
Implementing Coordinated Transportation in Pacific County

Findings and Recommendations

May 15, 2002

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1 Executive Summary

Under contract by the Coastal Community Action Program, a consultant from FLT Consulting, Inc. interviewed 18 transportation, social service, and private agencies to determine the feasibility of implementing a coordinated transportation plan in Pacific County.

The findings show that many stakeholders have an interest in implementing some level of coordinated transportation—especially in the Long Beach Peninsula area—but are unable to move forward without additional resources. Stakeholders lean towards Pacific Transit as the most logical agency to take the lead in implementing coordinated transportation services when and if funding is secured.

A number of opportunities to coordinate transportation were identified, as well as agreement on the transportation needs and coordination challenges.

The following recommendations are suggested based on the findings. The report provides options for the Coalition to consider under each recommendation.

- A. Take it slow and simple
- B. Designate Pacific Transit as lead agency
- C. Identify and pursue funding
- D. Demonstrate the possibilities
- E. Address the major concerns and challenges
- F. Maintain and expand the Coalition

2 Background

In 1999, the Coastal Community Action Program (CCAP) received and administered a planning grant from the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT). The grant funds were used to build a coalition of stakeholders interested in coordinating transportation resources in Pacific County, and to develop a coordinated transportation plan.

CCAP contracted with the Community Transportation Association to assist with the development of the plan. In 2002, the ***Coordinated Transportation Plan: Improving Access in Pacific County*** was published and distributed to the Pacific County Coordinated Transportation Coalition.

After the development of the plan, CCAP contracted with FLT Consulting, Inc. to:

- Interview stakeholders and assess the feasibility of implementing a coordinated transportation plan in Pacific County
- Prepare a report with interview findings and recommendations for appropriate next steps
- Facilitate two meetings of the Pacific County Coordinated Transportation Coalition

This report provides findings from the stakeholder interviews and recommendations on how the Coalition should proceed.

3 Approach

Stakeholder interviews were conducted in April and May of 2002. The majority of interviews were conducted in person, however several were conducted over the phone.

Interview participants were chosen based on the transportation services performed in the community, transportation need, and previous participation in coalition meetings.

A standard list of questions was developed prior to meeting with participants, but the interviews were informal and discussion varied depending upon the interview participant.

The findings and recommendations in this report will be presented to the Pacific County Coordinated Transportation Coalition on May 16, 2002 from 12 pm to 3:30 pm at the Courthouse Annex in South Bend, WA. The Coalition will meet again on June 20, 2002 at the same time and location to discuss and agree upon a plan of action.

4 Interview Participants

Representatives from the following 18 agencies were interviewed. Contact was made with the Shoalwater Tribal Center, but a meeting time was unable to be arranged.

Stakeholder Agency	Name	Title	Meeting Date
AARP	Genevieve Hatfield	Board Member	April 4
Catholic Community Services	Mike Curry	Executive Director	April 25
Coastal Community Action Program	Troy Colley	Executive Director	April 25
Coastal Community Action Program	Craig Dublanko	Finance Manager	April 25
Coastal Community Action Program	Roxanne Jackson	RSVP Coordinator	April 25
Chinook Tribe	Ray Gardner	Transportation Planner	April 4
DAV	Thelma Harris	Commander	April 2
DAV	Curt Kelly	Driver	April 2
Department of Social and Health Services, Regional Office	Shelba Maracci	CSO	April 4
Economic Development Council	Linda Rotmark	Executive Director	April 2
Ocean Beach School District	Nancy Olsen	Superintendent	April 11
Ocean Beach School District	Richard Eades	Transportation Manager	April 11
Ocean Park Resort	Curt Stephens	Owner/Manager	April 3
Olympic Area Agency on Aging (O3A)	Brent Apt	Manager	April 4
Pacific County	Bud Cuffel	Commissioner	April 3
Pacific Transit	Tim Russ	Manager	April 2
Paratransit Services	Tom Young	General Manager	April 26
Peninsula Senior Activity Center	Deloris Butcher	Volunteer	April 15
Peninsula Senior Activity Center	Larry Cook	President	April 15
Raymond School District	Mitchell Denning	Superintendent	April 26
South Bend School District	Nick Johnson	Superintendent	April 2
South Bend School District	Bruce Baird	Transportation Manager	April 2
Tours Plus	Jill Park	Manager	April 17
Willapa Valley School District	Mike Sullivan	Superintendent	April 2
Willapa Valley School District	Steve Hudson	Transportation Manager	April 2

5 Findings

Assessing the feasibility of implementing coordinated transportation in any community is evident by evaluating the following seven criteria:

- A clear vision and desire to reach it
- Adequate sponsorship or leadership
- Adequate resources
- The right people at the table
- An understanding of transportation needs
- Opportunities to coordinate transportation
- An understanding of challenges/issues and a willingness to address them

Based on the stakeholder interviews, the feasibility of implementing coordinated transportation in Pacific County was rated by these criteria.

A high rating is indicated by a “green light”, and means that conditions are optional for moving forward. The medium rating is indicated by a “caution sign”, and means that some work is needed before progressing further. A “stop sign” indicates a low rating, which means that significant work is needed and that activities should stop until the issue(s) can be addressed.

The ratings are subjective and not based on a scientific method.

High



Medium



Low



Is there a clear vision and a desire to reach it?

Most all interviewed stakeholders reported that coordinating transportation services makes sense and that there are opportunities to meet unmet transportation needs by more efficient use of resources. However, there is a general disbelief that it can actually happen.

Most participants were unfamiliar with, or did not understand, the coordination models outlined in the Coordinated Transportation Plan for Pacific County. When the general concepts of a coordinated call center and transportation brokerage were discussed however, many participants found the concept attractive. Some participants envisioned technology as playing a key role in developing a coordinated call/brokerage center, while others preferred a more simplistic approach.

The level of desire to pursue coordinated transportation varied between the two distinct regions of the county: the South Bend-Raymond-Willipa Valley area, and the Long Beach Peninsula area. Participants in the Long Beach area seemed to be more open and willing to providing transportation in a new and coordinated manner.



Is there adequate sponsorship or leadership?

The interview participants overwhelmingly viewed Pacific Transit as the lead agency with the infrastructure to make coordinated transportation happen. However, Pacific Transit is suffering from severe budget reductions due to the revenue loss from the recent repeal of the motor vehicle excise tax. While willing to act as a lead agency, Pacific Transit is not able to play a leadership role without additional resources.



Are there adequate resources?

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) has provided funding to the Coalition for coordinated transportation planning. However, the agency has limited to no demonstration and implementation dollars over the next 12-month period (July 2002 – June 2003). New funding opportunities may arise through federal grant opportunities such as the Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grant, or if the state transportation funding ballot measure passes this fall. Both of these potential opportunities would not generate income for coordinated transportation until next year. Other funding opportunities could come from businesses serving the community (local businesses, Costco, Fred Meyers, Walmart).



Are the right people at the table?

The majority of key stakeholders are participating in the Coordinated Transportation Coalition. However, several organizations or agencies were noted as being potential stakeholders but either is not aware of or actively participating in coordination activities. They are Bay Shuttle in Long Beach, local taxi services, churches, the Division of Developmental Disabilities, major employers, Paratransit Services (the Medicaid broker), and community clubs (e.g. Lions Club).



Is there an understanding of transportation needs?

Most all participants agreed on the following transportation needs:

- Out of county transportation for medical and shopping services (Astoria and Longview; and Olympia and Aberdeen).
- Senior transportation.
- Transportation for WorkFirst clients getting to jobs or training.
- Transportation for residents in remote areas (Tokeland, Shoalwater Tribe, Naselle).
- Increased public awareness of existing transportations services.



Are there opportunities to coordinate transportation?

A number of opportunities to coordinate transportation were identified. They include:

Countywide:

- Coordinate pick-up and drop-off points for DAV with transit routes.
- Coordinate transit and school maintenance and driver training
- Coordinate school and transit buses available for large community events, such as the Lewis & Clark event.
- Coordinate transportation services with major shopping centers (e.g. Walmart, Costco, Fred Meyers)

South Bend/Raymond/WillipaValley area:

- Coordinate Willipa Valley School District and Pacific Transit transportation on Route 6.

Long Beach Peninsula area:

- Coordinate Pacific Transit, Ocean Beach School District, Bay Shuttle, and Medicaid trips along the peninsula. The school district has a wheelchair bus sitting most of day.
- Coordinate with a potential community transportation effort being developed between the Chinook Tribe and the Lions Club.



Is there an understanding of challenges/issues and a willingness to address them?

Participants have a clear knowledge and concern regarding the challenges of coordinating transportation. The commitment to overcome these challenges is questionable given the lack of clear vision and resources. Challenges and concerns identified include:

- Lack of funding
- Liability and safety issues
- Not comfortable with putting general public on school buses with children
- Potential for shifting unfunded trips between providers
- How to fairly allocate the cost of trips among programs, agencies, and fare-paying individuals
- Changes to accounting practices
- Not sure if the need or ridership level is high enough to warrant major changes
- Concern about the impact on private transportation services
- Concern with losing local business if residents are able to access transportation to shopping outside the area
- Inability to group riders with different funding sources (veteran's transportation)
- Start-up challenges – how to get the word out and manage general confusion

6 Recommendations

A. Take it slow and simple

Given the consensus that coordinated transportation is a good idea, combined with the apprehension about how and if it would work in the county, the Coalition should pursue easy successes that prove the concept of coordination.

- Option A-1: Start “shopping around” the idea of coordinated transportation at community meetings. See what the community has to say about it.
- Option A-2: Develop a public awareness campaign communicating all of the transportation services currently available (e.g. Dial-a-Ride, Medicaid, veteran’s, private companies).
- Option A-3: Identify the pros and cons of identified coordination opportunities and act on the ones with the most potential (see ***D. Demonstrate the possibilities***).
- Option A-4: Designate an agency to be the central point of contact for community transportation information.

B. Designate Pacific Transit as lead agency

The current lead agency for administering the ACCT grant is the Coastal Community Action Program (CCAP). While the agency serves Pacific County, it is not highly visible in the community. Given the leadership role Pacific Transit plays in providing transportation in the county, the Coalition should consider using this agency as the lead for implementing coordinated transportation activities.

- Option B-1: Designate Pacific Transit as the lead agency to administer demonstration and implementation grants from ACCT and other sources.
- Option B-2: Retain CCAP as the lead agency to administer grants, however pass-through grant funding to Pacific Transit for the demonstration and implementation of coordinated transportation.

C. Identify and pursue funding

Without funding, coordinated transportation will not be able to happen in Pacific County. Funding is primarily needed for staffing resources to manage and implement coordinated transportation. The Coalition needs to identify potential funding sources and partners, and aggressively pursue them.

- Option C-1: Use the remaining ACCT planning dollars for demonstration purposes; and apply for ongoing ACCT support.

- Option C-2: Partner with CCAP, the Pacific County Economic Development Council, and the Chinook Tribe to research and apply for other grants.
- Option C-3: Partner with local businesses or regional businesses to fund specific coordinated transportation projects.

D. Demonstrate the possibilities

Opportunities for coordination exist in the community; identify which best meets the community needs and act upon them.

- Option D-1: Request large shopping centers such as Walmart, Costco, and Fred Meyers to provide shopping transportation to and from their facilities.
- Option D-2: Coordinate pick-up and drop-off points between the DAV veteran's transportation program and Pacific Transit. Potentially link non-veteran riders on the DAV vehicles for out-of-county transportation.
- Option D-3: Partner with Chinook Tribe and Lions Club efforts to provide volunteer transportation to the community.
- Option D-4: Review route similarities and vehicle capacity along the Long Beach Peninsula between Pacific Transit, the Ocean Beach School District, Paratransit Services (Medicaid) and Bay Shuttle. Coordinate services where appropriate. Potentially demonstrate a coordinated call call/brokerage center for these participating agencies.
- Option D-5: Develop a cooperative responsible for the maintenance and driver training for school districts and Pacific Transit (e.g. Aberdeen-Hoquiam Transportation Cooperative)
- Option D-6: Utilize Willipa Valley School District buses as public transportation on Route 6 when children are not present.

E. Address the major concerns and challenges

The Coalition should prioritize and address the major concerns and challenges facing coordinated transportation. Addressing the funding issue is mandatory. Other potential focus could address useage questions, liability and safety, concerns, and cost shifting fears.

- Option E-1: Conduct a survey of the Long Beach Peninsula community to identify potential useage of coordinated transportation services. Insert the survey in the Peninsula Senior Activity Center newsletter.
- Option E-2: Work with the ACCT School/Community Transportation Workgroup to address liability and safety issues of using school buses as public transportation.
- Option E-3: Develop minimum driver and vehicle standards for transportation providers providing transportation to different population groups (e.g. transportation children v.s. the general public).
- Option E-4: Develop a method to fairly share the cost of grouped trips between multiple funders.

F. Maintain and expand the Coalition

The Coalition should meet on a quarterly basis and provide long-range vision, prioritize short-term goals and tasks, provide the opportunity for transit, school, and social service providers to formally and informally coordinate services, and advocate for coordinated transportation.

- Option F-1: Recruit additional stakeholders to participate, including Bay Shuttle, local taxi services, churches, the division of developmental disabilities, major employers, Paratransit Services (the Medicaid broker), and community clubs (e.g. Lions Club).
- Option F-2: Break the Coalition into workgroups around specific tasks. Workgroups should be meet more frequently than the Coalition to achieve the task objectives.
- Option F-3: Develop a simple and clear long-range plan, outlining where the Coalition is today and where the Coalition wants to be in 5 to 10 years.