

Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

October 6, 2012

Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan Update

October 6, 2012

HSTCP Summary: The current Human Services Transportation Coordination Plan (HSTCP) for the Palouse Regional Transportation Planning Organization (PRTPO) was completed through a contract with Nelson / Nygaard Consulting Associates. The completion of the project occurred in August, 2010, when the final project report was issued.

The current HSTCP report was the product of public outreach activities across the four Counties of Whitman, Asotin, Garfield, and Columbia that make up the boundaries of the Palouse RTPO. Report sections detail the background of the mandates for the report, how the stakeholder coordination was accomplished, what the project methodology was, what the met and unmet needs are across the RTPO, a study of the demographics of the region, and a detailed description of the existing public transportation services across the RTPO. An additional section regarding the development of strategies to meet the (then current) unmet needs was presented at the end of the report. Only the changes through the update process are reflected in this report; all of the original materials within the original report that are not addressed through this update remain unchanged.

This is the first update to the original August 2010 report, and was adopted by the Palouse RTPO Board through a mail vote during November, 2012.

Summary of Existing Transit Services: The existing transit services were outlined in the original report by County. In the two years since the report was published, some changes have occurred to the service delivery in some of the Transit Districts, and the changes are outlined below. In this update, only the material changes in services are listed. Route changes, some minor adjustments in routes, etc. are not made a part of this update. Please contact the individual transit districts for the most recent service and routing information.

The substantial changes since the 2010 report are listed within the copy presented below, and are (by County):

- **Asotin County:**

Asotin County Public Transportation Benefit Area (PTBA) implemented its new fixed-route bus system in January 2010 with three new routes: Red route in Clarkston; Green route between

Clarkston and Asotin; and Blue route between Clarkston and Lewiston in Idaho. It also operates a dial-a-ride service for people in the fixed-route service area but with mobility limitations that prevent them from using the regular fixed-route service. Since the plan was published, the Asotin PTBA has seen its service in Clarkston evolve into a Commuter Service that allows the PTBA to take individuals to medical appointments and shopping daily. In addition, the PTBA provides a vanpool program, currently for six vanpool groups, and a Guaranteed Ride Home Program. The PTBA is funded with a county sales tax of 0.2%.

- **Columbia County:**
No changes to the original plan are made with this update.
- **Garfield County:**
No changes to the original plan are made with this update.
- **Whitman County:**

Pullman Transit is the primary public transportation provider in Whitman County and is fully accessible; however, it only operates within the Pullman city limits. Pullman Transit operates nine fixed-routes on weekdays and two routes on Saturdays. In addition to people with mobility limitations, anyone over 65 years old is eligible to use the ADA paratransit system. Pullman Transit has provided contract services, also open to the public, for the Pullman Public Schools for 30 years and for Washington State University for 21 years.

Wheatland Express is a charter bus operator and once provided a subsidized fixed-route service. Wheatland Express operated one route with scheduled stops in Whitman County. The Pullman / Moscow Commuter Bus (a public shuttle between the Washington State University and the University of Idaho campuses) ceased operation in the spring of 2011.

Overall, Wheatland Express utilizes 18-24 passenger buses, 47- passenger buses, and 56-passenger buses. It also operates accessible buses, carrying from 18 up to 47 passengers, all of which are nearing life expectancy.

COAST serves eight counties in Washington and Idaho, including Whitman, Asotin, and Garfield counties in Washington. COAST leases several of its vehicles to various programs in Whitman County including the Community Child Care Center, Palouse Industries, and the YMCA. COAST also provides technical assistance, risk management services, and certified driver training. COAST provides demand responsive, one-on-one services using agency vehicles and paid drivers, contracted providers and their drivers, and volunteers who drive their own cars.

An Unincorporated Transportation Benefit Area was established in September 2009 to provide vanpool services in the unincorporated part of the county. COAST was contracted to be operator of the system.

Human Service Providers, such as churches, hospitals, child care facilities, and retirement homes, have 1-3 vehicles that they use for their own programs. A description by county of known providers is included in the full report.

Elements from the current HSTCP that remain current with regard to the continuation or extension of services to address identified needs are:

1. Continuation of current services that would not otherwise operate without grant funds:

The need to maintain existing service was universally identified as the top priority by workshop participants in all four counties. Grant funds are required to sustain operations in Columbia, Garfield and Whitman counties and to support capital programs in the entire region.

2. Extension or expansion of current services to meet an identified need:

Current service is limited in scope by constrained funding. The following needs expand upon existing service to meet unmet needs.

- Continuation of limited Saturday service available to the general public by Columbia County Public Transportation to Walla Walla.
- Expansion of current semi-weekly trips into daily service by Garfield County Transit to Clarkston.
- Extension of Garfield County Transit's local trips beyond 2 PM
- Maintenance of loading area for Garfield County Transit at the Senior Center for the safety of frail elderly riders.
- Extension of Pullman Transit's routes in the summer to meet senior citizens' needs.
- Additional information about how to use public transportation in all four counties.
- Further coordination between transit and human service providers through ongoing meetings.

3. New service established to meet an identified need:

Each County has needs for new service, above and beyond what exists today. These vary by community characteristics and geographic opportunities and constraints.

- Regularly-scheduled evening and weekend service in all four counties. (Some limited evening service exists in Garfield and Columbia Counties and Pullman Transit provides Saturday service.)
- A connection between Garfield and Columbia Counties.
- A small vehicle for Garfield County Transit to better provide long-distance trips and free up resources for local service requests.
- Elimination of regulatory restrictions between Washington and Idaho to allow for interstate medical trips by public transportation.
- Daily transportation for jobs and services from outlying communities into Pullman.
- Medical transportation for those who do not qualify for ADA or Medicaid transportation in Asotin and Whitman Counties, which do not provide public dial-a-ride service, and in all counties for trips outside the Palouse region.

4. Region-wide Needs:

Many of the needs are pervasive across all four counties. These include:

- Sustained existing service
- Ongoing coordination between transit and human service providers
- Information sharing and promotion both at the local and regional level
- Non-Medicaid long-distance medical trips
- Transit connections outside of the region, especially into Idaho.

Tier Strategies

Tiers	Timeframe	Feasibility
Tier 1	Immediate	WSDOT grants available for operating and capital funds to continue existing service
Tier 2	Near Term	Modest staffing resources needed; potential sources for projects needing funding are identified
Tier 3	Long Term	Implementation requires identifying significant new funding or staffing

The Tier 1 strategy is to apply for operating and capital funds from the Washington State Consolidated Grant Program. Through a formula developed by WSDOT, each region is allowed a set number of “A,” “B,” and “C” project applications, with “A” projects being the top priorities in the region. For this update, only tier 1 strategies were reviewed and amended.

For the 2012-14 grant application period, the following are the priorities set by the transit providers in the Palouse RTPO:

Tier 1 Strategy

Apply for operating and capital funds from the Washington State Consolidated Grant Program.

“A” Projects (4 Allowed, 0 Unallocated)

CCPT: Operating funds to sustain existing service

GCT: Operating funds to sustain existing service

COAST: Operating funds to sustain existing service

Pullman Transit: Operating funds to sustain existing service.

“B” Projects (3 Allowed, 0 Unallocated)

Asotin PTBA: 2 ADA cutaways with cameras - replacements

CCPT: 2 ADA Accessible Cutaways — replacement vehicles

GCT: One ADA Accessible Cutaway vehicle - replacement

“C” Projects (3 Allowed, 2 Unallocated)

COAST: Two minivans, both replacement vehicles