

Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan

Background

A Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP) helps your organization identify public transportation needs and improvements for people with disabilities, seniors, young people, individuals with lower incomes, and others who depend on public transportation services. A plan developed in conjunction with stakeholders, service providers, public transportation users, and others (refer to coordination checklist on pp. 2-3) can enhance transportation access, minimize duplication of services, encourage cost-effective transportation services, and identify priorities for the area.

Information from the HSTPs is also included in WSDOT's Statewide Human Services Transportation Plan, a strategic framework for existing human-services transportation needs and recommendations on improving access and mobility for future needs.

In addition, an HSTP is required for metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) and regional transportation planning organizations (RTPO) that apply for grants from the WSDOT. Federal and state funding for these grants comes from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and WSDOT.

The following instructions provide guidance on preparing your HSTP, such as the topics to address, organization of the document, and engagement of stakeholders and the public. If you have questions or need assistance, contact the WSDOT Public Transportation Division at 360-705-7011. Title VI and American with Disabilities Act (ADA) information are provided on the last page of this document.

Contact information for your HSTP

On the first page of your HSTP, provide the contact information of your organization:

- Planning area (MPO/RTPO)
- Lead agency
- Mailing address
- Contact person
- Email address
- Phone number (including area code)
- Fax number

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement is a key element in developing your HSTP and meeting WSDOT and FTA expectations. It is important to identify the needs of the communities, available transportation services, and development of solutions.

Coordination checklist

The categories below (in bold) are the organizations, agencies, institutions and transportation service providers to contact for information and involvement with your plan. (Note: All of these organizations may not exist in your community.)

- **Employment providers**
 - Major employers or employer organizations
 - Work-first local planning area

- **Education/youth**
 - Community colleges
 - Local school districts
 - Private schools

- **Medical providers**
 - Hospitals
 - Medical clinics
 - Veterans medical

- **Transportation providers**
 - Local Medicaid brokers and/or providers
 - Nonprofit transportation providers
 - Private bus operators
 - Public transit agencies
 - Taxicab operators

- **Government entities**
 - City councils
 - County commissioners or council
 - Washington State Department of Social and Human Services - Community Services office
 - Tribal governments

- **Organizations by and for people with disabilities**
 - Independent living centers
 - Arc of Washington
 - Washington State Association of the Deaf
 - Washington Council of the Blind

- **Organizations by and for people with low income**
 - Community action programs
 - Foodbanks
 - Tenant rights organizations

- **Organizations by and for youth and teens**
 - Big Brothers Big Sisters
 - Team Child
 - YMCA/YWCA

- **Organizations by and for seniors**
 - Area agency on aging
 - Assisted living communities
 - Senior centers

Convening stakeholders

You should provide a narrative of how community stakeholders were engaged in the planning process. Refer to the coordination checklist above for the organizations to contact. It is expected that you will contact one or more organization from each group.

In this description, address how you have reached out to people with disabilities, seniors, teens, low-income residents, and others who use public transportation.

Also, describe how people were invited to participate. Consider convening meetings in different locations and offering to attend and/or facilitate them. For example, visiting a senior center may be a good way to get input.

Include a list of people you invited and whether they were willing to participate in the process and provide input. Contacting the right people in an organization is important. Think about who actually interacts with special needs transportation.

If you are unable to find representation from one of the groups in your community, document your efforts to engage those people.

Indicate where you reached out to any out-of-boundary/out-of-jurisdiction partners who might have overlapping needs in your area.

Document your communication with social service providers in your area, including a list of their services. In the description, include the following:

- How transportation could help social service programs.
- A list of transportation providers in the area and an explanation of their services.
- How riders were contacted and needs they identified.

Describe ongoing efforts that your organization will be conducting to engage stakeholders throughout the current and next biennia.

Stakeholder deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indicate how many stakeholders were involved in your process.• Indicate how many stakeholders were invited.• Provide a list of meeting dates with the various stakeholder groups or organizations.

Emergency management

Transportation plays a key role in disaster preparedness, response and recovery. For this section of the HSTP, address how the transportation providers and planners within the RTPO address emergency management issues. How do the transportation providers collaborate with local emergency management agencies? Examples of collaboration are transportation providers assisting in evacuation, providing transportation of emergency responders, sheltering people, and providing knowledge of public transportation infrastructure. In case of an emergency, WSDOT recommends that memorandums of understanding be prepared that outline the responsibilities of the transportation providers, county and social service agencies.

Emergency management deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure that local emergency management agencies know about the HSTP and emergency management activities conducted by transit.• Ensure that transportation providers are aware of the importance of being included in the local emergency management planning and operations.

Data and information

In this section, outline information about common origins and destinations for all public transportation users, including people with special transportation needs.

People with special transportation needs are defined in RCW 47.06B as people "including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or purchase transportation." The U.S Census data often underrepresents people with special needs. It is for this reason that we recommend you supplement your census data with other data sources.

Your stakeholder group should be very helpful in determining origins, destinations and existing services. Use maps to illustrate common origins and destinations, existing services, and population density.

Common origins

For places that may constitute common origins, consider locations where public transportation users start their trips. Indicate the following:

- List where people with disabilities are located in your planning area.
- List where low-income residents are located in your planning area.
- List where young people and seniors are located in your planning area.
- List any locations that are common to all or some of the groups who meet the definition of people with special transportation needs.
- Describe the features in your community that generate public transportation users (e.g., multi-family housing, neighborhoods with a significant percentage of the total population in the service area of the transit provider).

Common origins deliverables

- Identify all significant origins for public transportation system users.
- Identify where people with special transportation needs reside in your community, using data from the U.S Census Bureau, Office of Financial Management, American Community Survey, and community organizations.

Common destinations

For places that may constitute common destinations, consider entry-level employment opportunities, childcare facilities, schools and other educational centers, medical centers, shopping districts and others as suggested by the stakeholder group.

- Describe destinations for people with disabilities in your planning area.
- Describe destinations for low-income residents in your planning area.
- Describe destinations for young people and seniors in your planning area.
- Identify whether any of these destinations are common to all or some of the groups that constitute people with special transportation needs.
- List the major employment centers, educational centers and medical facilities in the service area of your public transportation system.

Common destinations deliverables

- Using demographic data or other data sources*, indicate common destinations for people with special needs. Display this data in a chart or map.
- Indicate common destinations for public transportation system users, other than people with special needs.

** Other data sources could be the Office of Financial Management, American Community Survey, and data from community organizations.*

Existing transportation services

You should describe the existing transportation services. The FTA describes transportation services available within a community as a “family of transportation services.” This phrase describes traditional services, such as fixed route, route deviated, intercity bus and rail, shuttle, demand response, taxi, vanpools, rideshare, volunteer driver

programs, and other transportation services. The “family of transportation services” is a way of tailoring existing and alternative services to your specific community.

Also consider other nontraditional providers, such as social service providers who also provide some level of transportation to their clients. Describe whether the nontraditional providers are open to leveraging resources.

Additional information to include in this section of the plan includes hours of operation, service area boundaries, travel time standards, fares, program costs and other operating characteristics. Describe how these transportation services are currently funded, and whether any of them are funded with grants from the WSDOT Public Transportation Division.

Completing this section on existing transportation services enables planners to identify underserved areas, which areas may have their service(s) discontinued, and whether transportation services are being duplicated.

Existing transportation services deliverables
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the combined level of transportation service within the RTPO. Display the number of hours, miles, and trips for fixed-route and paratransit services.• Indicate how many mobility management projects are located in the region, along with their goals and deliverables.

Identify unmet transportation needs

You should identify the various types of transportation challenges and gaps in existing public transportation services. Compare the origins and destinations of people with special transportation needs with the existing transportation services. Identify unmet needs and possible duplication of efforts in certain areas. Identify opportunities for the grouping of services, shared rides, or group trips to improve efficiency. Identify challenges to implementing these opportunities. For services that would not exist without grants, include these as unmet needs.

By identifying the unmet needs of the region, stakeholders can determine the services that are most appropriate and useful to improving transportation access for the community. For the region's unmet needs, planners will consider a “family of transportation services” to accommodate varying transportation needs of urban, suburban and rural areas.

A family of transportation services could include buying new vehicles; sustaining or expanding fixed-route, deviated-route, demand-responsive, and paratransit services; vanpools; mobility coordinators; travel training; bicycle and pedestrian connections; education and outreach programs; or a combination of service types.

Unmet transportation needs deliverables

- Describe unmet transportation needs in your region and any challenges to meeting those needs.
- Describe appropriate and useful “family of transportation services” that would improve access for the community.

Technology

In addition to the traditional transportation services, technology can aid the planning and coordination of services. Intelligent transportation systems (ITS) represent a broad group of technology-based solutions to transportation issues, including automatic vehicle location, computer-aided dispatch, traveler information systems, and electronic payment and collection systems.

Consider using any geographic information systems or maps. Producing maps as part of the planning process can assist planners with identifying unmet transportation needs and developing effective transportation alternatives. As well, maps can be an effective means of showing gaps in transportation services to decision-makers and the general public.

Technology deliverables

- Identify how many active technology projects in your region.
- Describe areas that could be improved with ITS enhancement.
- Check that all ITS projects are included in WSDOT’s ITS architecture plan.

Develop strategies to meet public transportation needs

You should broadly identify strategies along with a list of prioritized projects to meet the identified gaps in service. Transportation solutions will vary in each area, depending on the resources available, size of the market for each alternative, and extent of existing services. Options include buying vehicles, increasing fixed-route service (extending hours or territory), employer vanpool services, dial-a-ride services, volunteer ride services, bus passes, travel training, and mobility management.

Transportation needs deliverables

- List the number of rides, trips, and hours of service that would be delivered under the proposed strategy/project.
- Explain whether you are creating a basic level of service in an area that wouldn’t otherwise have it.
- Describe whether you are creating service for a group of people that wouldn’t otherwise have it.

Coordination

You should identify how coordinated transportation will be used within your transportation alternatives. Coordination should be considered when determining your community priorities. Identify whether there is there a plan to leverage different resources. List different groups of people with special transportation needs who share/could share vehicles. Describe how information will be shared among the partners/riders.

Consider how you will continue to coordinate after the plan is complete. Describe how you will know if coordination is a success. Describe how the level and success of coordination will be measured.

Coordination deliverable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe how you will continue coordination efforts after the plan is completed.

Community project priorities

You should identify, describe and rank the preferred projects that address the unmet needs in your community. The description should provide a brief description of the proposed solution, estimated cost, and whether the solution worked. Include expected outcomes and whether the solution is cost-effective. Also describe the process for determining the alternatives and rankings, including who was included and whether your prioritization included coordinated transportation. Distinguish how new projects could more effectively meet your unmet need than existing projects. Determine whether your proposed projects meet your broadly described strategies.

The process for prioritizing and describing preferred alternatives must be developed and approved through a process that includes representatives from seniors, individuals with disabilities, general public, private companies, nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and others.

Local providers must refer to this plan when they apply for funding through WSDOT's public transportation grant program. Priorities and unmet needs identified in the HSTPs need to complement other existing plans.

Title VI requirements

Title VI nondiscrimination requirements exist to ensure that no person is treated differently based on race, color, or national origin. These requirements extend to all programs of an agency when federal funding is involved, regardless of the project/program that was federally funded.

For planning purposes, nondiscrimination can be summarized as reaching out to all represented segments of your service area population as part of your HSTP process. By conducting community engagement, your agency provides a comprehensive methodology

for ensuring that the public has input and investment into a process that will affect coordinated transportation. Having an HSTP that complies with federal Title VI non-discrimination requirements is required.

Your organization needs to include Title VI policy statement that describes how you will outreach to people who have limited English proficiency or are minority or low income. This outreach will help your HSTP to be more comprehensive and a better investment for the public transportation users.

Examples of WSDOT's Title VI and ADA statements in English and Spanish for documents:

Title VI Notice to Public

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

Notificación de Título VI al Público

Es la póliza de el Departamento de Transportes del Estado de Washington de asegurar que ninguna persona sea excluida de participación o sea negado los beneficios, o sea discriminado bajo cualquiera de sus programas y actividades financiado con fondos federales sobre la base de raza, color, origen nacional o sexo, como proveído por el Título VI de el Acto de Derechos Civiles de 1964. Cualquier persona que cree que sus protecciones de Título VI han sido violadas, puede hacer una queja con la Oficina de Igualdad de Oportunidades (OEO). Para información adicional con respecto a procedimientos de quejas de Título VI y/o información con respecto a nuestras obligaciones sin discriminación, por favor de comunicarse con el Coordinador de Título VI de la Oficina de Igualdad de Oportunidades (OEO) (360) 705-7082.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information

This material can be made available in an alternate format by emailing the Office of Equal Opportunity at wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov or by calling toll free, 855-362-4ADA(4232). Persons who are deaf or hard of hearing may make a request by calling the Washington State Relay at 711.

Información del Acta Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Este material es disponible en un formato alternative. Envíe su petición por correo electrónico al equipo de Oficina de Igualdad de Oportunidades (OEO) en wsdotada@wsdot.wa.gov o llamando gratis, 855-362-4ADA (4232). Personas sordas o con problemas de audición pueden solicitar llamando el relé de estado de Washington al 711.