

Wheeler County Public Transportation Needs Assessment

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Executive Summary

To better understand and address Wheeler County residents' unmet transportation needs, Wheeler County Community Transportation (WCCT) retained the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD), with financial support from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), to complete a needs assessment and plan for general public transportation services in Wheeler County. MCEDD was contracted to gather information through a public engagement process to examine the potential to expand public transportation services beyond the scope of existing services in the county. The project's primary purpose is to identify and evaluate the following: current transit use and public transportation services provided in Wheeler County, gaps in service, future transit demand, and recommended public transportation service options and associated costs to meet the needs of Wheeler County residents.

The product of WCCT and MCEDD's collaborative research effort is the Wheeler County Public Transportation Plan, a separate document from the needs assessment, which outlines the implementation and costs of recommended strategies listed below. The information generated for and presented in the needs assessment and public transportation plan will help Wheeler County continue to plan for and address the transportation needs of Wheeler County residents.

Methodology

The needs assessment project required a significant public engagement process, including a survey of Wheeler County registered voters, stakeholder and agency interviews, and three public meetings to allow the general public to provide input about transportation needs and the type of public transportation services to best serve Wheeler County residents. MCEDD staff conducted a demographic analysis considering historical population and transportation figures from 1990 – 2010 and analyzed comparable transportation systems in rural Oregon counties to identify models for services that address needs identified by the public engagement process.

Demographics of Wheeler County

Wheeler County demographic characteristics originate from census data, the population forecast came from Portland State University's Population Research Center, and additional demographic information was obtained from the general population survey conducted in Wheeler County for comparison. The following is a summary of key findings from the demographic analysis:

- Since 2000, Wheeler County has experienced population loss and by 2030, Wheeler County is projected to lose 7.5 percent of its 2010 population.
- Nearly 53 percent of the population lives in one of three population centers, with Fossil being the largest at 473 people. It is important to note that the three communities are an average of over 37 miles from one another.
- The majority of the population (54 percent) is over age 50. Those aged 70 and up constitute the largest demographic in the county at 20 percent of the population (283 people).

- Since 2000, those 18 to 24 years old decreased in number by over 60 percent. The population in age groups under age 45 experienced a decline, while the population 45 and over increased in the ten-year period.
- Over 37 percent of Wheeler County households reported an annual income of less than \$25,000.
- At \$33,403 the median income for Wheeler County households in 2010 was less than 72 percent of the statewide median income.
- In 2010, there were approximately 164 people, over 11 percent of the total population, below the poverty level in Wheeler County, compared with over 15 percent statewide.
- In 2010, nearly half of Wheeler County's population drove alone in a car, truck, or van as the primary means of transportation. Notably, over 31 percent of the population walked as their primary means of transportation.
- The highest housing density in the county exists in Fossil at just over one housing unit for every two acres.
- On average, households in Wheeler County have about 2 vehicles available to them.
- The trend of an aging demographic combined with an increasing number of seniors living below the poverty level points to the importance of providing accessible and affordable transportation options throughout the county.

Summary of Key Findings from General Population Survey, Agency Interviews, and Public Meetings

Data gathered from the general population survey, agency interviews, and public meetings indicate the transportation needs and public transportation service preferences among Wheeler County residents. A summary of the key findings from the public engagement process is provided below. This listing is not comprehensive and is intended to provide access to highlighted points of emphasis from the multi-faceted qualitative data-collection process.

Key Survey Results and Findings:

- Individuals aged 70 years and up made up the largest proportion of survey respondents at 44.5 percent overall.
- Out of 230 respondents, 17 percent indicated having a physical or mental disability requiring transportation assistance.
- Less than 9 percent of respondents indicated that their transportation needs or those of members of their household are not being met.
- Nearly four out of five respondents drive alone in a car or truck as their primary means of transportation.
- On average, respondents spend about \$632 each month on car payments, maintenance, gas and oil, and insurance.
- Destinations showing the highest demand, in terms of the number of trips for a specific purpose among survey respondents in a normal week, include Bend and Redmond for

medical and shopping purposes, Fossil for banking and shopping purposes, and The Dalles and Madras for medical purposes.

- Bend was the destination to which the highest number of respondents indicated demand for public transportation, considering all trip purposes, at 72 percent.
- Forty-seven percent of respondents indicated demand for public transportation to Redmond, 41 percent to Prineville, and nearly 33 percent to The Dalles.
- Survey responses primarily indicate trip demand for public transportation from Wheeler County to Bend, Redmond, and Prineville. Trip pairs from each community in Wheeler County with significant demand among respondents include:
 - Fossil to Bend, Fossil to The Dalles, and Fossil to Madras
 - Spray to Bend, Spray to Redmond, Spray to Fossil, and Spray to Prineville
 - Mitchell to Prineville, Mitchell to Bend, and Mitchell to Redmond
- Respondents indicated an overall preference for weekdays, with morning service preferred between 7:00 - 10:00 AM and the greatest demand (57 percent) at 8:00 AM.
- Over two-thirds of respondents prefer to call ahead for a ride and less than 20 percent prefer to catch a bus at a stop.
- Nearly 30 percent of respondents are unable to walk to a bus stop, which further supports the existing demand-response service model. However, those under age 60 were five times more likely to walk up to a mile to a bus stop than those aged 60 and over.
- Respondents under age 60 were split nearly in half between those who are aware and those unaware of WCCT's open seat policy. Four out of five respondents aged 60 and over are aware of the policy. This indicates a need for greater outreach towards all ages throughout the county to encourage their use of open seats on existing trips.
- Over 40 percent of respondents use existing services, while nearly 60 percent do not.
- Respondents primarily use existing services once a month or less.
- A majority of respondents would be willing to pay \$5.00 fare for roundtrips within Wheeler County, while over 75 percent would pay \$10.00 or more for roundtrips to destinations outside Wheeler County.
- Obstacles to use of public transportation mentioned by respondents include issues of convenience, lack of need, availability of services, and the time or duration of trips to high-demand destinations.

Key Findings from Agency Interviews:

- Participants noted access to services and appointments as the top transportation need, such as access to medical services for children and seniors, drug and alcohol treatment, and grocery shopping.
- Common barriers to client access of services include distance and travel time, lack of a private vehicle, lack of current driver's license, and lack of awareness of the existing public transit service and how to access it. An agency expressed the perception that it is difficult to match clients' appointment schedules with the existing bus schedule and offered that a

system with paid drivers, instead of volunteers, on a set schedule may provide a reliable service of which clients might make better use.

- Most interviewees indicated their clients drive alone, while several additionally mentioned carpooling or getting a ride from friends and family as an option used by clients.
- Those agencies already partnering with WCCT indicated frequent use of the transit services among their clients. New or enhanced partnerships with stakeholder groups will improve outreach and provide clients with increased awareness of their transportation options.
- Agency representatives most frequently identified Bend as a necessary destination for their clients to address medical and shopping needs. Redmond was mentioned second most frequently, followed by The Dalles and Madras for food shopping, medical services, and social services appointments. Prineville was also mentioned by several agencies as serving their clients' shopping, banking, and medical needs. Fossil was mentioned as a destination of residents of Spray and Mitchell and provides some medical and counseling services within Wheeler County.
- Service running on weekdays in the morning during regular business hours would allow clients to make use of transit and access agency services. Preferred times include a morning run, starting between 7:00 - 8:00 AM, and a late afternoon/early evening run, ranging between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM.
- Clients are generally unaware of WCCT's open seat policy.
- The results regarding use and perception about existing services were mixed, even among stakeholder agency representatives, which points to a need for targeted outreach to clients of stakeholder agencies who either do not use WCCT service or have misconceptions about it.
- Stakeholders frequently mentioned the need to make clients aware of the services available, which would make them more likely to use the services, as would adequate space for groceries on transit vehicles, and more reliable trip schedules each week, such as a run to Bend clinics on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Outreach to the general population with information about services and who can use them could alleviate misconceptions or stigmas associated with the use of public transportation.
- Responses indicate that stakeholders value transportation services, which connect clients to affordable groceries, medical services, and social or mental health services located out of town or out of the county.

Key Findings from Public Meetings:

- There is a need for WCCT to communicate seat availability to the general public in a timely fashion.
- Young families, especially young mothers and children, need greater access to transportation to access services and social activities.
- Increase education of potential riders on how to reserve/schedule trips.
- A commonly expressed obstacle is the time it takes for trips that combine purposes such as medical, shopping, and other errands.

- Public transportation is desired from Fossil to The Dalles, Condon, Bend and Portland by half of the participants in Fossil.
- Demand for public transportation in Spray focused on service to Bend for various purposes.
- In Mitchell, participants indicated transportation demand and public transportation demand for trips to Prineville for shopping and banking, Bend for medical or shopping, and Redmond for shopping purposes.
- Participants in all three meetings indicated interest in using public transportation to access Costco and St. Charles Hospital in Bend and the Eye Institute and Walmart in Redmond.
- Participants in Fossil and Spray support a donation-based fare system, while Mitchell participants unanimously preferred a set in-county/out-of-county trip fare system.
- There is a noted lack of volunteer drivers for WCCT trips serving Mitchell.
- Some people may not know to call ahead of time to request a trip, which indicates a need for greater outreach.

Recommendations

Based on the key findings listed above, particularly concerning travel needs, transportation preferences, and general awareness of existing transportation services, the following recommendations offer options for Wheeler County Community Transportation to consider for implementation in the next one to five years.

1. Enhance advertising and marketing strategies to promote existing WCCT services and proposed additional public transportation services throughout Wheeler County, highlighting the regular trips scheduled for each week or month, including the trips' community of origin and popular destinations.
2. Increase regular public transportation trips to destinations of need, including the following additional trips:
 - Spray to Bend – twice a month
 - Spray to Fossil – once a month
 - Mitchell to Prineville – once a month
 - Mitchell to Bend – once a month
 - Mitchell to Fossil – once a month
 - Fossil to Bend – once a month
 - Fossil to Madras – once a month
3. Enhance communication and coordination between transportation services and key additional partner agencies/organizations, including social service providers, mental health providers, community schools and medical clinics, workforce development agencies, and veterans support organizations.
4. Continue to monitor transportation use and needs among Wheeler County residents, particularly to compare seniors' and individuals with disabilities' public transportation use with that of the general public.

Section I: Introduction

Purpose

Wheeler County is a rural frontier county located in the north-central region of the State of Oregon, approximately 170 miles southeast of Portland. It contains 1,714 square miles and is bordered by the counties of Gilliam and Morrow to the north, Grant to the east, Crook to the south, and Jefferson and Wasco to the west. The area is known for its cattle ranches, recreation opportunities on the John Day River, and the geological and tourist draw of the John Day Fossil Beds National Monument. In 2010, Wheeler County's population was 1,441 and the population density was less than 1 person per square mile. Wheeler County's remote location, combined with limited availability of basic services within the county, requires residents to make lengthy trips to urban areas.

Wheeler County Community Transportation (WCCT) began operating in 1992 and continues as the sole public transportation provider located in Wheeler County that serves Wheeler County residents. WCCT, which is overseen by the Wheeler County Court, provides demand-response transportation primarily to serve seniors and individuals with disabilities. WCCT has an open seat policy such that the general public may access the demand response transportation as space is available on existing trips for seniors and individuals with disabilities. In recent years, WCCT has experienced increased demand among the general public to use WCCT services, as well as increased inquiries from the general public about available transportation options.

To better understand, document, and address Wheeler County residents' unmet transportation needs, WCCT retained the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD), with financial support from the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), to complete a needs assessment and plan for general public transportation services in Wheeler County. MCEDD was contracted to gather information through a public engagement process to examine the potential to expand public transportation services beyond the scope of existing services in the county. The project's primary purpose is to identify and evaluate the following: current transit use and public transportation services provided in Wheeler County, gaps in service, future transit demand, and recommended public transportation service options and associated costs to meet the needs of Wheeler County residents.

The product of WCCT and MCEDD's collaborative research effort is the Wheeler County Public Transportation Plan, a separate document from the needs assessment, which outlines the implementation and costs of recommended strategies listed in Section VII of the needs assessment. The needs assessment provides context and supporting information for the public transportation plan. The plan will additionally provide a strategic foundation for the next update to the Wheeler County Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan. The information generated for and presented in the needs assessment and public transportation plan will help WCCT continue to plan for and address the transportation needs of Wheeler County residents.

Methodology

The needs assessment project required a significant public engagement process, including a survey of Wheeler County registered voters, stakeholder and agency interviews, and three public meetings to allow the general public to provide input about transportation needs and the type of public transportation services to best serve Wheeler County residents. MCEDD staff conducted a demographic analysis considering historical population and transportation figures from 1990 – 2010 and analyzed comparable transportation systems in rural Oregon counties to identify models for services that address needs identified by the public engagement process. This section provides detail on data collection and comparable systems analysis methods used to generate the transportation needs and recommended strategies listed in this report.

General Population Survey

Wheeler County Community Transportation conducted a mail survey of Wheeler County registered voters in February 2013. The survey was designed to identify general transportation needs, demand for services to specific destinations, obstacles to using existing transportation services, and what new or additional public transportation services should be considered in Wheeler County. WCCT mailed the survey to 927 Wheeler County residents, including 20 residents who were not on the registered voter list, but known to WCCT to use existing public transportation services frequently.

Returned surveys were given a unique identification number and entered into an online survey tool. Responses were aggregated and analyzed using Survey Monkey. Results were analyzed in total and filtered by respondent community of residence and by age of respondent. Survey results analyzed by respondent community of residence form the basis of trip demand by destination, an item used to prioritize potential trips to add to the general public demand response system. Project staff developed a three-step analysis tool for WCCT to use to estimate costs of prioritized trips, both within Wheeler County and to destinations outside the county, by mileage and trip duration (hours). The analysis tool is presented in greater detail in the Wheeler County Public Transportation Plan.

Section III of the needs assessment contains a summary of survey results that highlight Wheeler County residents' transportation needs and form the basis for recommended actions to address those needs. Appendix A contains the survey mailing.

Agency Interviews

Wheeler County Community Transportation and MCEDD staff developed a stakeholder/agency list consisting of agencies that serve various segments of the Wheeler County population, each with transportation needs. Agencies interviewed serve seniors, medical patients, young families (parents and children), students, workers and job-seekers, individuals with disabilities, mental health clients, individuals with alcohol or drug addiction, unemployed or under-employed individuals, and veterans.

Interview participants indicated their clients' current transportation needs and issues, which are summarized in Section IV.

Public Meetings

Wheeler County Community Transportation hosted three public meetings, which were held in the communities of Fossil, Spray and Mitchell in the winter of 2013. WCCT posted meeting notices in the Wheeler County News, Condon Times Journal, and at public locations in each community. Meeting notices were also distributed at the Wheeler County Courthouse and in meetings with community leaders. Notices were posted in English and Spanish.

MCEDD staff facilitated the public meetings and documented participation and discussion that occurred at each meeting. Section V includes a summary of the information gathered in the three public meetings.

Comparable County Transportation Systems

MCEDD staff conducted phone interviews with the directors of the Harney County Senior Center and Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, which serves Wallowa County. The interviews focused on information about paid drivers, worker's compensation and insurance costs, which serve as a resource Wheeler County Community Transportation may use to anticipate costs to implement and operate similar public transit services in Wheeler County.

Organization of this Report

Section II: Wheeler County Population Profile, describes and analyzes the demographic characteristics of Wheeler County residents. **Section III, General Population Survey Results**, describes and analyzes the results of the Wheeler County registered voter survey, with a focus on information pertaining to transportation needs, demand for trip destinations and purposes, and public transportation service preferences. **Section IV: Summary of Agency Interviews**, describes and analyzes the findings from the interviews conducted with stakeholder agency representatives. **Section V: Summary of Public Meetings**, describes and analyzes the findings from the three public meetings held in Wheeler County. **Section VI: Comparable County Transportation Systems**, identifies two Oregon counties as relevant case studies for future transit services in Wheeler County. **Section VII: Recommendations**, provides suggestions and methods to address transportation needs and service gaps in Wheeler County.

Section II: Wheeler County Population Profile

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the demographics and characteristics of Wheeler County's general population. The population profile contributes to an understanding of the context within which the public's transportation needs and public transportation services exist. The population profile considers Wheeler County's population growth rate, population centers, age structure, household income, poverty status, means of transportation, housing density, and vehicles available per household. This information provides a basis for comparison with the demographic information collected through the survey and discussed in Section III.

County Profile and Demographics

Wheeler County is a rural/frontier region in north-central Oregon. The county consists of 1,714 square miles and a 2010 population of 1,441 (2010 US Census). The population density is less than 1 person per square mile (0.84/sq. mi.), compared with an Oregon statewide population density of 39 people per square mile. It has the second lowest population density in the state behind Harney County (0.7/sq. mi.).

Table 2-1 shows the population size and the average annual growth rate for Wheeler County and Oregon from 1990 to 2010. While the state's population has grown substantially over the twenty-year period, Wheeler County has experienced population loss, particularly since 2000.

Table 2-1: Population and Average Annual Growth Rate

Year	Oregon		Wheeler County	
	Population	AAGR	Population	AAGR
1990	2,842,321		1,396	
2000	3,421,399	2.04	1,547	1.08
2010	3,831,074	1.20	1,441	-0.69

Source: 1990, 2000, 2010 US Census

Wheeler County's population is essentially split between small rural communities and unincorporated rural/frontier areas in the county. Table 2-2 shows about 53 percent of the population lives in one of three population centers, with Fossil being the largest at 473 people. It is important to note that the three communities are an average of over 37 miles from one another.

Table 2-2: Population Centers

Population Center	Population	Percentage of County Population
Fossil	473	32.8%
Spray	160	11.1%
Mitchell	130	9.0%
Unincorporated	678	47.1%

Source: 2010 US Census

Table 2-3 depicts the age structure for Wheeler County’s population, with splits for males and females for each age group. The overall population is essentially split among males and females, but the majority of the population (54 percent) is over age 50. Those aged 70 and up constitute the largest demographic in the county at 20 percent of the population (283 people).

Table 2-3: Population Age Structure: Wheeler County, 2010

Age	Total Count	Percent	Males	Percent	Females	Percent
Under 18	259	18%	137	19%	122	17%
18 to 24 years	69	5%	46	6%	23	3%
25 to 29 years	64	4%	34	5%	30	4%
30 to 39 years	116	8%	61	8%	55	8%
40 to 49 years	153	11%	63	9%	90	12%
50 to 59 years	248	17%	123	17%	125	17%
60 to 69 years	249	17%	125	17%	124	17%
70 and up	283	20%	129	18%	154	21%
Total	1,441		718		723	

Source: 2010 US Census

Table 2-4 illustrates the percent change by age group of the total population of Wheeler County and Oregon from 2000 to 2010. In Wheeler County, the population in age groups under age 45 experienced a decline, while the population 45 and over increased in the ten-year period. Most notably, those 18 to 24 years old decreased in number by over 60 percent. At 53 years of age, Wheeler County’s median age is fifteen years older than that of the state (38 years of age). The median age in the county also rose at nearly twice the rate of the state. Meanwhile, the median age among the Hispanic population in Wheeler County rose at ten times the rate of Hispanics throughout the state, but at 24 years of age it remains less than half the median age of the total county population. Overall, Wheeler County’s population is older than average and has generally become older since 2000.

Table 2-4: Population Change by Age Group, Wheeler County and Oregon, 2000 - 2010

Age	Oregon			Wheeler County		
	2000	2010	% chg.	2000	2010	% chg.
Under 18	846,526	866,453	2.4	351	259	-26.2
18 to 24 years	327,884	358,778	9.4	175	69	-60.6
25 to 44 years	997,269	1,023,669	2.6	298	239	-19.8
45 to 64 years	811,543	1,048,641	29.2	363	454	25.1
65 and up	438,177	533,533	21.8	360	420	16.7
Median Age	36.3	38.4	5.8	48.1	53.0	10.2
Hispanic MA	22.8	23.6	3.5	17.9	24.2	35.2

Source: US Census (2000 and 2010)

In addition to population age and distribution in Wheeler County, household income provides an important context for transportation needs and cost constraints among county residents. Table 2-5 presents figures for household income in Wheeler County and statewide in Oregon. In 2010,

236 households reported an annual income of less than \$25,000, which constitutes over 37 percent of Wheeler County households. Statewide, less than 26 percent of households reported the same level of income. Proportions of households reporting between \$35,000 and \$75,000 were similar between the county and the state, but only 13 percent of county households had incomes over \$75,000 compared to 28 percent statewide. At \$33,403 the median income for Wheeler County households in 2010 was less than 72 percent of the statewide median income.

Table 2-5: Household Income, Oregon and Wheeler County, 2010

Income Range	Oregon		Wheeler County	
	Households	Percent	Households	Percent
Less than \$10,000	118,189	7.8%	67	10.6%
\$10,000 - \$14,999	90,857	6.0%	61	9.7%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	181,041	12.0%	108	17.1%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	177,254	11.8%	91	14.4%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	234,029	15.5%	104	16.5%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	284,572	18.9%	118	18.7%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	173,023	11.5%	46	7.3%
\$100,000 - \$149,999	160,509	10.6%	21	3.3%
\$150,000 - \$199,999	47,234	3.1%	4	0.6%
\$200,000 or more	40,429	2.7%	11	1.7%
Total	1,507,137		631	
Median Income	\$46,560		\$33,403	

Source: 2010 US Census

Table 2-6 shows several segments of the population below the poverty level and the rate of change in the number of persons below the poverty level in Wheeler County and Oregon between 2000 and 2010. Notably, the number of persons and families below the poverty level in Wheeler County decreased by nearly a third, compared to a statewide increase by over 50 percent. Despite the overall decrease, persons below the poverty level among unrelated individuals, female households with family, and persons over age 65 increased in Wheeler County. In 2010, there were approximately 164 people, over 11 percent of the total population, below the poverty level in Wheeler County, compared with over 15 percent statewide.

Table 2-6: Percent Change Persons Below Poverty Level, Oregon and Wheeler County, 2000 - 2010

Group	Oregon			Wheeler County		
	2000	2010	% chg.	2000	2010	% chg.
All Persons	388,740	596,408	53.4%	239	164	-31.4%
All Families	70,032	105,970	51.3%	56	37	-33.9%
Unrelated Individuals	155,661	230,151	47.9%	57	74	29.8%
Female HH w/Family	29,589	46,721	57.9%	11	19	72.7%
Persons Over Age 65	32,120	41,403	28.9%	15	25	66.7%

Source: US Census – American Community Survey 2000, 2010

Decennial census data from 2000 and 2010 also provides context for Wheeler County residents' needs or preference for different transportation modes. Table 2-7 shows that in 2010 nearly half of Wheeler County's population drove alone in a car, truck, or van as the primary means of transportation. Notably, in 2010 over 31 percent of the population walked as their primary means of transportation, an increase from under 9 percent in 2000. Between 2000 and 2010, the number of carpoolers dropped by over 56 percent and the number of telecommuters dropped by 46 percent.

Table 2-7: Means of Transportation, Wheeler County, 2000 and 2010

Transportation Mode	2000		2010	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Car, truck, or van	430	70.7	344	56.6
Drove alone	332	54.6	301	49.5
Carpooled	98	16.1	43	7.1
In 2-person carpool	62	10.2	28	4.6
In 3-person carpool	23	3.8	15	2.5
In 4-or-more person carpool	13	2.1	0	0.0
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	6	1.0	4	0.7
Walked	53	8.7	192	31.6
Bicycle	0	0.0	0	0.0
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1	0.2	6	1.0
Worked at home	115	18.9	62	10.2

Source: US Census (2000 and 2010)

Table 2-8 re-emphasizes the rural/frontier character of Wheeler County in terms of the number of housing units in each community compared with the size of the community and the county in general. In 2010, there were 895 housing units in the county, which consists of nearly 1.1 million acres. The highest housing density in the county exists in Fossil at just over one housing unit for every two acres. Spray has a similar housing density to Fossil, but Mitchell consists of a larger area with fewer houses than Fossil or Spray.

Table 2-8: Housing Units Per Acre, 2010

Area	Housing Units	Area in Acres	Units/Acre
Fossil	265	505.6	0.5241
Spray	94	185.6	0.5065
Mitchell	83	806.4	0.1029
Unincorporated	453	1,096,102	0.0004
Wheeler County	895	1,097,600	0.0008

Source: US Census (2010)

In addition to considering the density of the population and housing units, the density of available personal vehicles provides an important measure of potential transportation needs or preferences. Table 2-9 presents the number households of various sizes by the number of vehicles available to the household. Wheeler County households are predominantly one- or two-person households. One-person households have a surprising number of vehicles available, as

over 52 percent have one vehicle and over 45 percent have more than one vehicle. Likewise, over 50 percent of two-person households have 2 vehicles and about 33 percent have more than 2 vehicles. On average, households in Wheeler County have about 2 vehicles available to them.

Table 2-9: Household Size by Vehicles Available, 2007-2011

Household Size	No vehicle	1 vehicle	2 vehicles	3 vehicles	4 or more vehicles
1-person household	4	118	71	28	3
2-person household	3	41	138	59	31
3-person household	2	7	20	11	5
4-or-more-person household	0	15	17	8	20
Total	9	181	246	106	59

Source: U.S. Census, 2007-2011 American Community Survey

As mentioned above, Wheeler County is considered rural/frontier due to a population density of less than 1 person per square mile. Considering the density of housing units, in addition to the population density and distance between communities in the county, it is not surprising that personal vehicles are preferred by over half of the population. It is also not surprising that many households have several vehicles to support their transportation needs. However, it is important to consider the age and income demographics in the county, as they provide context for the figures that show nearly half of the population either does not or cannot use a personal vehicle as a primary means of transportation. In addition, the trend of an aging demographic combined with an increasing number of seniors living below the poverty level is cause for concern that points to the importance of providing accessible and affordable transportation options throughout the county.

In the next twenty years, if demographic trends continue as they have during the previous ten years, Wheeler County will continue to experience population decreases. Table 2-10 shows a relatively constant rate of change between 2010 and 2030, with a total reduction of over 7.5 percent from the 2010 population.

Table 2-10: Population Forecast, Wheeler County 2010 - 2030

Year	Population	Population Change	Percent Change
2010	1,441		
2015	1,407	-34	-2.4
2020	1,378	-29	-2.1
2025	1,353	-25	-1.8
2030	1,332	-21	-1.6

Source: Forecasts of Oregon's County Populations and Components of Change, 2010 – 2050, Oregon Office of Economic Analysis. Release date: March 28, 2013

Summary of Findings from Wheeler County Profile

The key results and findings from the Wheeler County demographic analysis are listed here. This is not a comprehensive list of all results discussed above, but it highlights important information found in the analysis.

- Since 2000, Wheeler County has experienced population loss and by 2030, Wheeler County is projected to lose 7.5 percent of its 2010 population.
- Nearly 53 percent of the population lives in one of three population centers, with Fossil being the largest at 473 people. It is important to note that the three communities are an average of over 37 miles from one another.
- The majority of the population (54 percent) is over age 50. Those aged 70 and up constitute the largest demographic in the county at 20 percent of the population (283 people).
- Since 2000, those 18 to 24 years old decreased in number by over 60 percent. The population in age groups under age 45 experienced a decline, while the population 45 and over increased in the ten-year period.
- Over 37 percent of Wheeler County households reported an annual income of less than \$25,000.
- At \$33,403 the median income for Wheeler County households in 2010 was less than 72 percent of the statewide median income.
- In 2010, there were approximately 164 people, over 11 percent of the total population, below the poverty level in Wheeler County, compared with over 15 percent statewide.
- In 2010, nearly half of Wheeler County's population drove alone in a car, truck, or van as the primary means of transportation. Notably, over 31 percent of the population walked as their primary means of transportation.
- The highest housing density in the county exists in Fossil at just over one housing unit for every two acres.
- On average, households in Wheeler County have about 2 vehicles available to them.
- The trend of an aging demographic combined with an increasing number of seniors living below the poverty level points to the importance of providing accessible and affordable transportation options throughout the county.

Section III: General Population Survey Results

Wheeler County Community Transportation conducted a survey of the general public in Wheeler County in February 2013. WCCT mailed the survey to 927 Wheeler County residents, the majority of whom were on the registered voter list for the county at the time of the mailing. As stated in the Methodology section above, approximately 20 residents were added to the survey mailing list who were not on the registered voter list, but were known to WCCT to be frequent users of the current public transportation services. The survey was designed to help WCCT determine whether the existing transit system in Wheeler County should be expanded to serve the general public, beyond its current focus on seniors and individuals with disabilities, and if so, what type of public transportation services would best serve county residents.

This section contains the survey results that best indicate county residents' transportation needs, travel patterns, and preferences for transportation service characteristics. Results were analyzed in total and filtered by respondent community of residence, as well as by age of respondent. Survey results analyzed by respondent community of residence form the basis of trip demand by destination, an item used to prioritize potential trips to add to the general public demand-response system.

Respondent Characteristics

The survey provided an opportunity to assess the demographic characteristics of individuals in Wheeler County, which adds to the context of transportation needs and preferences for Wheeler County communities. Several respondents did not respond to the demographic survey questions, however, a majority of respondents did indicate their age group, sex, whether they have a physical or mental disability, and income level.

Table 3-1 shows the split between male and female respondents. Out of 199 respondents, 62.3 percent were female, while 37.7 percent were male. It is important to note, however, that the results regarding male and female respondents do not take into account surveys returned with both male and female options selected. It is possible that a single survey was returned that reflects the views of multiple members of a household, which could explain instances in which both options were selected.

Table 3-1: Sex of Respondents (N=199)

Sex	Overall Count	Overall %	Fossil %	Spray %	Mitchell %
Female	124	62.3%	70.2%	57.4%	55.3%
Male	75	37.7%	29.8%	42.6%	44.7%

Table 3-2 shows the age distribution of respondents overall and by community. Individuals aged 70 years and up made up the largest proportion of survey respondents at 44.5 percent overall. In Fossil and Mitchell, individuals who are eligible for senior transportation (60 years and up) made up 75 percent and 73 percent respectively. Meanwhile, Spray had the highest percentage of respondents under age 60 at nearly 39 percent.

Table 3-2: Age Distribution (N=236)

Age Group	Overall Count	Overall %	Fossil %	Spray %	Mitchell %
Under 18	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
18 - 24	6	2.5%	2.0%	1.4%	6.7%
25 - 29	3	1.3%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%
30 - 39	12	5.1%	4.9%	8.3%	0.0%
40 - 49	14	5.9%	5.9%	5.6%	6.7%
50 - 59	34	14.4%	8.8%	23.6%	13.3%
60 - 69	62	26.3%	28.4%	23.6%	33.3%
70 and up	105	44.5%	47.1%	37.5%	40.0%

The age distribution of respondents reflects, to some extent, Wheeler County's US Census statistics mentioned in Section II above. However, the proportion of older adults is substantially higher among respondents. One explanation for this is potentially greater awareness and use of existing transportation services among seniors compared to younger adults. The awareness and use of existing services by different age groups is dealt with later in this section.

Respondents indicated whether they have a physical or mental disability requiring transportation assistance. Out of 230 respondents, 39 (17%) indicated having a physical or mental disability requiring transportation assistance. Meanwhile, 45 respondents indicated needing a specific type of transportation assistance, including wheelchair lift access, door-to-door assistance, personal assistance or other. Table 3-3 shows that 40 percent of respondents that need assistance specifically need door-to-door assistance, while 31 percent need personal assistance such as help with medical or stability equipment or purchased goods, and nearly 9 percent need wheelchair lift access.

Table 3-3: Transportation Assistance (N=45)

Assistance Type	Count	%
Door-to-Door Assistance	18	40.0%
Personal Assistance	14	31.1%
Wheelchair Lift Access	4	8.9%
Other	14	31.1%

Table 3-4 depicts the income levels indicated by survey respondents. As mentioned above, there may have been some instances in which one survey was returned with the responses for multiple members of a household and while the question was asked to determine individual income levels, it is possible that some surveys were returned with household income indicated. Regardless, respondent income levels shown in Table 3-4 resemble census statistics listed in Section II above, as the majority of respondents and households were in the \$15,000 to \$74,999 range. However, over 17 percent of respondents indicated less than \$10,000 income, which compares to less than 11 percent of all households in Wheeler County.

Table 3-4: Income (N=190)

Income Group	Count	%
\$10,000 or less	33	17.4%
\$10,001 - \$14,999	27	14.2%
\$15,000 - \$24,999	38	20.0%
\$25,000 - \$34,999	41	21.6%
\$35,000 - \$49,999	18	9.5%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	21	11.1%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	7	3.7%
\$100,000 or more	5	2.6%

General Distribution of Respondents

Table 3-5 shows the distribution of the survey respondents by community in Wheeler County. Over 40 percent of the survey's respondents live in or nearest to Fossil, while just over 30 percent live in or near Spray. Nearly 20% of respondents live in the Mitchell area and the remaining 7.7% live in other areas within Wheeler County.

Table 3-5: Respondent's Community (N=272)

Community	Count	%
Fossil	113	41.5%
Spray	83	30.5%
Mitchell	55	20.2%
Richmond	6	2.2%
Twickenham	10	3.7%
Other	5	1.8%

Presence of Transportation Needs

Residents of Wheeler County overwhelmingly indicated that their own transportation needs and those of members of their household are being met. In fact, only 23 individuals, or 8.6 percent of respondents, indicated that their transportation needs or those of members of their household are not being met. Table 3-6 illustrates the proportion of respondents from each community who have transportation needs that are not being met. The community with the greatest percentage of respondents whose needs are not being met is Fossil (15.1%), while in Spray and Mitchell over 94 percent of respondents currently have their transportation needs met. In addition, respondents under age 60 indicated a similar level of needs met as respondents age 60 and over, with over 90 percent in each group showing their needs are currently being met.

Table 3-6: Are your transportation needs currently being met?

Needs Met (Y/N)	Overall Count	Overall %	Fossil %	Spray %	Mitchell %	< 60 yrs. %	60+ yrs. %
Yes	243	91.4%	84.9%	94.9%	94.4%	92.8%	90.4%
No	23	8.6%	15.1%	5.1%	5.6%	7.2%	9.6%
		N=266	N=106	N=79	N=54	N=69	N=157

When asked to specify needs that are not being met, several respondents mentioned needing transportation to medical appointments and/or shopping. Others noted lacking access to a personal vehicle, having income limitations or being unable to afford driving themselves. Additional needs for transportation stem from respondents who lack the ability or who find it difficult to travel during winter or for long distances.

Transportation Mode Use

Table 3-7 shows that nearly four out of five respondents drive alone in a car or truck as their primary means of transportation. Nearly one in three respondents ride a passenger in a car or truck, while over 13 percent primarily walk. Nearly one in five respondents indicated public transportation service as their primary mode of transportation and that number increased to over 28 percent among respondents age 60 and over. Notably, under 3 percent under age 60 primarily use public transportation, as nearly 90 percent in that age group drive alone. The drive alone figures among respondents correlates with the demographic findings in Section II showing that most households in Wheeler County have personal vehicles available. However, they diverge from the census data that shows only half of the population primarily drives alone.

Table 3-7: Transportation Mode Use (N=267)

Mode	Overall Count	Overall %	< 60 yrs. %	60+ yrs. %
Drive car/truck alone	212	79.4%	89.7%	72.0%
Ride as a passenger in a car/truck	84	31.5%	35.3%	32.3%
Park and ride in a carpool	3	1.1%	2.9%	0.0%
Bike	8	3.0%	7.4%	1.8%
Walk	36	13.5%	22.1%	11.6%
Bus/van public transportation service	51	19.1%	2.9%	28.7%
Company/fleet vehicle	4	1.5%	2.9%	0.6%
Other, please specify:	12	4.5%	2.9%	5.5%
		N=267	N=68	N=164

Respondents that drive personal vehicles indicated their monthly transportation expenditures, as shown in Table 3-8. On average, respondents spend about \$632 each month on car payments, maintenance, gas and oil, and insurance. If monthly estimates hold true throughout the year, respondents could be spending an average of \$7,584 annually, or about 23 percent of Wheeler County's median household income.

Table 3-8: Transportation Expenditures per Month

Expense	Overall Average
Gas and Oil	\$159.18
Car Maintenance	\$54.99
Car Payment	\$321.02
Insurance	\$96.80
Total	\$631.99

N=168

Trip Destinations and Purposes

Information regarding trip destinations, trip purposes, and the demand for public transportation to serve trips to particular destinations among survey respondents, forms the trip demand research that supports the needs assessment and informs the recommended additions to general public demand response service for Wheeler County residents. Table 3-9 lists the number of respondents who travel to several destinations for a variety of reasons, including work, shopping, medical, banking, special events, social, and other.

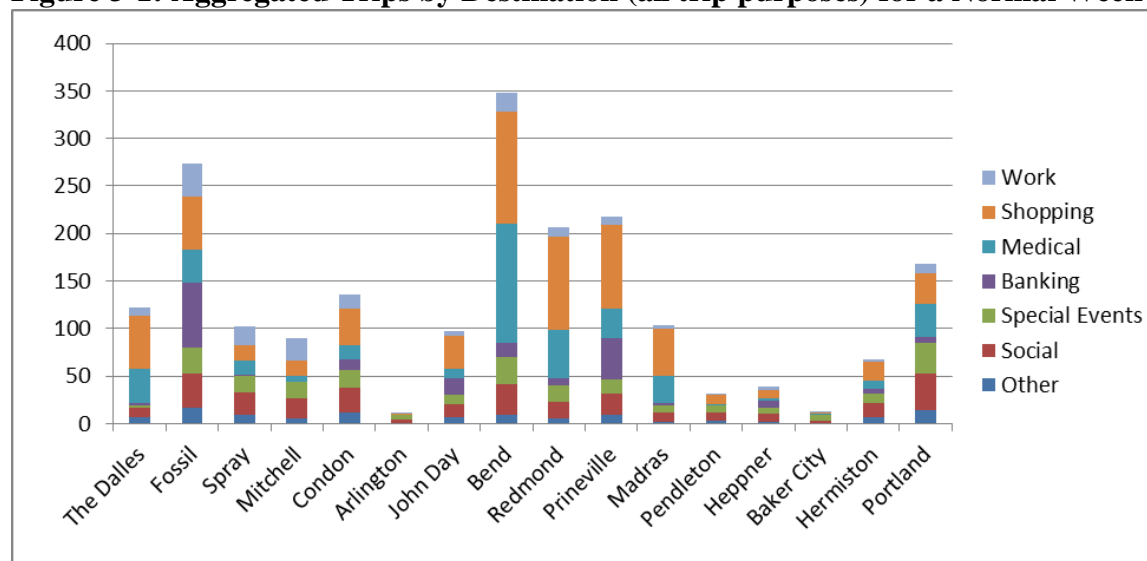
Table 3-9: Destinations to which Respondents Travel in a Normal Week

Destination	Work	Shopping	Medical	Banking	Special Events	Misc. Errands or Social	Other	Resp. Count
The Dalles	8	57	35	3	3	9	7	77
Fossil	35	56	35	68	28	36	16	114
Spray	20	16	15	1	17	24	9	59
Mitchell	24	16	6	0	18	20	6	48
Condon	15	39	15	11	18	27	11	72
Arlington	1	1	0	0	5	3	1	9
John Day	5	34	10	18	10	13	7	51
Bend	20	118	125	15	28	33	9	158
Redmond	9	98	51	8	17	18	5	115
Prineville	9	88	31	44	15	22	9	105
Madras	4	50	29	2	7	10	2	66
Pendleton	2	10	1	0	7	9	3	21
Heppner	4	9	2	8	6	8	2	27
Baker City	1	1	1	0	6	2	1	12
Hermiston	2	20	8	6	10	14	7	34
Portland	10	32	35	6	32	39	14	68

N=248

Destinations showing the highest demand, in terms of the number of trips for a specific purpose among survey respondents in a normal week, include Bend and Redmond for medical and shopping purposes, Fossil for banking and shopping purposes, and The Dalles and Madras for medical purposes. Aggregated trip count results, as shown in Figure 3-1, which considers trips to a destination for each purpose as a separate trip, indicate Bend as the destination with the highest number of regular trips made by respondents (nearly 350 trips), followed by Fossil, Prineville, Redmond, and Portland. Likewise, nearly 64 percent of respondents listed Bend as a destination for a normal travel week, followed by Redmond and Fossil at 46 percent of respondents, and Prineville at 42 percent.

Figure 3-1: Aggregated Trips by Destination (all trip purposes) for a Normal Week



N=248

Destinations to which Respondents Would Use Public Transportation

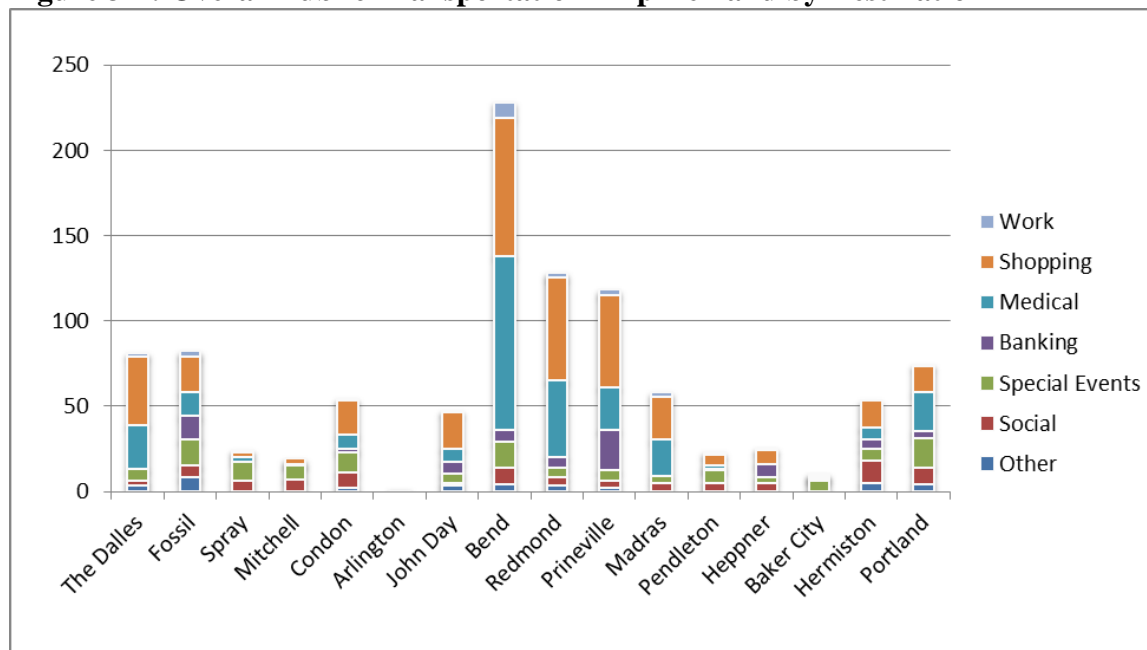
Table 3-10 shows the destinations, by specific purposes, to which survey respondents would use public transportation. These results provide a comparison to the responses above indicating general travel behavior among respondents. Destinations to which respondents indicated the highest demand for public transportation include Bend, particularly for medical and shopping purposes, Redmond and Prineville for shopping purposes, and to a lesser extent The Dalles for shopping and medical purposes. Bend had the highest number of respondents indicating demand for public transportation, considering all trip purposes, at 72 percent. Additionally, 47 percent would use public transportation to Redmond, 41 percent to Prineville, and just under 33 percent to The Dalles. Aggregated trip totals by destination, shown in Figure 3-2 below, indicate that public transportation to Bend would serve the greatest trip demand of any destination, again followed by service to Redmond and Prineville. Both Figures 3-1 above and 3-2 below indicate low to mid-level demand to out of county destinations like Portland and The Dalles. Respondents noted Fossil as the destination in Wheeler County with the highest trip demand (274 total trip count), and although it had an overall low to mid-level demand for public transportation, it did have the highest demand as a destination for public transportation within the county.

Table 3-10: Destinations to which Respondents Would Use Public Transportation (N=162)

Destination	Work	Shopping	Medical	Banking	Special Events	Misc. Errands or Social	Other	Resp. Count
The Dalles	2	40	26	0	7	3	3	53
Fossil	3	21	14	14	15	7	8	37
Spray	1	3	3	0	11	5	1	21
Mitchell	0	3	1	0	8	7	0	12
Condon	1	20	8	2	12	9	2	31
Arlington	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
John Day	1	21	8	7	5	2	3	27
Bend	9	81	102	7	15	10	4	117
Redmond	3	60	45	6	6	5	3	76
Prineville	3	54	25	24	6	4	2	66
Madras	3	25	21	0	4	5	0	39
Pendleton	2	6	2	1	7	4	1	17
Heppner	1	8	0	8	3	4	1	13
Baker City	1	1	1	1	5	1	0	6
Hermiston	0	16	7	5	7	13	5	21
Portland	1	15	23	4	17	10	4	32

N=162

Figure 3-2: Overall Public Transportation Trip Demand by Destination



N=162

Respondents were also asked to specify up to three locations to which they need transportation frequently. The results provide a basis for potential future stops along public transportation routes or runs that could serve commonly expressed needs among survey respondents. Table 3-11 shows the most common destinations listed by respondents. Medical-related offices, dentists or hospitals in Bend were the most common with 66 responses. St. Charles Hospital in Bend was specifically noted by 11 additional respondents. Walmart in Redmond, Costco in Bend, and to a lesser extent medical offices in Prineville, The Dalles, and Madras were also common destinations for respondents.

Table 3-11: Landmarks to which Respondents Need Transportation Frequently

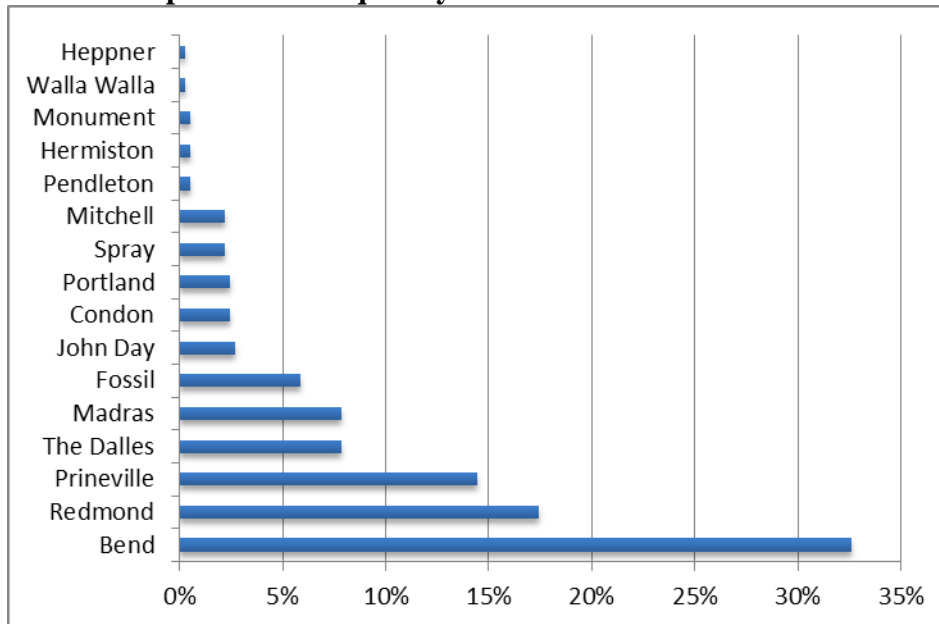
Most listed landmarks	City	Count
Medical (hospital, doctors offices, dentists)	Bend	66
Walmart	Redmond	37
Costco	Bend	22
Medical (hospital, doctors offices, dentists)	Prineville	17
Medical (hospital, doctors offices, dentists)	The Dalles	13
Medical (hospital, doctors offices, dentists)	Madras	13
Bank	Prineville	12
St. Charles Hospital	Bend	11
Medical (hospital, doctors offices, dentists)	Redmond	11
Bi-Mart	Prineville	9
Bi-Mart	Madras	9
Grocery Store	Prineville	8
Bank	Fossil	7
Safeway	Madras	7
VA	Bend	6
The Center	Bend	6
Shopping (general)	Redmond	6
Shopping (general)	Bend	6
Safeway	Other	5
Fred Meyer	Redmond	5
Bi-Mart	Other	4
Food Pantry	Fossil	4
Cash & Carry	Bend	4
Mercantile	Fossil	4
Shopping (general)	Prineville	4
VA	Portland	3
Costco	Other	3
Senior Mealsite	Condon	3
Spray General Store	Spray	3
Grocery Outlet	Prineville	3

N=164

Of respondents who listed specific landmarks within destination cities as places to which they frequently need transportation, a third indicated a need to travel to Bend, followed by 17 percent

to Redmond, 14 percent to Prineville, and 8 percent to The Dalles and Madras (see Figure 3-3 below).

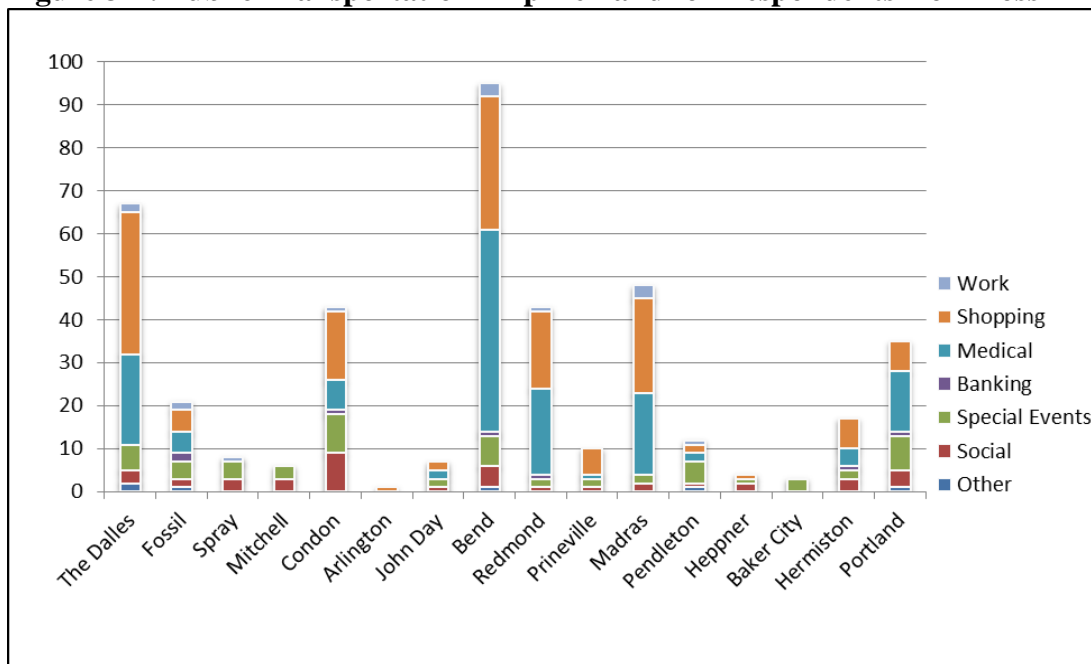
Figure 3-3: Summary of Cities with Specific Landmark Destinations to which Respondents Need Transportation Frequently



N=164

The overall trip demand and destination results help to determine the travel needs among respondents and the general market potential for public transportation. However, while understanding demand to various destinations is helpful, it is important to identify demand from specific trip origins in order to determine appropriate trip pairs that enable public transportation to serve demand. Figures 3-4 through 3-6 illustrate the aggregate trip demand by destination to which respondents would use public transportation, with specific focus on respondents living in or near Fossil, Spray, or Mitchell respectively. Respondents in Fossil indicated high trip demand for public transportation to Bend, intermediate demand to The Dalles, and moderate demand to Madras, Condon, and Redmond (see Figure 3-4 below). In addition, of the 71 respondents from Fossil indicating demand for public transportation, 72 percent would use public transportation to Bend, 59 percent would use it to travel to The Dalles, and 46 percent would use it to travel to Madras.

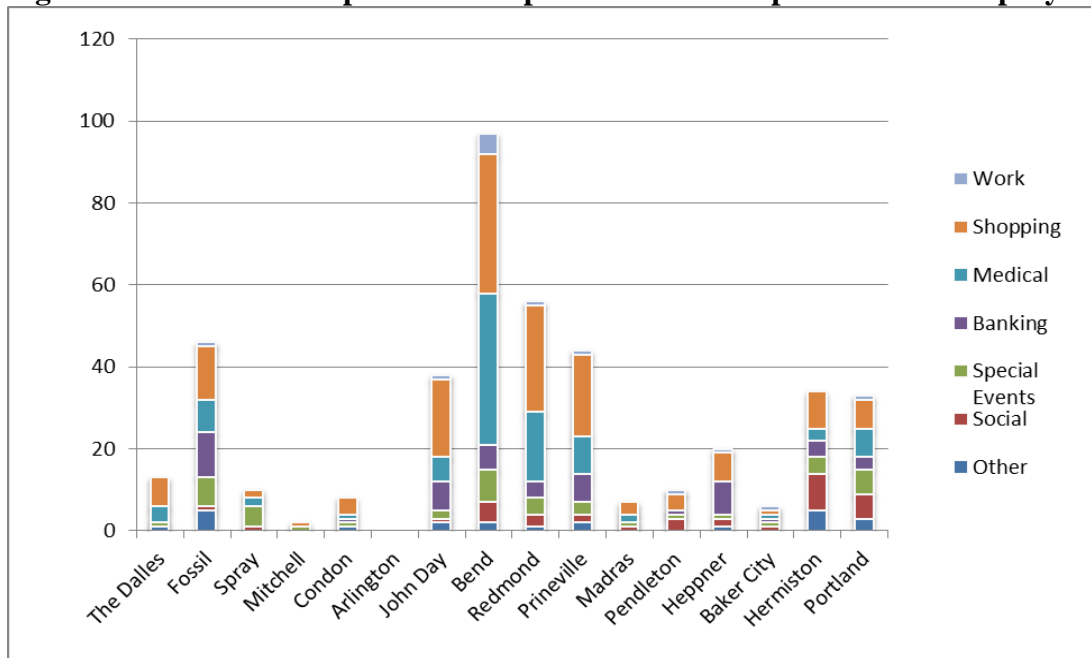
Figure 3-4: Public Transportation Trip Demand for Respondents from Fossil



(N=71)

Respondents in Spray also indicated high demand for public transportation to Bend, intermediate demand to Redmond, and moderate demand to Prineville and Fossil (see Figure 3-5 below). Of the 51 respondents from Spray, 82 percent indicated demand for public transportation to Bend, 61 percent indicated demand to Redmond, and 45 percent indicated demand to Prineville.

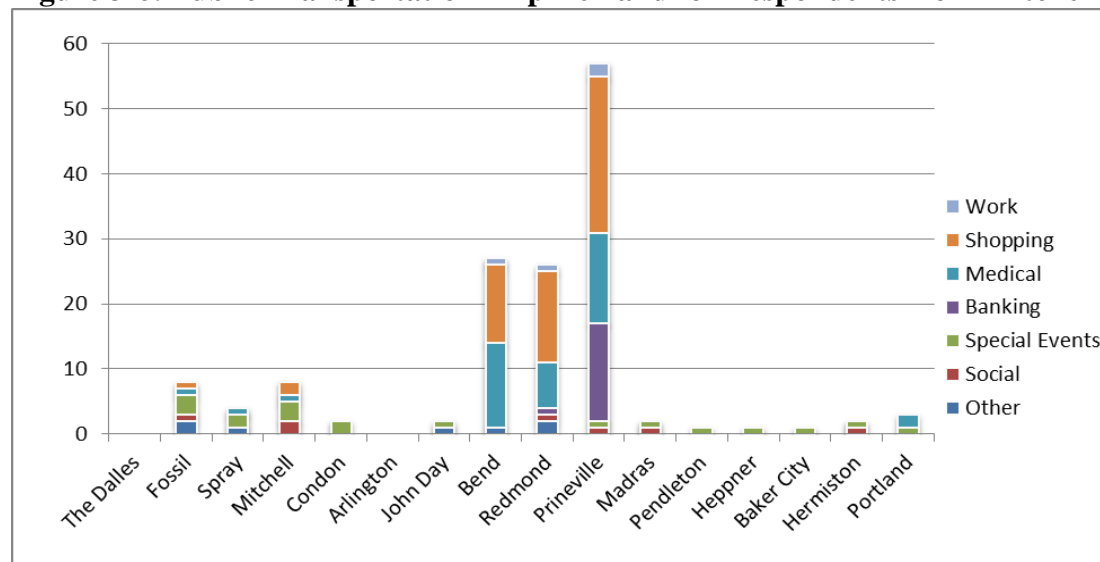
Figure 3-5: Public Transportation Trip Demand for Respondents from Spray



(N=51)

Respondents in Mitchell indicated high demand for public transportation to Prineville and moderate demand to Bend and Redmond (see Figure 3-6 below). In addition, of the 31 respondents from Mitchell, 94 percent indicated demand for public transportation to Prineville, 58 percent indicated demand to Bend, and 52 percent indicated demand to Redmond.

Figure 3-6: Public Transportation Trip Demand for Respondents from Mitchell

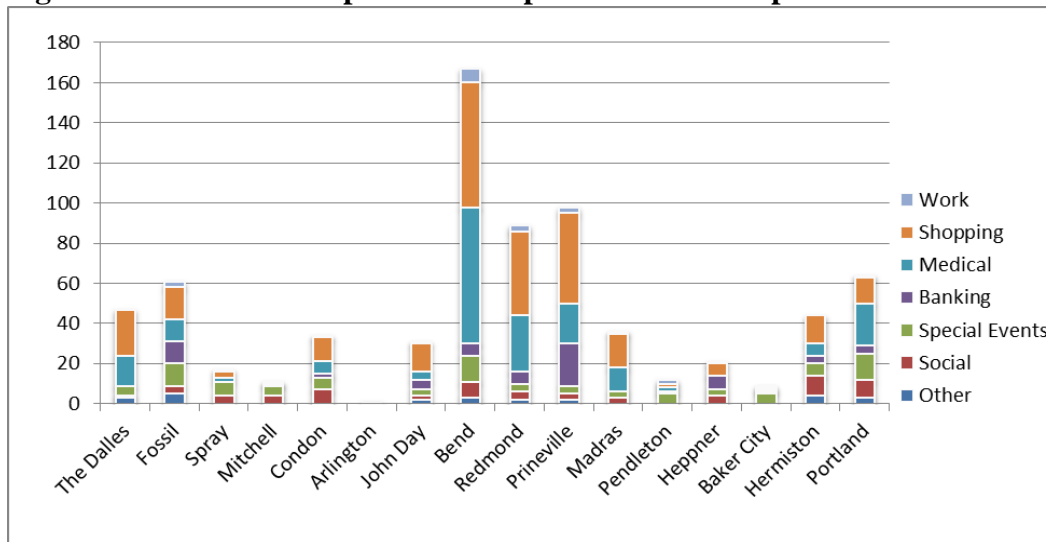


(N=31)

Further analysis of demand for public transportation by destination and trip type focused on respondents who indicated their primary means of transportation was driving alone. Those who drive alone, while perhaps not the most likely to use public transportation frequently right now, make up a significant portion of the ridership potential for public transportation. Current drivers may have increased demand for transportation options in the future for several reasons: drivers may lose access to a vehicle, driver's license, or insurance; income constraints combined with the costs of owning a vehicle and driving alone; and the combination of advanced age, inclement weather, and trip distance may make driving alone an untenable option. As discussed in Section VII, communication to current drivers and outreach of public transportation options that serve current drivers' trip needs could ease the transition for aging adults and encourage current driver use of public transportation when they are not able to drive themselves in the future.

Respondents who primarily drive alone indicated high demand for public transportation to Bend, both in terms of aggregated trip counts (167 trips) and the proportion of respondents indicating demand (72 percent). Prineville and Redmond received similar indications of demand at 45 percent (98 trips) and 46 percent (89 trips) of respondents respectively.

Figure 3-7: Public Transportation Trip Demand for Respondents who Drive Alone



N=115

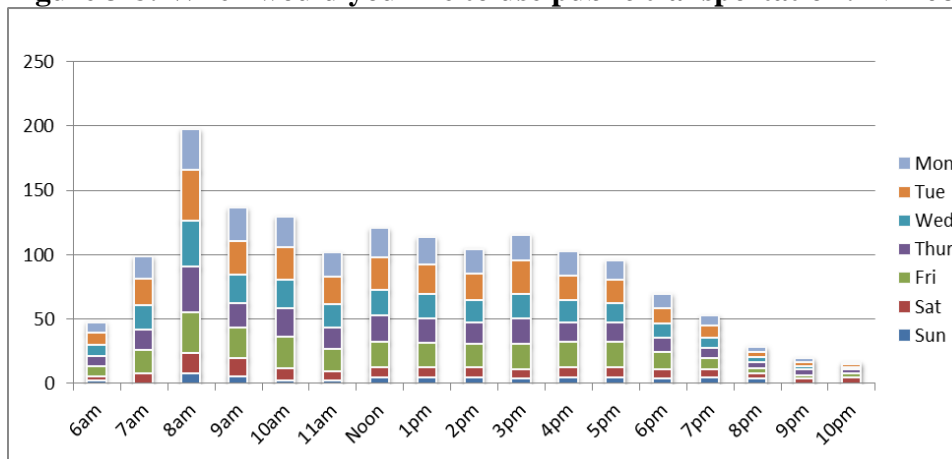
In summary, survey responses primarily indicate trip demand for public transportation from Wheeler County to Bend, Redmond, and Prineville. Trip pairs from each community in Wheeler County with significant demand among respondents include the following:

- Fossil to Bend, Fossil to The Dalles, and Fossil to Madras
- Spray to Bend, Spray to Redmond, Spray to Fossil, and Spray to Prineville
- Mitchell to Prineville, Mitchell to Bend, and Mitchell to Redmond

Time of Day Respondents Would Use Public Transportation

Figure 3-8 shows the time of day and days of the week respondents would use public transportation services, if available. Respondents indicated an overall preference for weekdays, with morning service preferred between 7:00 - 10:00 AM and the greatest demand (57 percent) at 8:00 AM. Demand for service between noon and 5:00 PM was near 25 percent of respondents.

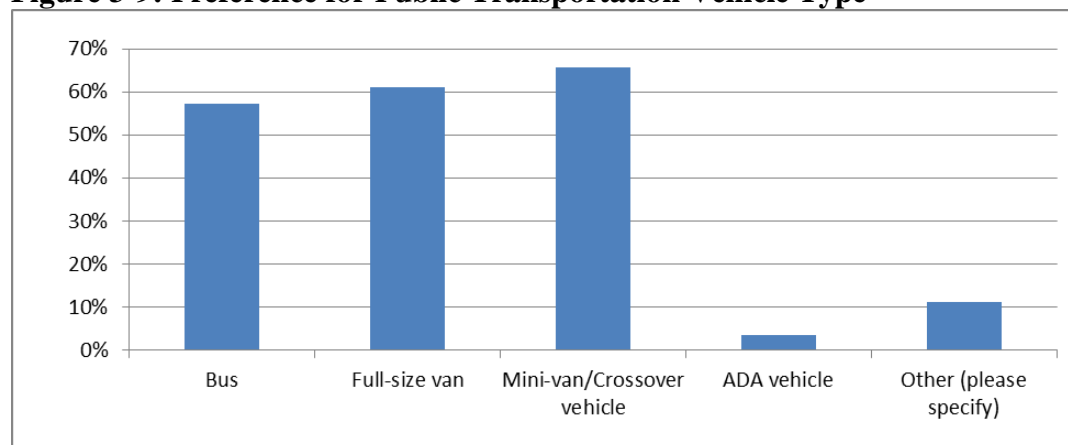
Figure 3-8: When would you like to use public transportation? N=108



Public Transportation Vehicle Preference

Respondents were asked about their preference regarding public transportation vehicles. Figure 3-9 shows that a majority of respondents (nearly 66 percent) would prefer to ride a mini-van or crossover vehicle, which could readily operate in year-round conditions. Similar majorities were shown for the use of full-size vans and buses. In addition, ADA vehicles were preferred by seven respondents.

Figure 3-9: Preference for Public Transportation Vehicle Type



N=198

Respondent Preference to Access Transportation Services

The current public transportation service in Wheeler County is accessible for riders that schedule their trip ahead of time. Considering additional services for the general public, it is important to understand preferences for how to access transportation services. Respondents were asked their preference between (1) catching a bus at a stop, which would support a focus on more fixed-route service, (2) calling ahead to schedule their trip, which would support similar service to what is offered now, or (3) an “Other” option. Table 3-12 shows that over two-thirds of respondents prefer to call ahead for a ride and less than 20 percent prefer to catch a bus at stop. Several respondents selected “Other” who did not have a preference, have their own vehicle for transportation, or do not prefer any of the options. Relatively more respondents age 60 and over prefer to call ahead to schedule their trip, but a majority of respondents under age 60 also prefer that method to access transportation.

Table 3-12: How would you or members of your household prefer to get a ride?

Preferred Access	Overall	< 60 yrs. %	60+ yrs. %
Catch a bus at a stop	19.6%	22.2%	18.2%
Call ahead for a ride	67.4%	60.0%	70.5%
Other	13.0%	17.8%	11.4%
	N=184	N=45	N=132

Further considering the possibility of instituting designated pick-up locations for public transportation service, respondents indicated how far they would walk to catch a bus. Table 3-13 shows that nearly 30 percent of respondents are unable to walk to a bus stop, which further supports the existing demand-response service model. Nearly 37 percent indicated they would not walk more than three blocks and the remaining 33 percent would be willing to walk more than three blocks to catch a bus. Considering responses age group, nearly 66 percent of those under age 60 and 52 percent of those aged 60 and over would not walk more than six blocks. However, those under age 60 were five times more likely to walk up to a mile than those aged 60 and over.

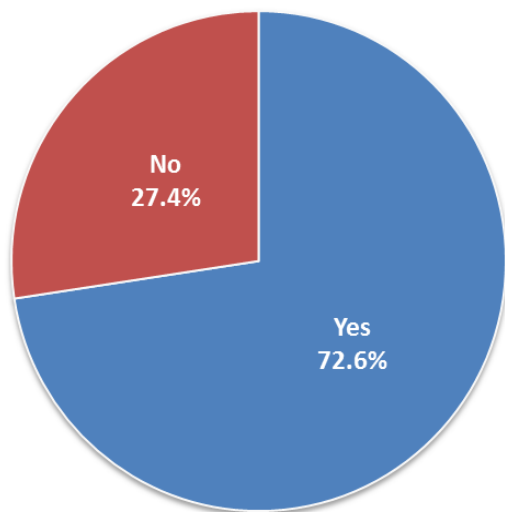
Table 3-13: How far would you be willing to walk to a bus stop?

Walking Distance to Bus Stop	Overall	< 60 yrs. %	60+ yrs. %
1 block	17.1%	6.9%	19.0%
2 to 3 blocks	19.7%	31.1%	16.7%
4 to 6 blocks	18.8%	27.6%	16.7%
One-half mile	6.0%	6.9%	6.0%
Up to 1 mile	8.5%	20.7%	4.8%
I am unable to walk to a bus stop	29.9%	6.9%	36.9%
	N=117	N=29	N=84

Public Awareness of WCCT Open Seat Policy

Wheeler County Community Transportation primarily serves older adults and individuals with disabilities. However, the general public can ride if there is an open seat available on an existing WCCT trip. Respondents were asked about their awareness of the open seat policy. Figure 3-10 shows that nearly 73 percent of respondents are aware of the policy.

Figure 3-10: Overall Awareness of WCCT Open Seat Policy



N=263

Table 3-14 shows the difference in awareness of the open seat policy by age group. While respondents under age 60 were split nearly in half between those who are aware and those unaware of the policy, four out of five respondents aged 60 and over are aware of the policy. This indicates a need for greater outreach towards all ages throughout the county to encourage their use of open seats on existing trips.

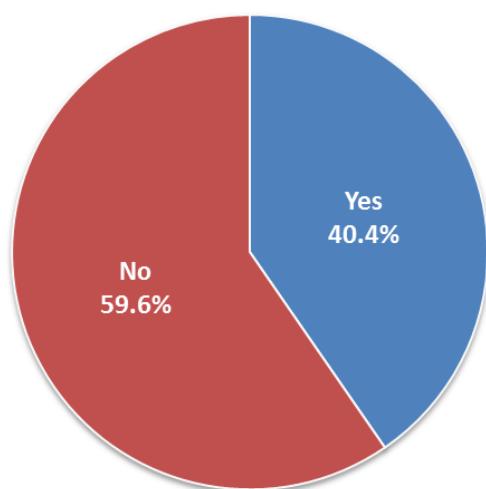
Table 3-14: Awareness of WCCT open seat policy by age group

Aware of Open Seat Policy	Overall %	< 60 yrs. %	60+ yrs. %
Yes	72.6%	50.7%	80.5%
No	27.4%	49.3%	19.5%
	N=263	N=69	N=164

Use of Existing Public Transportation Services

Respondents were asked if they or members of their household use the existing transportation services offered by Wheeler County, as well as the frequency of use. Figure 3-11 shows that just over 40 percent of respondents use existing services, while nearly 60 percent do not. Table 3-15 shows about 51 percent of respondents aged 60 and over currently use existing services compared to 19 percent of respondents under age 60.

Figure 3-11: Use of Existing Public Transportation Services in Wheeler County



N=260

Table 3-15: Use of Existing Public Transportation Services in Wheeler County by Age

Use Existing Services	Overall %	< 60 yrs. %	60+ yrs. %
Yes	40.4%	19.1%	50.9%
No	59.6%	80.9%	49.1%
	N=260	N=68	N=161

Respondents who do currently use existing transportation services indicated the frequency of their use. Table 3-16 shows that respondents primarily use existing services once a month or less frequently. Several respondents indicated using existing transportation services between once or twice a year, once every two or three months, or simply as needed.

Table 3-16: How often do you ride the bus for general public transportation?

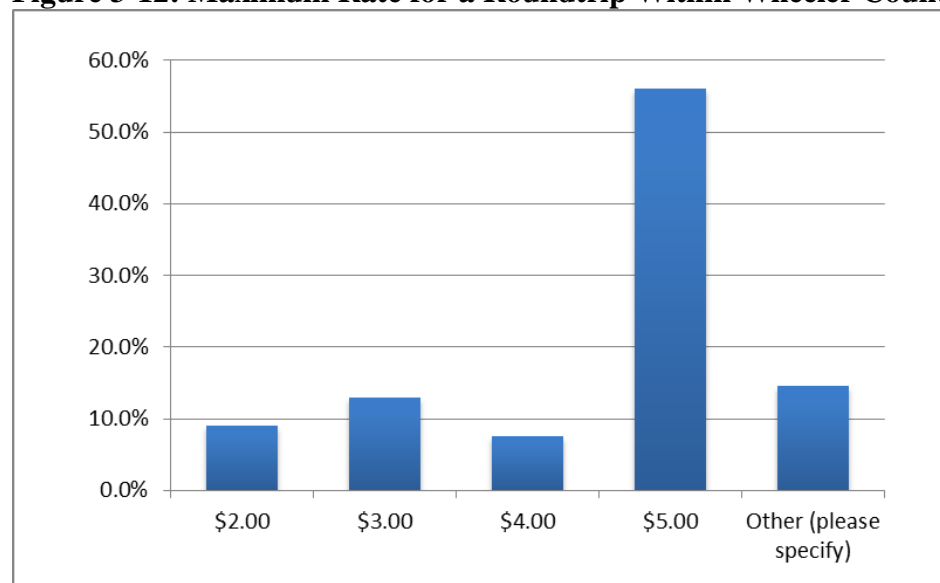
Frequency of Public Transit Use	Overall	< 60 yrs.	60+ yrs.	Fossil	Spray	Mitchell
Once a month	50	3	43	23	15	9
Once a week	8	0	7	6	2	0
Twice a week	1	0	0	1	0	0
Once a day	0	0	0	0	0	0
Multiple times a day	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other	55	15	35	28	18	4

N=114

Public Transportation Fare Preference

An important characteristic of any public transportation service is the cost to ride. Respondents were asked to indicate the maximum rate they would pay for a roundtrip using public transportation for destinations both within and beyond Wheeler County. Figure 3-12 shows that a majority of respondents would be willing to pay a \$5.00 fare for roundtrips within Wheeler County.

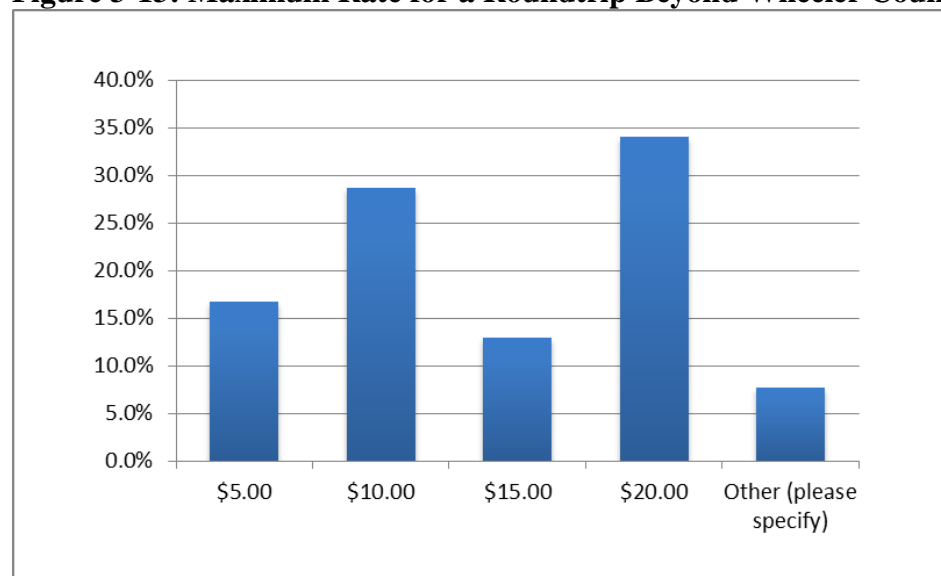
Figure 3-12: Maximum Rate for a Roundtrip Within Wheeler County



N=200

Figure 3-13 shows that 34 percent of respondents would be willing to pay \$20.00 for a roundtrip travelling out of Wheeler County. In fact, over 75 percent would pay \$10.00 or more for roundtrips to destinations outside Wheeler County. Considering the existing donation-based transportation fares system in Wheeler County, the survey results indicate a potential fare structure for future services, which could remain donation-based. Based on respondents' preferences, WCCT could consider setting fares at \$5.00 per roundtrip for in-county trips and \$10.00 or more per roundtrip for inter-county trips.

Figure 3-13: Maximum Rate for a Roundtrip Beyond Wheeler County



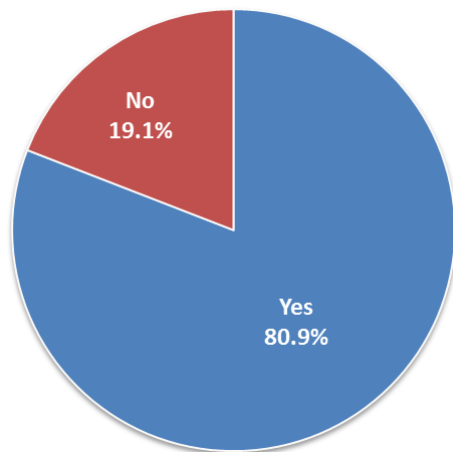
N=209

Public Awareness of Volunteer Drivers

The survey provided an opportunity to assess the level of awareness that WCCT services are operated by volunteer drivers, as well as the interest among the county population in volunteering as drivers for existing transportation service or future services. Wheeler County currently depends on the participation of twenty-seven volunteers to service the demand for trips throughout the county. However, only a portion of the volunteers have the capacity to service trips to destinations out of the county or have flexible schedules to serve demand each weekday. Thus, volunteer recruitment will continue to be crucial to the operations of WCCT, especially considering the needs in each community.

Figure 3-14 shows that 81 percent of respondents were aware that all drivers for WCCT are volunteers, compared with just 19 percent that were not aware. Ten survey respondents indicated an interest in volunteering with Wheeler County Community Transportation, which was four percent of those that responded to the question. Extrapolated against the Wheeler County population, the market for potential volunteers could be as many as fifty-seven people.

Figure 3-14: Awareness that all WCCT drivers are volunteers



N=257

Obstacles to Using Public Transportation

Respondents were asked to list the primary obstacle to themselves or members of their household using public transportation services in Wheeler County. Table 3-17 depicts the count and percentage for each category of obstacles perceived by respondents. Of the 138 responses, 18 percent dealt with issues of convenience or lack thereof with regards to using public transportation. The main convenience issues included having to wait for others and needing to go to multiple destinations during a single outing. The next most common response was from respondents without an obstacle (17 percent). Additional obstacles that were frequently mentioned include not needing public transportation due to access to a personal vehicle or not traveling much; lack of availability of public transportation or inability for potential riders to connect with scheduler or drivers at the time transportation is needed; time or duration of trips; and distance, particularly between respondents' residences and pickup locations.

Table 3-17: Obstacles to Respondents' Use of Public Transportation

Obstacle	Count	% of Total	Obstacle	Count	% of Total
Convenience	25	18%	Access	4	3%
None	24	17%	Health	4	3%
Need	19	14%	Age	3	2%
Availability	15	11%	Lack of Interest	3	2%
Time	14	10%	Limited Income	3	2%
Distance	13	9%	Children	2	1%
Other	13	9%	Work Schedule	2	1%
Need to transport goods/equipment	5	4%	Transit connections	1	1%
Unaware of service	4	3%	Overcrowding	1	1%
Combined trips	4	3%	Need vehicle for work	1	1%

N=138

General Comments

Several survey respondents provided additional comments about transportation needs and issues in Wheeler County. Table 3-18 lists the categories of comments and shows that over a third of respondents commented with appreciation for the existing services provided by WCCT, while 16 percent commented on trip or scheduling issues, and 11 percent indicated that they do not currently use transportation services, but might in the future. Likewise, 9 percent noted that transit is important to residents of Wheeler County and provides necessary access to services and amenities, while 6 percent indicated they would not use WCCT services, and one respondent mentioned being unable to use the service.

Table 3-18: Additional Comments

Comment Type	Count	% of Total
Thanks to WCCT/Appreciation for bus	32	34%
Trips and Scheduling issues	15	16%
Not using now, but might in the future	10	11%
No Comment	9	9%
Transit is important and provides necessary access	9	9%
Not going to use transit	6	6%
Other	6	6%
Need Help	3	3%
Fares	2	2%
Marketing and outreach	2	2%
Unable to use transit	1	1%

N=95

One respondent included an important note related to marketing public transportation services in Wheeler County:

“Please let me know what is available via mailing local notices, relevant newspapers, w/times + cost and any baggage limitations as it becomes available. I usually consolidate my trips needs and can spend hours at a given destination before return. I hope to be able to go on living in Wheeler County into my old age.”

Marketing and outreach will play a critical role in raising awareness and understanding about the transportation services available in the county. Some comments, such as the following, indicate a misunderstanding about who can ride existing services and for what purpose:

“There are some now riding vans for personal medical trips who are perfectly able to drive and can afford it. I don't approve of that abuse of the system.”

Another respondent offered a suggestion regarding fares for trips:

“Qualifying seniors & disabled individuals should be required to pay a small fee, i.e., \$2.00. All non-qualifying general public should be required to pay a minimum of \$5.00 to

\$10.00 in Wheeler County; outside county the required fee should be \$20.00 to \$50.00 depending on distance and type of trip.”

Respondents reiterated obstacles to their use of existing public transportation services:

“The need for trips varies a lot. Trips are too long and we tire long before the trip ends.”

“Unfortunately, I live in too remote of an area for public transport”

Lastly, the several comments indicated the value many respondents have for existing transportation services in the county and the desire to see such services continue in the future:

“I feel the program is of great benefit for many people even though at this time with my work schedule it will not help me - perhaps in the future”

“I think public transportation is a great asset to the elderly and those that do not have vehicles”

“...if we did not have the senior transportation we could not have our medical needs taken care of.”

Summary of Key Survey Findings

The key results and findings from the Wheeler County Needs Assessment Survey are listed here. While this is not a comprehensive list of all results discussed above, it is intended to highlight important information found in the survey results.

- Individuals aged 70 years and up made up the largest proportion of survey respondents at 44.5 percent overall.
- Out of 230 respondents, 17 percent indicated having a physical or mental disability requiring transportation assistance.
- Less than 9 percent of respondents indicated that their transportation needs or those of members of their household are not being met.
- Nearly four out of five respondents drive alone in a car or truck as their primary means of transportation.
- On average, respondents spend about \$632 each month on car payments, maintenance, gas and oil, and insurance.
- Destinations showing the highest demand, in terms of the number of trips for a specific purpose among survey respondents in a normal week, include Bend and Redmond for medical and shopping purposes, Fossil for banking and shopping purposes, and The Dalles and Madras for medical purposes.
- Bend was the destination to which the highest number of respondents indicated demand for public transportation, considering all trip purposes, at 72 percent.

- Forty-seven percent of respondents indicated demand for public transportation to Redmond, 41 percent to Prineville, and nearly 33 percent to The Dalles.
- Survey responses primarily indicate trip demand for public transportation from Wheeler County to Bend, Redmond, and Prineville. Trip pairs from each community in Wheeler County with significant demand among respondents include:
 - Fossil to Bend, Fossil to The Dalles, and Fossil to Madras
 - Spray to Bend, Spray to Redmond, Spray to Fossil, and Spray to Prineville
 - Mitchell to Prineville, Mitchell to Bend, and Mitchell to Redmond
- Respondents indicated an overall preference for weekdays, with morning service preferred between 7:00 - 10:00 AM and the greatest demand (57 percent) at 8:00 AM.
- Over two-thirds of respondents prefer to call ahead for a ride and less than 20 percent prefer to catch a bus at a stop.
- Nearly 30 percent of respondents are unable to walk to a bus stop, which further supports the existing demand-response service model. However, those under age 60 were five times more likely to walk up to a mile to a bus stop than those aged 60 and over.
- Respondents under age 60 were split nearly in half between those who are aware and those unaware of WCCT's open seat policy. Four out of five respondents aged 60 and over are aware of the policy. This indicates a need for greater outreach towards all ages throughout the county to encourage their use of open seats on existing trips.
- Over 40 percent of respondents use existing services, while nearly 60 percent do not.
- Respondents primarily use existing services once a month or less.
- A majority of respondents would be willing to pay \$5.00 fare for roundtrips within Wheeler County, while over 75 percent would pay \$10.00 or more for roundtrips to destinations outside Wheeler County.
- Obstacles to use of public transportation mentioned by respondents include issues of convenience, lack of need, availability of services, and the time or duration of trips to high-demand destinations.

Section IV: Summary of Agency Interviews

Introduction

Interviews were conducted to gather the perspective of organizations and service providers with clients in Wheeler County regarding their clients' transportation needs and the type of public transportation services to best serve them. The following provides a summary of the interviewees' responses to the questions posed during each interview.

Agency Information

WCCT and MCEDD staff selected several agencies that serve various segments of the Wheeler County population, including seniors, medical patients, young families (parents and children), students, workers and job-seekers, individuals with disabilities, mental health clients, individuals with alcohol or drug addiction, unemployed or under-employed individuals, and veterans.

Interviewees include one or more individuals from the following organizations:

- Asher Community Medical Clinic
- Haven House Retirement Community
- Fossil School District – Superintendent
- Mitchell School District – Superintendent
- Department of Human Services – Child Welfare and Family Services
- Department of Human Services – Self-Sufficiency Services
- Mid-Columbia Council of Governments – Workforce Development
- Community Counseling Solutions
- Veterans Services Officer for Wheeler County
- Wheeler County Commission on Children and Families

Transportation Needs

Interview participants indicated their clients' current transportation needs and issues. Overall, participants noted access to services and appointments as the top transportation need, while highlighting several types of services their clients need access to, such as medical services for children and seniors, drug and alcohol treatment, and grocery shopping. One agency indicated that hospital patients often have no way to get home unless a friend or relative can serve the trip. Participants mentioned common barriers to client access of services, such as distance and travel time, lack of a private vehicle, lack of current driver's license, and lack of awareness of the existing public transit service and how to access it. An agency also expressed the perception that it is difficult to match clients' appointment schedules with the existing bus schedule and offered that a system with paid drivers, instead of volunteers, on a set schedule may provide a reliable service of which clients might make better use. Another organization, which works closely with Wheeler County Community Transportation indicated that all of their clients' needs are currently being met. The needs and issues identified by each agency interviewed are listed below:

- Clients need access to services in The Dalles. The distance between Wheeler County and The Dalles presents an obstacle to accessing services, appointments, and amenities. The cost of

travel to The Dalles and access to reliable vehicles for clients also presents a barrier. Since Mid-Columbia Council of Governments closed the workforce development office in Wheeler County, they have not had many clients utilize their services from Wheeler County.

- Parents with children need transportation to medical services out of county. Access to medical services is the top need, especially for adults with small children, as the nearest hospital is 70 miles away.
- In Mitchell, most people get to town (Prineville) 45 miles each way and go there for shopping and medical trips. One student takes the Grant County People Mover on Fridays to Prineville and one school board member takes people to Prineville once a month.
- Parents and kids need to get to services in another town from where they live, such as mental health services in Fossil for residents of Spray or Mitchell. Most clients do not have their own transportation. Many clients need access to Alcoholics Anonymous groups or treatment. Sometimes clients need transportation to Boardman or Heppner to access Community Counseling Solutions offices, but the frequency of need depends on the client. Case workers make lengthy trips to transport clients when no other option is available.
- Clients struggle to get to necessary medical appointments despite opportunities for DHS reimbursement for mileage to medical trips (often need to make trips to Bend, Redmond, The Dalles, and Portland). The top issue facing clients is access to affordable food or grocery stores.
- Medical appointments in Bend are 3 hours away and combined trips can be up to 14 hours for seniors. Also, getting home from the hospital is a need if family members or others cannot drive them.
- Individuals with disabilities may lack awareness of the services that are available and how to access those services. Parents of students may not always have the means to provide transportation for their children to get to medical or other appointments.
- Clients lack money or a personal vehicle to get to treatment. Alcohol and drug clients who have lost their license have no way to get themselves to treatment services.
- Availability of reliable services relative to the time services are needed/requested is a need for clients. Due to the nature of services provided by volunteer drivers and trips that may be delayed by weather and road conditions, current public transportation does not always match up well for clients. Clients need reliable service that may be provided by having paid drivers on more of a set schedule or on-call to serve transportation needs. In addition, clients need access to veteran/medical services closer to Wheeler County than Bend/Portland.
- Currently, our clients' needs are being met by Wheeler County Community Transportation, which provides transportation for seniors to appointments.

Interviewees were asked to describe other transportation needs in Wheeler County that should be addressed resulting in the following list of items:

- Primary need is for transit to The Dalles.
- Culture is not geared toward a demand for public transit, as it is more independent in mindset. One way to address the local mindset is to market specific trips to Prineville or Bend/Redmond, particularly in the winter months.

- A more reliable transit system is needed, or a fixed trip schedule that allows for more certainty of when and where buses run each week or month would be helpful for DHS case workers.
- People should walk more. Additional transportation needs include a regular trip from Fossil to The Dalles or Fossil to the Bend/Redmond/Madras area.
- There is a major need for a paved parking lot at Fossil High School. The site needs paving and safety improvements to enable the safe use of the lot for school and community events.

It is important to make sure there are vehicles in the county to serve ADA needs. It would also be beneficial to have WCCT vehicles and personnel stationed in all three communities (Fossil, Spray, and Mitchell) to serve needs in each community and create efficient opportunities for connections between the communities (i.e. a veteran in Mitchell could get a ride to Fossil to catch a previously scheduled trip from Fossil to Portland rather than a volunteer in Fossil having to drive an hour and a half to pick up and bring back the person in Mitchell).

Transportation Mode Use

Stakeholder organizations identified which transportation mode(s) their clients use most often, either to access appointments with the stakeholder or to satisfy transportation needs in general. Table 4-1 below lists the transportation modes mentioned and the number of stakeholders who identified each mode as most frequently used by their clients. Most interviewees indicated their clients drive alone, while several additionally mentioned carpooling or getting a ride from friends and family as an option used by clients. Not surprisingly given the distance between common origins and destinations for trips both in and out of Wheeler County, walking and biking were seldom mentioned as frequently used modes. The mode split, as perceived by stakeholder organizations, provides Wheeler County Community Transportation important information regarding partnerships for outreach about public transit services. Those agencies already partnering with WCCT indicated frequent use of the transit services among their clients. New or enhanced partnerships with stakeholder groups will improve outreach and provide clients with increased awareness of their transportation options, including public transportation.

Table 4-1: Client Transportation Mode Use

Mode	Count
Drive alone	9
Bike	0
Carpool / Park & Ride	7
Walk	1
Public transit	2
Other: school bus; gas card; borrow friend's or relative's car	2

Trip Destinations

Participants identified common destinations their clients need transportation to access and indicated the associated trip purposes. Agency representatives most frequently identified the city of Bend as a necessary destination for their clients to address medical and shopping needs. Bend also serves the veteran population with its VA clinic. Clients of DHS Self-Sufficiency may also serve employment and employment assistance needs with trips to Bend, as well as to Redmond and The Dalles. Redmond was mentioned second most frequently, followed by The Dalles and Madras for food shopping, medical services, and social services appointments. Prineville was also mentioned by several agencies as serving their clients' shopping, banking, and medical needs. Fossil was mentioned as a destination of residents of Spray and Mitchell and provides some medical and counseling services in Wheeler County. Table 4-2 below contains the list of destinations and trip types mentioned by the agency interviewees.

Table 4-2: Top destinations clients need transportation to access

Agency	City/Location/Purpose
Asher Community Medical Clinic	Bend: St. Charles Hospital, Central Oregon Radiology, Cascade Imaging, Bend Dermatology, East Cascades Women's Group, North Star Neurology, Desert Orthopedics, Northwest Foot Care. Redmond: Redmond Clinic, Optima Foot and Ankle, Cascade Imaging, Eye Institute, Nuclear Testing, Women's Health Clinic Madras: Mountain View Hospital, Madras Vision Source The Dalles: Cascade Orthopedics, MCMC Prineville: Optima Foot and Ankle
Haven House Retirement Community	Bend, Redmond, Madras, The Dalles: doctor appointments
Fossil School District	Madras: to access the hospital, shopping, dentists, and doctors Prineville: shopping and medical trips (Rays, Bi-Mart, Grocery Outlet, banking)
Mitchell School District	Redmond/Bend
DHS Child Welfare and Family Services	Fossil: trips from either Spray or Mitchell. Prineville: top destination for clients in Mitchell
DHS Self-Sufficiency Services	The Dalles, Bend, Redmond: medical services, food, transportation to employment and for employment assistance.
Mid-Columbia Council of Govts – Workforce Dev.	The Dalles: shopping, medical services, social services, social security office, and DHS
Community Counseling Solutions	Fossil: CCS Office and Asher Community Health Center
Veterans Services Officer for Wheeler County	Bend, Portland: VA and other medical clinics
Wheeler County Commission on Children and Families	Madras, Redmond/Bend: shopping and medical trips

Time of Day Clients Would Use Public Transportation

Interviewees identified the days and times that would best serve their clients needs or would allow for the greatest use of public transportation services. Nearly all of the agency representatives indicated that service running on weekdays in the morning during regular business hours would allow their clients to make use of transit and access the services their agencies provide. Common times include a morning run, starting between 7:00 am and 8:00 am, and a late afternoon/early evening run, ranging between 4:00 pm and 7:00 pm. Specific days mentioned include Tuesdays to coordinate with social services appointments, Wednesday afternoons to serve AA meetings in Fossil and Prineville, and Fridays for students and families as there is no school on Fridays. One interviewee suggested scheduling transit trips to a metropolitan area near the fifth day of each month (perhaps to coincide with monthly assistance payments allowing clients to make needed purchases). Generally, the timing of trip demand varies, but trips that allow clients to access appointments and services on weekdays will serve the demand described by stakeholder agencies.

Public Awareness of WCCT Open Seat Policy

A majority of those interviewed indicated that their clients are unaware that they can ride existing WCCT bus trips when seats are available. While a few stakeholders said their clients are aware of the open seat policy, several indicated a need for their clients to find out that seats on an existing trip are available to the general public. One respondent explained that clients are not aware of the policy “possibly because they are unsure whether seats are available, which may preclude clients from pursuing public transportation as an option for their trip.” Suggested outlets to disseminate this information include the Wheeler County News, the Post Office Bulletin, flyers distributed through the schools in Fossil and Mitchell or newsletters sent to parents.

Use of Existing Public Transportation Services

Interviewees were asked if their clients use public transportation services offered by Wheeler County. Four stakeholders indicated that clients do use public transportation services, one of which mentioned that clients think the service is only for seniors, and another mentioned that a few veterans and their families make use of the services on a weekly basis. The rest of the stakeholders split among those who do not believe their clients use public transportation and those who are unsure whether they do or not. One interviewee explained, “Clients are aware that the service could be used for medical trips. The assumption is that the service is hard to schedule, especially for an individual need. Clients assume that they need a critical mass to be able to schedule a trip that is not already running.” The mixed results regarding use and perception about existing services, even among the stakeholder agency representatives, point to a need for targeted outreach to clients of stakeholder agencies who either do not use the service or have misconceptions about existing services.

Use of Expanded Service

A majority of interviewees indicated that their clients would use public transportation service and gave several trip details that would lend them to use such service. One stakeholder

mentioned that “[y]oung families without reliable vehicles might use the transportation services if they are aware that they can use it. One way to encourage young families to use the services is to advertise a semi-regular trip specifically for younger families, which would enable them to feel comfortable bringing children on bus trips, and avoid other passengers (seniors) from being bothered by noisy kids.” Another interviewee suggested their clients would use an airport shuttle or activity bus. Stakeholders frequently mentioned the need to make clients aware of the services available, which would make them more likely to use the services, as would adequate space for groceries on transit vehicles, and more reliable trip schedules each week, such as a run to Bend clinics on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One interviewee was unsure if clients would use public transit in the future and another indicated that while younger clients might ride the bus, seniors prefer particular drivers or riding alone.

Obstacles to Using Public Transportation

Interviewees described a few key obstacles to their clients’ use of public transportation in Wheeler County. Client awareness of services or seats available, lack of a set schedule, and the length of some trips present the primary challenges to clients who might make use of public transportation. Additional obstacles include the cost to use services, trip logistics and scheduling to avoid long days and remain sensitive to clients that need to make connections to access appointments, and the perceived stigma associated with reasons clients cannot drive themselves. Outreach to the general population with information about services and who can use them could alleviate misconceptions or stigmas associated with the use of public transportation.

Agency Transportation Services

Of the ten agencies/organizations interviewed, six offer transportation services to clients, including Mid-Columbia Council of Governments, which operates in Wasco County; Mitchell School, which transports students to school and once a month to Bend; Department of Human Services, which provides gas cards/vouchers to clients and transportation to appointments in state vehicles as a last resort; Veterans Services, which provides transportation and reimbursement to VA medical appointments; and Community Counseling Solutions, which offers transportation to appointments as a last resort. Five of the six agencies that offer transportation services operate their own vehicles and the other contracts with a school bus company. The availability of ADA features varies with each agency.

Importance of Transportation Services

Stakeholders explained the importance of transportation services to their own mission and emphasized how transportation services provide clients access to the stakeholders’ services and programs. Responses indicate that stakeholders value transportation services, which connect clients to affordable groceries, medical services, and social or mental health services located out of town or out of the county. The following includes several stakeholders’ comments regarding benefits to their agencies:

- Provides clients with access to programs and services, especially for those without private vehicles or reliable vehicles.

- Provides necessary link to shopping and conveniences not available locally.
- Provides access for clients to services and affordable groceries, as food benefits don't go as far at more expensive local grocery stores.
- Lifeline, have to have it because doctors appointments are out of town (Fossil), provides access to services.
- They get kids to school and back and provide access to services for children. There may be less need in Wheeler County than other places with a larger population, but there are times when transportation services are critical for accessing needed services and amenities.
- Veterans need transportation to get to doctors and medical appointments and the VSO depends on transportation services to get clients to their appointments.
- Continuity of care and the ability to have diagnostics done in a timely fashion. For example, the mammogram bus has increased the number of women able to get better health care via the monthly trip from each community to the clinic in Fossil.

Interviewees also described the ways in which transportation services benefit their clients in Wheeler County. Responses closely resemble the benefits to the stakeholder agencies themselves, as transportation services provide clients access to services, shopping, and activities, especially those located significant distances from local communities in the county. The following includes stakeholders' comments regarding the benefits of transportation services to their clients:

- Provides access to services for youth and families without their own reliable transportation and provide access to programs and activities, especially in Spray.
- Provides access to folks not comfortable driving in bad weather.
- Helps families and children access important services to reach desired outcomes for their cases.
- Provides access for clients to services and affordable groceries, as food benefits don't go as far at more expensive local grocery stores.
- Keeps folks from being isolated. They can get to shopping and affordable services that are out of the community.
- Veterans can't get to medical appointments without transportation services.
- Vital to patients to gain access to health information and services.

Transportation Service Improvements

Stakeholders provided suggestions for Wheeler County Community Transportation's consideration to increase their clients' access to public transportation services. Ideas tend to highlight the need for outreach about existing services and when they are available, as well as measures to increase reliability with paid drivers or more trained drivers. The following includes comments from several stakeholders:

- Keep up outreach activities and work to increase the awareness and certainty of who can use the transportation services.

- Provide better exposure of when services are available.
- Increase outreach regarding travel options to get clients to appointments, i.e. Mitchell to Fossil on Tuesdays. Streamline logistics of trip scheduling; make it easier for DHS to match clients' travel needs with public transportation trips or trip schedule.
- Pursue federal dollars for rural community and economic development, emphasizing transportation and access to community amenities and resources.
- Train more drivers, in Fossil particularly, need a sweep to get more drivers – provide more flexibility for trips at the times needed by Haven House clients.
- If drivers can be paid to be on-call or on a set schedule for regular trips, that would improve the reliability of access to transportation services for veterans.

Summary of Key Findings from Agency Interviews

The key results and findings from the interviews conducted of agencies and organizations that serve residents of Wheeler County are listed here. While this is not a comprehensive list of all results discussed above, it is intended to highlight important information drawn from the interviews.

- Participants noted access to services and appointments as the top transportation need, such as access to medical services for children and seniors, drug and alcohol treatment, and grocery shopping.
- Common barriers to client access of services include distance and travel time, lack of a private vehicle, lack of current driver's license, and lack of awareness of the existing public transit service and how to access it. An agency expressed the perception that it is difficult to match clients' appointment schedules with the existing bus schedule and offered that a system with paid drivers, instead of volunteers, on a set schedule may provide a reliable service of which clients might make better use.
- Most interviewees indicated their clients drive alone, while several additionally mentioned carpooling or getting a ride from friends and family as an option used by clients.
- Those agencies already partnering with WCCT indicated frequent use of the transit services among their clients. New or enhanced partnerships with stakeholder groups will improve outreach and provide clients with increased awareness of their transportation options.
- Agency representatives most frequently identified Bend as a necessary destination for their clients to address medical and shopping needs. Redmond was mentioned second most frequently, followed by The Dalles and Madras for food shopping, medical services, and social services appointments. Prineville was also mentioned by several agencies as serving their clients' shopping, banking, and medical needs. Fossil was mentioned as a destination of residents of Spray and Mitchell and provides some medical and counseling services within Wheeler County.

- Service running on weekdays in the morning during regular business hours would allow clients to make use of transit and access agency services. Preferred times include a morning run, starting between 7:00 - 8:00 AM, and a late afternoon/early evening run, ranging between 4:00 PM and 7:00 PM.
- Clients are generally unaware of WCCT's open seat policy.
- The results regarding use and perception about existing services were mixed, even among stakeholder agency representatives, which points to a need for targeted outreach to clients of stakeholder agencies who either do not use WCCT service or have misconceptions about it.
- Stakeholders frequently mentioned the need to make clients aware of the services available, which would make them more likely to use the services, as would adequate space for groceries on transit vehicles, and more reliable trip schedules each week, such as a run to Bend clinics on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Outreach to the general population with information about services and who can use them could alleviate misconceptions or stigmas associated with the use of public transportation.
- Responses indicate that stakeholders value transportation services, which connect clients to affordable groceries, medical services, and social or mental health services located out of town or out of the county.

Section V: Summary of Public Meetings

Introduction

Wheeler County Community Transportation hosted three public meetings, which were held in the communities of Fossil, Spray and Mitchell in the winter of 2013. This section provides a summary of the meeting participants' responses to questions posed at each meeting. Information was obtained regarding transportation needs, such as mode use and destination demand; preferences for transportation system characteristics, such as time of service and fare structure; use of existing services and obstacles to using services.

Transportation Needs

Participants in each of the three meetings expressed substantive transportation needs, benefits of existing transportation services, and obstacles to using existing services. In general, participants expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the services currently provided by Wheeler County Community Transportation. Common needs expressed include greater access to and services for young families, especially young mothers and children to access services and social activities; and outreach to raise community awareness of existing services, particularly regarding open seat availability on existing trips and educating potential riders on how to reserve/schedule trips. A commonly expressed obstacle is the time it takes for trips that combine purposes such as medical, shopping, and other errands. Participants suggested separating medical trips from other trip purposes to reduce trip time.

Transportation Mode Use

Participants were asked to identify the transportation mode they use most frequently to meet their transportation needs. Results from each public meeting are listed in Table 5-1 below:

Table 5-1: Mode Use

Mode	Fossil	Spray	Mitchell
Drive car/truck alone	6	8	7
Ride as a passenger in a car/truck	4	3	6
Park and ride in a carpool	0	0	0
Bike	1	0	0
Walk	7	2	3
Bus/van public transportation service	2	7	6
Company/fleet vehicle	1	0	0
Other, please specify:		2	

In Spray, two participants mentioned that they frequently use 4-wheelers for their transportation. In Mitchell, participants noted that they ride as a passenger in a car/truck sometimes, but not

most often. Additionally, Mitchell participants mentioned they ride the public transit service's current monthly trip when it is offered, but that is not the most frequent option available.

Trip Destinations

Meeting participants indicated trip destinations by purpose to which they travel regularly and to which they would use public transportation. In Fossil, a majority of participants indicated traveling regularly to The Dalles for shopping and medical purposes and about half indicated traveling to Madras for shopping and Bend for medical purposes as well. Public transportation is desired from Fossil to The Dalles, Condon, Bend and Portland by half of the participants in Fossil as well. In Spray, participants indicated demand for transportation to Bend, Prineville, John Day and Fossil mostly for shopping and medical purposes. Demand for public transportation focused on service to Bend for various purposes. In Mitchell, participants indicated transportation demand and public transportation demand for trips to Prineville for shopping and banking, Bend for medical or shopping, and Redmond for shopping purposes.

In addition, participants listed specific locations to which they would use public transportation. Table 5-2 lists the locations mentioned at each meeting.

Table 5-2: Most Frequent Destinations for Public Transit

Desired Public Transit Destinations	Fossil	Spray	Mitchell
Costco – Bend	X	X	X
Central Oregon Radiology – Bend	X		
St. Charles Hospital – Bend	X	X	X
Bend Memorial Clinic			X
Casey Eye Clinic – The Dalles	X		
Eye Institute – Redmond	X	X	X
VA Clinic – Bend	X	X	
VA Hospital – Portland	X		
Celilo Center – The Dalles	X		
Walmart – Redmond	X	X	X
Bi-Mart/Safeway – Madras	X		
Bi-Mart/Safeway – Redmond	X		
McDonald's – Biggs	X		
McDonald's – Madras	X		
Macy's, Kohl's – The Mall in Bend	X		
Dollar Tree – Madras	X		
Fred Meyer – Bend		X	
Cash and Carry – Bend		X	
Jo-Ann Fabrics – Bend		X	
Dollar Store/Bi-Mart – Prineville		X	X

Big R – Redmond	X	X
Hospital/Medical Offices – Redmond	X	
Trader Joes – Bend		X
Home Depot – Bend		X
Dentist – Redmond		X
Pharmacy – Prineville		X
Mosaic Medical – Prineville		X
Clinic in the Heights – Prineville		X
Starbucks – Prineville		X
Bank – Prineville		X

Time of Day Clients Would Use Public Transportation

Participants were asked to identify specific days and times that they would like to have access to public transportation. The results are listed below:

Fossil: Three individuals would like service every day, two identified a need on Tuesdays from daylight to dark and Saturdays from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm, and one identified Thursdays from daylight to dark. The group agreed that the service on Tuesday/Thursday should run from 7:00 am to 6:00-7:00 pm, or 5:00 pm in winter.

Spray: Participants identified Saturdays for a morning trip to Fossil, Prineville or Bend with a return to Spray in the afternoon/evening. They also suggested a trip on Fridays for children to get to doctor appointments.

Mitchell: Participants noted Wednesdays (1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month) for a trip leaving Mitchell by 9:00 am, arriving in Fossil by 10:00 am, and returning to Mitchell by 4:00 pm. It was noted that an auto-repair garage in Fossil is well-used by Mitchell residents and could be a destination for those using the Mitchell to Fossil run.

Public Transportation Fare Preference

Participants in Fossil had the perception that a donation-based fare system would encourage more use of public transit than a set fare system. However, the group agreed that a revenue stream beyond donations was important to have and maintain. It was mentioned that riders who cannot afford general transit may be seniors and individuals with disabilities who could use existing special needs transportation services. It was also suggested to have set fares for trips to special events.

In Spray, participants noted that donations were the preferred fare system and the group recommended having a “suggested donation” notice on the bus to inform passengers. However in Mitchell, participants unanimously preferred a set fare system. The group suggested having an in-county fare and an out-of-county fare for trips of each kind (a two zone structure). The group also indicated that passengers should donate beyond the set face amount when able.

Public Awareness and Use of Existing Public Transportation Services

Everyone in Fossil indicated that they or someone in their household have used the existing public transportation services. Ten participants in Spray and seven participants in Mitchell indicated that they use WCCT services as well. The frequency with which meeting participants use existing public transportation is displayed below:

Table 5-3: Frequency of Existing Public Transit Use

Frequency of Public Transit Use	Fossil	Spray	Mitchell
Once a month	3	6	7
Once a week	0	2	0
Twice a week	0	0	0
Once a day	0	0	0
Multiple times a day	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0

In Spray, participants mentioned that posters at the Post Office advertising for the existing transportation services are effective for residents of Spray, but they go unnoticed by those out of town for whom it is harder to communicate what is going on in town. It was suggested that WCCT advertise regular shopping trips specifically. In Mitchell, most participants were aware that the general public can use WCCT services if there are open seats on a particular trip, but they indicated that further outreach to the community explaining as much would be helpful.

Obstacles to Using Public Transportation

Participants listed the following obstacles to using public transportation in Wheeler County:

- Some riders do not want to share a trip with other people or with certain individuals.
- Trip distance and time, which currently depends on the trip purpose of passengers, can make for too long of a trip or a day for drivers and other passengers.
- Mothers with young children have a cost issue for trips and the purpose of their travel may not line up with the existing transit trips for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- Mothers with young children and families need better access to public transportation.
- Lack of volunteer drivers for WCCT trips serving Mitchell.
- The Grant County People Mover stops in Mitchell, but it is too costly to use frequently.
- Some people are hesitant to depend on someone else for help, which discourages them from using public transportation.
- Some people may not know to call ahead of time to request a trip, which indicates a need for greater outreach.

Summary of Key Findings from Public Meetings

The key results and findings from the interviews conducted of agencies and organizations that serve residents of Wheeler County are listed here. While this is not a comprehensive list of all results discussed above, it is intended to highlight important information drawn from the interviews.

- There is a need for WCCT to communicate seat availability to the general public in a timely fashion.
- Young families, especially young mothers and children, need greater access to transportation to access services and social activities.
- Increase education of potential riders on how to reserve/schedule trips.
- A commonly expressed obstacle is the time it takes for trips that combine purposes such as medical, shopping, and other errands.
- Public transportation is desired from Fossil to The Dalles, Condon, Bend and Portland by half of the participants in Fossil.
- Demand for public transportation in Spray focused on service to Bend for various purposes.
- In Mitchell, participants indicated transportation demand and public transportation demand for trips to Prineville for shopping and banking, Bend for medical or shopping, and Redmond for shopping purposes.
- Participants in all three meetings indicated interest in using public transportation to access Costco and St. Charles Hospital in Bend and the Eye Institute and Walmart in Redmond.
- Participants in Fossil and Spray support a donation-based fare system, while Mitchell participants unanimously preferred a set in-county/out-of-county trip fare system.
- There is a noted lack of volunteer drivers for WCCT trips serving Mitchell.
- Some people may not know to call ahead of time to request a trip, which indicates a need for greater outreach.

Section VI: Comparable County Transportation Systems

Introduction

Wheeler County is one among several frontier counties in Oregon with relatively small, dispersed population centers, and demand for transportation that requires lengthy trips to larger urban areas. Two counties in eastern and southeastern Oregon provide appropriate comparisons to Wheeler County for the purposes of considering public transportation services to meet trip demand: Harney County and Wallowa County. This section briefly describes the services each county offers and the associated costs to provide such service.

Harney County Senior Center: Demand Response Transportation

Harney County Senior Center (HCSC) provides curb-to-curb, wheelchair accessible, demand response services on weekdays from 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM, and Saturdays from 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM. HCSS provides pick-up and drop-off service for passengers on ADA-accessible vehicles and provides bus service to meal sites, shopping, medical appointments, and other destinations. There is no age restriction to ride HCSC transportation. The fee for bus service is \$0.50 for a one-way trip for all riders.

Harney County also offers weekly trips from Burns to Bend. The fee for this service is \$35.00 round trip or \$18.00 one way. The bus to Bend is also available for persons of all ages. HCSC makes the regular trip to Bend on Tuesdays or Thursdays primarily for medical appointments. Funding for the weekly intercity trip is provided by Harney County.

HCSC transportation drivers have paid full-time positions at \$11 to \$12 per hour and are insured through Harney County's vehicle insurance policy with Steens Mountain Insurance. The hourly wage for drivers has fluctuated over time, but HCSC noted that a competitive wage was necessary to attract qualified applicants for open driver positions.

Wallowa County: Commuter, Intercity, and Dial-a-ride

Northeast Oregon Public Transit (NEO Transit) operates several services in Wallowa County that link small urban areas together and provides access to services for residents of Wallowa, Joseph, Enterprise and Lostine. Services offered through NEO Transit include dial-a-ride, the Wallowa Commuter, and the Wallowa Link.

The dial-a-ride service is open to anyone and requires trip reservations at least one day in advance of the appointment, though two days' notice is preferred. In Enterprise, service is available on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM and on Tuesdays from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM. In Joseph, service is available on Tuesdays from 8:30 AM to 2:30 PM. In Wallowa, service is available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10:00 AM to 2:30 PM.

The Wallowa Commuter operates Monday through Thursday between the Wallowa Senior Center and Enterprise. Fare is \$1.50 per boarding or \$3.00 per round trip. See below for the Commuter Schedule:

Wallowa Commuter Schedule

Stop	Times
Wallowa Senior Center	7:15 am
Lostine (across from M. Crow)	7:22 am
Enterprise drop offs	Arrive by 7:50 am
Enterprise pick ups	Depart at 5:00 pm
Lostine	5:20 pm
Wallowa Senior Center	Arrive by 5:35 pm

The Wallowa Link is an Intercity Route running between Joseph and La Grande twice per week. Bus fare is \$5.00 per boarding. See below for the Wallowa Link Schedule:

Wallowa Link Schedule

	Mondays		Thursdays	
Stop	Departure	Departure	Departure	Departure
Joseph	8:00 am	Arrive by 4:00 pm	2:30 pm	Arrive by 8:30 pm
Enterprise	8:15 am	3:37 pm	2:45 pm	8:17 pm
Lostine	8:30 am	3:22 pm	3:00 pm	7:57 pm
Wallowa	8:45 am	3:07 pm	3:15 pm	7:42 pm
Elgin	9:20 am	2:32 pm	3:50 pm	7:05 pm
Imbler	9:32 am	2:20 pm	4:02 pm	6:50 pm
La Grande	Arrive by 10:00 am	2:00 pm	Arrive by 4:30 pm	6:30 pm

NEO Transit drivers in Wallowa County are paid \$9.39 per hour and generally work part-time, about 20 hours or less each week. One driver operates the intercity route running twice per week, one driver operates the shopping bus running once a week, two drivers run routes to meal sites three times each week, two drivers operate the summer shuttle, and three drivers serve medical trips. The service also makes use of five or six volunteer drivers at a given time.

A full cost comparison between the paid driver costs of HCSC, Wallowa County, and WCCT is listed in detail in Table 6-1 below.

Cost Comparison Considering Paid Drivers for Rural Transit Service

Table 6-1: Cost comparison for the consideration of paid drivers for rural transit service

	Harney Co. Senior Center	Wallowa Co. Community Connections	WCCT
# paid drivers	6	9	3
# of volunteer drivers		6	27
FTE	40 hrs/wk	6 drivers at total of 97 hrs/wk, 2 at 30 hrs/wk for 4 mos and 1 driver at 25 hrs/wk for 8 mos.	19 hours or less
Wage	\$11.50	\$9.39 to \$12.88	\$11.00 (proposed)
Vacation & Sick Time	Accrued for FTE	Pro-rated for 0.5 FTE	Pro-rated for 0.5 FTE
Retirement		7.5% of gross wages	
Medical Coverage	\$500/month/driver		7.65% of gross wages
Worker's Comp/SAIF	\$4.40/\$100 driver payroll	22.29% of hourly wage	\$0.50/hr
Vehicle Insurance	5 vehicles (3 minivans, 1 bus, 1 large van) = \$1,084 avg. annual/vehicle	\$944 avg. annual/vehicle	\$969 avg. annual/vehicle
Drug/Alcohol Testing	\$20 to \$30 per test, contract with BioMed for testing	\$69/drug test, \$35/alcohol test	\$20 to \$30 per test, contract with BioMed for testing
Testing in 2012	Maybe 2 or 3 tests	16 random drug tests, 8 re-employment tests	Maybe 2 or 3 tests
Total D&A testing cost	< \$100.00	\$2,496.00	< \$100.00
Medical/hr	\$2.88		\$0.84
Worker's Comp/hr	\$0.51	\$2.09	\$0.50
Retirement/hr		\$0.70	
<i>Fringe/hr subtotal</i>	\$3.39	\$2.80	\$1.34
Wage + Fringe/hr	\$14.89	\$12.19	\$12.34
Cost/Driver/week	\$595.62	\$207.18	\$234.49
Total Driver Cost/week	\$3,573.75	\$1,864.65	\$703.47
Total Driver Cost/month	\$15,486.24	\$8,080.17	\$3,048.35
Annual Driver Cost	\$185,834.88	\$66,331.31	\$36,580.21
Driver Cost/month for Additional Runs			\$863.91 Assumes 70 hours/month for 3 drivers to serve additional runs.
Annual Driver Cost for Additional Runs			\$10,366.86

Key findings from the cost comparison above between Harney County Senior Center, Wallowa County Community Connections (NEO Transit), and Wheeler County Community Transportation include the following:

- Total driver cost, including wages and fringe benefits was highest for HCSC at \$14.98 per hour. Wallowa County drivers earn \$12.19 per hour.
- Assuming a competitive hourly wage of \$11.00 for potential paid drivers for WCCT, the total hourly expense would be \$12.34 in Wheeler County. This assumes an hourly rate for Worker's Compensation of fifty cents.
- Paid drivers in Wheeler County would likely be established as part-time, less than 19 hours per week, to keep employment costs manageable for the county.
- The scenario portrayed in the above comparison considers three part-time drivers for WCCT that could serve 70 or so hours each month to complete the proposed additional trips to address demand expressed in the needs assessment survey. As such, the estimated cost additional trip cost for paid drivers is about \$864 per month.

Section VII: Recommendations

Introduction

This section offers recommendations regarding strategies Wheeler County Community Transportation may employ to address Wheeler County residents' public transportation needs. The recommendations are primarily based on the key findings from the general population survey, agency interviews, and public meetings discussed above. Considering the information gathered on travel needs, transportation preferences, and general awareness of existing transportation services, the following recommendations offer options for Wheeler County Community Transportation to consider for implementation in the next one to five years. The recommendations discussed in this section include the following:

1. Enhance advertising and marketing strategies to promote existing and proposed additional public transportation services throughout Wheeler County.
2. Increase regular public transportation trips to destinations of need, including the following additional trips:
 - Spray to Bend – twice a month
 - Spray to Fossil – once a month
 - Mitchell to Prineville – once a month
 - Mitchell to Bend – once a month
 - Mitchell to Fossil – once a month
 - Fossil to Bend – once a month
 - Fossil to Madras – once a month
3. Establish a Gatekeeper Network to enhance communication and coordination between transportation services and key agencies/organizations serving Wheeler County.
4. Continue to monitor transportation use and needs among Wheeler County residents, particularly to compare seniors' and individuals with disabilities' public transportation use with that of the general public.

Outreach and Marketing

An important initiative associated with public transportation services, especially new, modified, or added services in rural areas, is community outreach. While transit agencies in dense urban areas benefit from highly visible transit vehicles that pass through neighborhoods and business districts with great frequency, outreach of public transit service for rural communities depends on connections with key organizations, community groups, public postings and announcements, and word-of-mouth efforts. The Transportation Coordinator and staff at Wheeler County Community Transportation currently engage in several important marketing and outreach strategies to raise the public's awareness of available services and how to access them. WCCT must continue and expand upon marketing and outreach efforts to inform the general public about existing services and emphasize additional or modified services to be implemented in the

near future. The following contains a description of WCCT's current outreach measures and a list of strategies to consider implementing with new or modified services.

Current Outreach

WCCT conducts outreach to residents of Wheeler County through the following measures:

- Develop a brochure of services that is updated every two years. The brochures are available on WCCT vehicles and in Wheeler County offices.
- WCCT schedules are posted throughout the county, including stores and post offices in all three communities, Spray City Hall, Haven House, Asher Clinic, senior meal sites, the bank in Fossil, and a restaurant in Mitchell.
- WCCT maintains a mailing list of riders and other contacts and sends out a monthly mailer to the list that advertises open seats to the general public. The mailing list currently includes 70 contacts in Fossil and 20 in Mitchell.
- Word-of-mouth outreach is an important approach in Wheeler County, especially considering the size of the communities and the distance the communities are from each other. WCCT encourages current riders to contact the transit office if they hear of someone in the county who may have underserved transportation needs. WCCT will attempt to reach underserved individuals by phone if possible.

Recommended Outreach Strategies

Key findings from the Needs Assessment's public engagement process indicate a significant portion of the population currently uses WCCT service, may consider using WCCT service in the future, or would make use of WCCT service when aware of it. In particular, agency representatives indicated their clients would likely use public transportation to access appointments, but that many clients are not aware of the service. Additionally, a small percentage of survey respondents and even agency representatives who partner with WCCT have misconceptions about who can ride WCCT vehicles. Thus, it is crucial for WCCT to engage in effective and efficient outreach strategies. Additional outreach strategies for WCCT to consider include the following measures:

- Distribute information about WCCT and its services in a variety of media. Send general broadcasts or public service announcements via local radio stations, newspapers, organizational newsletters (see Gatekeeper Network below), and online. In particular, the Internet provides an untapped opportunity for WCCT to inform the public about services. WCCT has a dedicated page on the Wheeler County website, which in addition to contact information could supply the public with the following:
 - Regular bus schedules
 - Hours of operation
 - Protocols for accessing WCCT and who may use each type of service
 - Updated listings of scheduled trips with open seats and the number of open seats that could be utilized by the general public
 - Public notice of plans, schedule changes, or meetings and hearings

- Advertise public meetings and hearings. Such events, though often under-attended, can serve as a community building opportunity. Public meetings about transportation services or proposed changes to schedules or fares allow county residents and potential customers of public transportation to feel a sense of ownership and thus responsibility and involvement with the program. Tying into hearings that are not transportation specific, but relate to issues for seniors, individuals with disabilities, workforce, public health, economic development and education can broaden WCCT's reach into the community, as well.
- Target specific groups for outreach, including parents and families with school-aged children via the school districts and local community organizations (WCCCF); older adults via senior centers, meal sites, and medical offices; and additional transportation-challenged groups via state and local social service agencies, mental health and public health organizations.
- Post schedules for monthly trips in a variety of locations to reach as wide an audience in the county as possible. List the regular trips scheduled for each week or month and give special attention to any changes in the schedule. Include each trip's community of origin and highlight popular destinations that trips usually serve, such as grocery stores, hardware and general supply stores, banks, and frequently used medical locations. For instance, an advertisement about a trip from Spray to Bend could emphasize the opportunity to restock on supplies with a stop at Costco. Schedules should be posted in public venues, such as newspapers and post office bulletins; public buildings, such as schools, Wheeler County Courthouse, and Family Services building; and in each gatekeeper organization's office.

General Public Demand Response Service Additions

Needs Assessment respondents indicated significant demand for public transportation with service to destinations both within and beyond Wheeler County. The following lists recommended trips for WCCT to consider adding to existing transportation services:

Service to Points within Wheeler County

Fossil was the destination within Wheeler County to which survey respondents indicated demand for public transportation. WCCT currently offers a regular monthly trip from Spray to Fossil and from Mitchell to Fossil. An additional trip from Spray with service to Fossil is recommended to address demand for trips to attend meetings of Wheeler County Court, access banking and medical services, and shopping at local grocery and supply stores. WCCT could consider running these trips on Tuesdays or Wednesdays to allow customers to access certain social and mental health services in Fossil.

Service to Points Outside Wheeler County

Residents of Fossil and Spray indicated high levels of demand for transportation to Bend, whereas residents of Mitchell indicated the highest demand for trips to Prineville, followed by trips to Bend. WCCT currently offers three trips per month from Fossil to Bend, one trip per month from Mitchell to Prineville and one trip per month from Mitchell to Redmond that stops in Prineville. To best address demand, and to create a consistent service schedule that is easy for customers to remember, the following additional trips are recommended:

- Two monthly trips from Spray to Bend
- One monthly trip from Mitchell to Prineville
- One monthly trip from Mitchell to Bend
- One monthly trip from Fossil to Bend to enable a regular weekly trip schedule.

In addition, WCCT currently offers one monthly trip from Fossil to The Dalles, which does serve demand indicated by survey respondents from Fossil. However, the demand expressed by respondents for transportation from Fossil to Madras is not currently served by a regular standing trip. Thus, it is recommended that WCCT add one trip per month from Fossil to Madras, primarily to serve demand for shopping and medical needs. Detail on the expected additional cost for each recommended trip can be found in the Wheeler County Public Transportation Plan.

Establish Wheeler County Gatekeeper Network to Enhance Communication and Coordination

Coordination between agencies that serve a similar client base provides a mutually beneficial approach to outreach for WCCT to consider. WCCT already engages in coordination to some extent, as a partner for veterans' transportation within a tri-county area, and as a partner with medical clinics and senior services facilities to connect older adults and individuals with disabilities with transportation services to access necessary appointments. However, there are several additional agencies and organizations serving Wheeler County residents that WCCT should consider including in a so-called "Gatekeeper Network."

Gatekeepers are the organizations serving a common client base, in this case Wheeler County residents. The network of gatekeeper organizations provides an efficient forum for communication between organizations, primarily to share information about programs and services for clients to access. In addition to senior services and medical organizations, the Wheeler County Gatekeeper Network should include social service providers, mental health providers, community schools and medical clinics, workforce development agencies, the commission on children and families, chambers of commerce, local offices of state agencies, and veterans support organizations. In particular, the school districts in Wheeler County present a key opportunity for outreach to diverse age groups within the county, as the schools provide community hubs of activity in Fossil, Mitchell, and Spray.

The network would enable organizations to easily contact one another and encourage consistent communication about available services via a network contact list and periodic meetings/updates. Specific to WCCT, the network would allow for efficient distribution of monthly bus schedules, fliers explaining how to access public transportation, and WCCT's contact information and website to the entire client base.

Monitoring Transportation Use and Needs

Lastly, it is important for WCCT to continue to monitor transportation needs, travel patterns, and preferred transit characteristics among Wheeler County residents over time. This assessment considers current trends and recent demographic information to plan for transportation service to meet the needs of residents in the near future. However, the needs and preferences expressed

herein can change, especially with significant changes in workforce opportunities, the availability of services and amenities in the county, or demographics. Conducting a regular needs assessment survey every few years may be the most straightforward method to obtain relevant data for comparison with the current assessment. Regular surveys can also keep the public engaged and informed about transportation issues and services in Wheeler County.

Specific data to collect for monitoring transportation use includes ridership counts, fare/donation collection, trip cost, trip mileage, trip time and hours, and destinations. Additionally, WCCT should conduct periodic surveys of riders to determine if they are general public, seniors, or individuals with disabilities, which will indicate the use of public transportation by those segments of the population. Further information on performance measures can be found in the Wheeler County Public Transportation Plan.

Appendix A: General Population Survey

Wheeler County Public Transportation Community Survey

We need your help. By taking this survey, you will help Wheeler County Community Transportation (WCCT) determine whether the existing transit system in Wheeler County should be expanded to serve the general public and if so, what the characteristics of the transit system will be. It is important to WCCT that the general public transit system is safe, dependable, convenient, and affordable. The survey will take about fifteen minutes. Your participation is voluntary. WCCT will not associate personal information with your survey responses in the transit plan. Completing this survey is your agreement to participate. If you have questions about the survey or the public transportation system in Wheeler County, please contact Candy Humphreys at 541-468-2859 or Scott Turnoy at 541-296-2266.

1. Do you or members of your household have transportation needs which are not being met?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If so, what are they? _____

2. What community do you live in or nearest to? *(Please select one)*

☐ Spray

☐ Mitchell

☐ Twickenham

☐ Fossil

☐ Richmond

☐ Other, please specify: _____

3. Which of the following transportation modes do you use most often? *(Please select all that apply)*

☐ Drive car/truck alone

☐ Ride as a passenger in a car/truck

☐ Park and ride in a carpool

☐ Bus/van public transportation service

☐ Bike

☐ Company/fleet vehicle

☐ Walk

☐ Other, please specify: _____

4. In the table below, please indicate to which destinations and for which purpose(s) you usually need to travel in a normal week. *Check the box in each row and column that applies:*

Destination	Work	Shopping	Medical	Banking	Special Events	Social	Other
The Dalles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fossil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spray	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mitchell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Condon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arlington	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Redmond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prineville	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Madras	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pendleton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heppner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baker City	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hermiston	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. In the table below, please indicate which destinations and for which purpose you or members of your household need or would **use public transportation to get to**. *Check each box that applies:*

Destination	Work	Shopping	Medical	Banking	Special Events	Social	Other
The Dalles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fossil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spray	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mitchell	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Condon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arlington	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
John Day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Redmond	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prineville	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Madras	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pendleton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Heppner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Baker City	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hermiston	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Portland	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. In the table below, please indicate the days and times **you would like to use public transportation**.

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
6am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11am	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Noon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10pm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Please select all that apply)

8. If available, what types of public transportation would you or members of your household use?
(Please select all that apply)

☐ Bus
☐ Full-size van
☐ Mini-van/Crossover vehicle
☐ ADA vehicle
☐ Other, please specify: _____

9. Are you or members of your household aware that the general public can ride on Wheeler County's existing buses and vans if seats are available?

☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Do you or members of your household use the existing public transportation services offered by Wheeler County?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, how often do you ride the bus for general public transportation? (Please select one)

☐ Once a month ☐ Once a day
☐ Once a week ☐ Multiple times a day
☐ Twice a week ☐ Other, please specify: _____

11. What do you currently spend on transportation per month? Please enter the dollar amount per month:

☐ Gas and oil \$ _____
☐ Car maintenance \$ _____
☐ Car payment \$ _____
☐ Insurance \$ _____

12. Would you or members of your household be willing to pay a fare or donation for public transportation service?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If Yes, what is the maximum rate you would be willing to pay for a round-trip within Wheeler County? (Please, select one)

☐ \$2.00 ☐ \$3.00 ☐ \$4.00 ☐ \$5.00 ☐ Other: \$ _____

If Yes, what is the maximum rate you would be willing to pay for a round-trip that travels out of Wheeler County? (Please, select one)

☐ \$5.00 ☐ \$10.00 ☐ \$15.00 ☐ \$20.00 ☐ Other: \$ _____

13. Are you aware that all drivers of existing transportation services in Wheeler County are volunteers?

☐ Yes ☐ No

14. Are you interested in volunteering as a driver with Wheeler County Community Transportation?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If you are interested in volunteering with WCCT, please provide your name and phone number:

Name

Phone Number

15. Aside from your home, what are the three destinations you need transportation to most frequently?
Please list the nearest landmark or place of business, and town for each destination:

- i. _____,
Landmark or Place of Business Town
- ii. _____,
Landmark or Place of Business Town
- iii. _____,
Landmark or Place of Business Town

16. How would you or members of your household prefer to get a ride? (Select one)

- ☐ Catch a bus at a stop
☐ Call ahead for a ride
☐ Other, please specify: _____

If you prefer to catch a bus at a stop, how far would you be willing to walk to a bus stop?

- ☐ 1 block ☐ One-half mile
☐ 2 to 3 blocks ☐ Up to 1 mile
☐ 4 to 6 blocks ☐ I am unable to walk to a bus stop

17. What is the primary obstacle to you or members of your household using public transportation?

18. Do you have any additional comments you would like to make?

Demographic Information:

i. Age: ___ Under 18 ___ 18 - 24 ___ 25 - 29 ___ 30 - 39
 ___ 40 - 49 ___ 50 - 59 ___ 60 - 69 ___ 70 and up

ii. Sex (choose one): ___ Male ___ Female

iii. Do you have any physical or mental disabilities that require transportation assistance?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

iv. What type of transportation assistance do you need? Please select all that apply:

- ☐ Wheelchair Lift Access
☐ Door to Door Assistance
☐ Personal Assistance
☐ Other, please specify: _____

v. What is your income level? (Select one)

- ☐ \$10,000 or less ☐ \$25,000 - \$34,999 ☐ \$75,000 - \$99,999
☐ \$10,001 - \$14,999 ☐ \$35,000 - \$49,999 ☐ \$100,000 or more
☐ \$15,000 - \$24,999 ☐ \$50,000 - \$74,999

Thank you for participating in this survey! Please return within one week of receipt.

Appendix B: Agency Interview Questionnaire

Agency or Organization Name	
Street Address, City, Zip	
Telephone Number	
Person Contacted	
What types of services does your Agency provide?	
Who is your primary clientele, considering your service area in Wheeler County?	

1. Do your clients from Wheeler County have transportation needs which are not being met?
What is the number one transportation issue facing your clients from Wheeler County?
2. What are the top destinations that your clients usually need transportation to get to?
3. What days and times do your clients need or would use public transportation?
4. Which transportation mode do your clients use most often?
 - Drive alone
 - Carpool/Park&Ride
 - Bike
 - Walk
 - Public transit
 - Other:
5. Do your clients use public transportation services offered by Wheeler County?
6. Would your clients use a public transportation service if it was available?
7. Are your clients aware that the general public can ride Wheeler County Community Transportation when seats are available?
8. What is the primary obstacle to your clients using public transportation?
9. Does your agency offer transportation services for your clients?
 - (a) If you offer transportation services, in which of the following ways do you provide these services?
 - We operate our own vehicles
 - We contract with someone else who provides transportation service for us
 - Some clients reach our service using other transportation services for which we pay
 - We provide no transportation services to our clients
 - Other (please explain):

- (b) If you offer transportation services, what special features do your vehicles have (lift-equipped, ramp, etc.)?
10. In what ways are transportation services important to your Agency/Organization?
11. In what ways are transportation services important to the people you serve and the services you offer?
12. Do you have any ideas for how to improve transportation services?
13. Please describe other transportation needs in Wheeler County that you feel should be addressed:

Appendix C: Public Meeting Questions

1. Do you or members of your household have transportation needs which are not being met? If so, what are they? (*Open discussion with the group, take notes on flip chart*)

What is the primary obstacle to using public transportation?

2. What days and times would you like to have access to public transportation? (*Open discussion with the group, take notes on flip chart*)

Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
6am							
7am							
8am							
9am							
10am							
11am							
Noon							
1pm							
2pm							
3pm							
4pm							
5pm							
6pm							

3. Which of the following transportation modes do you use most often? (Show of hands)

- ☐ Drive car/truck alone
- ☐ Ride as a passenger in a car/truck
- ☐ Park and ride in a carpool
- ☐ Bike
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Bus/van public transportation service
- ☐ Company/fleet vehicle
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

4. At this time the services run on donations. Is this preferred or is a set fare preferred? Would you or members of your household be willing to pay a fare or donation for public transportation service? Would you pay different fares for trips in/out of the county?

5. In the table below, please indicate to which destinations and for which purpose(s) you usually need to travel each week:

	Trip Type						
Destination	Work	Shopping	Medical	Banking	Special Events	Misc. Errands or Social	Other
The Dalles							
Fossil							
Spray							
Mitchell							
Condon							
Arlington							
John Day							
Bend							
Prineville							
Madras							
Pendleton							
Portland							

6. In the table below, please indicate to which destinations and for which purpose(s) you or members of your household need or would use public transportation to get to:

	Trip Type						
Destination	Work	Shopping	Medical	Banking	Special Events	Misc. Errands or Social	Other
The Dalles							
Fossil							
Spray							
Mitchell							
Condon							
Arlington							
John Day							
Bend							
Prineville							
Madras							
Pendleton							
Portland							

7. Are you or members of your household aware that the general public can ride on Wheeler County's existing buses and vans if seats are available?

8. Do you or members of your household use the existing transportation services offered by Wheeler County?

If so, how often do you ride the bus for general public transportation?

- ☐ Once a month
- ☐ Once a week
- ☐ Twice a week
- ☐ Once a day
- ☐ Multiple times a day
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

9. Aside from your home, what are the three destinations you would need transportation to most frequently? Please list the nearest landmark or place of business and town for each destination:

10. What is your preference to access public transportation services - catch a bus at a stop, or call ahead to schedule a pick-up?

11. How far would you be willing to walk to a bus stop?

- ☐ 1 to 3 blocks
- ☐ 4 to 6 blocks
- ☐ One-half mile
- ☐ Up to 1 mile
- ☐ I am unable to walk to a bus stop

If there is extra time left, ask if there are any questions about public transportation services or needs that we should have asked **AND** ask if anyone has additional comments.