



Okanogan County Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update 2018

Prepared by



Prepared for

Okanogan Council of
Governments / Rural
Transportation
Planning Organization

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Okanogan County Transportation Partners

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Participating Okanogan County Human Service Providers

Numerous providers contributed key support by offering their time, facilities and staff, helping to host community forums, and soliciting and providing critical community needs information. We would like to thank the following for those contributions:

- Colville Confederated Tribes' Tribal Government Center
- Tonasket Senior Center
- Methow Valley Senior Center
- People for People's 2-1-1 Service
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- WorkSource
- Mid-Valley Hospital
- North Valley Hospital
- Okanogan Public Health
- The Support Center
- Northwest Center
- Housing Authority of Okanogan County
- Methow Valley Community Center
- Family Health Center

Additional stakeholders who were invited, but unable, to participate:

- Wenatchee Valley College
- Methow Valley School District
- Okanogan School District
- Omak School District
- Oroville School District
- Tonasket School District
- Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare
- Three Rivers Hospital
- Okanogan County Community Action Council

State and Federal Requirements – Statement of Compliance

This Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (CPT-HSTP) has been prepared in compliance with state and federal requirements, including Chapter V of the FTA Circular 9070.1 G, which provides federal guidance on the coordinated planning process for projects selected for funding under the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Program (FTA Section 5310).

Title VI Notice to Public

It is the Washington State Department of Transportation's (WSDOT) policy to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin or sex, as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise discriminated against under any of its federally funded programs and activities. Any person who believes his/her Title VI protection has been violated, may file a complaint with WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO). For additional information regarding Title VI complaint procedures and/or information regarding non-discrimination obligations, please contact OEO's Title VI Coordinator at (360) 705-7082.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

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CHAPTER 1 – PLAN OVERVIEW

This plan explores existing conditions in Okanogan County, including: both population characteristics that indicate a need for various mobility services and mobility services that are currently operating; the need for these and other services; and ways that coordination among transportation and other mobility services may be coordinated.

Why coordinate transit and human services transportation?

There are several good reasons to consider coordination of the various transportation and other mobility services that are available in any given jurisdiction. First and foremost, coordinating services can help to improve how people in need of transportation assistance get where they need to go. Coordination among two or more organizations, whether providing transportation directly or providing mobility assistance like payment vouchers, information in multiple languages or escorts for people with physical mobility challenges, can help to increase timeliness of services, expand areas or times in which services are operated, increase comfort on the ride and more.

These improvements are made possible, in part, by making better use of funding for transportation by eliminating or reducing duplication and sharing resources that would otherwise sit idle or unused. These efforts enable providers to do more or spend less.

These improvements are also made possible by having access to outside funds. In 2005, a federal law known as SAFETEA-LU was passed, creating several funding programs to address the service gap for people with special transportation needs and requiring state and local governments to develop coordination plans in order to access those funds. Since then, the law has been modified several times, but the coordinated planning requirement remains for FTA 5310 program funds (Enhanced Mobility for Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities). These funds may only be accessed by jurisdictions, including rural planning organizations like Okanogan Council Of Governments (OCOG), if the projects that they are seeking funding for are "included in a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan." Furthermore, it is WSDOT's policy that all state and federally funded projects are identified in an adopted regional human services transportation plan.

Projects eligible for 5310 funds include both "traditional" capital investment and "nontraditional" investment beyond the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) complementary paratransit services. Additionally, Section 3006(b) of the federal FAST Act created a discretionary pilot program for innovative coordinated access and mobility that is open to 5310 recipients. These funds are made available to assist in financing innovative projects that improve the coordination of transportation services and non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) services. Examples of ways these funds can be used include technology that supports coordination, projects that create or increase access to community and creation of or improvements to One-Call/One-Click Centers.

This plan seeks both to meet funding eligibility requirements and to address community needs.

Plan Components

Existing Conditions

The existing conditions chapter includes a profile of the various communities throughout Okanogan County, common origins and destinations, and a summary of the current public transportation services available in the county.

Mobility Needs

The needs chapter discusses the range of needs that have been identified in the county, along with the top few needs, prioritized due to factors such as expected public benefit, cost, and level of effort.

Service and Coordination

The service and coordination chapter takes into account existing population conditions and needs, along with the strengths of the current system of transportation and other mobility services, and makes recommendations for the continuation of existing services as well as service expansion and/or coordination that may improve mobility around the county and/or the cost efficiency of providing these services. Mobility technologies and participation in countywide emergency management are also discussed here.



Image: Various vehicles in TranGO-OCTN-CCT DOT shared lot.

Community Outreach and Engagement

The four major transportation providers in Okanogan County are the Okanogan County Transportation Authority (TranGO), Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition (OCTN), Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT DOT), and People for People (PFP). Representatives of these four organizations were engaged throughout the planning, outreach and public workshop processes to provide guidance and valuable feedback regarding the populations they serve.

Public Transportation Rider/Potential-rider Survey

A survey was created for current and potential transportation users. The survey offered respondents the opportunity to: share information about transportation services they use regularly; identify key origins and destinations; describe some key household information; and provide details on high-level mobility satisfaction and needs. Online versions of the survey were distributed electronically via email blasts and social media posts from transportation partners, and on-board surveys were distributed on TranGO and OCTN transit services. People for People's 2-1-1 operators also offered callers the opportunity to take the survey.

Transportation Provider Survey

Another survey was created for the transportation providers to complete. The survey provided them with an opportunity to detail their current service offerings as well as to contribute ideas for continuing or adding service.

Public Engagement Workshops

Four public workshops were held in Okanogan County's larger population centers during the week of July 23, 2018. Workshops were conducted at the Colville Confederated Tribes' Tribal Government Center in Nespelem, the TranGO/OCTN building in Okanogan, the Senior Center in Tonasket, and the Methow Senior Center in Twisp. Okanogan County is known to contain hard-to-reach populations, so workshop information was posted on community boards, pushed out on TranGO's social media site, and posted in local newspapers (online and in print). Unfortunately, they were not well-attended. Only about two dozen residents participated, many of whom use transportation services (beyond driving their own vehicles) infrequently, if at all.

Personal Stakeholder Outreach

TranGO conducted personal outreach in the form of phone calls and face-to-face meetings with numerous stakeholders in the region including employment providers, education, health care, government entities, local emergency management agencies, organizations for people with disabilities, organizations for people with low income, organizations for youth or teens, and organizations for seniors. This direct outreach was intended to fill information gaps due to low workshop participation, leveraging service provider knowledge of their clients' needs.

CHAPTER 2 – EXISTING CONDITIONS

Community Profile

Okanogan County is the largest county geographically in Washington State, covering 5,268 square miles, yet it has the fifth fewest residents per square mile (7.8). With more than half of residents living in unincorporated areas of the county, a relatively small population is spread out across a large land area, which creates mobility challenges for people in need of assistance and for providers striving to serve them.

Denser populations can be found in each of the county's 13 cities and towns. However, as shown in Figure 2-1, most of these municipalities are home to less than 1,000 residents.

Figure 2-1: Okanogan County Population by Jurisdiction

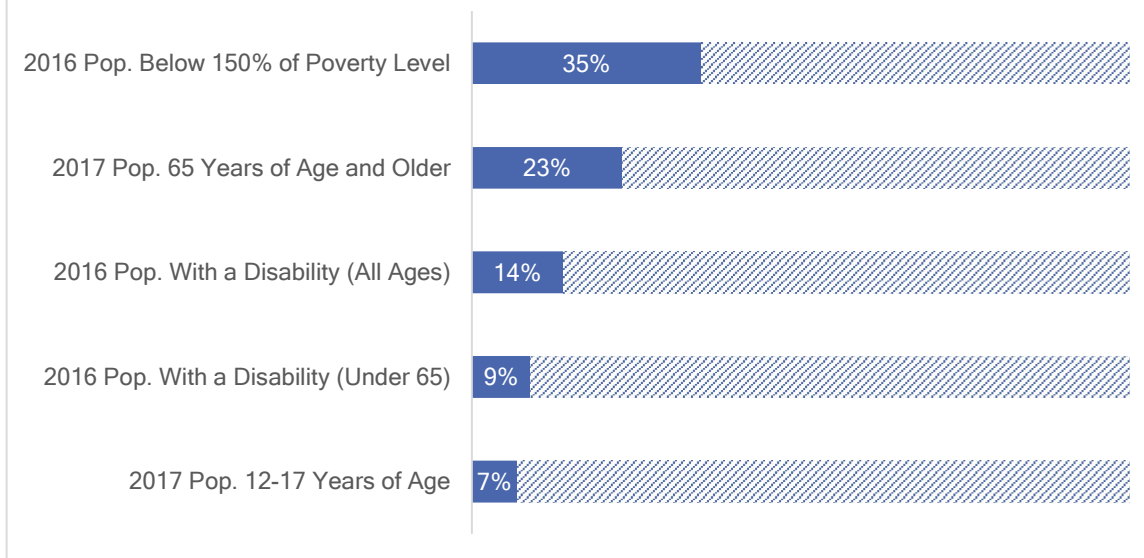
Jurisdiction	2010*	2011**	2012**	2013**	2014**	2015**	2016**	2017**
Okanogan County	41,120	41,200	41,425	41,500	41,700	41,860	41,730	42,110
Unincorporated Okanogan County	24,780	24,805	25,085	25,110	25,120	25,320	25,090	25,400
Incorporated Okanogan County	16,340	16,395	16,340	16,390	16,580	16,540	16,640	16,710
Omak	4,845	4,845	4,835	4,830	4,840	4,900	4,925	4,925
Okanogan	2,552	2,585	2,535	2,560	2,595	2,580	2,595	2,610
Brewster	2,370	2,365	2,355	2,370	2,380	2,395	2,395	2,400
Oroville	1,686	1,690	1,715	1,715	1,700	1,695	1,710	1,705
Tonasket	1,032	1,025	1,020	1,020	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110
Twisp	919	925	930	940	945	945	950	970
Coulee Dam (part)	911	910	915	915	915	910	915	915
Pateros	667	665	665	665	665	525	560	580
Winthrop	394	410	405	405	435	435	430	445
Elmer City	238	240	235	235	240	285	290	290
Riverside	280	280	280	280	290	285	285	285
Nespelem	236	235	235	235	235	245	245	245
Conconully	210	220	215	220	230	230	230	230

Source: OFM Databook based on *2010 Census data and **American Community Survey estimates

Common Populations in Need of Mobility Assistance

Adults ages 65 and older, young people ages 12-17 (traveling without an adult), people with disabilities, and people with lower incomes tend to have greater need for mobility assistance, since they may not be able to drive alone, afford the cost of transportation, or get around without higher levels of support. Figure 2-2 shows estimated proportions of the Okanogan County population for each of these population groups in the most recent year for which data are available.

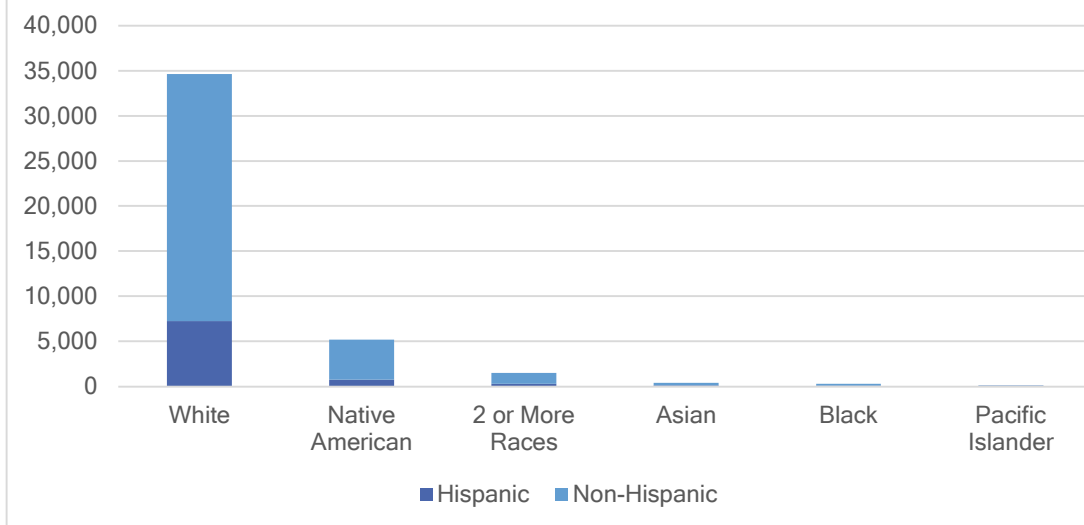
Figure 2-2: Populations in Greater Need of Mobility Assistance
(Census Estimates 2016-17)



Culture and Language

As shown in Figure 2-3, the majority of Okanogan County residents identify as non-Hispanic White, though the county is also home to significant Hispanic and Native American (AIAN) populations. Culture and language needs are important factors in providing accessible transportation and other mobility services.

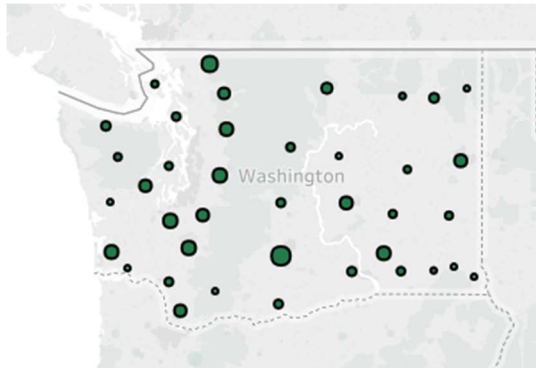
Figure 2-3: Race by Hispanic/Non-Hispanic
(Census Estimates, 2017)



Migrant and seasonal workers, typically of Hispanic or Latino descent, are important parts of the greater Okanogan County community, and defensible estimates produced by the National Center for Farmworker Health show that the number of people identified as Hispanic are undercounted by the U.S. Census Bureau. While the most recent estimates are from 2012 and represent threshold numbers of workers only (not families) that could be affected by current weather conditions, labor policies, etc., they show many more Hispanic residents (at least during seasonal work) than does the

Census. See Figures 2-4 and 2-5 to see how Okanogan County's migrant population compares to the rest of the state.

Figure 2-4: 2012 Animal Production Workers



Okanogan = 505 (3% of state)

Figure 2-5: 2012 Crop Production Workers



Okanogan = 15,521 (6% of state)

Together, these data indicate potential challenges for the Transit Authority and its partners in their efforts to provide mobility services to all in need, including but not limited to:

- Very low population densities in unincorporated areas where regular transit service is unlikely to be justified or accepted by the broader public;
- Over one-third of the total population whose household income is at or below 150% of the poverty level, making it difficult to pay for transportation, so setting higher fares to account for lower density transit service is an unlikely solution;
- Almost one-quarter of the county is over 65 years of age, some of whom may face physical limitations that need a higher level of service to get around; and
- A large farmworker population, many of whom are now staying in place to raise their families, may indicate a greater need for bilingual information to help people access the services available to them.

Origins and Destinations

Prior to a series of workshops held around the county, a survey was distributed to gather a baseline understanding on community mobility practices, including where people live and where they go most commonly, also known as origins and destinations. Online versions of the survey were distributed electronically via email blasts from transportation partners and social media posts, and on-board surveys were distributed on TranGO and OCTN transit services. People for People's 2-1-1 operators also offered callers the opportunity to take the survey.

Origins

Most survey respondents indicated that they live in the larger cities and towns in the county, namely the neighboring cities of Omak and Okanogan (42% of survey



Does
Vanpooling
get you where
you need to
go?

Wish you
could share
more rides?

Share your
needs in just 4
minutes.

Take the Okanogan County
Transportation Needs Survey:
<https://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/4452814/Okanogan-County-Transportation-Needs-Survey>

Image 2-1: One of five social media tiles use to promote participation in the transportation needs survey.

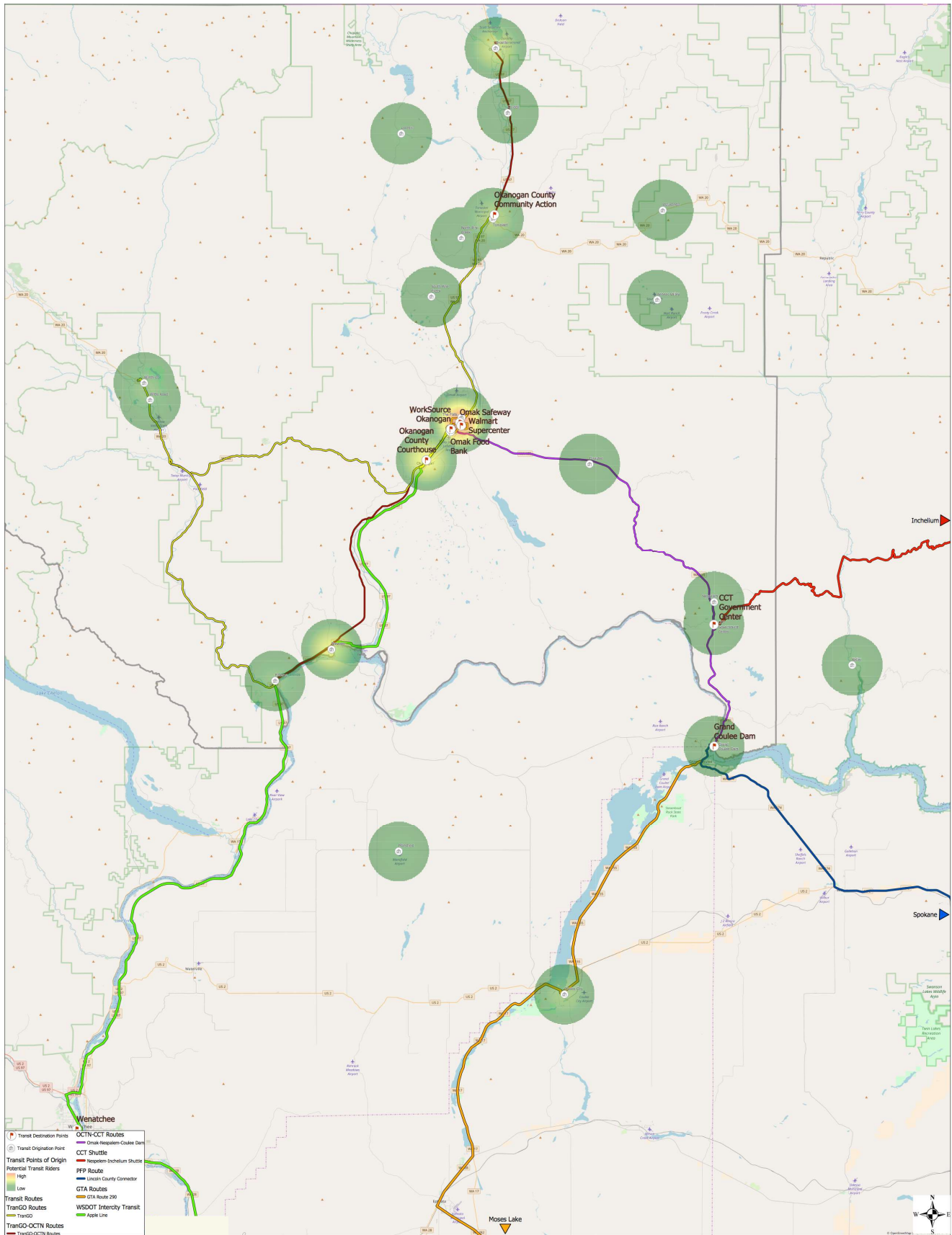
respondents) and the closely located cities of Tonasket and Oroville (27% of survey respondents). (Figure 2-6 shows all response counts, with percent of total, by place of residence.)

Figure 2-6: Survey Responses by Reported Place of Residence (n=164)

Place of Residence	Count	Percent
Omak	44	27%
Oroville	31	19%
Okanogan	24	15%
Tonasket	13	8%
Twisp	13	8%
Malott	8	5%
Brewster	7	4%
Carlton	3	2%
Riverside	3	2%
Coulee Dam/Grand Coulee	3	2%
Winthrop	2	1%
Nespelem	2	1%
Loomis	2	1%
Pateros	1	1%
"T-town"	1	1%
Mountain	1	1%
Wellpint	1	1%
Mazama	1	1%
Disautel	1	1%
Molson	1	1%
Aeneas Valley	1	1%
Methow	1	1%

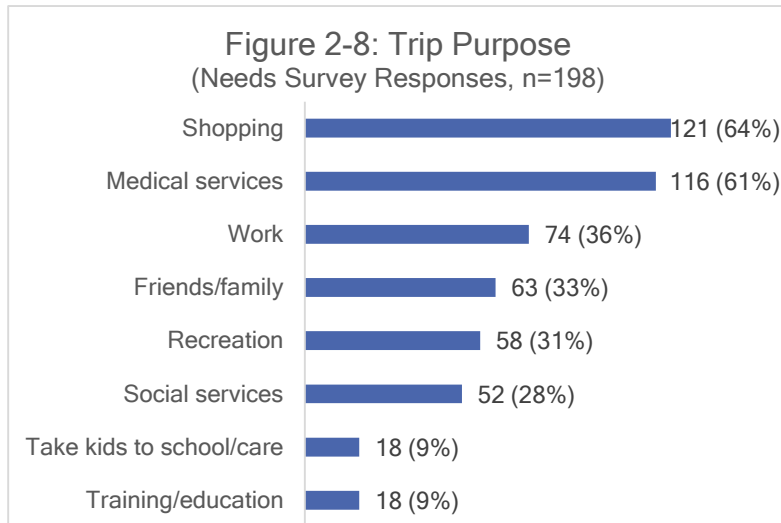
These are also the county's population centers (areas with higher population counts and density) as shown in the Origins and Destinations Map (Figure 2-7), which naturally tend to be the areas where most trips originate. Of course, as stated in the Community Profile section of this chapter, more people live in unincorporated areas of the county where services are limited. Due to the county's rural nature, detailed population data is also limited, making it difficult to say how many people in which areas can be associated with the target populations of this plan and therefore may need transportation services beyond driving their own vehicles or walking or biking on their own to the places they need to go.

See Figure 2-7: Major Origins and Destinations in Okanogan County (on the next page).



Trip Purpose and Geographic Destinations

Approximately two-thirds of survey respondents indicated medical appointments and shopping as destinations that they need to reach on a regular basis. Of course, there are a variety of other common destinations reported as well, including going to work, visiting friends and family, and more.



See Figure 2-8 for details on destinations reported by survey respondents. More discussion on the top two types of destinations follows.

Medical Destinations

The only major medical services in the county can be found in the cities of Tonasket, Omak and Okanogan, including Mid-Valley Hospital. For some specialized services, however, Okanogan County residents must travel outside the county to Wenatchee, Spokane or Seattle.

Shopping Destinations

Local groceries and other shopping opportunities can be found in cities and towns around the county, including on the Colville Confederated Tribes Reservation. Major shopping needs are most likely to be met in Omak, where the Walmart Superstore and other major retail stores can be found. Walmart was specifically noted as a key destination in the community workshop held in Nespelem.

For residents living in or near each of the cities in the county, public transportation to both medical services and shopping destinations is available, though service in the winter months is impacted by both terrain and weather. For residents living in areas further away from cities, they must rely on their own transportation or get a ride from friends or family. Nespelem workshop participants also noted that hitchhiking is a fairly common occurrence.

Existing Transportation and Other Mobility Services

Transportation services - fixed route, deviated fixed route and demand response - are primarily operated in and as connectors between the county's municipalities. The services are provided in a highly coordinated system of three general transportation providers: TranGO, OCTN, and CCT DOT.

OCTN began providing transportation service in 1976 to support the senior nutrition program in Okanogan County. Public special needs transportation (primarily door-to-door) was added in 1983. Services grew through implementation of several public demonstration projects (in 2000) funded through the Washington State Department of Transportation. These routes operated from Omak to Brewster, Omak to Oroville, and Omak to Twisp. After the demonstration projects, the services from Omak to Oroville and Omak to Brewster became permanent in 2003. In 2007, OCTN began a collaborative project with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation to develop commuter routes between Omak and Nespelem, specifically to support employment. The route began service in 2008. In 2015, as TranGO began service, OCTN expanded service to include Saturdays in Okanogan and Omak. In 2016, TranGO and OCTN modified services to expand deviated fixed routes

between the primary population centers in the County. In 2017, a project was coordinated with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, People for People and Special Mobility Services to build a connection between Omak and Spokane. The demand for service always outpaced the capacity of the system, and competitive grants made system security uncertain.

TranGO was established by Proposition 1 in 2013 by a vote of the people. Once this service was established, the providers worked together to increase connectivity in the county and prevent duplication of services. While coordination will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter, it is unavoidable to discuss when describing existing transportation services due to the integral role that coordination plays in this system.

Following is a description of each of these direct transportation services as well as other mobility services in the county.

Fixed and Deviated Fixed Route Transportation

TranGO/OCTN

TranGO and OCTN collaborate to provide multiple fixed routes throughout Okanogan County. All of these routes deviate up to .75 miles for pick-up of ADA-eligible passengers. General operating information is described in the table below.

Community	Days of Service	Hours of Service
Tonasket-Okanogan	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Okanogan-Omak	Monday – Saturday, including most holidays	7:00 am – 7:00 pm Weekdays 8:00 am – 6:00 pm Saturday/Holidays
Twisp-Okanogan	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Twisp-Winthrop	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Twisp-Pateros	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Okanogan-Pateros	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm
Oroville-Tonasket	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Fixed routes are operated on a curb-to-curb basis while deviated service offers door-to-door assistance. There are no restrictions on who may access TranGO's fixed route services and TranGO allows for a variety of mobility needs, including allowing car seats/booster seats, bikes, and service animals for passengers. Translated signage/other informational resources are also used to improve access for people with limited English proficiency.

Cost to passengers per one-way trip is \$1.00; free rides are available for personal care attendants and veterans pay half price.

A large bus (15 passengers or more) is used for all of TranGO's fixed routes and fuel is purchased through Whitley Fuel and Coleman Oil at market rate (with the Washington fuel tax later being reimbursed). A total of 13 drivers (7 full time and 6 part time) are employed to operate these vehicles. Drivers utilize tablets to interact with the dispatch software. Riders can use customer-facing technology (website, smart phone application) to see where their bus is and access other services.

On average, TranGO completes 5,113 one-way trips per month on an annual operating budget of more than \$1,000,000. Funding for this service is primarily subsidized by sales tax revenue with some support from fare revenue.

In addition to these routes, OCTN operates 2 deviated fixed routes with funding from TranGO, the Okanogan-Pateros and Oroville-Tonasket routes.) with funding from TranGO and from WSDOT grants.

OCTN/CCT DOT

OCTN, in partnership with the CCT DOT, also operates a deviated fixed route service from Omak to Coulee Dam, Monday through Friday, 5:45 am to 8:45 am and 2:10 pm to 5:15 pm. An additional run operates Wednesdays between 10:15 am and 1:35 pm. The additional route on Wednesdays coordinates with a CCT DOT route (between Nespelém and Grand Coulee), with People for People (from Grand Coulee to Davenport) and with Special Mobility Services (between Davenport and Spokane). There is no service on weekends or holidays. Pick-ups and drop-offs are made on a curb-to-curb basis. There are no restrictions on who may access these services, and OCTN allows for a variety of mobility needs, including allowing car seats/booster seats, bikes and service animals for passengers. Translated informational resources are utilized to improve access for Spanish-speaking populations.

A large bus (15 passengers or more) is used for all OCTN's route services, and fuel is purchased through Whitley Fuel and Coleman Oil. OCTN employs 5 individual drivers (4 FTE) to operate OCTN's deviated fixed route services. TranGO purchased dispatch software for both companies in 2016. OCTN provides the dispatch staff for both companies.

OCTN provides approximately 1,500 one-way trips per month, and travels about 17,000 vehicle miles. OCTN operates with an annual operating budget of \$375,000 for fixed route service. The average cost per trip is \$20.13. Funding for fixed route services is currently provided by a WSDOT Rural Mobility Grant, TranGO, and the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. Previous WSDOT funding included JARC, Paratransit Special Needs and 5311.

In addition to the Omak-Coulee Dam route operated by OCTN with funding from the Colville Confederated Tribes, CCT DOT operates a free public transportation shuttle between Inche'llium and Nespelém, Monday through Friday, between 5:45 am and 6:00 pm with no service on holidays.

Other Fixed Route Services

Additional services operated on a fixed route basis connect Okanogan County residents to destinations outside the county and serve specific population needs within the county.

Out-of-county connections:

- The Lincoln County Connector is operated by People for People Monday-Friday (7:30 to 8:50 am, 12:00 to 2:30 pm, and 4:00 to 5:20 pm) between Coulee Dam and Davenport (with connections to Spokane coordinated with Special Mobility Services). The fare for service depends on the provider, and the trip purpose. Some trips are provided to Medicaid eligible customers to medical destinations. Medicaid eligible trips are free of charge to the rider. Other public passengers pay the required fare.
- WSDOT's Apple Line, operated by Northwestern Trailways, follows a 160-mile route through Omak, Ellensburg and Wenatchee with connections to Amtrak and Greyhound. It is operated seven days a week starting at 6:00 am in Omak, with stops in Okanogan, Malott, Brewster, Pateros, Chelan, Entiat, Wenatchee and Ellensburg. The final destination is Ellensburg. The

intercity bus is designed specifically to connect to Greyhound, and the limited operations make it difficult to use for other purposes.

- Some services for specific populations exist including transportation for migrant and year-round workers provided by farm owners
- Grand Coulee Dam employee transportation to and from work

Daily school bus transportation for school children No additional information about these services is available at this time.

Demand Response Service

Demand response is a service where individual passengers can request transportation from a specific location to another specific location at a specific time. Transit vehicles providing demand response service do not follow a fixed route but travel throughout specific communities transporting passengers according to their specific requests. This service usually requires advance reservations, but not always.

OCTN

Door-to-door services are provided to Okanogan residents at a level that is dependent on available funding. Current demand response services are provided within a 10-mile radius of the five largest communities in Okanogan County. OCTN Door-to-Door Service is available in the following areas: Brewster/Pateros/Bridgeport, Omak/Okanogan area, Oroville, Tonasket, and Twisp/Winthrop. General operating information is provided in the table below.

Community	Days of Service (no holidays)	Hours of Service	# of Buses
Brewster/Pateros/ Bridgeport	M, T, W, Th	8:00 am – 12:30 pm – 11:30 am 4:30 pm	1
Omak/ Okanogan	M, T, W, Th, F, Sa*	6:00 am – *8:30 am – 6:00 pm 4:30 pm	4
Oroville	T, Th, F	9:00 am – 12:30 pm – 11:30 am 03:30 pm	1
Tonasket	M, W, Th	8:00 am – 12:30 pm – 12:00 pm 03:30 pm	1
Twisp/Winthrop	M, Th, F	8:00 am – 1:00 pm – 11:30 am 4:30 pm	1

The cost to passengers per one-way trip for this service is \$2.00 for the general public for in-town trips and \$4.00 for out-of-town trips. Rather than a set fare, seniors (age 60 and over) can ride with a donation. The “suggested donation” for a senior is \$2 per day. With a single donation, they can ride as many times that day as they desire. Personal care attendants ride for free. All vehicles are lift equipped.

Cutaway buses (less than 15 passengers) are used for these services, which are operated by a total of 9 drivers (5.6 FTE). The same fueling vendors are used throughout the OCTN system. Dispatch technology purchased by TranGO and operated by OCTN support the deviated fixed route services.

On average this service provides 2,500 one-way trips per month, travelling 10,000 vehicle miles with no trip denials recorded. The per trip cost averages \$26.48. The service operates on an annual budget

of over \$621,000. Funding for this service is provided by grants from WSDOT (5311, Paratransit/Special Needs, Rural Mobility), a contract with TranGO, fares and donations.

OCTN also provides one long-distance, demand-response trip to Wenatchee monthly from three communities in Okanogan County. General operating information is described in the table below.

Community	Day of Service	Departure / Return	# of Buses
Brewster	Every 2 nd Friday	7:30 am / 2:30 pm	1
Omak/Okanogan	Every 1 st Tuesday	7:00 am / 2:30 pm	1
Twisp/Winthrop	Every 3 rd Tuesday	8:00 am / 3:00 pm	1

Additionally, OCTN provides one long-distance trip to Omak monthly from four communities in Okanogan County. General operating information is described in the table below.

Community	Day of Service	Departure / Return	# of Buses
Brewster	Every 3 rd Friday	8:30 am / 3:00 pm	1
Oroville	Every 2 nd Monday	8:30 am / 3:00 pm	1
Tonasket	Every 2 nd Tuesday	9:15 am / 3:00 pm	1
Twisp/Winthrop	Every 2 nd Tuesday	8:30 am / 3:00 pm	1

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT)

NEMT is provided to Medicaid eligible passengers to approved medical services. A description of these services in Okanogan County is provided below.

People for People (PFP)

People for People serves communities in nine counties by arranging transportation for people of all ages who are covered under Washington State Apple Health (Medicaid and CHIP) and have a current ProviderOne services card and need transportation to non-emergency medical services. Verification for proper eligibility is confirmed, and then the most cost-effective, appropriate transportation is coordinated. A primary goal of these services is to assist clients with vouchers for gasoline or mileage reimbursement if they have their own transportation resources. If that is not possible, transportation is arranged using contracted providers such as local transit and paratransit providers, volunteer drivers, train, Greyhound, non-profit providers, cabulance and taxi companies.

Referrals for out of area specialty medical care may be requested by contacting the call center with five business-days' advance notice. Overnight accommodations may be provided upon receipt of proper medical justification from a client's physician.

People for People ensures that the lowest cost, most appropriate ride is arranged for the client, and trips may be shared with other riders. In Okanogan county, PFP contracts with Omak Taxi and Okanogan Valley Transportation (NEMT-only services), TranGO, Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition and TranCare Volunteer Driver program. PFP provided 13,667 trips in Okanogan County for the period of January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. The total trips include services provided by transportation providers, gas vouchers, mileage reimbursement, public bus and Greyhound.

Vanpool

TranGO offers vanpool as an option to commuters who need to travel outside of fixed route times and/or service area. Vanpool fares are developed to include all costs associated with use of the vans, including maintenance costs, fuel usage, replacement cost of the vehicles, etc. Vanpool routes and pickup locations are based on the needs of each vanpool and their ridership. TranGO currently offers the following vanpools and their monthly fares:

V-470 Vanpool, Omak to Chief Joseph (\$89.97)

V-520 Vanpool, Okanogan to Tonasket (\$71.06)

V-570 Vanpool, Okanogan to Chief Joseph (\$80.51)

V-670 Vanpool, Malott to Chief Joseph (\$61.60)

V-480 Vanpool, Omak to Grand Coulee Dam (\$121.34)

Vehicles used to operate these services include 7 passenger mini-vans and 12 passenger vans.

Other

Beyond all of the above transportation services provided by government, non-profit and private providers, Okanogan County residents that do not typically drive their own vehicles are also known to bike, walk, ride with family and friends and even hitchhike to get where they need to go.

CHAPTER 3 – MOBILITY NEEDS

Utilizing the feedback received from the public, transportation providers, and other key stakeholders, a range of needs were identified. These needs and related strategies (discussed in more detail in chapter 4) were initially prioritized by the human service providers in the area and those initial priorities were vetted with the Okanogan Council of Governments. The transportation provider agencies further aggregated and prioritized the needs based upon current data available. They estimated the level of effort and resources needed to address each need and weighed that against the expected public benefit.

Range of Needs

Results of the rider survey indicate that respondents rely upon the existing transportation services and that they are generally satisfied. However, respondents did indicate that the existing services do not get them everywhere they need to go and that destinations are limited. Respondents indicated challenges getting where they need to go due to limited destinations offered (41%, n=160), and some have a hard time paying for transportation (29%, n=156). A t-test analysis of differences among the ages of those who identified these challenges and those who did not found no significant differences. Available data are insufficient to conduct additional tests. However, the general depressed state of the county's economy and lack of comprehensive transportation services throughout the county makes it possible that these challenges are general challenges faced across population groups. More in-depth information was gathered in workshops and direct outreach efforts.

Public outreach workshops identified a list of initial needs. Local health and human service providers were contacted to solicit their input regarding the initial needs list and prioritization. They were also asked to state needs that they felt were not reflected in the initial list. The table below indicates some of the needs that were identified and the resulting priority.

Need Identified	Comments	Priority
Extend existing in-county service	Extend hours (earlier and later) for commuting. Expanding service locations for meeting basic needs. Add weekend service for recreation, shopping, and church. People desire fixed route and dial-a-ride service on weekends.	Very high
Provide medical transportation outside the county for specialized care. (Spokane, Wenatchee, Moses Lake, VA in Spokane etc.)	With the VA closing in Tonasket it is unclear if a need exists, but seems likely. The VA provides a van to their Spokane facility, but residents may not know how to access the service, or it may not be available when needed. Depending on where residents live within the county, it may be closer to travel to Spokane, Wenatchee, or Moses Lake. Previous surveys showed that residents travelled throughout the state (including Seattle and the Tri-Cities) for specialized care. It is unclear how many people <i>need</i> transportation to these locations and how often they need to travel.	High (This need requires additional information to truly quantify and prioritize, but is assumed to be high.)

Some residents living outside of town have difficulty getting into town for basic services		High (This need requires additional information to truly quantify and prioritize, but is assumed to be high.)
Residents don't know what services are available		High
Provide lodging/accommodations for ill and elderly going to intensive medical appointments in Wenatchee and Spokane	Anecdotal evidence shows that some patients travelling outside the county for medical treatment may benefit from eliminating multiple hours of travel back and forth by staying close to their medical provider during intense treatment. However, this is seen as a case-by-case issue that is best resolved by healthcare providers, patients and social service networks.	Medium
Connection to and navigating Link Transit in Wenatchee is difficult for ill and elderly	Link requires tokens rather than cash to ride their system. For Okanogan County residents, it is likely that they have not previously navigated any large transit system.	Medium
Increase transportation to recreation	Ski locations, hiking trails, biking trails, river rafting/floating.	Medium
Non-medical out-of-county (i.e. shopping & recreation)	Since funding for the transit is based on sales tax, taking residents out of the county for shopping may not serve the financial well-being of the system. It may also negatively impact other municipalities and junior taxing districts.	Low
Migrant worker transportation	It was reported that some employers operate private transportation but it is \$10/day. This has not been verified. Not all employers provide transportation.	Low
Increase service in Tonasket	Tonasket residents are heavily using the system and have a desire for expanded local service and expanded service hours. Tonasket is uniquely located between Hwy 7 and Hwy 97. There is a bridge south of town, and a bridge at the center of town. The geographic layout limits current access to transportation services for all residents.	Low

Priority Needs

The needs identified were grouped into related classifications for simplification and funding considerations.

Priority 1

Continue existing service, including demand-response and fixed route

Continuation of service also requires adequate vehicles.

Priority 2

Evaluate design and feasibility of a maintenance/operations facility

Priority 3

Continue to improve outreach, education and promotion of existing services to more fully utilize current resources.

Priority 4

Continue to gather and analyze needs data specifically focused on addressing potential need for expanding services within and outside of Okanogan County.

CHAPTER 4 – SERVICE & COORDINATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Since 2007, OCTN, PFP and the CCT DOT have been coordinating services in Okanogan County. In 2014 and 2015, the Okanogan Transit Authority worked with the partners to build on that existing system. These providers seek to meet the most essential transportation needs while avoiding redundancy, knowing that their combined resources stretch farther for the residents they serve when they work together. This collaboration is strong and should continue to be leveraged in the future as the providers work to overcome the challenges of providing transportation services in low-density areas.

Continuation of Existing Services

Okanogan County has significant populations of people who are identified by the State of Washington as people with special transportation needs (through disability, age or income they cannot provide their own transportation):

- 35% of residents live at 150% below the poverty line
- 23% of residents are aged 65 and older
- 21% of transportation survey respondents indicated that they are living with a physical disability

For these reasons, continuing the existing transportation services into the future will ensure that these residents and others have public transportation options as they navigate the county. All existing routes and services fill a critical need in the public transportation system with limited duplication. These services include the bus, shuttle, vanpool, non-emergency medical and demand response transportation services as well as the 2-1-1 social service referral system.

More than 90 percent of survey respondents who use these services reported that their needs are generally being met by the existing system. It is therefore recommended that all existing transportation services in Okanogan County be continued. More detailed recommendations follow.

Continue Existing Demand Response Service

OCTN's Door-to-Door Service is available in the following areas: Brewster/Pateros/Bridgeport, Omak/Okanogan area, Oroville, Tonasket, Twisp/Winthrop. It provides critical access for those living outside of town and/or with physical limitations to get into town for medical and shopping needs.

PFP provides Medicaid-eligible residents with transportation to non-emergency medical services. This population would otherwise encounter significant barriers to accessing transportation to medical appointments. With proper documentation from a primary care provider, referrals for out-of-area medical care and even overnight accommodations may be provided with proper medical justification from a client's physician. PFP also provides 2-1-1 services which provides key outreach services and helps residents navigate the transportation network that runs in and through the county.

Continue Existing Fixed Route Services

The existing fixed route services provided by TranGO, OCTN, and CCT DOT provide critical transportation access for residents of the county from outlying communities to major shopping and medical destinations in Omak and Okanogan as well as to key employers in the region. They also provide limited but critical connections for getting residents out of the county for specialized medical services, shopping trips, or socializing with out-of-the-area friends and family.

Replace Aging Vehicles

Based upon the mileage traveled in Appendix A and the age of its current fleet, OCTN will need to replace 5 vehicles in order to maintain the critical transportation services it provides. The vehicle to be replaced are between 10 and 16 years old with mileage on them ranging from 142,000 – 348,000 miles and are past their useful life. Repair costs from July 2017 through July 2018 have been \$83,000.00. The replacement of these vehicles is necessary to ensure reliable transportation service resulting and minimize service days lost caused by repair and maintenance.

Acquire a Vehicle Maintenance Facility

Unfortunately, grant funding was not approved for acquiring a maintenance facility in the last grant cycle. The agency still must move forward with securing a local facility for securing and servicing its vehicles. Currently, TranGO and OCTN must send its vehicles out of the area for repairs and maintenance; this resulted in the loss of an estimated 400 service days in 2018.

Continue to Improve Outreach, Data Analysis & Education

Existing services may meet several needs surfaced during outreach, but residents may simply not know about them. For example, there are transportation options to Wenatchee that are at least somewhat practical for certain communities/populations, including those that have Apple Line stops, are serviced by OCTN's monthly Wenatchee trip, or are NEMT-eligible with proper medical documentation.

Increased and on-going outreach efforts will help to prove or disprove some of the transportation gaps that were identified via recent outreach efforts. Okanogan County is known to contain hard-to-reach populations, yet connecting with many more residents will provide key data and inform current transportation gaps. Additionally, collaborative data sharing and analysis of the existing service data will help transportation partners to identify where the county needs to invest in service expansions within and outside of the area next.

Service Expansion/Coordination

Established in 2013, TranGO is still a young transportation organization that is only serving a portion of the county's residents with its existing fixed route services. Given the low density in Okanogan county, it is recommended that TranGO lead a coordinated, collaborative effort with the other transportation partners to evaluate the need to offer more transportation services to county residents. Services need not be limited to increasing the number of fixed routes, but the partners should continue to brainstorm and pilot ways to help rural residents move around the county in a cost-effective way.

In-County Service Expansion

While OCTN and TranGO operate fixed and deviated fixed route service in ten of the largest communities in the county, some cities and towns are not served and many rural residents have no access to public transportation. Within Okanogan County, several small towns and communities may need access to transportation, including, but not limited to, Loomis, Mazama, Wauconda, Aeneas Valley, Conconully, Twin Lakes Road, Molson, Chesaw, and Havillah.

Comments emerged during outreach about extending hours of service (earlier and later weekday service) to better cover commutes. On a related note, Sunday service was identified as a need during outreach.

An aging population with high transportation needs is the group requiring dialysis, which requires up to three medical visits per week. The only dialysis center in Okanogan County is located in Omak. Private transportation options like taxi services, Uber/Lyft, etc. are non-existent in the county. Dialysis patients must either provide their own transportation or utilize existing public transportation services. Transportation for Dialysis is provided to Medicaid eligible people.

Local residents and community leaders also requested more access to the county's key recreational destinations, including local ski resorts and tourist destinations.

Out-of-County Service Expansion

During outreach, the need to travel to Wenatchee or Spokane for intensive, specialized medical treatments (i.e. chemotherapy, radiation, etc.) was identified. While OCTN offers several monthly trips to Wenatchee and WSDOT's Apple Line to Wenatchee has some stops in Okanogan County, comments during outreach indicate that these services are not well-known by the community or are potentially impractical for people with physical limitations due to age or medical conditions. The 6:00 a.m. Apple Line connection in Omak is not practical for outlying communities as connecting services do not run early enough to transport them there in time. It is also suspected that OCTN's current monthly trips are too long and difficult for people with physical limitations. Also, these trips are offered only one day per month in several communities, making medical appointment coordination difficult. Similar service may also be necessary to Spokane, which is closer than Wenatchee for people living in the Okanogan Valley, north of Omak.

Attention should also be paid to providing transportation options in areas that overlap two or more counties or have important and common destinations in neighboring cross-county communities (i.e. Bridgeport – Brewster, Coulee Dam – Coulee Medical Center).

Increase Number of WSDOT-Eligible Projects

Since Okanogan County is a one-county RTPPO, it is limited in the ranking slots available for A, B, and C projects. For example, the Okanogan RTPPO can rank 3 projects as A level priority, 3 projects as B level priority, and 3 projects as C level priority. The neighboring NEW RTPPO has nearly the same geographic size and population, but they can rank 9 A level priority projects, 9 B level priority projects and 9 C level priority projects. The priority ranking provides additional points to an application for final award ranking in the WSDOT Consolidated Grant evaluation process. In previous years, all A ranked projects were funded, while only a portion of the B or C ranked projects were selected for funding.

This seems inequitable and Okanogan County would like to work with the state to overcome this barrier to funding.

It was also noted during community workshop conversations that the state's grant process is challenging for rural areas like Okanogan County, where resources are tight and individual staff members are responsible for tasks typically carried out by multiple people in urban areas. This means that their capacity to develop strong grant applications is limited, and they have concerns that this limits their competitiveness.

Special Service and Coordination Considerations

The following sub-sections look at how selected features of direct transportation operating systems and emergency management are coordinated among the major transportation providers in the county. Recommendations for enhanced coordination are included where appropriate.

Technology

OCTN and TranGO fixed route (with ADA deviations) and demand response transportation services are supported by shared dispatch software. It is recommended that this partnership continue and that the two providers work with CCT DOT and other Colville Tribal representatives as appropriate to explore the utility and feasibility of expanding the partnership to include CCT transportation services.

The shared dispatch software also enables smart phone application connectivity, though public use of that capability is unknown at this time. Since more and more individuals use smartphones, including among populations with lower income levels, this feature may be a useful strategy for increasing use of OCTN, TranGO and potentially CCT services. It is recommended that the providers work together to explore ways that this feature could be used more widely, including how mobile phone service limitations impact the viability of this potential strategy.

Vehicle Storage and Fueling

TranGO and OCTN offices are co-located in the City of Okanogan, and a shared secure vehicle storage lot is located across the street. CCT DOT vehicles that are operated by OCTN are also stored there. This partnership is effective and likely to continue.

Both providers use the same source to fuel their vehicles, and both receive some federal and state fuel tax rebates or discounts.

Driver Training

TranGO and OCTN drivers participate in monthly coordinated trainings where topics include safety, serving populations with special needs, and customer service. Since CCT representatives discussed the need for well-trained drivers and more employment opportunities for CCT members, it is recommended that the three providers work together to explore the possibility of expanding this partnership to include tribal representatives in the training given to TranGO and OCTN drivers. CCT needs CDL-trained drivers, so they will need to access that specific credentialed training elsewhere. Some level of on-going driver training that is coordinated among the three agencies could be beneficial for all involved, including CCT staff goals for increasing employment opportunities for members.

Emergency Management

Information on emergency management planning and services coordination is limited to TranGO, OCTN and People for People at this time:

- The Okanogan County Transit Authority has submitted an approved interlocal agreement for emergency response transportation services to the Emergency Management Department of Okanogan County, but it has not signed by the County for unknown reasons.
- OCTN has a fully executed agreement to provide transportation services when the Emergency Management Department of Okanogan County calls on them.
- People for People's Greater Columbia 2-1-1 (GC 2-1-1) Information and Referral call center gathers information from key emergency response agencies and shares that information with concerned community members that contact them (via phone or web) during an emergency or disaster.

These services are important for the planning, practice and deployment of emergency management teams in the event of a natural disaster or other emergency and should be continued. However, cell phone service is needed in many cases and is a challenge in the county generally. It has also proven to be a problem in recent emergency response activities. This issue would benefit from further exploration, including tests of the system. Possible solutions could include a coordinated effort to improve cell phone reception throughout the county generally, which would require more cell phone towers to be sited strategically due to the mountainous landscape in some areas, and/or acquiring satellite phones for all emergency response agencies.

The extent to which CCT is involved in this emergency management system is not clear at this time. If they are not included as active partners in the emergency management system, it is recommended that they be included in the near future.

APPENDIX A – INVENTORY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

DIRECT TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

Following is detailed information about two of the major direct transportation service providers in Okanogan County. Additional known direct transportation service providers include: Colville Confederated Tribes Transit (available to the general public); People for People (NEMT provider); migrant farmworker transportation; school district transportation (available to school children); and daily transportation provided to employees of the Grand Coulee Dam.

	Okanogan County Transit Authority (TranGO)	OCTN operated service for TranGO and CCT DOT	Okanogan County Transportation (OCTN)
<i>Type(s) of service:</i>	Fixed route Deviated fixed route	Deviated fixed route	Demand response, Deviated fixed route
<i>Service areas:</i>	Tonasket-Okanogan, Okanogan-Omak, Twisp-Okanogan, Twisp-Winthrop, Twisp-Pateros	Okanogan to Coulee Dam, Okanogan-Pateros, Oroville-Tonasket	Local cities: Brewster, Twisp, Omak, Okanogan, Tonasket and Oroville
<i>Weekday hours of operation:</i>	7:00 am – 7:00 pm (start and end times vary slightly by route)	7:00 am – 7:00 pm (start and end times vary slightly by route) Once weekly mid-day connection from Spokane for CCT DOT Route.	7:00 am – 6:00 pm
<i>Weekend hours of operation:</i>	8:00 am – 6:00 pm	7:00 am – 7:00 pm (CCT DOT does not operate weekends.)None	Okanogan/Omak Saturday 8:30am – 4:30 pm
<i>Holiday hours of operation:</i>	8:00 am – 6:00 pm	7:00 am – 7:00 pm (CCT DOT does not operate holidays.)	None
<i>Pick-up/drop-off type:</i>	Fixed with only ADA-eligible deviations	Deviated fixed route	Door-to-door, deviated fixed route
<i>Cost to passenger per one-way trip:</i>	\$1.00	*Fare Free on Okanogan-Coulee Dam, All others \$1.00	Senior donation; General Public: \$2.00 - \$4.00
<i>Trip restrictions:</i>	None	Okanogan to Coulee Dam, Okanogan-Pateros, Oroville-Tonasket	Within a 10-mile radius of certain cities
<i>Allowable passengers:</i>	General public	General public	General public
<i>Allow car seats/ booster seats:</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Allow service animals:</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Translated signage/other informational resources:</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>Free/reduced cost rides for escorts/ personal care attendants:</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Discounted service for older adults:</i>	No	No	Yes
<i>Discounted service for low-income riders:</i>	No	No	No
	Okanogan County Transit Authority (TranGO)	OCTN operated service for (CCT DOT)	Okanogan County Transportation (OCTN)
<i>Discounted service for veterans:</i>	Yes	No	No
<i>Vehicle types:</i>	Vanpool: 7-passenger and 12 passenger vans. Fixed route: Large bus/vehicle (15 passengers or more)	Large bus/vehicle (15 passengers or more)	Small bus/full-sized vans (less than 15 passengers) Large bus/vehicle (15 passengers or more)
<i>Fuel purchased at:</i>	Whitley Fuel, Coleman	Whitley Fuel, Coleman	Whitley Fuel, Coleman
<i>Discount for fuel:</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Number of FT drivers:</i>	7	3	7
<i>Number of PT drivers:</i>	6	2	8
<i>Number of volunteer drivers:</i>	0	0	0
<i>Use of technology:</i>	RouteMatch Dispatch Software/smart phone application	RouteMatch Dispatch Software	RouteMatch Dispatch Software/smart phone application
<i>Average number of one-way trips per month:</i>	5,113	1,517	2,146
<i>Average number of vehicle miles traveled per month:</i>	32,500	16,835	9,646
<i>Average number of trip denials per month:</i>	0	0	0
<i>Per trip cost to agency:</i>	Unknown	\$20.13	\$26.48
<i>Annual operating budget:</i>	\$1,000,000+	\$112,000+	\$621,000+
<i>Funding sources:</i>	Sales tax revenue, fares, 5311, Rural Mobility, 5339, VIP, 5310, Paratransit/Special Needs	DOT Rural Mobility Grant, fares and donations, CCT	DOT special needs non-profit funds, fares and donations, TranGO

NEMT Brokering

Following is information on People for People, the organization that provides Medicaid trip brokering for non-emergency medical transportation. People for People is based in Yakima County.

Trip Providers	Average % of Monthly Brokered Trips
TranGO	0.09%
Omak Taxi/OKVT	56.28%
Trancare	7.40%
Greyhound	0.03%
Okanogan Valley Transportation	Not reported
OCTN	Not reported

OTHER MOBILITY SERVICES

Following is information available at the time of this plan regarding mobility services other than direct transportation.

	Okanogan County Transit Authority (TranGO)	Okanogan County Transportation	People for People
Information and referral	X		X
Travel training			X
Bus passes	X	X	X
Mileage reimbursement			X
Gas vouchers			X
Vanpool services	X		

COORDINATION OF SERVICES

Following is information available at the time of this plan regarding service coordination.

	Okanogan County Transit Authority (TranGO)	Okanogan County Transportation (OCTN)	People for People
Coordination goals:			
Improve efficiency/cost-effectiveness	X	X	X
Serve more areas/connect services	X	X	X
Serve more people	X	X	X
Improve quality	X	X	X
Improve information and communications	X	X	X

<i>Improve access</i>	X	X	X
Coordinates with:	People for People	Churches, Public transit, Tribal agency, Nutrition programs	Intercity carriers, Public transit, Tribal agency, nutrition programs
Emergency management coordination:	Interlocal agreement submitted to emergency management but not yet signed by the County.	Agreement for services if County Emergency Management calls for help.	Provides information on resources available during an emergency or disaster in Okanogan County. Information acquired by contacting key emergency response agencies to provide up-to-date information.