitality industry. People get off work late at night. So, it's the opposite problem, but commuting options are needed.

She knows Cathy has been doing a lot online, but with COVID, it's hard to have events to inform people about the option to carpool. It's good that Cathy speaks Spanish. There need to communication strategies to make commute alternatives more accessible and understandable for people who need them as an alternative to the bus.

The SETD workforce needs to be more diverse. A new customer service person is bilingual in Spanish and English. Need to keep this going.

We've been changing the routes and it's expensive to print new route maps. Having a map – not just a timetable – makes it easier for people understand how to use the service and do things like transfer.

3. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?



This would be really complicated to fix. During the summer, the traffic is really bad. 101 is the only option for connecting communities. Tourism introduces a lot of congestion. Reducing single-occupancy driving is a good goal to help with this. People have to leave really early for work just in case they would be late. Sometimes the buses have to skip a whole cycle because of congestion. The reliability is difficult for people who rely on the bus for their transportation. It gets rough in mid-June, when schools are completely out. It's still going during September.

A circular route around Seaside is a good idea. This has been proposed.

4. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

She thinks that being courteous and kind is a strength. All of the drivers are kind and patient. People recognize that here. This has been great during COVID. We were fare-free for a few months. The drivers dealt really well with the situation. We hired sanitation workers for the buses. We take rider input and complaints very seriously. We want people to feel comfortable using the service.

Jeff Hazen has done a lot of help us expand and be more reliable and relevant to the area. We want to keep growing and never say "this is good enough." We have good collaborations. She is unsure how many people transfer between the counties, but we have good intercounty collaboration.

5. Do you have any feedback about services that help people travel outside of the county? For example: POINT, Greyhound, Amtrak, SETD connections to neighboring providers like TCTD or TriMet, DAV vans, etc.

She knows that when people go to Portland and they use the Lower Columbia Connector, that works. But she doesn't know how many of our Hispanic riders are aware of that service. Are there flyers? Are they in Spanish? She is unsure if people are aware. Also, how are we educating people about transferring to the Portland transit system? Not just for Spanish speakers, but people who aren't as used to using apps or reading and understanding bus schedules.

6. (For towns/cities/county/chambers) What development or changes in land use are projected in your area and what impact will those developments have on economic development?

There will be a big change in Seaside. Context: Seaside has 3 schools – elementary, middle, high. Cannon Beach kids go to these schools too. Gearhardt kids go to Seaside too. The middle and high school were close to 101, in a tsunami risk area. For years, they campaigned to be able to move – and they finally got moved. Those 2 big properties are for sale. We hope it would be turned into housing. There is a housing shortage in our area. Not a hotel! This may impact transportation needs.

7. What organizations do you believe should be coordinating to address gaps in services and unmet needs for transportation in Clatsop County? This list could include transportation providers, planning organizations, local governments, regional partners, and more.



Clatsop Community Action – a lot of people go here because they have a lot of information and resources. They are key. If someone goes to them, they need to make it easy for people to access information about transportation. The staff there should be able to guide people to use transit.

Northwest Senior and Disability Services is also important. Also, anyone working with veterans. They need more access to transportation.

Food banks are a great place for people to find information about transportation.

Work with schools so that kids learn to be comfortable with using transit. She knows this is a project that is already going on.

Transit is key to having a healthy, vibrant community.

Columbia County Transit has had difficulties. We've tried to help out. We have the Lower Columbia Connector make some stops there. It would be great if they could have more transportation internally in the county.

INTERVIEW WITH HELPING HANDS

1. Can you describe your organization? Does it offer any transportation services?

Helping Hands is an emergency shelter and reentry facility. The organization addresses homelessness and helps those that are facing homelessness. They provide a long-term reentry program, in which clients enter into a one-year contract to work with Helping Hands on reentering society after being homeless. They provide case management and support services to remove barriers to being housed. For example, they assist people with obtaining critical documents like birth certificates and with reunifying with children.

Helping Hands serves multiple counties. Facilities are in Astoria, Tillamook, Yamhill County, Lincoln City (not up and running yet), and in Portland. These are all equipped with emergency shelters and shared living spaces with men's and women's floors. They don't house sex offenders.

1. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

Their clients face difficulties with the routes not extending out far enough, and the low frequency of the routes. Also, a lot of people don't understand how the bus system works. For example, they are told you can't flag the bus down, then they see people flag and get picked up. For older adults, they need more access to transportation and more affordable transportation.



More buses need to go off the beaten path to reach where people live. The bus in Astoria is on 101 but not surrounding areas. Also, the bus only runs twice a day to Knappa, but a lot of people need transportation there.

Ideally, buses running every 15 minutes from 5am to 1-2 am would be very helpful.

The bus needs to be made more visible, so people know where the actual stops are. We have a lot of rain, so people need to be covered at bus stops. Signage and benches are needed.

2. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?

He thinks they already Sunset Empire already has it in place: Dial A Ride. Origin to destination service for a small fee. And, the bus needs to be more affordable.

Make SETD a place where people want to work. Make it more worker-friendly.

Older buses need to be updated.

3. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

They make a good effort. They are trying. He understands it's a small rural community. But, where there's a will, there's a way.

4. Has the COVID situation brought anything to light about transportation needs in the community?

No. Sunset Empire implemented more job opportunities to have a designated person the bus to sanitize. They didn't stop transportation like some places did.

5. Do you have any feedback about services that help people travel outside of the county? For example: POINT, Greyhound, Amtrak, SETD connections to neighboring providers like TCTD or TriMet, DAV vans, etc.

These services need to be more frequent and more accessible. He doesn't understand the whole POINT/Greyhound/Tillamook services being all different – it's confusing. If you're not at a certain bus junction, you could miss your window to get back to your town because of the frequency, and how late the bus runs/doesn't run. He would love to be able to save on the cost of gas with commuting from Knappa to Astoria each day, but no bus system would ever get me to work before 8 and off at 4:30. An option for this commute would help cut down on carbon emissions.

6. What organizations do you believe should be coordinating to address gaps in services and unmet needs for transportation in Clatsop County? This list could include transportation providers, planning organizations, local governments, regional partners, and more.



Nonprofit agencies that serve potential clientele that would utilize transportation: hospitals, library/community centers, senior centers.

INTERVIEW WITH NORTHWEST SENIOR AND DISABILITY SERVICES

1. Can you describe your organization? Does it offer any transportation services?

NWSDS offers a variety of services to older adults and with disabilities. They do not offer transportation. The exception to this is when an in-home support worker transports a client to a doctor's appointment or another basic need, using their personal vehicle for which they receive mileage reimbursement.

Some of their older adult clients use Providence Community Care, which has a volunteer transportation service to take low-income people to medical appointments. If you don't meet the income guidelines, you can't use the service. There are people in this category who still need an option for medical transportation.

2. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

The travel training program is a strength.

3. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?

SETD does not provide assistance to people who need help getting from the door to the bus. With door to door assistance (at homes and destinations), more people would be able to use SETD. Some places have a lot of stairs to the curb, which is a challenge. Private providers won't provide door to door assistance, either.

People need transportation to medical appointments. County residents often get referred to specialists in Portland, including the Oregon Health and Science University. The SETD bus to Portland only runs twice a day, meaning that you have to spend the whole day on using it to attend an appointment in Portland. The bus only stops at the transit station in downtown Portland, so you have to use other options to get to the location of your appointment.

A better option would be a "rideshare" that goes to specific medical facilities, or areas, on certain days of the week. We should survey clinics to find out the locations for their referrals. Grant funding could support an expansion of Providence Community Care so they could attract more volunteers, or someone could be paid to transport people to appointments. For example, there could be a van available on Mondays, then people can set their appointments for that day.

4. Has the COVID situation brought anything to light about transportation needs in the community?

People have been afraid to go to the store, so stores are doing drive through/pick up service and/or delivering groceries. However, these services require a computer or a smartphone.



People need to be able to access delivery without a computer/smartphone. Also, same-day grocery delivery is a need. A taxi driver was delivering groceries, but this caused some confusion so it stopped. It would be great if a bus could be used to deliver groceries to several households at a time.

5. What organizations do you believe should be coordinating to address gaps in services and unmet needs for transportation in Clatsop County? This list could include transportation providers, planning organizations, local governments, regional partners, and more.

Sunset Empire
Northwest Senior and Disability Services
Child Welfare
Self Sufficiency
Hospitals
Helping Hands
The bigger clinics, like Coastal Family
Reinhart Clinic in Tillamook
Consumers in the community
Hispanic Council

INTERVIEW WITH PROVIDENCE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

1. Can you describe your organization? Does it offer any transportation services?

Community Connections is a community resource provided by the hospital to the county, funded by community outreach dollars that the hospital spends, open to all in the county who have no medical transportation benefit and fall within 200% poverty level and has no transportation.

When people call, we do a small interview about income level. We are unable to assist people in and out of the vehicle. We can fold wheelchairs up and put them in the car.

If we interview them and they appear to fit the guidelines, they go through an on-board process with CCA who does income verification for us. CCA provides the income level to us. Then we determine eligibility.

We are volunteer-based, and we will transport riders any place they need to go for medical care. We ask for 7 days' notice. Ride Scheduler software is used for scheduling and assigning rides to volunteers.

Transports to Portland for specialty care is the biggest need. Some people are able to drive locally, but they can't drive to Portland. We provide rides to Portland and local rides.

We've also been doing wellness trips – mainly grocery store and food bank trips. These are scheduled around medical trips which are the first priority.



90% of requests for rides are usually fulfilled.

The program was started by a church, and has been run by the hospital for 6 years. The program has slowly grown over time.

Ride counts vary – before COVID, we were doing about 15-20 rides per week (these are generally round trips). We have roughly 20-25 volunteers. The coordinator works 32 hours per week (.8 FTE) and he mostly does scheduling. Since COVID, he's started driving. They also have a part-time driver who is a .6 FTE. They have 1 vehicle owned by the program; a Subaru Forester that big enough to transport 3 people comfortably. It has all-wheel drive which is necessary for the trip to Portland. Most of the volunteers don't want to drive to Portland. They try to put the Portland runs all on their vehicle with the part-time driver on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays. Usually 3 clients ride per day, and it is a full-day round trip.

The most common destinations are Providence (Seaside) and CMH, the hospital in Astoria. There are some outlying clinics associated with both of those hospitals. Portland is a really important destination. 9 rides per week are for Portland.

CMH was considering, just before COVID, starting a similar program.

Providence Community Care has also partnered with Rinehart Clinic in Wheeler (Tillamook County) to Providence Seaside, or Portland. That is the exception to their service area limitation. The clinic serves low-income people.

2. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

That group that falls just above of our poverty line for eligibility. The Sunset Empire bus doesn't run consistently enough to for people to use it to go to medical appointments. People who can't easily walk to bus stops can't use the bus. The Portland bus doesn't work well for medical. Cabs are too expensive; it can be \$100 or more to ride a long distance. Paratransit through Sunset Empire works well but not everyone qualifies.

People also call us from just outside the county line – from Manzanita/Wheeler (Tillamook County) and just across the bridge into Washington – and they are not eligible. These individuals sometimes have appointments at Providence. There is one bus that comes from Manzanita per day, so the options are very limited.

Providence has discussed expanding the geographical area of eligibility to these locations, but that is on hold due to the pandemic.

3. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?



He would love to see a program like Providence Community Care, but with paid drivers. They often get requests from people who don't qualify for the program. He would love to be able to give them a number to a place like Sunset Empire, who could provide a door-to-door ride for, perhaps, half the cost of a taxi. There could be an on-call pool of drivers, that maybe would be paid just above the federal mileage reimbursement rate.

And, it would be great to beef up Sunset Empire paratransit so it's more available.

INTERVIEW WITH VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

1. In your opinion, what are the most important unmet transportation needs for individuals throughout Clatsop County (or particularly in your community) who currently or would potentially ride transportation?

People who rely on transportation have a lot of difficulty. There is a shortage of services where were Sunset Empire goes. There is also a shortage of times. Lack of location coverage and times is the biggest issue.

Clatsop Community College has a second campus –the MERTS Campus, where students can do hands-on vocational training. Service to this campus is limited. [The interviewee seemed to believe that SETD does not stop at MERTS, but it does – but only three times per day on Route 10.]

The county just does not have the bus coverage we need. If you live in the main Astoria area, then you are OK, but as you go further out – and not even to the rural areas – for example, when you cross over the bridge to Warrenton and even Hammond – there are not a lot of stops. People have to walk ½ mile to 1 mile to get to a stop. SETD has added service but it's not adequate to meet the need. People want to use the bus for employment. The hours are not enough – the schedules can't accommodate a late shift, for example. There needs to be a wider span of hours.

For a long time, SETD didn't run between 12 and 2 – or maybe 11 to 1 – due to drivers taking their lunch. What we've been told in the past is that there are not enough drivers.

2. What services would you like to see in your area/community that do not exist today but could be addressed either by SETD or other modes of transportation?

Take a look at our population needs as far as routes and times that are offered. Our transit system has some programs – say, Medicaid NEMT - that is meeting the need for that. We have Dial A Ride, too. Someone can call and set up door to door but it is \$8-12 for a round trip, which is not affordable for all.

Expand the route options. People are having to walk too long. While doing that, expand the times for both the service span and the frequency.



3. What are the strengths of SETD, from your perspective?

They do the best they can with the resources that they have. It was good they didn't charge during COVID. The fact we have them is great. They allow you to flag them the down. The driver will stop when someone waves them down. People who can't make it to the stops have been able to use this service, which we appreciate.

4. Do you have any feedback about services that help people travel outside of the county? For example: POINT, Greyhound, Amtrak, SETD connections to neighboring providers like TCTD or TriMet, DAV vans, etc.

We don't use those as often.

5. Does your organization regularly work with SETD and/or any other transportation providers?

We primarily work with SETD. We only have taxis otherwise. We don't contract with them often. We purchase bus passes for clients. We were doing yearly passes, but SETD has been through a lot of changes even over the last year. A new CFO was creating new policies which were making it difficult to get the passes we need. It was good when we had the annual pass. We had some long-terms clients where we know we'd need that.

6. What organizations do you believe should be coordinating to address gaps in services and unmet needs for transportation in Clatsop County? This list could include transportation providers, planning organizations, local governments, regional partners, and more.

SETD should be in this role. We have tried to have conversations with them. They should be communicating regularly with our agency and the Oregon DHS self-sufficiency program.

Also, SETD should touch base with the school districts and look at how they could work with students without school bus stops. Students attending schools outside of their home districts need transportation.





Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility Cost-Sharing Policy Statement

Revised August 2020

Introduction

The Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) was established in 2004 by Executive Order 13330 in order to improve the accessibility, availability, and efficiency of transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults, and individuals of low income. The Secretary of Transportation chairs the CCAM and the CCAM's membership consists of the secretaries of Agriculture (USDA), Education (ED), Health and Human Services (HHS), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Interior (DOI), Labor (DOL), Transportation (DOT), and Veterans Affairs (VA), as well as the Attorney General (DOJ), the Chairperson of the National Council on Disability (NCD), and the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The Executive Order directs CCAM members to work together to provide the most appropriate, cost-effective transportation services within existing resources, and reduce duplication to make funds available for more services. Fully coordinating transportation through vehicle and ride sharing for Medicaid, aging, and other human service transportation trips can result in a 10 percent increase in passengers per revenue hour, which can create significant cost savings for Federal, State, and local agencies.¹

This CCAM Cost-Sharing Policy Statement provides key transportation cost-sharing information to encourage greater State and local cost sharing. This includes principles specific to the provision of Medicaid nonemergency medical transportation (NEMT) and the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA) Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG) program, which provides NEMT for Veterans living in highly rural areas.

Policy Statement

CCAM agencies agree that Federal grantees should coordinate their transportation resources where possible, including sharing costs for mutually beneficial transportation services, in order to maximize the availability and efficiency of transportation services.

Cost-sharing arrangements include both **vehicle and ride sharing** as well as **Federal fund braiding for local match** across Federal programs, which are discussed in more detail below.

Vehicle and Ride Sharing

Vehicle and ride sharing occur when a single shared vehicle transports beneficiaries of multiple Federal programs. Vehicle sharing may occur with shared rides, when multiple Federal programs' beneficiaries are on the same vehicle simultaneously, or with individual rides, when a vehicle transports a single beneficiary at a time. Participating partners pay for the equitable proportion of shared costs for transporting its beneficiaries.

Before local partners begin to share vehicles and rides, they should first establish a local transportation cost-allocation agreement that details how partner organizations will allocate shared costs. To establish this agreement, local partners may wish to consult the Federal Transit Administration's Cost Allocation Handbook, which provides high-level guidance on determining and allocating shared costs. Local partners should incorporate the general and program-specific principles below, as applicable. Local partners should also consult and adhere to any Federal, State, or local laws and regulations related to vehicle and ride sharing and cost allocation.

¹ "Uncover the Impacts of Coordinating Human Services Transportation—One Study, Two Locations, and Three What-If Coordination Scenarios." Charlotte Burnier, et al. Presented at 93rd Annual Meeting of the Transportation Research Board. 2014.



General Principles: These principles apply to any local transportation cost-allocation agreement.

1. Costs must be allocated based on the benefit received by each local partner and may not be allocated based on how much funding individual partners have available.
2. Each local partner must pay the amount equal to its allocable share of the costs.
3. No local partner may pay for a cost that does not benefit its program as determined in the cost-allocation process.
4. No program may pay for a cost that is unallowable under its governing statutes and regulations.
5. The local transportation cost-allocation agreement should be updated regularly (e.g., annually) to account for changes in expenses or frequency of use.
6. If shared activities result in program income, then the program income should be allocated to partners in the same proportion as shared costs.
7. Local transportation cost-allocation agreements should include how rates address the cost of a required attendant for a passenger.
8. No program may pay directly for unloaded miles (miles driven when the program's beneficiary is not in the vehicle) or for missed trips. However, a program may pay indirectly for these costs and other indirect costs, such as vehicle depreciation, when they are built into the rate methodology for completed trips.
9. No program may pay any additional costs that arise from sharing rides with local partners' beneficiaries, such as costs associated with longer trip times.

Medicaid Principles: These principles apply to any local transportation cost-allocation agreement that includes a local partner using Federal Medicaid funds on transportation.

10. Medicaid will only pay for transportation to and from covered medical care.
11. Medicaid is the payer of last resort and will only pay for transportation if there are no other legally liable third payers. There are some exceptions to this rule.²

HRTG Principles: These principles apply to any local transportation cost-allocation agreement that includes a local partner using HRTG funds.

12. HRTG will pay for the transport of Veterans who live in highly rural areas (county or counties with less than seven persons per square mile) to and from VA medical facilities or VA-authorized medical facilities.
13. Before participating in vehicle or ride sharing with local partners, HRTG grantees should consult the VHA.
14. Vehicles purchased with HRTG funds may be used for vehicle and ride sharing to transport local partners' beneficiaries within or outside highly rural areas. Costs to transport local partners' beneficiaries must be allocated to those local partners.
15. The VHA encourages HRTG grantees to avoid potential public misperception that passengers who are not highly rural Veterans are being served by HRTG funds. To support this goal, HRTG grantees using HRTG-branded and Veteran-branded vehicles to transport local partners' beneficiaries may consider covering HRTG-specific and Veteran-specific vehicle markings or using unbranded vehicles when serving local partners' beneficiaries.

Federal Fund Braiding for Local Match

Federal fund braiding for local match, also referred to as Federal fund braiding, is when Federal funds from one grant program are used to fulfil the local match requirement of another Federal grant. This provides Federal grantees the opportunity to share costs of a transportation project across multiple Federal programs. All statutory and regulatory requirements, such as eligibility and reporting, must be met for both programs.

Federal fund braiding arrangements can especially benefit communities that are otherwise unable to provide match funds for Federal transportation projects. Federal fund braiding also encourages greater

² For exceptions to Medicaid's payer of last resort rule, see pages 20–22 of the "Coordination of Benefits and Third Party Liability (COB/TPL) in Medicaid 2020" handbook (<https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/eligibility/downloads/cob-tpl-handbook.pdf>).



coordination at the local level due to the additional reporting requirements that grantees must meet when receiving funds from two Federal sources.

Federal fund braiding is not available between all Federal programs that may fund transportation. To determine if Federal fund braiding is a possibility, potential grantees should consult the CCAM's Federal Fund Braiding Guide. The Federal Fund Braiding Guide discusses whether Federal fund braiding is allowable for 67 Federal programs that may fund transportation and provides additional information on grantee eligibility requirements.

Potential grantees looking to find State or local partners to coordinate and braid funds with may also consult the CCAM Program Inventory, which identifies 130 Federal programs that may provide funding for human service transportation. Grantees of these Federal programs may be potential future partners for transportation projects funded via Federal fund braiding.

List of Resources

1. **“Appendix A: Cost Allocation Handbook.” Federal Transit Administration. 2016.**
https://www.transit.dot.gov/sites/fta.dot.gov/files/docs/ntd/56681/uniform-system-accounts-usoa-effective-fy18_0.pdf

The Federal Transit Administration’s Cost Allocation Handbook provides high-level guidance for Federal grantees to assign costs when participating in vehicle and ride sharing. The Cost Allocation Handbook begins on page A-1 of this document.

2. **“CCAM Program Inventory.” Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. 2019.**
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/ccam/about/ccam-program-inventory>

The CCAM Program Inventory identifies 130 Federal programs that may provide funding for human service transportation for people with disabilities, older adults, and/or individuals of low income.

3. **“Federal Fund Braiding Guide.” Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility. 2020.**
<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/ccam/about/coordinating-council-access-and-mobility-ccam-federal-fund>

The Federal Fund Braiding Guide provides information for Federal employees and potential grantees on whether CCAM agency programs may participate in “Federal fund braiding,” or the use of Federal program funds to fulfil the match requirement of other Federal programs on eligible transportation projects.