

*Okanogan Council of Governments*



COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2022 Update



Okanogan  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS



SCJ ALLIANCE

## Project Information

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Project: Okanogan Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services  
Transportation Plan

Prepared for: Okanogan Council of Governments  
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Plan Adopted: September 2022

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# Title VI and ADA Statements

## 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 Federal Transit Administration (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).

### English

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Este material está disponible en un formato alternativo, que puede ser solicitado al funcionario responsable de ADA a 509-422-7104 o enviar un correo electrónico a [skeitzman@co.okanogan.wa.us](mailto:skeitzman@co.okanogan.wa.us).

## Acronyms

TranGO	Okanogan County Transit Authority
OCTN	Okanogan County Transportation & Nutrition
OCOG	Okanogan Council of Governments
PFP	People for People
CCT: DOT	Colville Confederated Tribe Department of Transportation
WSDOT	Washington State Department of Transportation
GTA	Grant Transit Authority
NCW Mobility Council	North Central Washington Mobility Council
SVI	Social Vulnerability Index
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
ATSDR	Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

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# What is Human Services Transportation?

Human services transportation includes a broad range of transportation service options designed to meet the needs of transportation disadvantaged populations including older adults, disabled persons and/or those with lower income.

Individuals have different needs and may require a set of different services depending on their abilities, their environment, and the options available in their community.

Examples may include dial-a-ride (responding to individual door-to-door transportation requests), the use of bus tokens and/or transit passes for fixed route scheduled services, accessing taxi vouchers and/or mileage reimbursement to volunteers or program participants.

**- Federal Transit Administration**

# Introduction

## Okanogan Council of Governments (OCOG)

is the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) for Okanogan County. This plan outlines recommendations that will help OCOG enhance and improve their coordinated public transit and human services transportation over the next four years and beyond.

The recommendations presented in this plan are based on an analysis of existing conditions

including population, demographics, existing services, and needs expressed through the public outreach process.

The CPT-HSTP aims to focus on recommendations that will help improve transportation options for those with special transportation needs including senior citizens, low-income households and individuals, and people with disabilities.

## Why Update the CPT-HSTP?

There are several reasons to coordinate transportation and mobility services in Okanogan County. Coordinating these services through a CPT-HSTP can:

- ◆ Improve accessibility for people with special transportation needs to get where they need to go
- ◆ Provide mobility assistance for those with physical mobility challenges
- ◆ Improve coordination between transit agencies for efficient transitions and services
- ◆ Increase the times and locations people are able to access transit throughout the County
- ◆ Improve comfort and safety of using public transit and mobility services

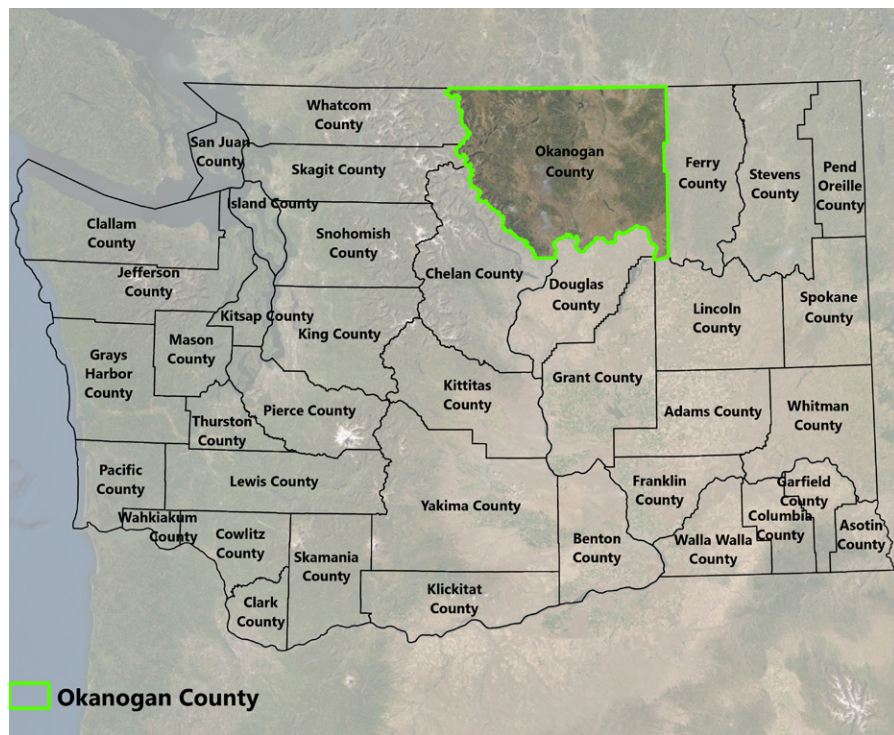


Figure 1: Context Map

These types of improvements can become a reality for Okanogan County by making efficient use of existing funding, working to become eligible for and applying for new funding opportunities, sharing resources when possible, and conducting regular analysis of how systems and services are meeting the needs of the community, then adjusting based on new data or changing needs.

These improvements are largely made possible by maintaining access to outside funding. Mobility services in rural communities must keep their fares at a level where they are accessible by those who

need them most. Therefore, rural transit agencies cannot operate based on fare revenue alone and must seek outside funding to continue providing services and meet the community's needs.

WSDOT requires OCOG to prepare a CPT-HSTP every four years to maintain eligibility for the Consolidated Grant Program, which provides funds for public transportation improvements within and between rural communities, transportation services between cities, purchases of new buses and equipment, and public transportation services to seniors and people with disabilities. WSDOT also references CPT-HSTPs to inform a Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan.

## Purpose

This plan seeks to identify priorities and recommendations that will maintain, enhance, or significantly improve mobility and human services in Okanogan County, as identified through analysis and public outreach, to meet WSDOT's Consolidated Grant eligibility requirements and to address community needs.



# Regional Context

Okanogan County is in north central Washington State. It shares its northern border with British Columbia, Canada, and borders several other counties in Washington, effectively bridging eastern and western Washington.

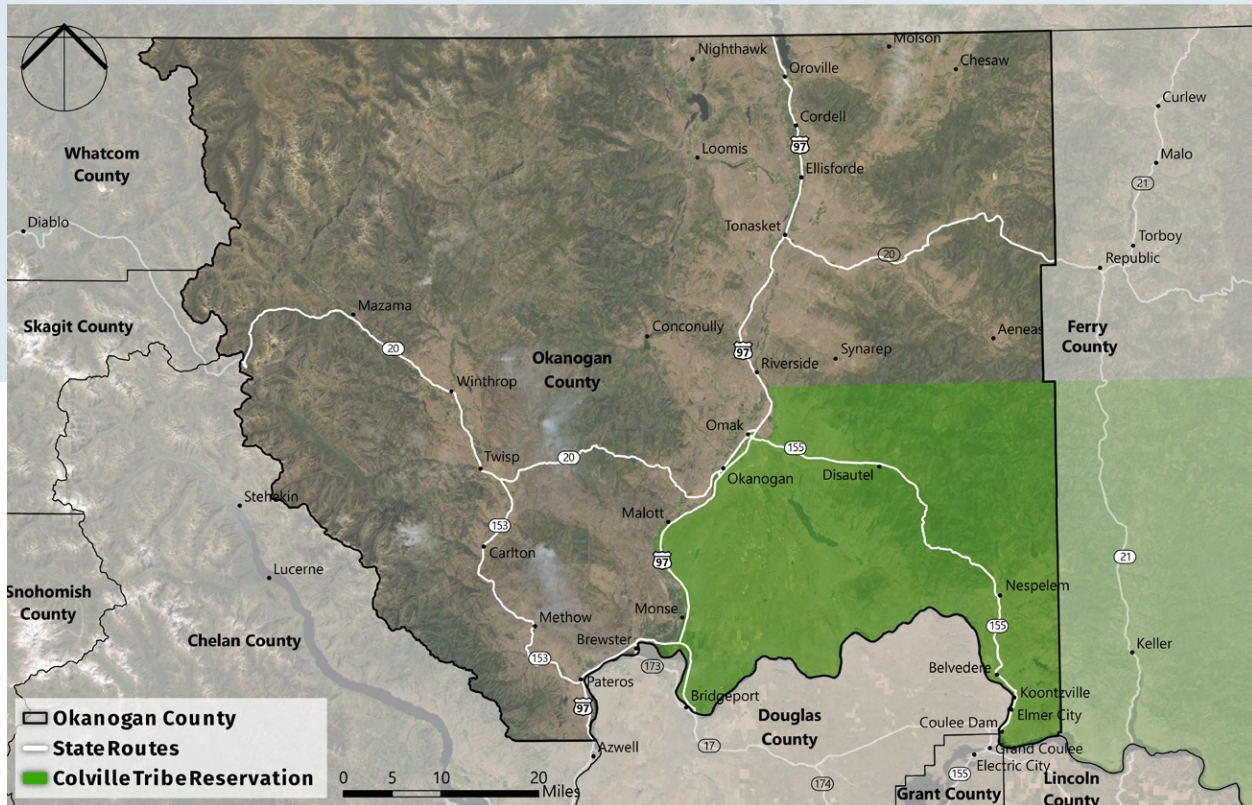


Figure 2: Okanogan County Map

## Population

Okanogan County is the largest county, by square miles, in Washington State, covering 5,268 square miles. Yet, it has the sixth fewest residents per square mile (8.0), and a total of only 42,104 residents as of the 2020 Census.

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 Table 1, most of these municipalities are home to fewer than 1,000 residents, meaning there are many people who do not live in one of the county's municipalities who may still need transportation assistance.

Overall, Okanogan County is a very low-density county at only 8 people per square mile. This low-density and rural nature creates challenges for making efficient use of public services, but the need for them still exists, as explained later in this plan.

Table 1: Okanogan County Population by Jurisdiction									
Jurisdiction	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Okanogan County	41,425	41,500	41,700	41,860	41,730	42,110	42,490	42,730	42,104
Unincorporated Okanogan County	25,085	25,110	25,120	25,320	25,090	25,400	25,720	25,920	25,943
Incorporated Okanogan County	16,340	16,390	16,580	16,540	16,640	16,710	16,770	16,810	16,161
Omak	4,835	4,830	4,840	4,900	4,925	4,925	4,935	4,940	4,860
Okanogan	2,535	2,560	2,595	2,580	2,595	2,610	2,620	2,640	2,379
Brewster	2,355	2,370	2,380	2,395	2,395	2,400	2,405	2,405	1,983
Oroville	1,715	1,715	1,700	1,695	1,710	1,705	1,705	1,700	1,795
Tonasket	1,020	1,020	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,110	1,103
Twisp	930	940	945	945	950	970	975	980	992
Coulee Dam (part)	915	915	915	910	915	915	915	915	1,011
Pateros	665	665	665	525	560	580	585	585	593
Winthrop	405	405	435	435	430	445	465	480	504
Elmer City	235	235	240	285	290	290	290	290	239
Riverside	280	280	290	285	285	285	285	285	329
Nespelem	235	235	235	245	245	245	245	245	180
Conconully	215	220	230	230	230	230	235	235	193

Source: OFM Databook based on 2020 Census Data for 2020 and American Community Survey estimates for 2012-2019

## Population Projections

Okanogan County's population was 42,104 at the 2020 Census. The Office of Financial Management (OFM) population projections shown in Figure 3 indicate that an additional 2,720 people are expected to live in the county by 2030, representing 6.5% growth over ten years. Another 1,095 people will live in Okanogan County on top of that by 2040, making for a total of approximately 9% population growth over 20 years.

This slow but steady population growth indicates that the need for public transportation and human services will not recede; rather, it will likely grow as the population ages.

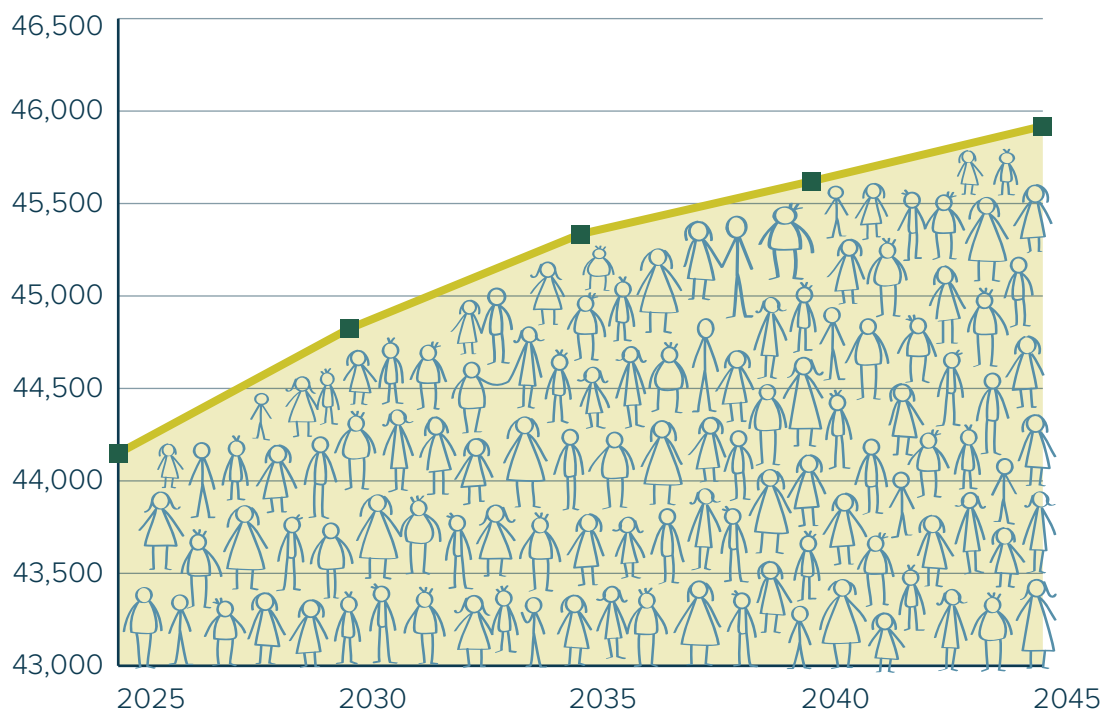


Figure 3: Okanogan County Population Projections, 2025-2045 (Office of Financial Management)

## Common Populations in Need of Mobility Assistance

Populations in need of mobility assistance include:

- ♦ Adults ages 65 and older
- ♦ young people ages 15-19 (traveling without an adult)
- ♦ people with disabilities
- ♦ people with lower incomes

These groups tend to have a 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 4 shows estimated proportions of the Okanogan County population for each of these groups.

## Percent of Total Population in Greater Need of Mobility Assistance

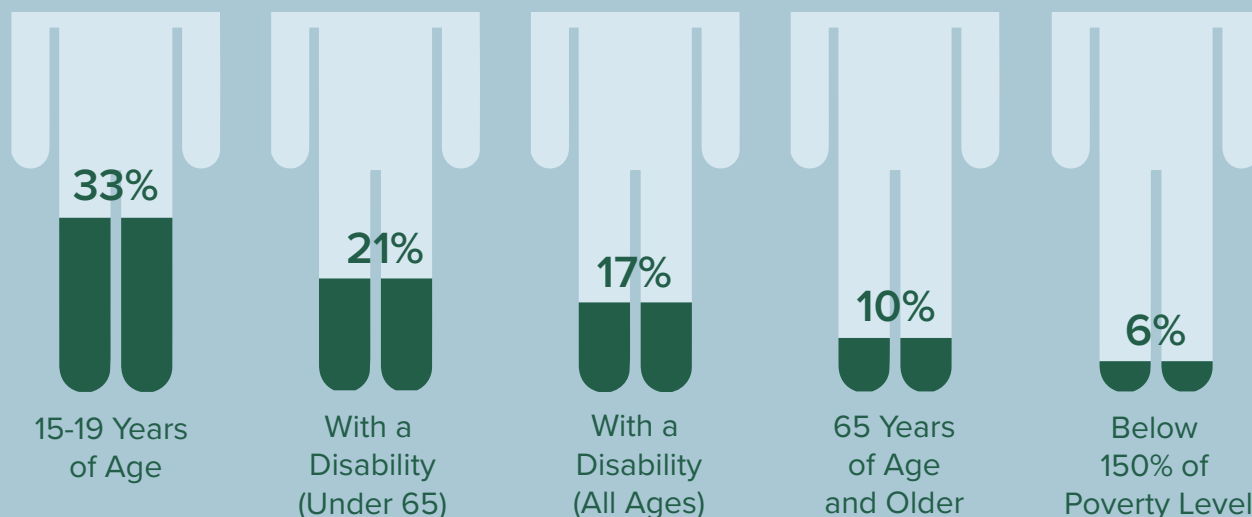


Figure 4: Populations in Greater Need of Mobility Assistance (Census Estimates 2019)

All of the groups represented in Figure 4 have a higher likelihood of needing transportation assistance. About one-third of the County is within 150% of the poverty level, indicating there is an economic reason that people might seek transportation assistance. This reinforces the need for service fares to remain at a low cost.

Additionally, over one-fourth of the County's population are in an age range where they are more likely to need transportation assistance (15-19 years or over 65 years).

Approximately 17% of the county's population has a disability of some kind, meaning that nearly one-fifth of the county has a higher likelihood of needing transportation assistance due to disability.

These populations represent a significant portion of Okanogan County. While not everyone in these categories may not actively use public transportation or human services, there are plenty who do. There are also many who may not know these services are available to them, or who have not sought these public services due to other factors, but might be inclined to use them in the future.

A clear need for transportation assistance exists for people in all groups identified.

## Culture and Language Needs

Culture and language are important considerations when identifying transportation needs in rural communities. Okanogan County's public transportation and human services need to provide service to all residents, regardless of culture or language. This means that planning for these services should consider the needs of significant minority populations within the County, including the needs of tribal populations, Hispanic/Latino populations, and migrant workers.

Figures 5 and 6 show the composition of race, ethnicity, and language spoken at home within Okanogan County per the 2020 Census, and indicates the following:

- ♦ The majority (76.8%) of Okanogan County residents identify as non-Hispanic and White.
- ♦ The county is also home to significant Hispanic and Native American (AIAN) populations (12.6%).
- ♦ Approximately 19.5% of county residents are Hispanic or Latino
- ♦ About 16% of residents speak mainly Spanish at home

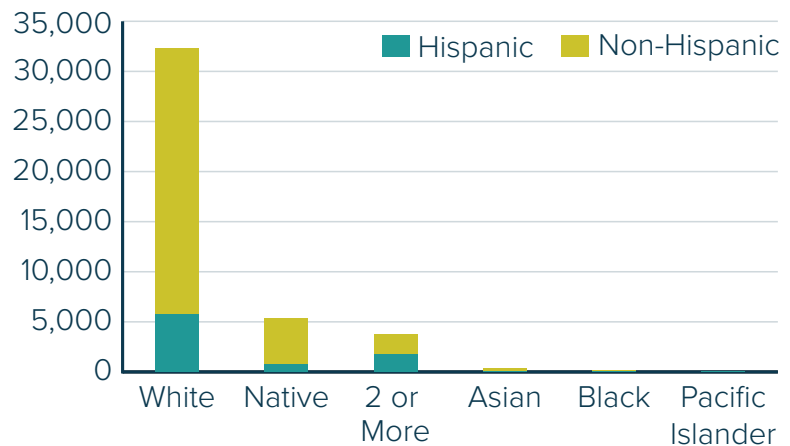


Figure 6: Race by Hispanic/Non-Hispanic (2020 Census)

These demographic indicators show that race, ethnicity, and language needs are important factors in providing accessible transportation and other mobility services.

## Language Spoken at Home

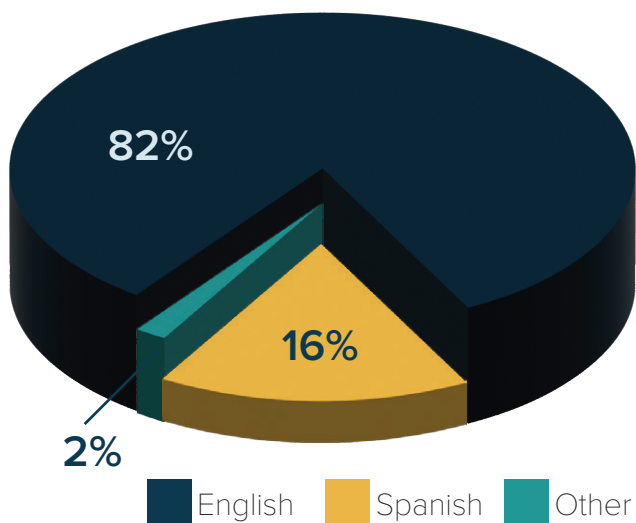


Figure 5: Language Spoken at Home, Population 5 years+ (Census Estimates)

In addition, estimates 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 2017 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.

Figure 7 describes how Okanogan County's migrant population compares to the rest of the state.

Migrant and seasonal workers, typically of Hispanic or Latino descent, represent a significant proportion of the County's population, and contribute significantly to the culture and economy of Okanogan County.

*Migrant workers often have special transportation needs to get to work in rural places, meaning transportation facility signage should be available in multiple languages, such as English and Spanish, to accommodate adequate transportation for migrant and seasonal workers.*

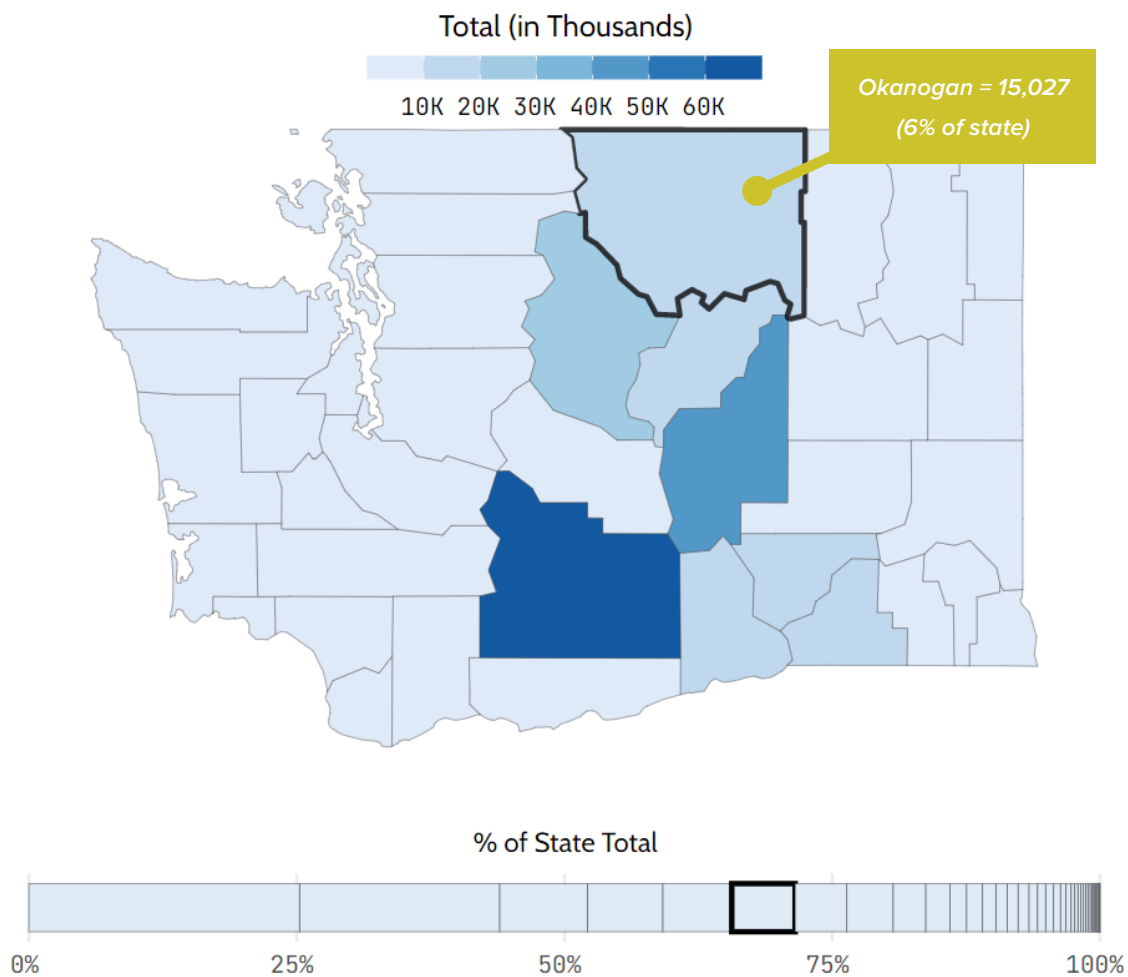


Figure 7: 2017 Agriculture Workers (National Center for Farmworker Health)



## Findings

Together, these regional data indicate potential challenges for OCOG 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 make regular transit service unlikely to be justified by the level of demand.
- ◆ Approximately one-third of the total population lives in a home where the household income is below 150% of the poverty line, making transportation costs much more burdensome. This means that setting higher fares to account for lower density transit service is an unlikely solution.
- ◆ About one-fifth of the county is over 65 years of age. People in this age range are more likely to face physical limitations that necessitate assistance with getting around.
- ◆ There are significant language and cultural divides amongst groups in Okanogan County, specifically for tribal and Hispanic/Latino populations.
- ◆ There is also a large farmworker population, many of whom are now staying in the county to raise their families. This may indicate a greater need for bilingual information and expanded awareness of transportation options to help people access the services available to them.

# Origins and Destinations of People with Special Transportation Needs

People who fall within the category of having special transportation needs include:

- ♦ People with disabilities
- ♦ Senior citizens and youth
- ♦ People with low incomes
- ♦ Minority groups
- ♦ Those with English language limitations

These categories, as well as other related demographics, are summarized by the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), a dataset developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). The SVI captures fourteen social factors and groups them into four related themes; each Census Tract then receives its own overall ranking based on the combined factors:

## *Socioeconomic Status*

- ♦ Below poverty
- ♦ Unemployed
- ♦ Income
- ♦ No High School Diploma

## *Household Composition and Disability*

- ♦ Aged 65 or Older
- ♦ Aged 17 or Younger
- ♦ Older than Age 5 with a Disability
- ♦ Single-Parent Households

## *Minority Status and Language*

- ♦ Minority
- ♦ Speak English "Less than Well"

## *Housing and Transportation*

- ♦ Multi-Unit Structures
- ♦ Mobile Homes
- ♦ Crowding
- ♦ No Vehicle
- ♦ Group Quarters

The original reason that the CDC developed the SVI was to identify and map the communities that will most likely need support before, during, and after a hazardous event. However, these categories correlate well with those identified above as having special transportation needs.

Thus, Figure 8 depicts the SVI in each Census Tract throughout Okanogan County, indicating where people are more likely to have special transportation needs. The most recent SVI data at the time of this report was from 2018.

It is interesting to note that the overall SVI score for

Okanogan County is 0.9255 (out of 1.0000), which indicates a high level of vulnerability. The majority of municipalities in the County (on the eastern half) are in a Census Tract with a high SVI. The central and southwestern parts of the County, including the Methow Valley, have a medium-high SVI, and the northwest part of the county, including Winthrop, has a low-medium SVI.

This analysis indicates that people with special transportation needs are found all over the county, but especially in the areas with higher population densities.

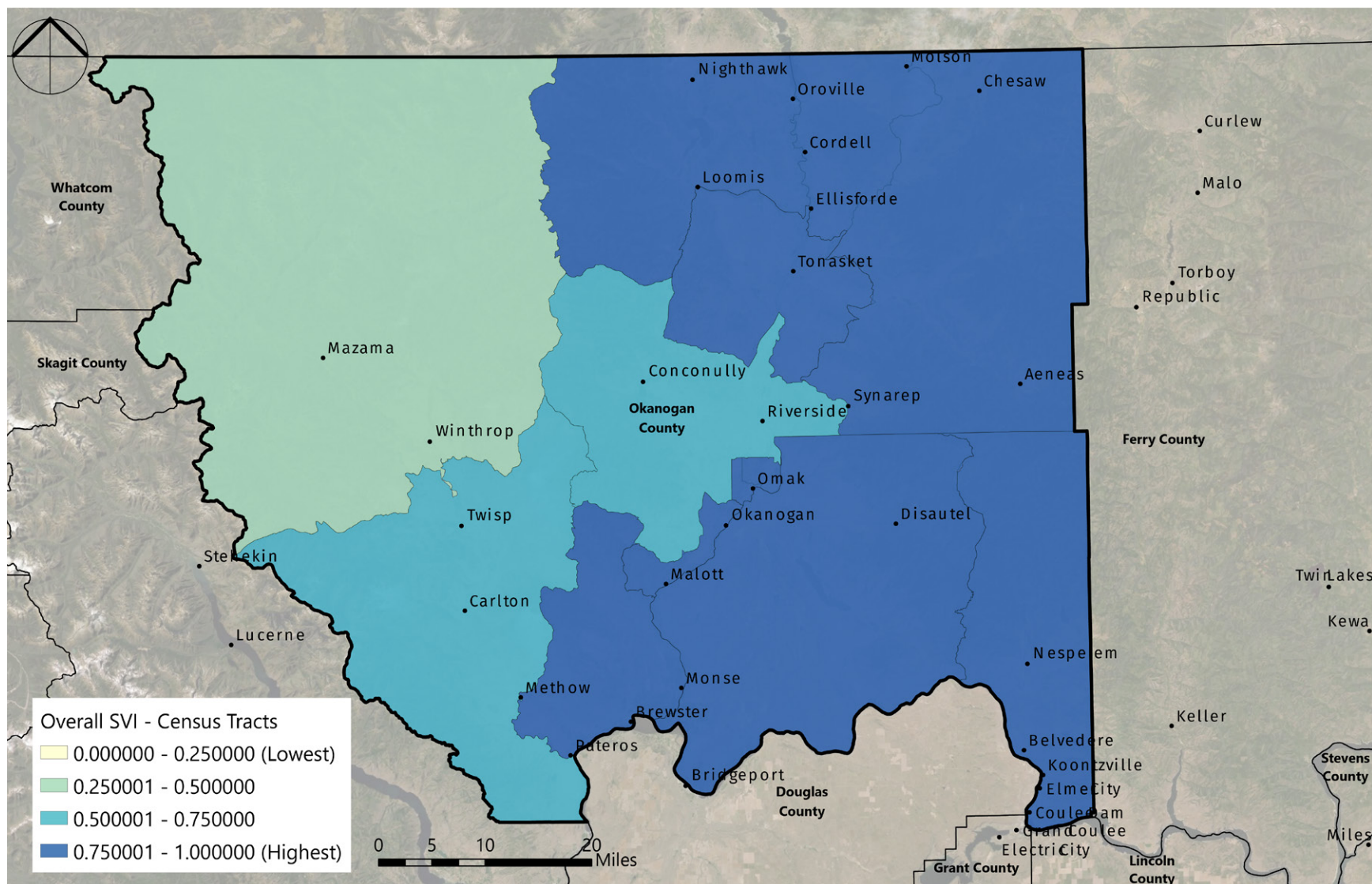


Figure 8: Social Vulnerability Index by Census Tract in Spokane County

# Community Outreach and Engagement

In support of the plan update, outreach and public engagement focused on several activities to understand, learn, and gather feedback from the public and key stakeholders. Input gathered during this plan update helped provide additional context and understanding of the unique human services and transportation needs in Okanogan County, as well as where the County can prioritize funding efforts to improve transportation services in the future.

Core outreach and engagement activities in support of the plan update were:

- ◆ Orientation interviews
- ◆ Regional survey
- ◆ Community fairs and festivals
- ◆ Public Transit Advisory Committee meetings





## Stakeholder Interviews

Working in collaboration with OCOG staff, SCJ Alliance conducted eighteen interviews, representing a range organizations and groups within Okanogan County. Most of the organizations support or provide services to Okanogan County residents with social services and specialized transportation needs, in particular low-income populations, older adults, and workers. Interviews took place from May through August 2022.

The organizations and stakeholders with completed interviews include:

1. Okanogan Behavioral Health Care
2. Washington WorkSource
3. Gebbers Farms
4. Okanogan County Child Development Association
5. Wenatchee Valley College
6. The Support Center
7. Okanogan FYRE
8. Okanogan County Community Action Council
9. The Economic Alliance – Okanogan County
10. Okanogan County Public Health
11. Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition Services (OCTN)
12. Colville Tribe Transit
13. People for People
14. Confluence Health Foundation Wenatchee
15. Okanogan County Transit Authority (TranGo)
16. Twisp Works

17. Family Health Center/Advance NW
18. Okanogan County Emergency Management

Several additional organizations were contacted for interviews but were not able to be reached due to scheduling conflicts. These include Northwest Center, Manfisher Ministries, Okanogan Coalition for Health Improvement, North Central Washington Libraries, and Okanogan County Housing Authority.

## Interview Takeaways

Interview participants were each asked to select how they would prioritize funds for public transportation services, and were given a first and second choice. The most popular first choice was to expand the amount of area covered by fixed-route transit services. The most popular second choice was to increase the frequency of existing fixed route transit services. Overall, the stakeholder meetings found that expanding fixed-route service capabilities should be one of the County's top priorities.

These interviews are, by intent, anecdotal, yet provide an opportunity for organizations to share more deeply the transportation needs they see for the communities they serve. While not quantitative, some other key takeaways were shared and emerged across the interviews:

- ♦ Most interviewees, though not all, shared that they felt like transit service, overall, is meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.
- ♦ Most people are traveling to/from Okanogan and Omak, either for work, shopping, or medical appointments.

- ♦ Many lower income populations and migrant workers in the County don't have vehicles, which can make accessing transportation and transit more challenging.
- ♦ About 3% of all households in Okanogan County are considered limited English-speaking households. The large majority of these limited English-speaking households speak Spanish. This makes Spanish language information about transit and transportation important to ensure access for Spanish speakers. Accessing medical appointments or shopping outside of Okanogan County (such as Wenatchee or Spokane) is a challenge for those relying on transit.
- ♦ It can be a challenge for people who live in remote areas, away from transit stops and routes, to get around if they don't have a car or if they have limited ability for personal transportation.

Interviewees shared the following as the greatest transportation needs and largest barriers in the County:



Figure 9: Interviewee's transportation needs and largest barriers

## Regional Survey

To seek feedback from a broad audience, SCJ Alliance developed a brief, 15 question survey to understand the transportation needs and priorities. The survey was open between June 4th and July 5th, 2022. The goal was for the survey to be accessible to the people who use public transportation services, and those who would be more likely to use them.

This target audience helped determine how the survey was distributed throughout the community. The survey was shared and boosted twice on Facebook with a reach that included the entire County. This Facebook link was shared by a number of organizations and agencies throughout the county as well. The survey link and QR code were also shared in several local newspapers including the Omak Chronicle, Methow Valley News, Wenatchee World, and Okanogan Valley Gazette-Tribune. Paper copies of the survey were distributed to the local transit agencies, and both paper copies of the survey and flyers with the survey QR code with were distributed at the four public outreach events.

A total of 208 respondents fully completed the

survey, while 71 partially completed the survey, bringing the total survey reach to 279 people. A couple dozen paper copies of the survey were returned, but most took the survey online.

Respondents were from all over Okanogan County. There was a strong representation from people who live in Twisp and Winthrop. There was also a strong showing from people who live in Omak.

Representation of those with special transportation needs included:

- ♦ 65% of survey respondents were aged 55 or older.
- ♦ 9% had a disability that requires special transportation needs.
- ♦ 23% have a household income under \$30,000 per year. With a countywide median household income of \$48,528, this means nearly one-quarter of respondents were within the very-low to low median income range. Another one-third of respondents were within the \$30,000 to \$60,000 range, meaning over half of respondents were in the low to moderate income range.

The full survey results can be found in the Appendix.



Figure 10: Survey Information posted in the Methow Valley Newspaper June 26, 2022



Figure 11: Image of the flyer that was handed out at community events with link to the survey

## Reported Household Income

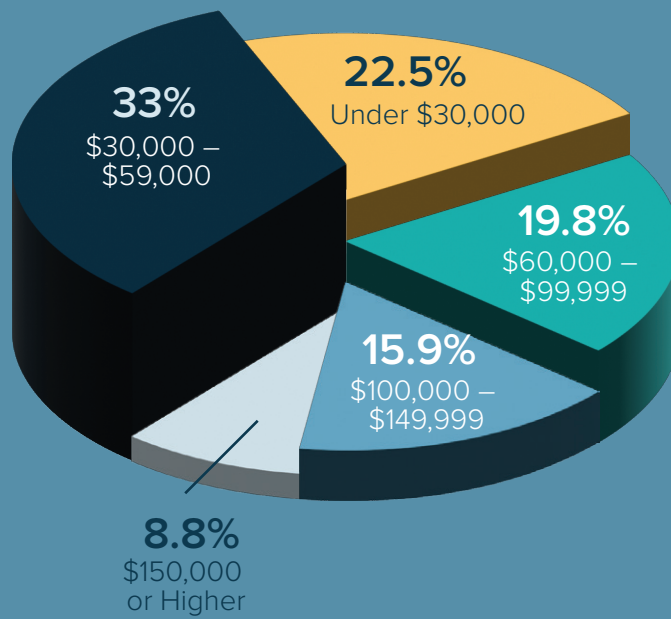


Figure 12: Survey Respondent Household Income

## Respondent Age Range

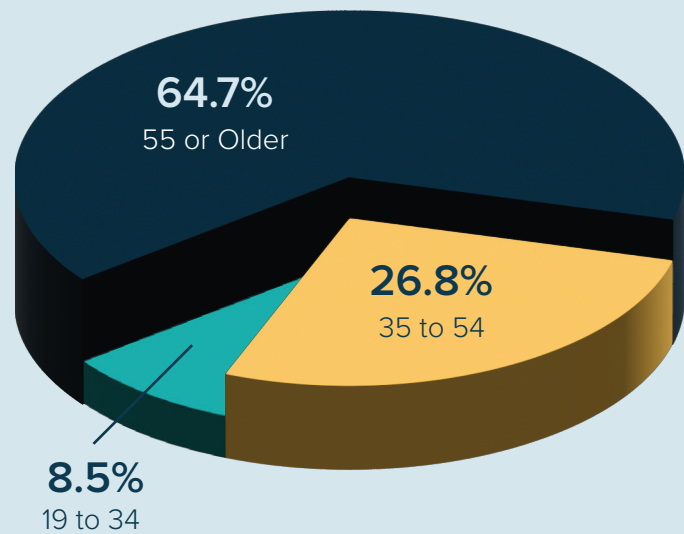


Figure 13: Survey Respondent Age Range

## Survey Takeaways

Nearly half (46%) of survey respondents indicated that they do use public transportation services in Okanogan County. Many others expressed a desire to use transportation services.

Respondents who do not use public transportation services noted barriers to using these services include schedules (transit doesn't work with employment or medical appointment schedules), confusion about how to use transit, and the limited ability to access fixed route stops.

Of the respondents who do use public transportation in Okanogan County, most shared that they are traveling to Omak (nearly 23%), Twisp (20%), Winthrop (18%) and Okanogan (17%), see Figure 14. They are primarily using transit for shopping (nearly 23%), medical appointments (18%), commuting to work (14%), and visiting family or friends (12%).

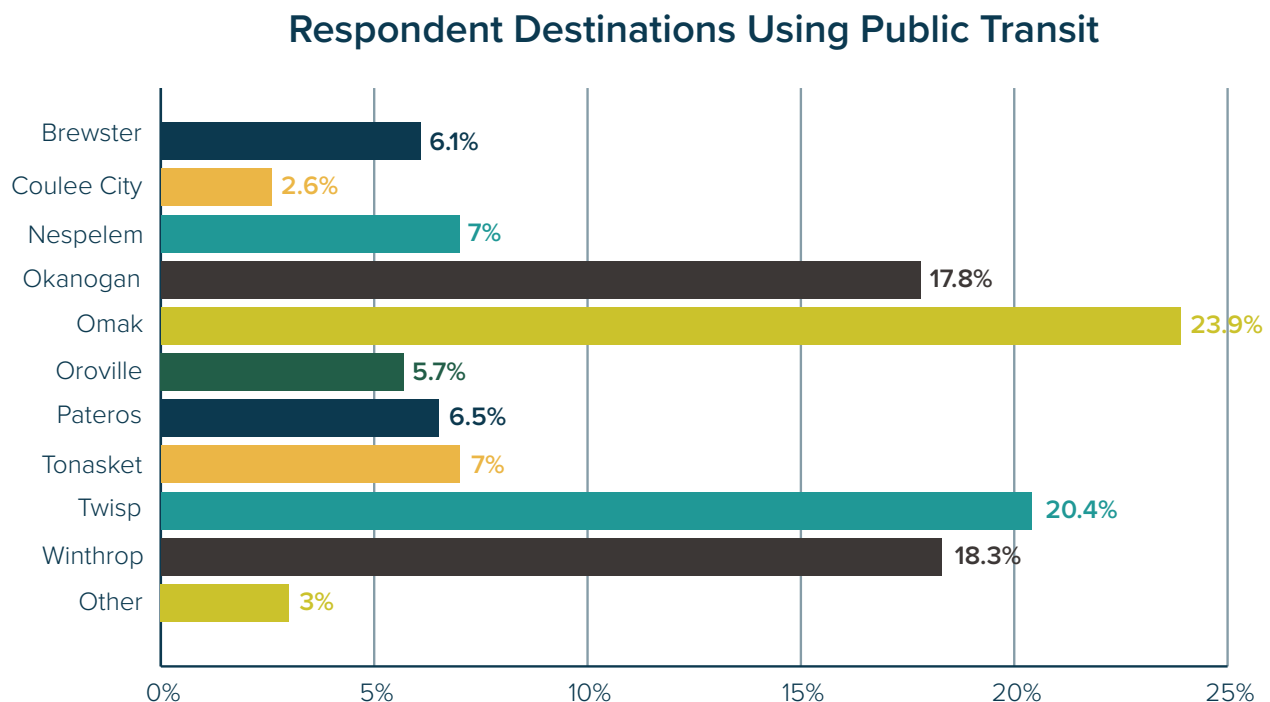


Figure 14: Survey Respondent Destinations Using Public Transportation

Respondents also shared what they like the most about existing public transit services, including helpful staff and drivers (34%) and frequency of service (28%). Interestingly, those who use transit felt like frequency of service was a plus, while many comments overall asked for service to be increased. This could be due to initial confusion around using public transit for the first time, or that the current schedules don't work with individual schedules.

When asked what kinds of improvements respondents feel would help when using transit, a majority wanted improvements to fixed route

lines, with 34% seeking earlier/later hours of operation and 31% looking for more frequent service on fixed routes. Approximately 36% would like to see better connectivity to other routes and transit services.

*"Currently I don't use the bus because the timing doesn't make it possible to work a full shift. It would be amazing if the schedules lined up with other systems schedules to get to Wenatchee."*



Finally, when asked if OCOG were able to fund one change to the existing transit system, 38% of respondents wanted to see increased coordination between different transit providers to improve regional connectivity. Tied for second at just under 27% each was a request to expand the amount of area covered by fixed route services and to increase the frequency of fixed route services. These are consistent with the sentiments heard during the stakeholder interviews.

“I think you should advertise in community papers and local radio to get the word out about your services. I think it would be used more if more people were reminded about the service you provide, I believe your ridership would go up. Especially with inflation and skyrocketing gas prices.”





## Community Events

OCOG hosted a total of four information booths at community fairs and festivals throughout the County during the time the survey was open. Booths were set up at the following events:

- ◆ Okanogan Days, Okanogan - Saturday, June 4, 2022
- ◆ Tonasket Farmers Market - Thursday, June 16, 2022
- ◆ Methow Valley Farmers Market, Twisp - Saturday, June 18, 2022
- ◆ Omak Farmers Market - Tuesday, June 28, 2022

Each event included flyers, opportunities to take the survey either online or on paper, display boards with a map of transit services in Okanogan County, space to share ideas and comments, and a list of potential transit priority areas that people could vote on.



# OTHER THOUGHTS ABOUT TRANSIT?

Weekend (Saturday) service from Okanogan/Cham to go to markets & enjoy the scenery.

Grab a Post-it OR write on the board!

Need Ride Truck Between Okan. Hwy

Have a way to access service even at odd hours of the day

PUBLIC TRANSIT HAS COME A LONG WAY!

Running after 5:00 PM stops @ Behanwood Health Centers

More visible stops & better clarity on stops, routes, & times.

I USE ABOUT ONCE A WEEK TO GET TO SCHOOLS & IT WORKS PERFECTLY!

X2

Hard/impossible to get from homeless women shelter in Okanogan to services in Okanogan City early morning when shelter closes

Can't see out the window on the bus from Okanogan to Twisp!

Free for students?

More access to Bridgeport (A number - lots of school district employees commute from Okan. area)

Can't get to Okan. from Nageleau for court by 9AM! Court starts at 9AM

PIKE RAIL

Bus stops over to the Hubs

## Community Event Takeaways

Approximately 100 community members visited the OCOG table across all of the community events, and several key takeaways emerged, which reflected similar feedback from the interviews and surveys:

- ◆ Schedules aren't early enough county-wide for people who need to commute for work
- ◆ More weekend services
- ◆ Expand service region by adding stops in areas currently without access
- ◆ Provide a way to access transit even at odd hours of the day, like late at night
- ◆ Make bus stops more visible
- ◆ Make fares free for populations with income restrictions, such as students and seniors
- ◆ Improve communications about services and schedules
- ◆ Clarify who can use the available services, such as the Wenatchee medical service bus

# Advisory Committee Meetings

An advisory committee was created, consisting of the stakeholders contacted for interviews, as well as OCOG board members, including local municipality representatives.

Two advisory group meetings were held.

## Advisory Committee Meeting #1

The first advisory group meeting took place virtually on June 23rd, 2022. Approximately seven advisory members attended the meeting. A presentation was given to review the outcomes of the regional context analysis and the public outreach process, and take any questions from the group. Afterward, a list of proposed recommendations was presented to the group. Each recommendation was discussed individually and the group rated each as either high, medium, or low priority. There was consensus by all members on the priority level of each recommendation.

## Advisory Committee Meeting #2

The second advisory group meeting took place virtually on July 19th, 2022. Approximately eight advisory members attended the meeting. A revised list of recommendations was presented to the group, where each recommendation was categorized as either high, medium, or low priority.

Each high priority item was discussed individually, and recommendations were refined to meet the group's ideas. The advisory group supported the findings, process, and final recommendations as proposed during the second advisory group meeting.

## Public Outreach Themes

Several cohesive themes emerged from across all the outreach and engagement activities. Despite the changes since the 2018 Plan, including the major disruptions caused by COVID-19, many of these themes expressed during the public outreach have remained true over time. This indicates that there is more work to be done to meet the transportation needs of the County.

Themes:

- ♦ Desire to continue to see fixed route services add more routes and adjust schedules to run earlier/later in the day.
- ♦ Ensure broader public understanding of how to access and use services.
- ♦ Consider adjusting schedules earlier/later to accommodate typical work shifts (especially for those commuting to Omak/Okanogan).

- ♦ Prioritize transit access and understanding. Invest in communication and outreach so people know and use the services available to them.
- ♦ Consider options for coordination and increasing transportation to/from Wenatchee and Spokane, especially for medical appointments and older adults.



# Transportation Services

## Existing Transportation Services

Transportation services – fixed route, deviated fixed route, and demand response – are primarily operated within and as connectors between the county’s municipalities. The services are provided in a highly coordinated system of three general transportation providers:

- ♦ Okanogan County Transit Authority (TranGO)
- ♦ Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition Services (OCTN)
- ♦ Colville Confederated Tribes: Department of Transportation (CCT: DOT)



## Okanogan County Public Transportation History

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. In 2000, services grew through implementation of several public demonstration projects 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 three years later. 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 2015, 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.



Figure 15: Existing Transit Services Map

# 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 Table 2.

## Fixed Route Services

### TranGO

TranGO's 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 one dollar. Children 6 and under ride for free, free rides

Community	Days of Service	Hours of Service
Tonasket-Okanogan	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 5:15 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 – 5:15 pm
Twisp-Winthrop	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 6:00 pm
Twisp-Pateros	Monday – Saturday	8:00 am – 4:45 pm
Okanogan-Pateros	Monday – Saturday	7:00 am – 6:15 pm
Oroville-Tonasket	Monday – Saturday	7:30 am – 5:45 pm

are available for personal care attendants, and veterans pay half price. Beginning September 1, 2022, those 18 years of age and younger are able to ride with zero fare.

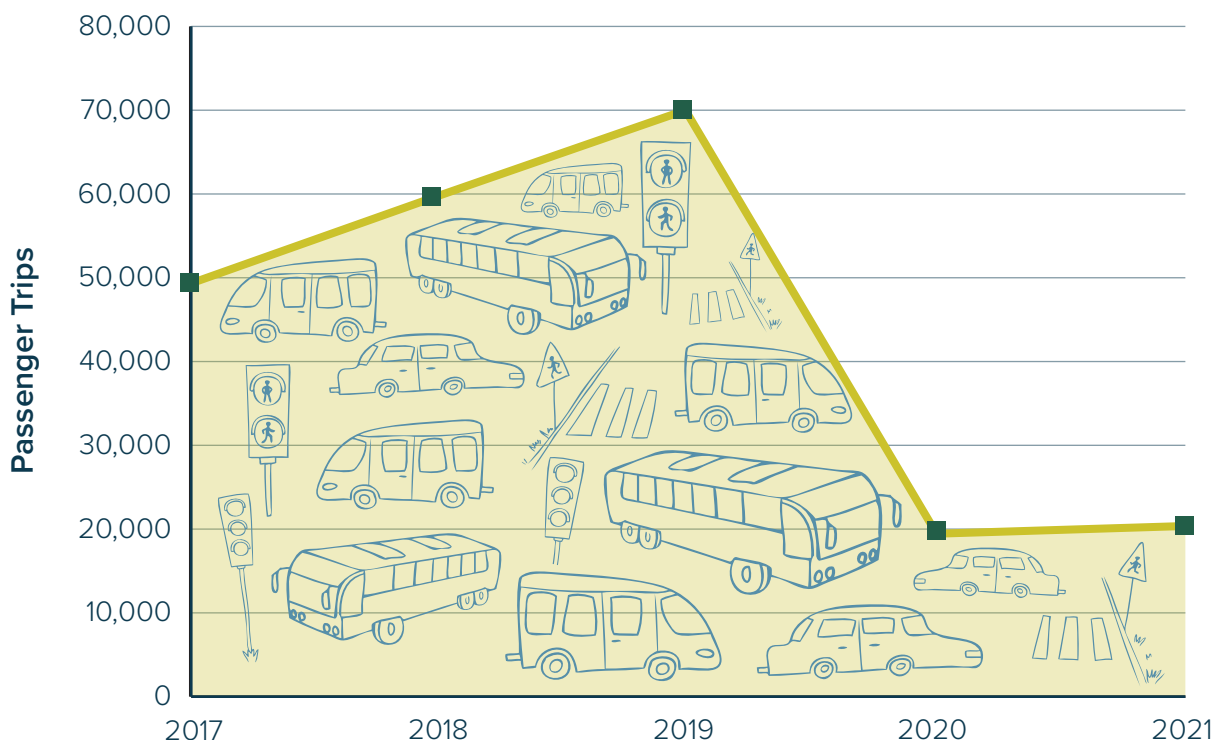


Figure 16: TranGO Fixed Route Annual Ridership



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 reimbursed later).

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 buses are and access other services.

The annual ridership (number of one-way trips) by year over the five-year period between 2017 and 2021 is provided in Figure 16.

TranGO's passenger trips steadily increased between 2017 and 2019 and, on average, completed approximately 60,000 annual passenger trips. Since the 2020 COVID-19 impacts, ridership has experienced a significant decrease. Between 2020 and 2021 the annual average was approximately 20,000 passenger trips.

In the first half of 2022, TranGO completed 17,215 one-way trips per month, indicating that TranGO is on an upward recovery after slow years in 2020 and 2021.

TranGO operates on an annual budget of more than \$2,000,000. Funding for this service is primarily subsidized by sales tax revenue with some support from fare revenue.

## OCTN

OCTN operates fixed round-trip routes between Okanogan and Pateros Monday through Saturday, and between Oroville and Tonasket Monday through Saturday. The fare is \$1 per boarding. These routes coordinate with TranGO and the Okanogan County transit system.

There is no service on Sundays and observed holidays are Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's day. 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.

For the first half of 2022, OCTN completed 3,316 trips. 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 4 individual drivers (3 FTE) to operate OCTN's fixed route services. TranGO purchased dispatch software for both companies in 2016. OCTN provides the dispatch staff for both companies.

OCTN provides approximately 550 one-way trips per month, and travels about 11,400 vehicle miles.

OCTN operates with an annual operating budget of \$288,000 for fixed route service. The average cost per trip is \$43.64. Funding for fixed route services is currently provided by a WSDOT Special Needs/Non-Profit Grant and TranGO. Previous WSDOT funding included JARC, Paratransit Special Needs, and 5311.

## OCTN Tribal Deviated Fixed Route

OCTN also operates a fare-free deviated fixed route service round-trip from Omak to Coulee Dam, with a stop in Nespelem connecting to CCT: DOT's route between Nespelem and Inchelium.

Until 2022, this route was partially supported financially by CCT: DOT, which provided partial funding and the vehicle for the route. OCTN plans to maintain this route as-is, despite losing this financial support, because it is an in-demand route and provides needed services to people living on the Colville Reservation, and allows Okanogan County residents access to Coulee Dam, Davenport, and Spokane.

The route operates Monday through Friday, leaving Omak at 5:45 am and arriving back at 8:45 am, then leaving again at 2:10 pm and returning at 5:15 pm. An additional run operates Wednesdays between 10:15 am and 1:35 pm.

The additional route on Wednesdays coordinates

with CCT: DOT's route between Nespelem and Inchelium as well as with People for People's route from Grand Coulee to Davenport that connects with Special Mobility Services' route 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.

OCTN operates with an annual operating budget of \$143,000 for this deviated fixed route service. The average cost per trip is \$26.48. Funding for fixed route services is currently provided by a WSDOT Special Needs/Non-Profit Grant and Colville Confederated Tribes. Previous WSDOT funding included JARC, Paratransit Special Needs, and 5311.

The annual ridership for OCTN's tribal deviated fixed route service over the five-year period between 2017 and 2021 is provided in Figure 17. Ridership remained relatively steady between 2017 and 2019, with an average of 7,542 trips per year. Due to the impacts of COVID-19, ridership

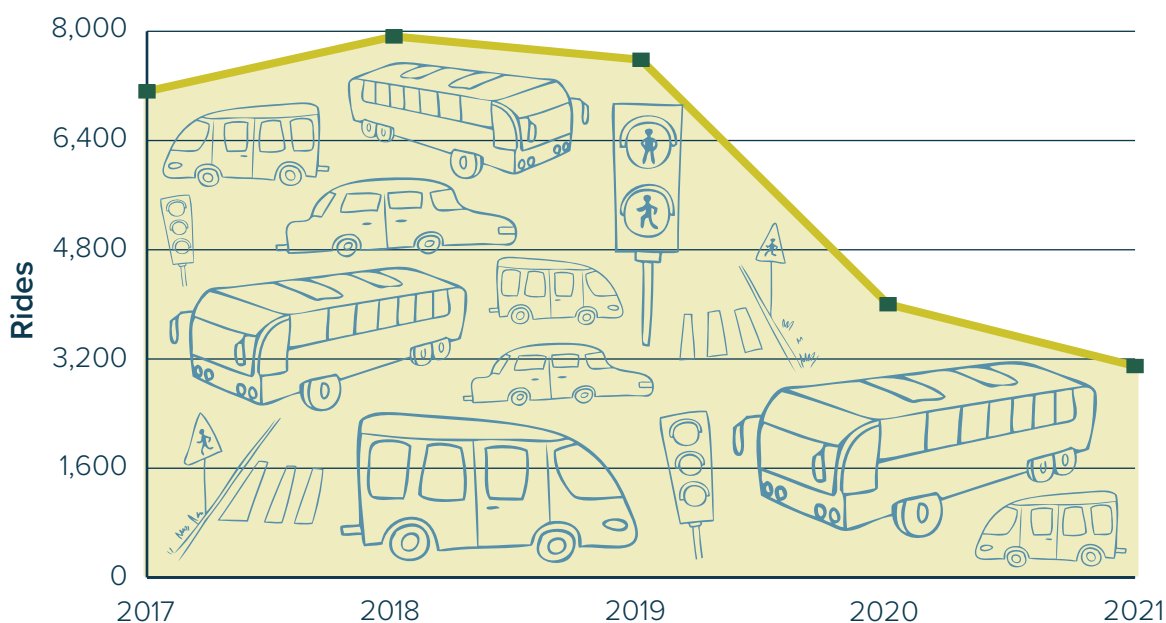


Figure 17: OCTN Fixed Route Omak-Coulee Dam Annual Ridership

dropped dramatically in 2020 and 2021. 1,757 trips were completed in the first half of 2022.

OCTN employs 1 individual driver (1 FTE ) to operate OCTN's deviated fixed route service. OCTN provides the dispatch staff for this route. OCTN provides approximately 450 one-way trips per month, and travels about 5,220 vehicle miles.

Future of this ServiceMileage and hours are expected to remain unchanged. Ridership is expected to return to pre-COVID-19 levels of 600 trips or more per month. This will reduce the cost per ride to \$19.86.

OCTN is looking into changing the hours and days of operation of this route. OCTN is looking for alternative and additional funding opportunities to avoid disruptions or discontinuance of this route.

## CCT: DOT

CCT: DOT operates a free public transportation shuttle between Nespelem and Inchelium Monday through Friday, between 5:30am and 6:00 pm with no service on holidays. This route coordinates with OCTN's Omak to Coulee Dam route.

## 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 excluding holidays (7:30 to 10:30 am, and 4:00 to 7:00 pm), and mid-day Wednesday only (12:00-3:00 pm) between Coulee Dam and Davenport (with connections to Spokane coordinated with Special Mobility Services). The fare for service is donation based.
- ♦ WSDOT's Apple Line, operated by Northwestern Trailways, follows a 160-mile route between Omak and Ellensburg with connections to Amtrak and Greyhound. It is operated seven days a week starting at 7:00 am in Omak, with stops in Okanogan, Malott, Brewster, Pateros, Chelan Falls, Orondo, Wenatchee, Quincy, George, and Ellensburg.
- ♦ Grant Transit Authority provides on-call services to Coulee Dam, and has the opportunity to connect with OCTN's service



to Coulee Dam. This service provides an opportunity for Okanogan County residents to reach Moses Lake and connect to other services from there to Tri-Cities and Yakima.

Transportation services for specific populations include:

- ♦ Direct transportation from farmers for migrant and year-round workers
- ♦ Grand Coulee Dam federal employer sponsored vanpool program
- ♦ Daily school bus transportation for school children

# Demand Response Service

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

## OCTN

OCTN provides door-to-door services to Okanogan residents at a level that is dependent on available funding. Current demand response services are provided within a 5-mile radius of the five largest communities in Okanogan County:

1. Brewster/Pateros/Bridgeport
2. Omak/Okanogan
3. Oroville
4. Tonasket
5. Twisp/Winthrop

OCTN service operation details are displayed in Table 3.

Table 3: OCTN Operations Information			
Community	Days of Service	Hours of Service	# of Buses
Brewster/Pateros/Bridgeport	T, W, F, and 1st & 3rd Th	8:00am – 11:00am 12:30pm – 4:30pm	1
Omak/ Okanogan	M, T, W, Th, F, Saturday*	6:00am – 6:00pm *8:30am – 4:30pm	4
Oroville	T, Th, F	9:00am – 11:30am 12:30pm – 3:30pm	1
Tonasket	M, W, Th	8:00am – 12:00pm 12:30pm – 3:30pm	1
Twisp/Winthrop	M, Th, F	8:00am – 11:30am 1:00pm – 4:30pm	1

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.

OCTN's door-to-door service must be scheduled 24 hours in advance. 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 (ages 60 and over) can ride with a donation. The "suggested donation" for a senior is \$2.00

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 equipped with lifts for wheelchair access.

Cutaway buses (fewer than 15 passengers) are used for door-to-door 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 service.

The annual ridership over the five-year period between 2017 and 2021 is provided in Figure 18.

Over the past five years, the annual demand response services have averaged around 26,000 rides.

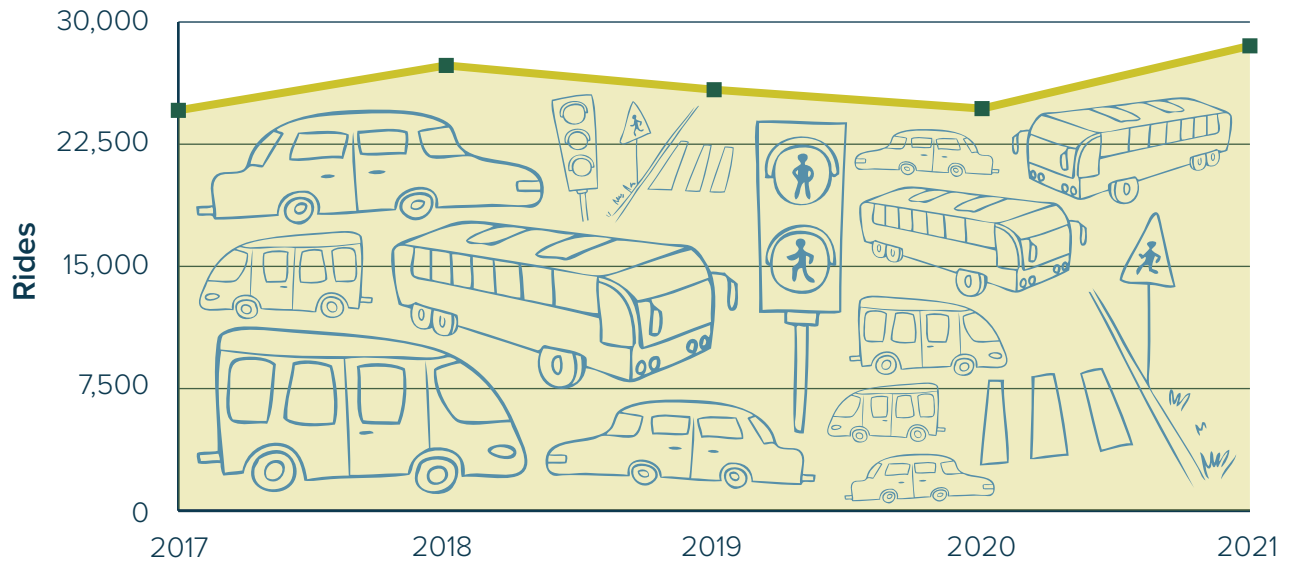


Figure 18: OCTN Demand Response Ridership 2017-2021

Approximately 2,500 one-way trips are provided per month, travelling 10,000 vehicle miles with no trip denials recorded. The per trip cost averages \$24.00. The service operates on an annual budget of over \$720,000. 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 monthly, long-distance, demand-response trip to Wenatchee from three communities in Okanogan County. General operating information is described in the following tables.

Table 4: OCTN General Operating Information			
Community	Days of Service	Departure/Return	# of Buses
Brewster	Every 2nd Thursday	7:30 am / 2:30 pm	1
Omak/Okanogan	Every 1st Tuesday	7:00 am / 2:30 pm	1
Twisp/Winthrop	Every 3rd Tuesday	8:00 am / 3:00 pm	1

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

Table 5: OCTN General Operating Information			
Community	Days of Service	Departure/Return	# of Buses
Brewster	Every 3rd Thursday	8:30 am / 3:00 pm	1
Oroville	Every 2nd Tuesday	8:30 am / 3:00 pm	1
Tonasket	Every 2nd Tuesday with Oroville	9:15 am / 3:00 pm	1
Twisp/Winthrop	Every 2nd 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 with Door-to-Door Transportation in Adams, Grant, Lincoln, and Yakima counties. They serve Adams, Grant, Lincoln, Benton, Franklin, Douglas, Chelan, Spokane, and Yakima with their Fixed Route Services. PFP arranges transportation for people of all ages who are covered under Washington State Apple Health (Medicaid and CHIP), have a current ProviderOne services card, and need transportation and related services to non-emergency medical appointments. After verification for proper eligibility is confirmed, the most cost-effective, appropriate transportation or related service 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, and clients live in a transit area, the Broker may purchase passes/tokens/tickets for clients. Transportation is also arranged using contracted providers, such as volunteer agency drivers, taxi companies, and cabulance companies. Transportation on Greyhound, Bellair Shuttle, Amtrak, and airline companies are other options.

Referrals for out-of-area specialty medical care may be requested by contacting the call center in advance of the medical appointments. They prefer five business-days' notice in order to receive proper referral or continued care letters.

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



PFP offers a 2-1-1 call service across Central and Eastern Washington, including Okanogan County. This service is available from 8am – 5pm on weekdays through phone, text, or email. The service offers:

“live Information and Referral Specialist that can guide you to programs that meet your unique needs including transportation, housing, food assistance and legal resources. Information is free, anonymous, and provided in the caller’s preferred language. You can also access a comprehensive list of resources by visiting our website.”

Okanogan County, PFP contracts with Omak Taxi, TranGO, Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition, and TranCare Volunteer Driver program. PFP provided 8,709 trips for eligible Okanogan County clients from January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021. The total trips included, gas vouchers, mileage reimbursement, public bus, and services provided by transportation providers.

### 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:

Table 6: TranGO Vanpool Information		
Vanpool #	Route	Monthly Fares
V-470 Vanpool	Omak to Chief Joseph	\$120.83 (currently not running)
V-520 Vanpool	Okanogan to Tonasket	\$114.16 (currently not running)
V-570 Vanpool	Okanogan to Chief Joseph	\$120.83
V-670 Vanpool	Malott to Chief Joseph	\$80.82 (currently not running)
V-480 Vanpool	Omak to Grand Coulee Dam	\$190.39
Vanpool Minivan	Okanogan to Chief Joseph	\$107.04
V-671 Vanpool Minivan	Malott to Chief Joseph	\$107.04

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

## Other Forms of Transportation

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

## WSDOT-Eligible Projects

Since Okanogan County is a one-county RTPO, it is limited in the ranking slots available for A, B, and C projects. For example, the Okanogan RTPO can rank 3 projects as A level priority, 3 projects as B level priority, and 3 projects as C level priority. The neighboring three-county NEW RTPO 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 levels provide 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.

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



It was also noted in the previous plan, and found to still be relevant, 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 are concerned that this restricts their competitiveness.

## Mobility Management

There are currently no mobility management projects specific to Okanogan County. However, Okanogan County is included in the service region identified by the North Central Washington Mobility Council, which aims to "increase access to services to improve the wellness of our communities and vulnerable populations in Chelan, Douglas, Grant, and Okanogan Counties."

The Council helps to plan and coordinate strategies to improve transportation options at a regional level across county lines. Okanogan County has been an active participant in this group and should work with this group to further improve services.

## Coordination with Emergency Management Agencies

Coordination between transportation providers and Okanogan County Emergency Management is vital to the continued safety of all Okanogan County residents. Okanogan County Emergency Management has outlined a general transportation response plan in their Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), under Emergency Support Function 1: Transportation.

The plan establishes the position of Transportation Coordinator, outlines a support network of transportation providers (including TranGO and OCTN), and establishes policies and procedures for how emergency response efforts will utilize existing transportation services. Okanogan County Emergency Management and the transportation providers are also all members of OCOG, and therefore, coordinate on a regular basis.

TranGO and OCTN have agreements with

Emergency Management to support efforts to mobilize individuals or materials when a disaster or emergency has been declared. In order to ensure this system runs smoothly, the following items should be addressed:

- ♦ Communication and points-of-contact are the most important pieces to ensuring this system and coordination run smoothly, especially within the urgency of a disaster response. It is important that both the County Emergency Management department and local transportation providers have the resources and quick access to each other's contact information and whose authority is needed to mobilize an emergency transportation response. OCOG will need to ensure that a formalized system is established to keep contact information up-to-date, as well as which individual, position, or agency has the authority to mobilize each piece of the emergency management response.
- ♦ Irregular cell phone service is an issue throughout the County, meaning that communication may be difficult during an emergency response. This issue would benefit from regular system tests, improved cell phone reception throughout the county, and/or acquiring satellite phones for all emergency response agencies and transportation providers.
- ♦ Future emergency management planning should also consider coordination with the Colville Tribe and their Department of Transportation.

# Lasting Impacts of COVID-19

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created a new set of challenges for transportation providers, including both passenger and operator safety. The pandemic led to a series of major changes as providers aimed to reduce the spread of the virus and keep riders and operators safe.

Transportation services in Okanogan County adapted to meet the needs of residents throughout the pandemic. In 2022, some important, lasting impacts that resulted from the pandemic remain. These include:

## ♦ Meal Delivery Services

- There was a huge increase in the demand for meal delivery during the pandemic. This demand has remained higher than pre-pandemic levels and is expected to continue to be in high demand into the future.

## ♦ Sanitary Practices

- Transit providers adapted transportation services to provide safe, sanitary options for people to get around. Measures included sanitizing vehicles, social distancing, and mask requirements. While the heightened level has subsided, transit providers have kept some sanitization procedures in place, such as more frequent bus cleaning, which requires additional staff time and materials, increasing the overall cost of service.

## ♦ Scheduling and Staffing Changes

- Transit providers, just like many other industries, have continued to experience disruptions to staffing and scheduling due to new cases of COVID-19. Sick employees cannot work, so staffing and scheduling must adapt, sometimes by finding last-minute replacements. This has not proven to be a very significant issue, but continues to happen, even when an employee is out with a non-COVID sickness.

## ♦ Ridership Recovery

- One of the most significant impacts of COVID-19 that is still felt to this day is the level of ridership on public transportation. As reported in the assessment of existing transportation services, the ridership of public transportation services in Okanogan County is still lower than pre-pandemic levels. The recovery is expected to continue over the next few years, but in the meantime, transportation providers are experiencing lower ridership, though a latent demand may still follow.

## ♦ Internet Access

- The increased need for rural internet service is another lasting impact. During the pandemic, many individuals and families shifted to remote work, learning, medical visits, and socializing. With an increased demand on the broadband network for work, school, healthcare and recreation, many families and individuals still do not have access to a reliable internet connection, cannot afford the costs, or lack the technical skills to log on and use online tools.

# Public Transportation Gap Analysis

Through the analysis of the population demographics of Okanogan County, and the needs expressed in the stakeholder interviews, regional survey, and outreach events, OCOG has identified a range of gaps that exist between the community's needs and the current available services. Table 7 identifies these gaps, as well as the needs that revealed the gap.

These gaps represent a lack in the supply of services where there is existing demand. These gaps focus on the needs for those with special transportation needs (youth, seniors, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, people of limited English-proficiency). The unmet needs identified in Table 7 represent those who will benefit those with special transportation needs.

## Service Gaps and Unmet Needs

Table 7: Service Gaps and Needs	
Gap	Need
1. Existing services are largely funded by grants, and, therefore, are not ensured for long-term funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Maintain existing services as they operate now</li><li>◆ Maintain affordable fares for low-income populations and to incentivize use</li></ul>
2. Existing Omak to Coulee Dam line does not have enough funding to sustain in the long run.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Provide funding and a vehicle to continue operating efficiently and providing access to the Colville Tribe, Coulee Dam, and provide a connection to PFP services to Davenport and Spokane</li></ul>
3. It is difficult to get to Wenatchee when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Provide more frequent and convenient service to Wenatchee</li></ul>
4. It is difficult to connect to medical services and appointments when needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Provide additional opportunities for residents to connect with medical services</li></ul>
5. Coordination with regional connections can be difficult.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Coordinate with other regional transit agencies to ensure efficient connections (low wait times, accessible transition points)</li><li>◆ Participate in regional efforts to improve mobility</li></ul>
6. There is a lack of knowledge of transit opportunities and comfort with using the system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Improve communication, information access, and ease of use throughout the County</li><li>◆ Develop a Mobility Manager position</li></ul>
7. Existing transit infrastructure lacks in accessibility, safety, and comfort.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Improve bus stops with shelters, lighting, and information</li><li>◆ Improve pedestrian, bicycle, and wheelchair infrastructure leading to bus stops</li></ul>

**Table 7: Service Gaps and Needs**

Gap	Need
8. Existing services often do not operate during the early morning, evening, or late night hours.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Create opportunities for early morning and evening trips along the routes with highest demand and those that connect workforce and affordable housing with employment centers</li> </ul>
9. There is not an efficient way to get to Chelan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Coordinate a stop in Chelan with efforts to increase connections to Wenatchee</li> </ul>
10. Limited internet access in rural parts of the County makes it hard for riders to learn about services and use digital wayfinding tools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Expand fiber optic broadband access and wireless infrastructure in rural areas</li> </ul>
11. It can be difficult to overcome barriers to transit, such as planning, booking, and paying for trips.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Improve access to mobility services and travel information for people with mobility barriers</li> </ul>
12. No formal system for updating contact information for emergency response purposes exists.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Develop a formal system of updating and maintaining points-of-contact for emergency response issues</li> <li>♦ Include contact information and which position/entity has the authority to mobilize each piece during an emergency response</li> </ul>
13. The RTPo project eligibility structure does not benefit OCOG due to its status as a single-county RTPo with a mainly rural population.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Work with WSDOT to analyze how the RTPo eligible-project structure might be reorganized in a more equitable way to better meet the needs of Okanogan County</li> </ul>
14. Human services needs (food/medical/ etc.) are difficult to meet for those with transportation difficulties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Expand meal delivery services</li> <li>♦ Look into mobile medical clinics so people don't have to travel as far for appointments</li> </ul>
15. Employment centers often lack nearby affordable housing for workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Improve transportation connections between areas with affordable housing and employment centers</li> </ul>
16. Current systems do not adequately serve housing occupied by clients involved with the Medical Assisted Treatment Program (MAT).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Provide transportation options for those needing access to MAT as well as other medical and mental health appointments</li> </ul>

# Goals

When analyzed, these gaps and needs identified in Table 7 tend to align with four overall goals for the future of public transportation in Okanogan County:

**1. Maintain existing services**

Maintain all existing transit and human service operations to ensure regional connectivity and to ensure no new gaps are created.

**2. Expand service reach**

Expand and grow public transit and human services to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community. This includes spreading awareness of these services, strengthening partnerships with communities, and exploring alternative programs to address gaps.

**3. Improve efficiency and accessibility**

Ensure route operations and connectivity across agencies are well coordinated, and services are available to all who need them.

**4. Improve infrastructure**

Build, maintain, and repair infrastructure that improves safety and accessibility for transit and human service users.



# Recommendations

The following recommendations were developed as a response to the identified gaps and needs that resulted from the analysis of population demographics, assessment of existing transportation services, and the public outreach process. These recommendations were vetted by the advisory committee during both group meetings, and revised according to the group's consensus on whether or not they were high, medium, or low priority.

The recommendations are organized by high, medium, and low priority, each aligning with the four main goals of this plan.

## High Priority



### MAINTAIN EXISTING SERVICES

Maintain all existing transit and human service operations to ensure regional connectivity and to ensure no new gaps are created.

#### 1. Maintain route between Omak and Coulee Dam

*This will help maintain regional connectivity to Davenport and Spokane.*

##### Action:

- Identify funding resources to help close the anticipated funding gap
- Acquire a new vehicle for this route

#### 2. Maintain senior meal delivery services in all parts of the County

##### Action:

- Identify funding resources to ensure the future accessibility of meal delivery services
- Coordinate meal delivery with existing transportation services to ensure efficiency of the service





**3. Coordinate with Colville Tribe to ensure connectivity and service availability within the Colville Reservation, and to other parts of the County, is maintained**

**Action:**

- Regularly work with CCT: DOT and Nespelem to analyze ridership, stop locations, and accessibility of public transportation for those living on the Colville Reservation
- Adjust service to meet the transportation needs identified by CCT: DOT, Nespelem, and other tribal groups

**4. Maintain vehicle fleets to ensure safe, reliable transportation at all times**

**Action:**

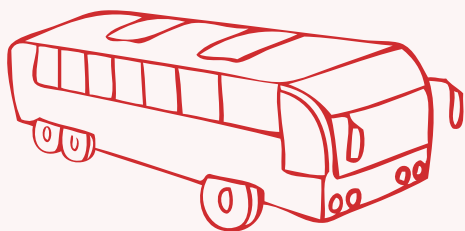
- Maintain, replace, and upgrade vehicles as needed
- Acquire a vehicle maintenance facility

**5. Maintain all other existing routes and services**

*Allow existing services to continue to avoid creating new gaps. All existing services are considered necessary and in-demand.*

**Action:**

- Identify long-term funding resources to ensure the stability of existing transit services



## EXPAND SERVICE REACH

Expand and grow transit and human services, including exploration of alternative programs, to ensure we are meeting the needs of the community

**6. Create a regular fixed-route Health/Commuter (Air/Rail) Shuttle between Omak and Wenatchee**

**Action:**

- Look into funding and implementation resources to help create a twice-daily shuttle service between Omak and Wenatchee
- Ensure connections in Wenatchee include medical clinics, hospitals, connections to Link transit, Amtrak, Greyhound, and the airport
- Include a connection to the City of Chelan along the route to Wenatchee

**7. Increase frequency of door-to-door service to Wenatchee**

*Current services only supply one trip per month for door-to-door services from various regions in the County.*

**Action:**

- Identify funding to increase this service to a minimum of once per week

**8. Coordinate a Mobile Clinic with resources in Wenatchee and/or Spokane**

*Mobile clinics would assist with closing the gaps that make it difficult for residents in Okanogan County to access medical services. Mobile clinics could include basic screenings and check-ups, and even incorporate internet hot spots for telehealth visits.*

**Action:**

- Identify a local entity who could be responsible for coordinating, organizing, and hosting mobile medical clinics
- Identify possible funding for regular mobile clinic services throughout Okanogan County
- Identify partners in the greater north central Washington region to assist with Okanogan County mobile clinic efforts

**9. Explore/Test a “Trip Link” Program**

**Action:**

- Identify new funding, or methods of redirecting existing funding when needed, to supply potential trip link customers with the payments that can be used to organize their transportation needs
- Identify a local entity that could administer the program and provide resources to those who participate

**10. Continue to grow partnerships throughout the community**

**Action:**

- Look into programs, coordination, or partnerships with local organizations, non-profits, school districts, and civic organizations to help expand knowledge of the County’s transportation services
- Support local events and programs with transportation services to increase visibility and knowledge of the available services



## IMPROVE EFFICIENCY & ACCESSIBILITY

Ensure route operations and connectivity across agencies are well coordinated, and services are available to all who need them.

**11. Improve coordination with People For People (PFP) and Grant Transit Authority (GTA) services in Coulee Dam to allow for improved round-trip services to regional destinations, including Davenport, Spokane, and Moses Lake**

**Action:**

- Regularly coordinate with PFP and GTA to ensure transfers are safe, easy, and efficient

**12. Ensure route/service transfers are sound, and wait times are minimized**

**Action:**

- Regularly assess schedules and coordination efforts between transportation providers to ensure safe, easy, and efficient transfers between inter-County transportation services

**13. Improve the web presence of transit services**

**Action:**

- Regularly update ridership information, route maps, and service announcements on provider websites, Google/Apple maps, and social media accounts
- Create a “Trip Planner” smartphone app for coordinating transportation within and outside of Okanogan County. This could build on TranGO’s existing smartphone app, and could help increase knowledge and accessibility of transit, especially among the youth and young adult populations
- Allow pre-payment of transit fares through the internet or smartphone app

**14. Actively participate and partner with the North Central Washington (NCW) Mobility Council**

**Action:**

- Coordinate OCOG participation in the NCW Mobility Council to ensure transit

providers in Okanogan County are aware of other needs and opportunities in neighboring jurisdictions

#### 15. Develop a Mobility Manager position

##### Action:

- Identify resources to hire a Mobility Manager to help coordinate public transit and human services transportation within Okanogan County, provide training services, and regularly interact and reach out to educate the community on available services

## IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

Build, maintain, and repair infrastructure that improves safety and accessibility for transit and human service users.

#### 16. Add new transit shelters at stops with higher use and/or need

##### Action:

- Improve existing bus stops with shelters, lighting, and updated schedules and information

- Include route maps at each stop, including simplified maps and schedules with information specific to each stop

#### 17. Improve pedestrian, wheelchair, and bicycle accessibility within a quarter mile of all bus stop locations

##### Action:

- Identify funding for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements
- Identify transit stops that are difficult or unsafe to access and focus bicycle and pedestrian improvements within one-quarter mile of those transit stops
  - ♦ Include ADA accessibility considerations in all improvements

#### 18. Expand fiber optic broadband access and wireless infrastructure in rural areas

##### Action:

- Identify funding for improvements to internet infrastructure in rural communities to improve rural accessibility to public human transportation services
- Identify areas with greatest need for improved internet access

## Medium Priority



# 2



## EXPAND SERVICE REACH

#### 1. Improve marketing for transit throughout the region

##### Action:

- Continue to increase community outreach through various methods, including advertising transportation services (radio/newspaper/flyers/web), giving informational presentations and trainings throughout the County, and regularly attending local events to talk with community members about their needs
- Look into expanding meal delivery services to more populations throughout the County

#### 2. Increase interest in using public transportation as a viable mode of getting around throughout the County

**Action:**

- Regularly schedule and advertise “free ride” days where all can ride for free
- Distribute free day passes to local/ regional non-profits and other organizations to increase transportation access for those with special transportation needs
- Advertise and provide shuttle transportation for major events in the region (concerts, fairs, etc.)

**3. Add early morning and evening trips to the Omak-Okanogan Circulator****Action:**

- Increase service between Omak and Okanogan during the early morning and late evening hours to help improve mobility for day-long or night-long purposes (nigh shifts, shelters, errands, evening programs)

**4. Provide new connections between employment centers, medical centers, shelters, mental health programs, workforce housing, affordable housing, subsidized housing, and assisted housing developments****Action:**

- Study spatial distributions of where the workforce populations live and work
- Increase service options between these locations to ensure the workforce populations can get to and from work while living in a location with affordable housing
- Provide connections to ensure those with medical and mental health needs can access the resources they need, including those participating in the MAT Program

**IMPROVE EFFICIENCY & ACCESSIBILITY****5. Regularly update web-based map data (Google/Apple Maps) with route information and service updates so that**

**online bus schedules are reliable for trip planning on a smartphone/computer**

**Action:**

- Provide updates to well-used online navigation systems whenever transportation service lines or hours are changed
- Provide contact information for on-demand services when transportation services are not available

**6. Increase awareness/accessibility of on-demand, door-to-door services for people with special transportation needs****Action:**

- Provide additional outreach and training for on-demand services for regions and groups that are more likely to need and use such services
  - ♦ Host outreach sessions at places such as senior centers, teen centers, and medical clinics

**7. Coordinate with Emergency Management to provide options for emergency transportation****Action:**

- Maintain regular and open communications with emergency management personnel
- Establish a formal system for regularly updating and maintaining resources for use during an emergency response. Updated information should include contact information for individuals, positions, and/or entities, as well as which role they play/authority they have in the emergency response procedure
- Develop an action plan, coordinated with the Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, to guide mobilization of public transportation vehicles and resources for use during emergencies
- Identify funding for transportation agencies to acquire backup supplies and materials for emergency situations, such as mobile/ internet hot spots and generators

## IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

### 8. Prioritize funding for transportation infrastructure improvements and maintenance along transit routes

#### Action:

- Incorporate fixed-route public transportation lines into the prioritization criteria for transportation projects and funding
- Include public transportation infrastructure improvements (bike/pedestrian access, transit shelters, signage, lighting, etc.) in infrastructure improvement plans along transit lines.

## Low Priority



## EXPAND SERVICE REACH

1. **Develop Park & Ride lots throughout the County to provide additional accessibility for those who cannot or do not want to drive long distances. Allow “on-call” services to be available, for a fee, to those in need or during off-hours (24/7 help line - guaranteed service within 1 hour)**

#### Action:

- Identify funding for park and ride infrastructure development
- Identify locations where park and rides would have the greatest benefit for those with special transportation needs

2. **Allow “on-call” services to be available, for a fee, to those in need or during off-hours (24/7 help line - guaranteed service within 1 hour)**

#### Action:

- Identify funding for and/or partnerships to create or contract out a 24-hour helpline for those needing transportation at odd hours or information on trip-planning or scheduling rides



## IMPROVE EFFICIENCY & ACCESSIBILITY

3. **Study accessibility of public transportation resources and first mile/last mile solutions**

#### Action:

- Research the location of bus stops and how accessible they are, looking at how people are getting to the bus stops and getting from the bus stops to their destinations (first mile/last mile)
- Identify funding and resources to improve first mile/last mile accessibility to improve overall accessibility of the public transportation network
- Adjust bus stop locations, or add more, as needed to improve accessibility

## IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE

4. **Increase the number of WSDOT-Eligible Projects in Okanogan County to be on-par with neighboring and other similar-size RTPOs**

#### Action:

- Advocate for an increase in the number of WSDOT-eligible projects to increase funding opportunities for the region
- Identify funding to help the RTPO hire/ensure assistance with grant applications to help improve competitiveness in the grant funding process

# Summary of Recommendations

## Strategies to Address Transportation Gaps

The recommendations discussed in the previous section work together to address the gaps identified throughout this planning process. The following tables describe which gaps each recommendation addresses, indicating the strategies to reference in order to address the identified gaps.

Table 8: Gaps Addressed by High Priority Recommendations		
#	Recommendation	Gap Addressed
1	Maintain route between Omak and Coulee Dam	1, 2, 5
2	Maintain senior meal delivery services in all parts of the County	1, 14
3	Coordinate with Colville Tribe to ensure connectivity and service availability within the Colville Reservation, and to other parts of the County, is maintained	1, 2, 5
4	Maintain vehicle fleets to ensure safe, reliable transportation at all times	1, 7
5	Maintain all other existing routes and services	1, 2
6	Create a regular fixed-route Health/Commuter (Air/Rail) Shuttle between Omak and Wenatchee	3, 4, 5, 9
7	Increase frequency of door-to-door service to Wenatchee	3, 4, 5
8	Coordinate a Mobile Clinic with resources in Wenatchee and/or Spokane	3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 14
9	Explore a "Trip Link" Program	4, 5, 6, 8, 11
10	Continue to grow partnerships throughout the community.	5, 6
11	Improve coordination with People For People (PFP) and Grant Transit Authority (GTA) services in Coulee Dam to allow for improved round-trip service to regional destinations, including Davenport, Spokane, and Moses Lake	3, 5
12	Ensure route/service transfers are sound, and wait times are minimized	5, 11
13	Improve the web presence of transit services	6, 10
14	Actively participate and partner with the North Central Washington (NCW) Mobility Council	4, 5, 6, 9
15	Develop a Mobility Manager position.	6, 8, 10, 11
16	Add new transit shelters at stops with higher use and/or need	7
17	Improve pedestrian, wheelchair, and bicycle accessibility within a quarter mile of all bus stop locations	7
18	Expand fiber optic broadband access and wireless infrastructure in rural areas	10

**Table 9: Gaps Addressed by Medium Priority Recommendations**

#	Recommendation	Gap Addressed
1	Improve marketing for transit throughout the region	6
2	Increase interest in using public transportation as a viable mode of getting around throughout the County	6
3	Add early morning and evening trips to the Omak-Okanogan Circulator.	8
4	Provide new connections between employment centers, medical centers, shelters, mental health programs, workforce housing, affordable housing, subsidized housing, and assisted housing developments	15, 16
5	Regularly update web-based map data (Google/Apple Maps) with route information and service updates so that online bus schedules are reliable for trip planning on a smartphone/computer	6, 11
6	Increase awareness/accessibility of on-demand, door-to-door services for people with special transportation needs	6, 11, 14
7	Coordinate with Emergency Management to provide options for emergency transportation	12
8	Prioritize funding for transportation infrastructure improvements and maintenance along transit routes	7, 13

**Table 10: Gaps Addressed by Low Priority Recommendations**

#	Recommendation	Gap Addressed
1	Develop Park & Ride lots throughout the County to provide additional accessibility for those who cannot or do not want to drive long distances	11, 14, 15
2	Allow "on-call" services to be available, for a fee, to those in need or during off-hours (24/7 help line - guaranteed service within 1 hour)	6, 8, 14
3	Study accessibility of public transportation resources and first mile/last mile solutions	7
4	Increase the number of WSDOT-Eligible Projects in Okanogan County to be on-par with neighboring and other similar-size RTPOs	13

# Regional Priorities for Implementation

## Prioritization Process

The recommendations in this plan were prioritized through consultations with the advisory committee and the OCOG Board. Both advisory group meetings 1 and 2 consisted of conversations about prioritization. The group discussed whether each priority should be considered high, medium, or low, and a consensus was reached for each. The advisory group consisted of the stakeholders and OCOG board members.

The advisory committee and OCOG Board had been made familiar with the results of the public outreach process and the survey results prior to prioritizing. Thus, the public input was a consideration in the prioritization process as well. Advisory group participants were able to arrive at a consensus on the prioritization of the recommendations while considering the main takeaways from the public outreach.

No objections or changes to prioritization levels were requested during the plan draft review phase.

## High Priority

High priority items were ranked that way due to their urgency, the high number of people they may impact, or because they would

address a significant gap. It is vital to maintain the existing services, without creating any new gaps. Thus, maintaining long-term funding for existing services was considered one of the biggest gaps to address. Additionally, there were recommendations that would help close a gap for a large number of people or a service that was considered to be in high demand, such as increasing service to Wenatchee, or expanding knowledge and accessibility of transportation services. These were considered highly demanded both in the public outreach and in the advisory group meetings.

## Medium Priority

Medium priority items were those that would be helpful to the overall operations of the county transportation systems but may not be the most urgent. The gaps they address are still significant, but the implications of not closing those gaps in the short-term were considered less severe. Medium priority items will take lower priority for this current plan but may become high priority items in the next plan update.

## Low Priority

Low priority items were those considered to be the least impactful over the next four years. These recommendations address less-significant gaps, but would still be helpful for improving public transportation services. These actions may move into medium, or even high, priority positions by the time of the next plan update.



# Ongoing Coordination

OCOG will continue to work with the stakeholders, transit providers, neighboring RTPOs, WSDOT, and the communities throughout Okanogan County to regularly coordinate until the next plan update. OCOG will ensure that this coordination occurs naturally by simply following the recommendations made in this report.

It is vital to maintain regional connections, including participation and coordination with the North Central Washington Mobility Council, to ensure that the people of Okanogan County have the access to the services that they need. OCOG will maintain strong partnerships throughout the county and the region over the next four years, working to accomplish the recommendations of this plan.

OCOG will be able to use this plan as a guide to address the identified gaps and meet the plan goals over the next four years. OCOG should make sure to use this plan as follows:

1. Conduct a quarterly check-in and review of plan progress
2. Identify which recommendation(s) the board will focus on over the next quarter
3. Identify the tasks that will help move the recommendation(s) forward
4. Assign each task to a person or committee
5. Establish a timeline for accomplishing or reporting back on task progress

OCOG will aim to regularly keep up with the needs of the community through consultations with various stakeholders by inviting them to present at OCOG board meetings, or by attending community events, to ensure the recommendations in this plan are still relevant.

The goal of this ongoing coordination will be to leverage community resources to the best of OCOG's abilities, while also recognizing the significant limitations and challenges of operating a rural RTPO. These limitations and challenges, as well as the opportunities and the wins, should be documented by OCOG and reviewed regularly to ensure the next CPT-HSTP update can work to build on those opportunities or address those challenges. These cumulative efforts should be clearly recorded and documented until the next plan update to ensure accurate and accessible information is available for the next planning cycle.

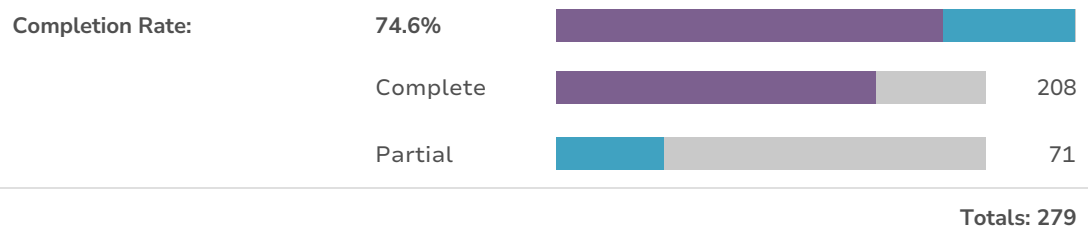
If human services transportation needs change significantly during this plan cycle, OCOG may work with WSDOT to amend this plan as they see fit to remove or include additional recommendations along with reasoning that those recommendations have been removed or added.



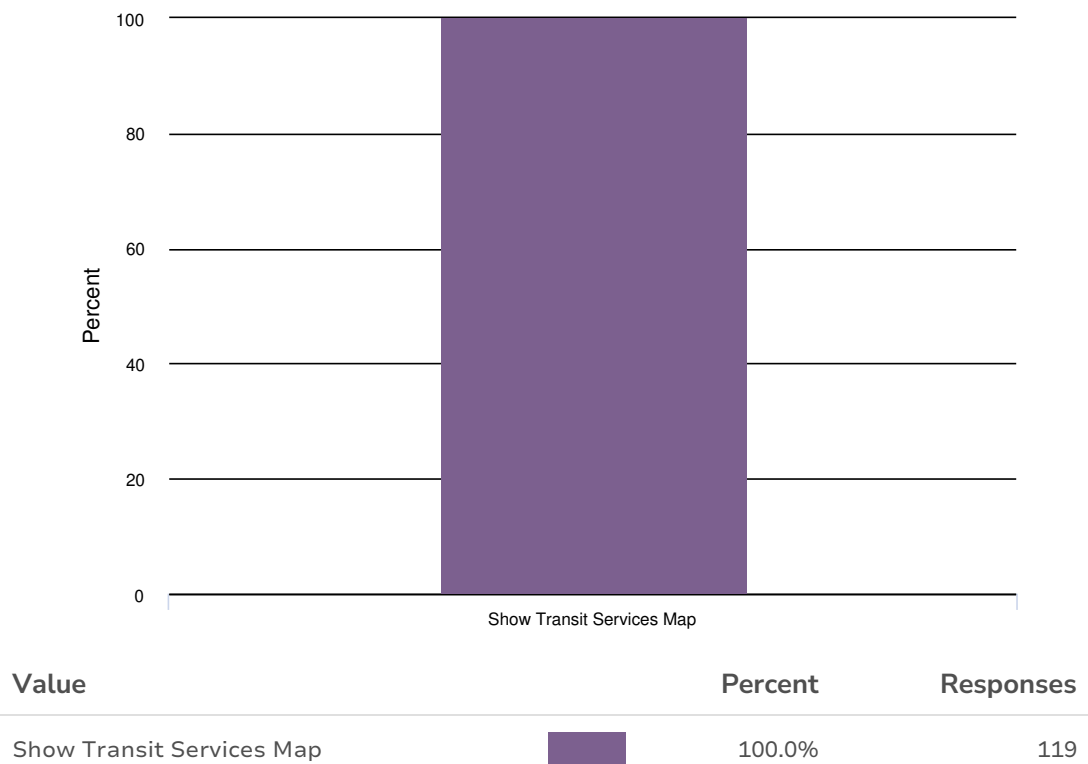
# Appendix

# Report for OCOG Coordinated Public Transit Plan Update

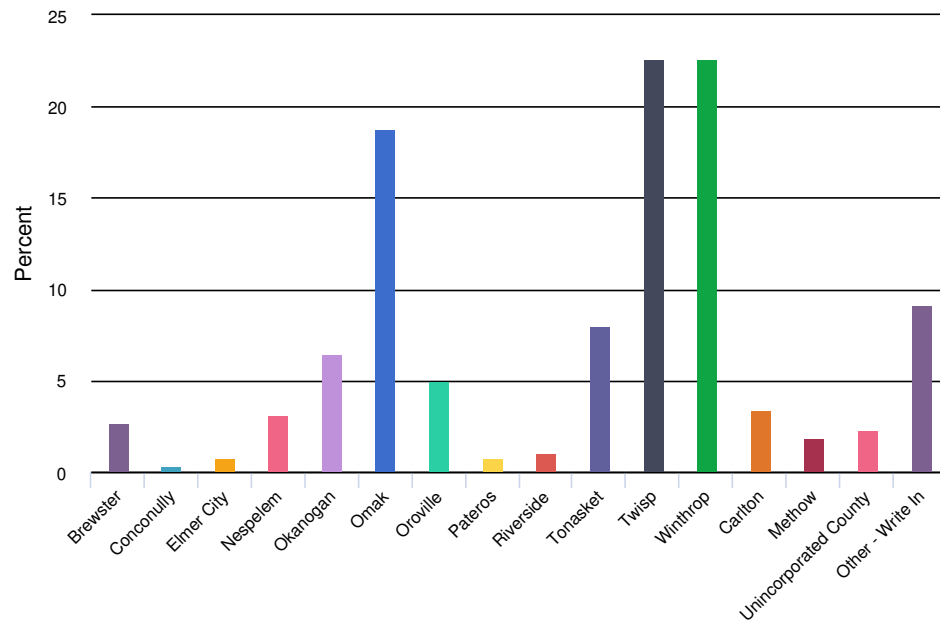
## Response Counts



1. Click the box below to display a map of existing transit services in Okanogan County.



## 2. Which community/area do you live in or near? Select one.

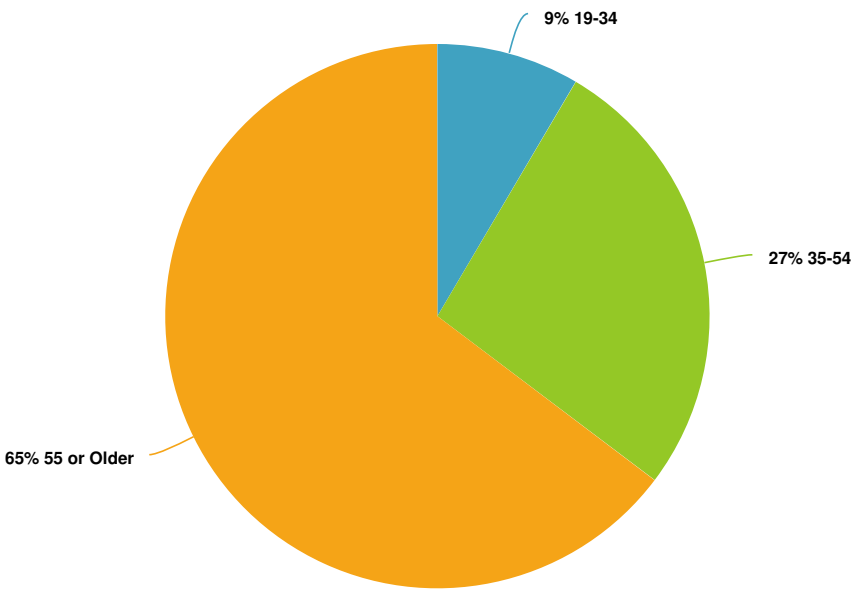


Value	Percent	Responses
Brewster	2.7%	7
Conconully	0.4%	1
Elmer City	0.8%	2
Nespelem	3.1%	8
Okanogan	6.5%	17
Omak	18.8%	49
Oroville	5.0%	13
Pateros	0.8%	2
Riverside	1.1%	3
Tonasket	8.0%	21
Twisp	22.6%	59
Winthrop	22.6%	59
Carlton	3.4%	9
Methow	1.9%	5
Unincorporated County	2.3%	6

Other - Write In		9.2%	24
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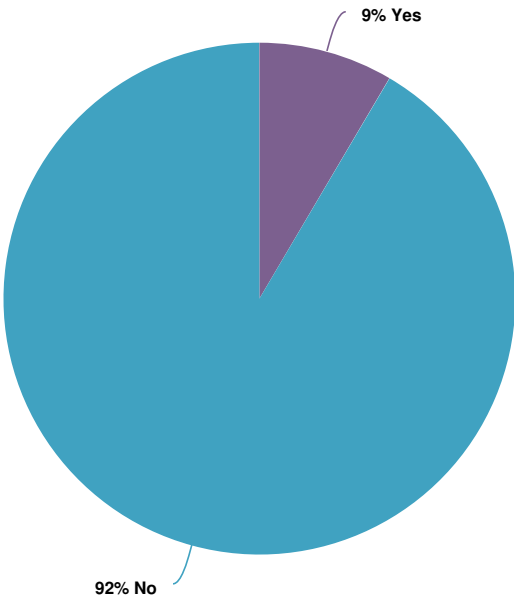
Other - Write In	Count
Mazama	12
Chesaw	2
Belvedere	1
Coulee Dam	1
Coulee Dam	1
Havillah	1
Highlands -Chesaw area	1
Malott	1
Mazama	1
Missouri	1
Wauconda	1
mazama	1
Totals	24

3. What is your age range?



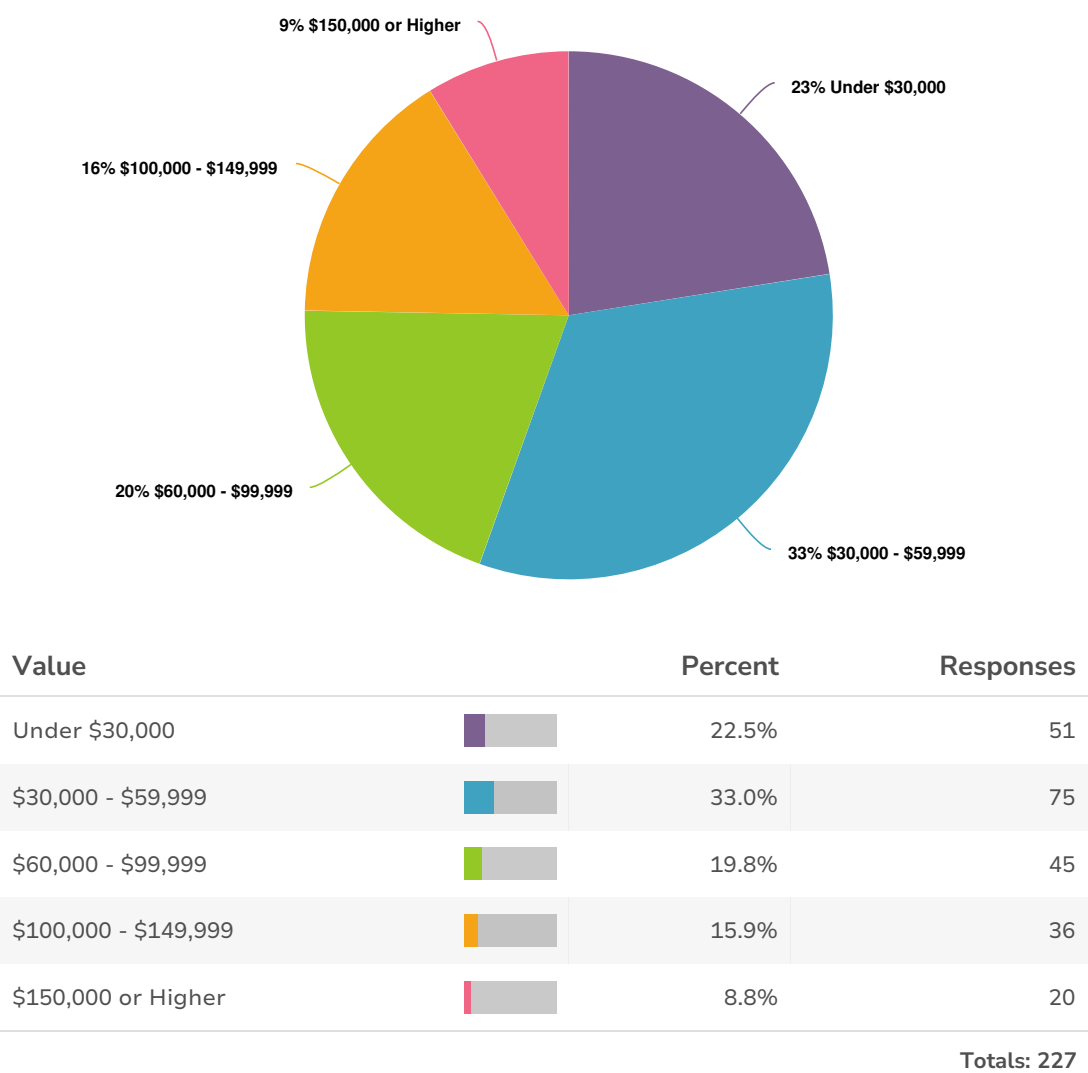
Value		Percent	Responses
19-34	<div><div></div></div>	8.5%	20
35-54	<div><div></div></div>	26.8%	63
55 or Older	<div><div></div></div>	64.7%	152
			Totals: 235

4. Do you have a disability that requires you to seek special transportation services?

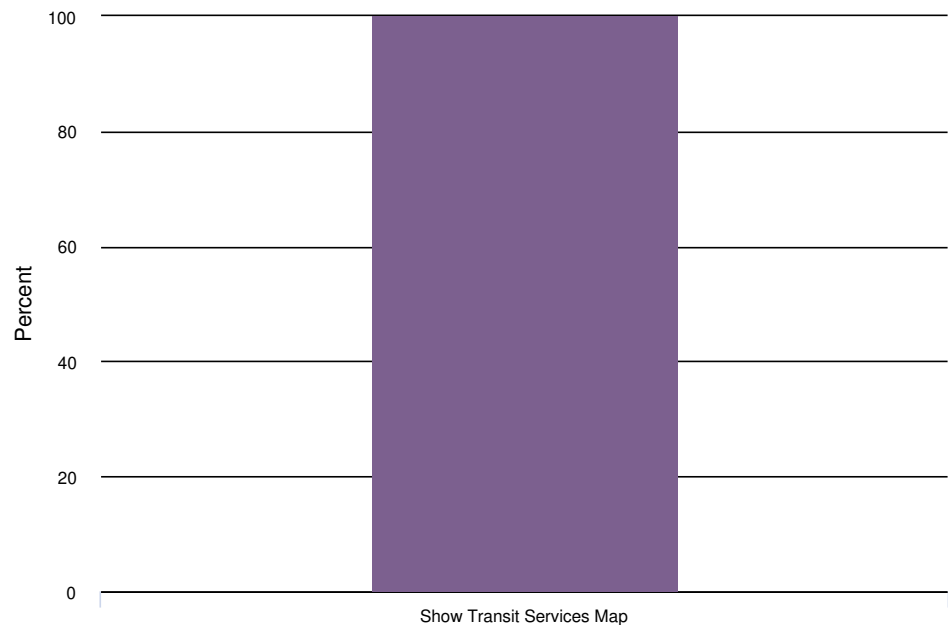


Value		Percent	Responses
Yes	<div><div></div></div>	8.5%	20
No	<div><div></div></div>	91.5%	214
Totals: 234			

5. What category best describes your total annual household income?

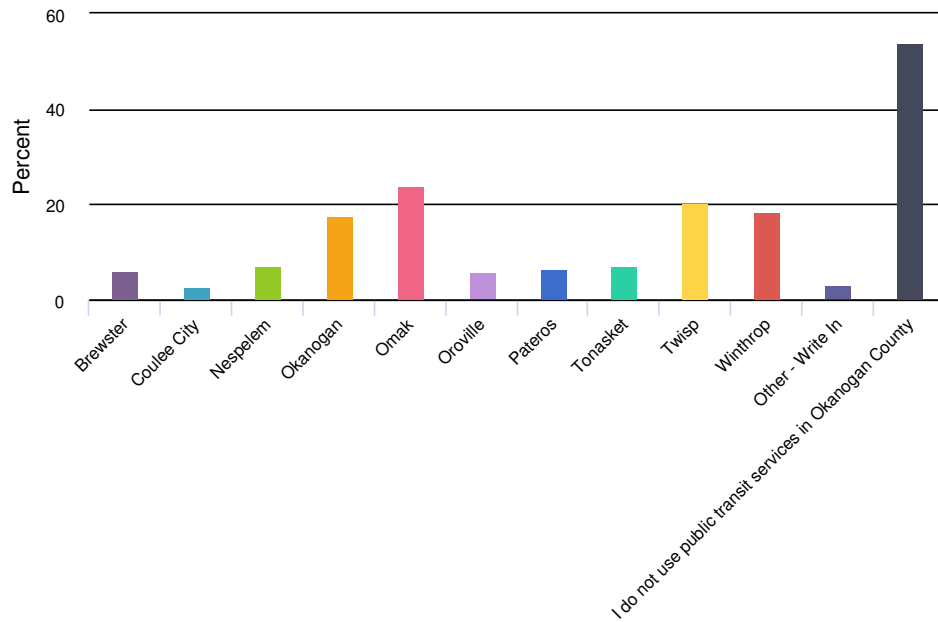














6. Click the box below to display a map of existing transit services in Okanogan County.



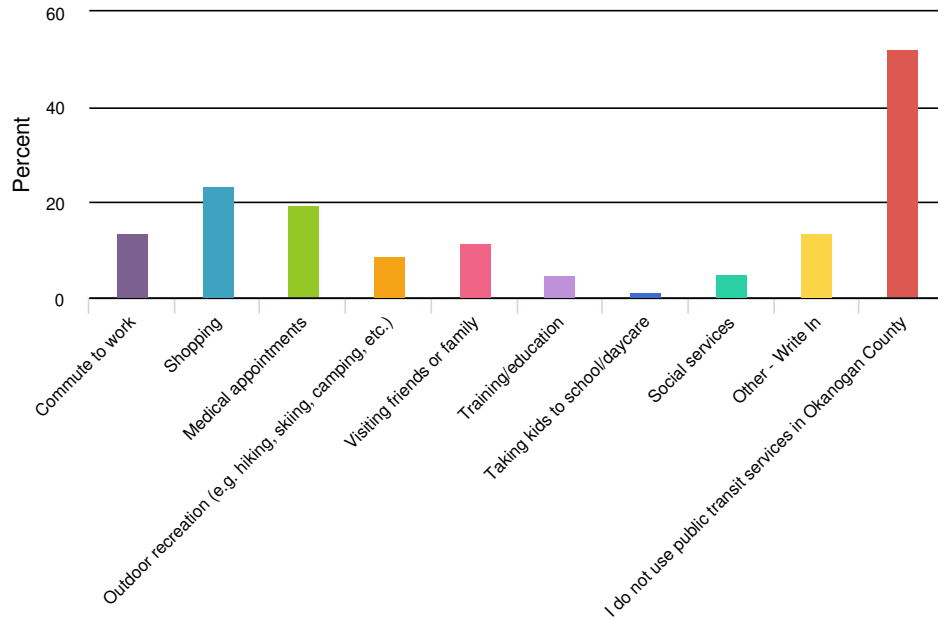
Value		Percent	Responses
Show Transit Services Map	<div></div>	100.0%	42











7. Where do you travel to within Okanogan County using public transit services (TranGo, OCTN, CCT DOT, or PFP)? Select all that apply.



Value		Percent	Responses
Brewster		6.1%	14
Coulee City		2.6%	6
Nespelem		7.0%	16
Okanogan		17.8%	41
Omak		23.9%	55
Oroville		5.7%	13
Pateros		6.5%	15
Tonasket		7.0%	16
Twisp		20.4%	47
Winthrop		18.3%	42
Other - Write In		3.0%	7
I do not use public transit services in Okanogan County		53.9%	124

8. What are the main reasons you use public transit services? Select all that apply.

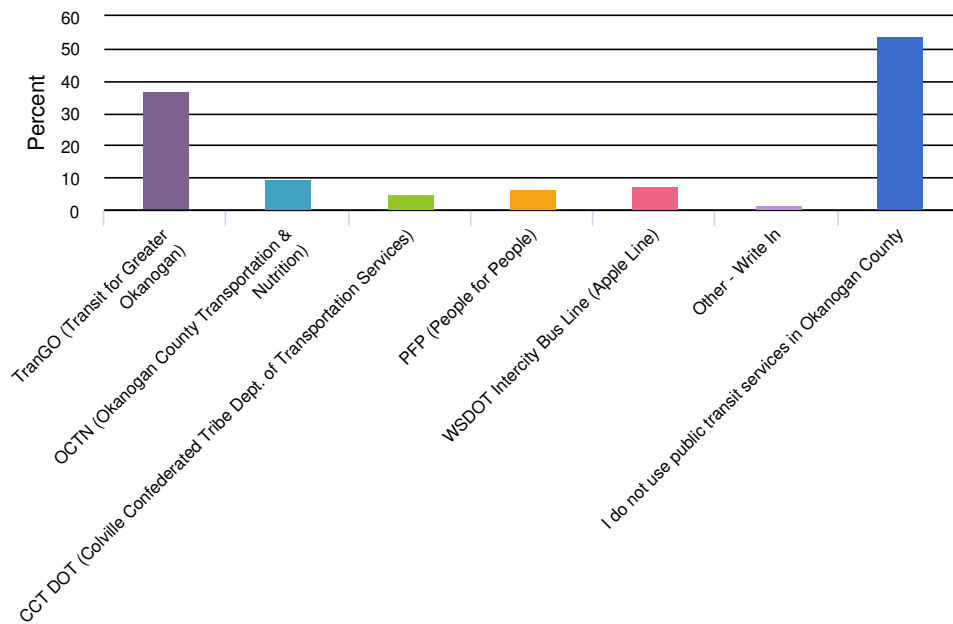


Value		Percent	Responses
Commute to work		13.6%	29
Shopping		23.4%	50
Medical appointments		19.6%	42
Outdoor recreation (e.g. hiking, skiing, camping, etc.)		8.9%	19
Visiting friends or family		11.7%	25
Training/education		4.7%	10
Taking kids to school/daycare		1.4%	3
Social services		5.1%	11
Other - Write In		13.6%	29
I do not use public transit services in Okanogan County		52.3%	112

Other - Write In	Count
Car repair	1
Connecting with other transpo6	1
Don't drive anymore.	1
Drop vehicle in Omak for repair	1
Errands	1
Exercise at the fitness center	1
General appointments, returning home after dropping off my car at the mechanics	1
Getting to school	1
Grocery shopping	1
I don't have a car	1
I dont use this bus, not enough routes. Needs to start earlier	1
I want to use the system more but always feel too rushed or confused about the schedule and stops etc.	1
Travel to volunteer work in Twisp	1
Tribal Services	1
Used to pick up car in Twisp	1
Would use service within Twisp, or to go leave	1
as primary transportation whrever I need to get.	1
bike 1 way, bus back; community events	1
car repair appointments	1
dropping vehicle at mechanic/airport commute	1
errands	1
events	1
Totals	27

Other - Write In	Count
gym visits	1
proximity to places i need to visit	1
taking/retrieving car from the auto repair shop	1
to go to Wenatchee	1
volunteer work	1
Totals	27

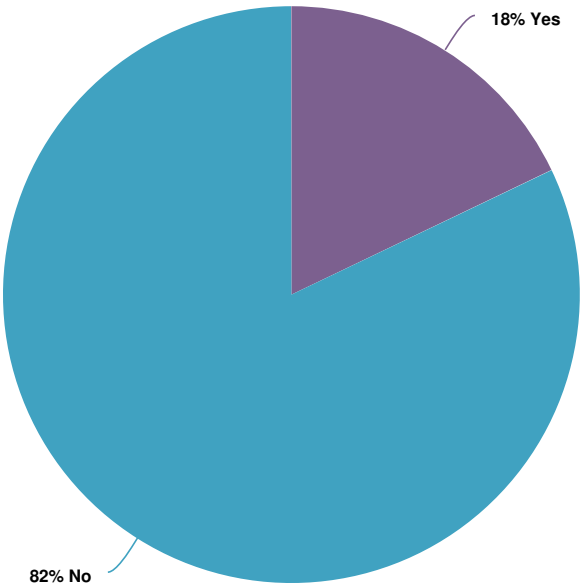
9. Which public transit services do you use? Select all that apply.



Value	Percent	Responses
TranGO (Transit for Greater Okanogan)	36.6%	78
OCTN (Okanogan County Transportation & Nutrition)	9.4%	20
CCT DOT (Colville Confederated Tribe Dept. of Transportation Services)	5.2%	11
PFP (People for People)	6.6%	14
WSDOT Intercity Bus Line (Apple Line)	7.5%	16
Other - Write In	1.4%	3
I do not use public transit services in Okanogan County	54.0%	115

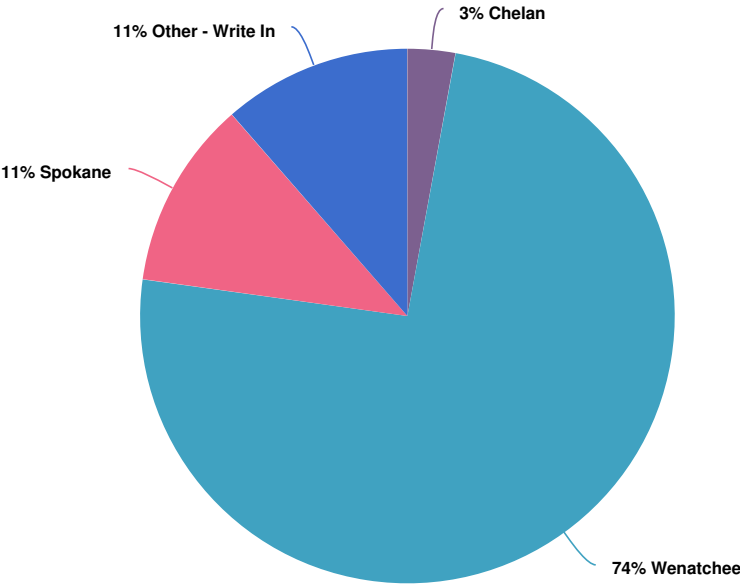
Other - Write In	Count
I would use OCTN if it went regularly, would like to use public transport to Wenatchee	1
It depends where I happen to be located at the time, sometimes due to medical reasons and other times social reasons and necessity.	1
Shuttle to SEA	1
Totals	3

10. Do you use public transit services to get to or connect to other services that bring you outside of Okanogan County?



Value		Percent	Responses
Yes	<div><div></div></div>	17.9%	38
No	<div><div></div></div>	82.1%	174
Totals: 212			

11. Which cities/towns do you travel to outside of Okanogan County?

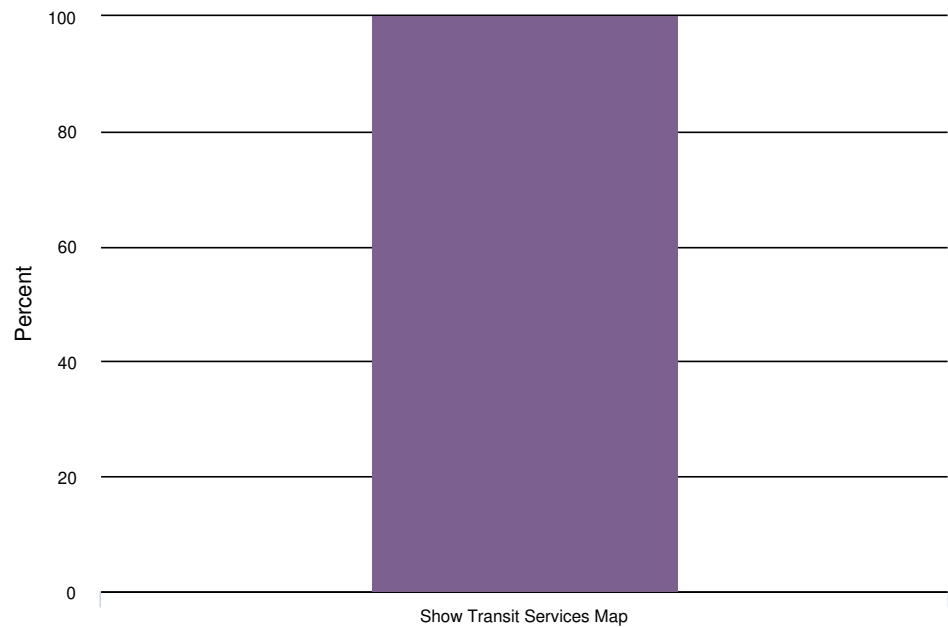


Value		Percent	Responses
Chelan	<div><div></div></div>	2.9%	1
Wenatchee	<div><div></div></div>	74.3%	26
Spokane	<div><div></div></div>	11.4%	4
Other - Write In	<div><div></div></div>	11.4%	4

Totals: 35

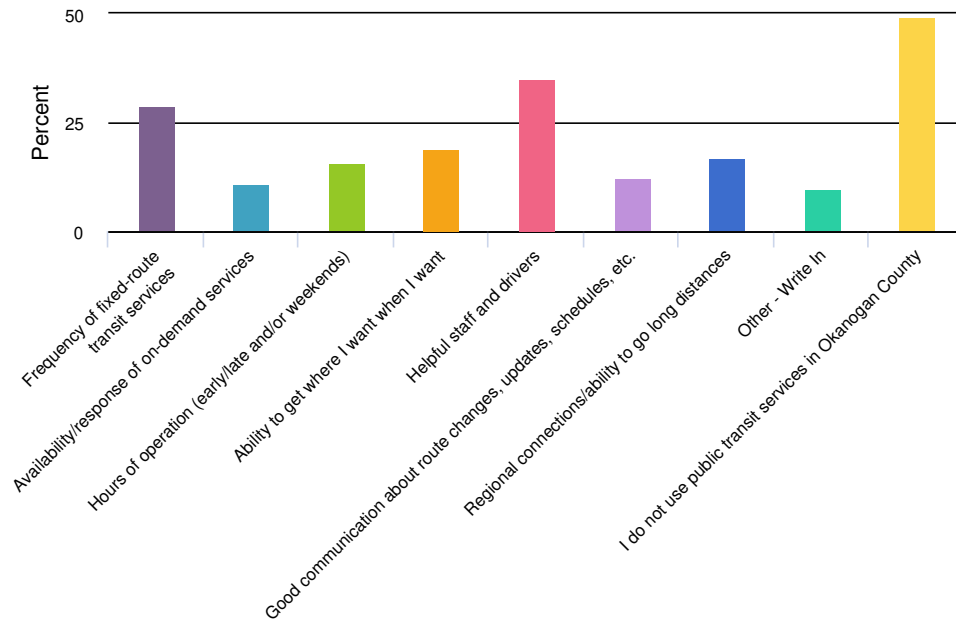
Other - Write In	Count
All of the above	1
Seattle, Wenatchee	1
Spokane AND Wenatchee (could only choose 1!)	1
Would have chosen Chelan and Wenatchee but allowed only 1 answer	1
Totals	4

12. Click the box below to display a map of existing transit services in Okanogan County.



Value		Percent	Responses
Show Transit Services Map		100.0%	14

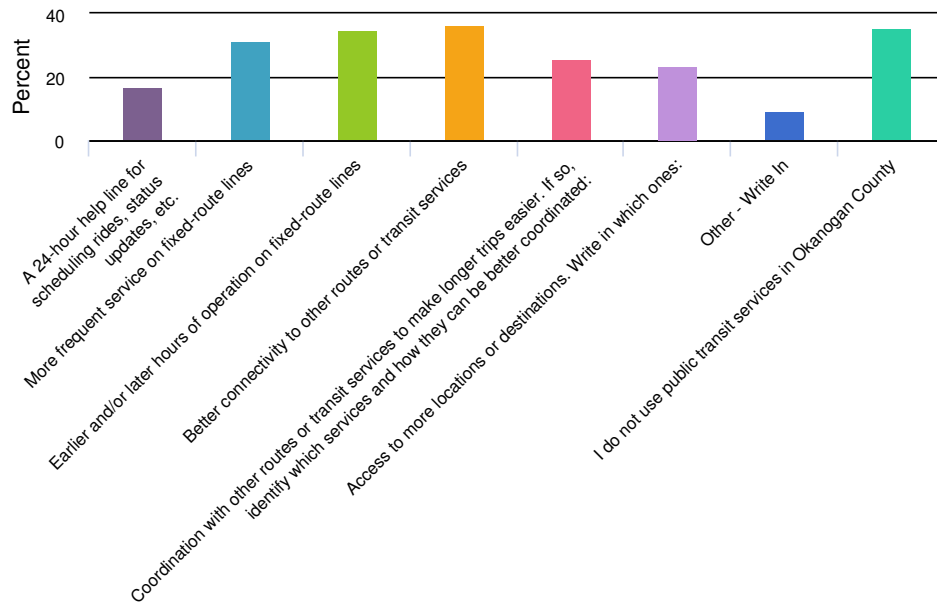
13. What do you like about the existing public transit services? Select all that apply.



Value	Percent	Responses
Frequency of fixed-route transit services	28.7%	60
Availability/response of on-demand services	11.0%	23
Hours of operation (early/late and/or weekends)	15.8%	33
Ability to get where I want when I want	19.1%	40
Helpful staff and drivers	34.9%	73
Good communication about route changes, updates, schedules, etc.	12.4%	26
Regional connections/ability to go long distances	16.7%	35
Other - Write In	9.6%	20
I do not use public transit services in Okanogan County	49.3%	103

Other - Write In	Count
Actually I cant take this bus. It needs to start earlier. It needs more routes	1
I did not know there was public transportation	1
I dont like how there are not enough routes, needs to work later,and start earlier	1
I like people being able to come to our beautiful valley without owning using a car, but using a reliable transportation system.	1
I need to know more...	1
I wish Mazama were included	1
I would use it if there was a more frequent schedule between Twisp and Winthrop	1
I'm glad it's there for the people who need it.	1
Need more routes - availability. No car, no drivers license.	1
Reasonable ride fee	1
Right now the transit service has a lot of issues. Most importantly there are no clear stops in Winthrop. The bus also takes a 2 hour break over lunch, stops running at 4:30 and does not run on sundays at all.	1
The option to use it in the future	1
The transportation services are desperately necessary and needed in our county and adjoining counties because it is a rural environment, necessitates this service! Thank you for the valued and appreciated services. Wonderful staff and drivers!	1
appreciate in-between stops when possible and safe; wish for more hours and transport to eve events	1
convenient	1
reasonable ride fee	1
that it exists	1
timeliness	1
Totals	18

14. Which types of improvements would help you when using these services?



Value	Percent	Responses
A 24-hour help line for scheduling rides, status updates, etc.	16.9%	34
More frequent service on fixed-route lines	31.3%	63
Earlier and/or later hours of operation on fixed-route lines	34.8%	70
Better connectivity to other routes or transit services	36.3%	73
Coordination with other routes or transit services to make longer trips easier. If so, identify which services and how they can be better coordinated:	25.4%	51
Access to more locations or destinations. Write in which ones:	23.4%	47
Other - Write In	9.0%	18
I do not use public transit services in Okanogan County	35.3%	71

<b>Coordination with other routes or transit services to make longer trips easier. If so, identify which services and how they can be better coordinated:</b>	<b>Count</b>
Ability to get to doctor appointments in Wenatchee	1
All	1
Bus to Chelan to connect with Link	1
Carlton to Pateros synchronized with Pateros to Brewster, Okanogan, etc.	1
Chelan county	1
Connecting with routes to get to Wenatchee and Seattle could be better timed out	1
Getting to Wenatchee	1
I would like to be able to get to Walmart from the Okanogan stop. It is not convenient to do so the way the service is now.	1
I would like to see a connection between Trango and the Link bus system	1
I would like to use for med appts in Brewster, Chelan and Wenatchee	1
It would be great to have easier access to Wenatchee from the Methow, also to Brewster .	1
Mazama & Lost River	1
PFP, Wenatchee: It appears there is not much communication with other entities/services	1
Pateros to Brewster connection from Twisp	1
Seattle to Winthrop	1
To have the transportation services in the community, county, and nearby outside counties. Coordinate connection routes!	1
Twisp:-Wen. To connect to trains & buses	1
Wenatchee airport in time for flights	1
Wenatchee and Chelan from Twisp/Methow Valley.	1
Wenatchee, spokane and Chelan	1
Totals	29

**Coordination with other routes or transit services to make longer trips easier. If so, identify which services and how they can be better coordinated:**

	Count
Would use transit if routes were coordinated so could go from Winthrop/ Twisp to Seattle.	1
clicking this on behalf of my work caseload of people who need to travel from far flung communities to omak or wenatchee for medical appts	1
connection of all public transportation links	1
connection to meet bus from Pateros to Wenatchee early morning	1
easy quick transfer in okanogan to omak bus	1
make sure no one is stranded	1
seatac commuter bus	1
to Wenatchee	1
to Wenatchee & Spokane	1
Totals	29

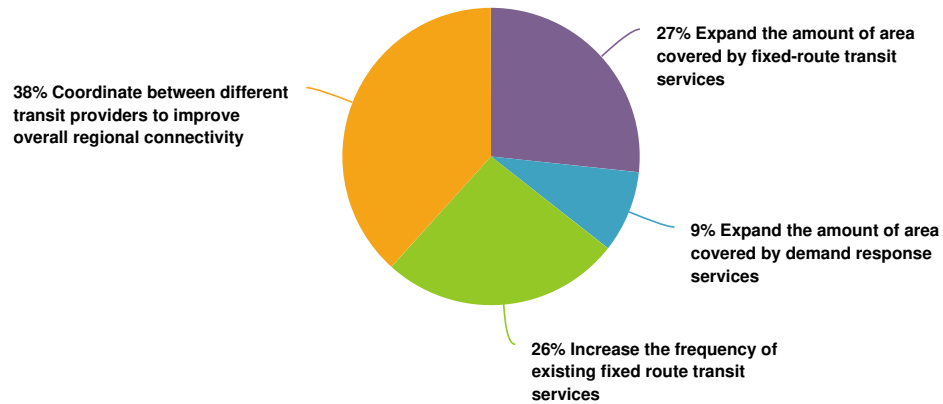
**Access to more locations or destinations. Write in which ones:**





	Count
Mazama	6
Wenatchee	4
A stop in Monse	1
All of the clinics in Omak and Brewster	1
Chelan, Wenatchee, Yakima	1
Chesaw	1
Everywhere	1
Festival or event buses	1
Liberty Bell HS, Winthrop Library	1
Totals	38

Access to more locations or destinations. Write in which ones:	Count
Lost River	1
Mazama	1
Mazama Shuttle to Winthrop	1
Mazama, Twisp River Road	1
Mazama, Washington Pass	1
Methow Valley Schools	1
Out of town	1
Seattle, Bellingham	1
Seattle, Wenatchee, Missoula, CDA	1
See above- all of the above!	1
Three Rivers Hospital	1
Twisp to Pangborn airport	1
Twisp-Winthrop East County Road	1
Wauconda	1
Wenatchee Chelan Spokane	1
Wenatchee, Chelan	1
Wenatchee, Chelan, Spokane	1
Wenatchee, East Wenatchee	1
mazama	1
medical	1
sun mountain lodge	1
Totals	38

Other - Write In	Count
A few more stops in towns	1
Bus service between twisp and Winthrop late night for folks that have been drinking	1
Communication with new residents	1
Do away with the TranGo public transit system.	1
Expanded service to Mazama	1
I don't currently use the services - but if there were more frequent rides on the fixed routes, earlier and later hours, and also a few more stops conveniently located to places I need to be I would definitely see myself using this service!	1
I frequently use the bus to travel to and from meetings. Having the bus leave Twisp exactly on the hour is hard when meetings are usually scheduleed to end on thee hour. also 12:00-1:00 is a hard time not to have bus service	1
Idaho Bound	1
Identifiable bus stops with associated parking	1
Lose the \$1 fee	1
Mazama	1
Omak/Wenatchee more often	1
The schedule is hard to understand	1
better and more bus stop facilities in Winthrop	1
more areas to access bus, sunday buses so people can go to church	1
Totals	15

15. If OCOG were able to fund one change to the existing transit system, which of the following would you choose? Choose only your top answer.



Value		Percent	Responses
Expand the amount of area covered by fixed-route transit services		26.7%	48
Expand the amount of area covered by demand response services		8.9%	16
Increase the frequency of existing fixed route transit services		26.1%	47
Coordinate between different transit providers to improve overall regional connectivity		38.3%	69

**Totals: 180**

16. Is there anything else you would recommend to improve about the public transit services in Okanogan County?

**ResponseID    Response**

9	More bus stops like every 1/4 mile. Flagging down a bus is weird. Route to the HUD's
26	Make route information more accessible with better online information and by sharing with community partners such as the library system.
29	More type of services for people who are unable to be removed from wheelchairs!
30	I like it if the buses didn't use residential neighborhood streets as a regular way to turn around. These are narrow streets in a quiet neighborhood and they roar through repeatedly during the day. In winter especially, with snowbanks, it's difficult to get past them due to the narrow roadway.
31	empty busses wasted tax dollars
38	Extend the service to chesaw and loomis
43	I would privatize this service. If it can withstand the 'supply and demand curve', then it should exist, otherwise it should be disbanded.
47	I frequently work with individuals who use the bus system. Their biggest barrier seems to be the timing of the rides (ie last bus from Twisp to Carlton early in the day or getting to Wenatchee from Twisp cannot be done in a day). I would advocate for longer availability of current bus routes.
49	Your survey doesn't ask why my family doesn't use trango.? That's the question you should be asking. But that doesn't seem of interest to you.
53	Accessibility is an issue. Living in Methow, getting to the bus stop is a problem without a car. Making the service easier for elderly folks. Transferring buses to get from Methow to Winthrop is a barrier for older people.
55	The few times I have traveled from Oroville Via bus I was impressed with the drivers BUT schedules and connections were IN convent. I am not disabled but at 81 I find the walking ,waiting and lack of covered waiting areas a daunting challenge. I also note that considering the people riding a perception of security at waiting areas must be addressed. It is not just your issue but attempting to find a HUMAN to discuss routing and connections , both within this area and State or National transportation. has become increasingly difficult. Publicity is also an issue, until I saw this map I was unaware of the "At home" pick up services and the various routes. I am on the city council of Oroville and would suggest putting on a detailed service presentation

## ResponseID Response

61	The OCTN website is poorly designed, not user friendly, and has too much running text. It doesn't "sell" the services; why would I want to use it? I am a fan of public transportation and the website and informational materials are kind of off-putting.
64	the issue is, people without transportation who ride busses do not always have the bus fare. I would suggest correlating with many businesses a way to improve the obstacles of people finding ways around. ESPECIALLY MEDICAL SITUATIONS/ORGANIZATIONS
68	Personal transportation for families with children
69	While I currently do not use it, I like that we have some form of public transportation available. My eye sight is getting worse and will soon depend on public services.
70	I would like Trango to become a more utilized option for kids to get around in the Methow Valley.
73	I feel that it does not pay for itself and causes more negative issues than positive. It saddens me that we are driving around empty buses in the Methow and transporting the druggies here from Omak/Okanogan. It needs to go away. Poor way to spend our tax dollars. The Senior bus did a good job. Still causing problems on the highway and blocking traffic - should have been put in Twisp Works and get the hazards off the highway. Terrible bus stop design also - no common sense.
74	I am very interested in becoming a customer of public transit to and from work! The price of gas is outrageous!
88	Spread the word! There aren't schedules posted at stops, no sign at all at Winthrop Barn. If yours were longer I could attend meetings in Twisp by bus. I'm on the Rideshare committee under Resilient Methow, we hope for more contact with OK staff, thank you for this survey!
91	Sponsor a ride share program. Communicate existing stops and schedules better.
94	Better publication of what services are available to the community at large and how to access them. Put services and scheduled into the newspaper or on the radio or via community orgs weekly to reach those who have limited mobility and may not have access to computer based information. Help promote a culture of ride sharing, taking the bus and reducing single person car trips. Help the transition to electric vehicles. Replace vans/buses with EV when it's time to purchase new vehicles. Offer Level 2 charging at key bus/rideshare locations. Thanks for the survey!

## ResponseID Response

96	An education campaign, more signage with the schedules at stops, pick ups not on the hour or half hour in the Methow to narrow the wait times in the towns.
99	Service to Pangborn airport
101	We need public transportation and hopefully regular routes for people to avoid taking single rider trips to appts out of the Methow Valley
103	We need public transit in the Methow valley
108	The Trango bus stop at the fitness center involves complicated street crossing, and the closest trango stop to where we live is at the Blue Star coffee shop, 15-20 minutes walk. It would mean that, without the Okanogan bus service, it would not be practical for me to get to the gym--I would spend up to 2 hours if I took Trango.
110	Keep the good work going.
112	I don't use public transportation services in Okanogan County but I would if service was improved in the Methow Valley.
114	I regret that I cannot be without a car in the Methow. There is just no bus connection, i.e. to Hanks, Or to travel, i.e. get to Wenatchee to take a plane or train.
115	As the population ages, we need more at home pick up services and bi-weekly trips to Wentachee or Omak for doctor visits. More frequent stops in the Methow Valley would increase ridership. Thank you for working on this very important issue
116	I used to use the service a long time ago, but don't anymore. I don't travel much and live up Cub creek where there is no bus. I do think it's a wonderful service we should all use more. Thank you!
117	I both live and work in Winthrop and don't travel a lot so don't have a strong need for public transit on a regular basis, but I have many friends that do and we really appreciate the service from Twisp to Winthrop!
122	Trango misses the lunch hour between Twisp and Winthrop, which is sometimes a problem for me. Also, a driver told me I couldn't transport my mountain bike as the tires were too big. Really?
124	I think the Methow Valley students are completely left out of consideration for a bus stop. Students have no way to get to/from school without a car or school bus. Some students travel b/w LBHS and ILC without any meaningful investment in their transportation needs, Please make a stop at LBHS.

## ResponseID Response

139	Better 'signage' at the bus stops. It's hard to know where to catch which bus.....
144	Marketing- I think you should advertise in community papers and local radio to get the word out about your services. I think it would be used more if more people were reminded about the service you provide, I believe your ridership would go up. Especially with inflation and skyrocketing gas prices. Just a thought...
149	I can still drive locally. Wenatchee for medical services is a problem. Methow at Home has frequent requests for rides to Wenatchee for eye treatment. A daily service to Wenatchee would be great.
152	I do not use the system now because I am able to drive. I do plan on using it when that becomes difficult.
153	Transit service to the upper valley might be nice to have a few times during the day. I try to carpool with others as much as possible but COVID limited that option so I end of driving more than I want.
154	thank you for serving the community. you do a great job.
156	I am a pct trail Angel. The hikers flying into Seattle would really benefit from a direct route from Seattle to Winthrop Additionally hikers finishing the trail need a good direct route from Winthrop to Seattle (airport). Etwen both is usually around 3k over the period of may-Oct
157	It would be nice to have the routes and schedule printed in the Methow Valley News when there are changes.
159	no
163	Please keep the public transit!
164	Provide park and ride lots in Winthrop/Twisp
167	I generally don't use the services except for an occasional need to get to Wenatchee. Other family members would use if okan-ton route coincided with hospital night shift work (arriving before 7pm)

## ResponseID Response

171	I'm relying on the bus to get my kids to and from Jobs. We currently have an employee shortage and most of the jobs are in Winthrop. The bus has no designated clearly marked stops in Winthrop. Tran go said it's because City of Winthrop has a westernization code and won't allow stops at all. Additionally the bus comes only every house takes a 2 hour break at lunch, stops running at 5 pm when most restaurants close at 8 pm then have clean up, so a busy should at least run till 9;30 pm. It also does not run at all on Sundays but most businesses are open on Sundays. It makes no sense at all. Please add more times like every half hour and extend to evening for teenage workers! No one can afford gas and a car out here! Not to mention it's good for the environment to have people use the bus! Saves more cars on the highway hitting deer and pollution.
172	Sunday service, later in the day service.
173	I live in Missouri and visit family in the Methow Valley. All I want is a ride from Wenatchee to the Valley and back. Is that available? Is it frequent, like every day?
177	Bus until 10 pm for work travel
178	The last bus leaving Twisp towards Pateros is at 3:30. Would like to have a later bus.
180	Currently I don't use the bus because the timing doesn't make it possible to work a full shift. It would be amazing if the schedules lined up with other systems schedules to get to Wenatchee.
182	More routes, start earlier,
183	Work later, start earlier, more routes
186	Provide service later into the evening so people could use it as a way to go out to supper and back.
194	Many of the people who could benefit from additional transportation live just outside of the city limits. The current transit routes rely on someone's ability to walk great distances to get to a stop. It would be hugely beneficial if stops along the existing routes could be scheduled to assist those with mobility issues. It would also be great to see transit routes expanded to accommodate those living just outside the boundaries of the cities within our County.

## ResponseID Response

195	My household does not currently use the services because the bus does not run early enough for me to get to work on time and also does not have a stop within what I feel is reasonable walking distance to my work. My kids are unable to use the bus because the stops in the Omak/Okanogan area are not located close enough to the places they go that I'd be comfortable with them walking from the stops. With gas prices what they currently are - I'd LOVE to be able to rideshare in this way! The stops in Tonasket are conveniently located but the ones in Omak and Okanogan seem further apart; and with the homeless & drug situations in that part of the county I'm just not comfortable with my kids walking very far at all.
198	Increase advertisements: -on social media with emphasis on how much gas \$ a person could save if they took the bus. - Appeal to certain residents' commitment to climate action by driving less
200	I work with people all the time that don't have cars, the old schedule, from about 4 yrs ago, was so much easier to read. My clientele can not understand it. And I struggle with figuring it out as well.
207	Given how rural Okanogan County can be, public transit is very difficult. That said, I think looking at the ability for lower income workers to commute is the important way to approach this.
209	#9 does not allow more than one choice Sspokane and Wenatchee would be my answers.
212	Would it be possible to dellver prescription medications from Walmart and FHC pharmacies to a drop off point in the Methow Valley?
214	Thank you for including us in your research!
215	Trango in the Methow Valley needs more public outreach so people know that it exists and clear bus stops so people know where to catch it!
217	Week-end service in the Methow...especially on Friday and Saturday evenings.
222	Consider expanding routes to major county roads so that people who live outside of towns would have better access
224	I drive to Winthrop every day for work. I would love to take the bus if it was more frequent
225	I think it is a great service and I'm glad many use it. My husband uses it but I haven't because I have a dog.

## ResponseID Response

227	I am in the Methow Valley. I feel there needs to be a HUGE information campaign. Make riding the public transport cool. Community involvement. Offer rides to Winthrop after an event at the community center or rides to Twisp after an event at the barn. Rides to the Farmer's market. Rides to the pool in Twisp. Rides to the fair. Stop at the school in the Methow
228	1. More awareness needed of the existing bus service in the Methow Valley - maybe a quarterly article in the Methow Valley News telling people how to use it, where it stops, and how to flag it down? 2. Have more designated stops where people are (i.e. Liberty Bell HS, Blue Star Coffee)
230	Expand to Mazama.
232	Additional/clearer parking options for commuting riders
237	Hoping for scheduling and frequency to make Seattle to Winthrop and back travels.
238	Appreciate the service - much needed.
239	Don't stop them running.
240	Please continue CCT DOT shuttle!
241	Line P for P up in the evening to Omak from Coulee Dam
242	very good for me
247	Communication with the public. It appears public transportation is word of mouth. If you know someone who uses public transportation in Okanogan County then someone will find out about it. Maybe a later service going from/to Okanogan to Coulee Dam. Thank you for this opportunity to communicate with you.
248	There could be one trip between Winthrop and Twisp in later hours. Ex. when going to a show or program at 5:30 or 6 p.m. with the bus, there is no way to go back home on the bus after the show. Say 8 p.m. would be great.
249	ensure availability of bicycle transport, including larger electric bicycles
250	I don't use the public transit because it isn't frequent enough. I've seen the schedule of the routes and times and it just isn't enough to take care of business and get home in a timely manner. Hanging around is no fun.
255	Earlier and later routes, no more than 15 minutes between connecting services

## ResponseID Response

256	Secure parking where I connect. Goldline or Appleline, to Spokane or Wenatchee. I have to drive from Hwy 20 @ Wauconda. I am thinking about Casino connection.
257	I have great the cost is spending. Hard to find info. We are new here. Having a difficult time finding out much about the community.
258	I do not support tax dollars being used for an inefficient cost per mile per passenger transportation system that consumes resources and any energy be it fossil fuel or battery (due to environmental damage for battery production).
262	Lose the fee, was told you reinstated it because you wanted "buy in", "invested" users. Can't schedule appointments in Brewster or Omak/Okanogan because either miss the bus or have to wait a hour for the bus. Not early or late enough. In the methow valley you should be aware of large events in Twisp and Winthrop and have service during those times including weekend evenings.
265	Answer the phones in the office, especially after hours when we are concerned about whether our bus is going to arrive.
269	No
275	No
280	If it came up hwy 20 I would use it but I would like a schedule and how much it costs.
285	If transit came to Mazama I think we might use the transit services more
287	If you tax Mazama, you should provide services there.
288	No
290	I need access to public transportation between Twisp and Chelan and Wenatchee for medical services. Please expand link to service the Methow Valley or to connect with Methow Valley services.
293	Increase the transportation budget and grant to expand service areas and connectivity in our rural environment, and more frequent service on fixed route lines. Please let your staff and drivers know we appreciate them!



Okanogan

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COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS