



## CHAPTER VI

# Coordination Opportunities

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Chapter VI provides a description of potential coordination opportunities and strategies in two areas. The first section in this chapter offers potential transit service coordination strategies achievable with *existing* services. Additional discussion among the providers will be needed to address new or extensions of service beyond the service along the major corridors. The second section in this chapter offers potential managerial/administrative coordination strategies, expanding on the discussion in previous chapters.



### POTENTIAL COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES - EXISTING SERVICES

This section describes coordination opportunities for existing services by county. The section also recommends new services where needed.

#### Stevens County

##### Intercity Bus Service from Kettle Falls to Spokane

The Gold Line is a new intercity bus service that is scheduled to begin early September 2010 and is part of the Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program, a collaboration between the Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and Greyhound that will connect Kettle Falls, Colville, Chewelah, and Deer Park to Spokane. This new bus line will join the three Travel Washington bus routes—the Apple Line, the Grape Line and the Dungeness Line that link into the Greyhound and the Northwestern Stage Lines that connect to the major cities in Washington. This intercity service will depart from Kettle Falls at 7:30 a.m. and reach Spokane at 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. There is also another southbound trip that leaves Kettle Falls at 1:30 p.m. and reaches Spokane at 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. There are two northbound trips that leave Spokane at 10:55 to 11:25 a.m. and 4:45 to 5:15 p.m. to reach Kettle Falls at 1:25 p.m. and 7:20 p.m., respectively.

### Service between Kettle Falls, Colville, and Chewelah

The commuter service operated by Rural Resources (RR) Community Action between Kettle Falls, Colville, and Chewelah needs to be modified to a deviated fixed route serving commuters and other individuals who may want to connect to the Gold Line to access Spokane. By coordinating those local/commuter trips and tying into proposed intercity service, Rural Resources Community Action has the potential to redirect resources in order to offer more services between Kettle Falls and Chewelah.

This deviated fixed-route structure will be similar to the existing commuter routes that will serve Safeway, Walmart, Community College, the casino at Chewelah, Kettle Falls, and Rural Resources. This route will also continue to help commuters doing a reverse commute from Colville into Kettle Falls and Chewelah into Colville. Passengers who need service from a location other than the designated bus stops will need to schedule an advance reservation so that the vehicles can be scheduled for pick-up and drop-off. The current schedule of the commuter service will have to be slightly modified on its southbound trip from Kettle Falls to Colville and northbound trip from Chewelah to Colville to meet the intercity connection at Rural Resources in Colville (also the boarding location for the southbound Gold Line) at 7:45 a.m. Extended evening service hours will need to be added on the commuter route to connect passengers traveling from the intercity service at Colville (at 7:05 p.m.) to Kettle Falls and Chewelah. The existing Stevens County dial-a-ride has service from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. and because of its limited service hours will not be able to get passengers to the new intercity service, especially those passengers who do not live on the corridor and near the boarding locations. The deviated fixed route will, however, help those passengers feed into the intercity service and provide access to Colville, Kettle Falls, and Chewelah for work. Extended service hours on the deviated fixed route would be Monday through Friday between the hours of 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The cost to operate the extended service hours was calculated using the RR current cost per hour of \$105.

- Number of vehicles = 2
- Additional Annual Service Hours = 1,000
- Additional Annual Service Cost = \$105,000

### Service on the Spokane Indian Reservation

The Spokane Tribal Transit Program “The Moccasin Express” operated by the Spokane Tribe of Indians is scheduled to start by October 2010. This new transit service has two elements—a deviated fixed route and vanpool service for employees and students. The deviated fixed route provides service Monday through Thursday on the Spokane Indian Reservation between Two Rivers (west end), New House Lane (east end) and Wellpinit (central). These services should continue as planned.

### Vanpool Service into Spokane

The vanpool program provided by the Spokane Tribal Transit Program should be expanded to include trips from Kettle Falls, Colville, and Chewelah to Spokane so that they can better meet the needs of commuters/students going to Spokane.

## **Ferry County**

### Service between Republic and Curlew

Ferry County has a dial-a-ride service operated by Rural Resources Community Action that provides service between Republic and Curlew from Monday to Thursday. This service should continue to provide service to meet the demands of residents.

### Service on the Colville Indian Reservation

The Colville Confederated Tribes receives 5311 tribal transit funds. The tribe uses the funds to contract service to Okanogon County Transportation and Nutrition (OCTN) to provide transit service between Omak, Nespalem, and Coulee Dam. OCTN and the Colville Confederated Tribes also receive grants from the Washington Department of Transportation and the Federal Transit Administration. This service is fare free and is provided Monday to Friday. The tribe also plans on extending service to Keller and Inchelium.

## **Pend Oreille County**

### Service between Metaline Falls and Newport

Rural Resources Community Action provides Pend Oreille dial-a-ride service on Fridays from anywhere in Pend Oreille County (including Metaline Falls) to Newport for shopping, medical, social, and other services. This service needs to be coordinated with the Kalispel tribe, which provides service between Usk and Ione, and the shopping trips provided by RR, from Metaline Falls, Metaline, and Ione to Colville, every two weeks on Fridays.

### Service between the Wellness Center (Usk) and Newport

Rural Resources Community Action and the Kaltran service already work together to provide service between Newport and the Wellness Center, Monday through Thursday. RR provides four round-trips between Newport and the Kalispel Tribal Wellness Center and Kaltran also provides service (two times a day) during hours that RR is not operating that route. This service needs to be provided by one provider in order for riders to have greater access to the Wellness Center and for services into Newport. Many times passengers board on one type of bus and are not aware that they may be expected to board another vehicle with different paint schemes and logos to get back. Having one provider operating the service will lead to consistency and familiarity with the service on the corridor.

### Service between the Wellness Center (Usk) and Newport into Spokane

Special Mobility Service provides service four days a week—Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday—with two round-trips per day from Spokane with service into Priest River, ID/Newport, WA. Kaltran provides service between the Tribal Wellness Center and North Spokane with three round-trips per day, four days a week—Monday through Thursday. We recommend that the two services be combined to provide service from Newport to the Wellness Center to Spokane. It is proposed that coordinated efforts between the two transportation providers will allow service to be provided five days a week, Monday through Friday, increase the service, and will also help to meet the need of residents who would like to use the service to get to work. The cost to operate the service from Newport to the Wellness Center to Spokane was calculated based on Kaltran's current cost per hour of \$78.

This service would have three round-trips per day. A one-way trip from Newport to the Wellness Center to Spokane would be approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes.

- Number of vehicles = 1
- Annual Service Hours = 2,625
- Annual Service Cost = \$204,750

The basic information needed at the customer's point-of-service is the following:

- Recognizable identification information so the customer-rider knows s/he is boarding the correct vehicle, traveling in the expected direction, to the expected destination.
- Schedule information, including pick-up time, drop-off time, and time points for any intermediate stops.
- Route information, such as the roads to be traveled, the stop locations, and information about connecting services.
- Fare information, particularly if fares are different in price or are handled differently among coordinated transit providers.
- How to obtain additional assistance.

### Commuter Service between the Wellness Center (Usk), Newport to Spokane

The existing bus schedules with service between Newport/Cusick and Spokane do not allow commuters to work in Spokane. A new vanpool service is proposed to allow people to go to Spokane for work. Depending on the success of this vanpool program, a commuter bus service to meet the needs of commuters going to work in Spokane is a possible next step.

## **POTENTIAL ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION STRATEGIES**

### **Joint Grant Writing**

The various transit and human service providers in the region should work together to coordinate grant submissions for existing services especially within a county or a corridor. As services are coordinated to a greater degree, are expanded, or as new services are initiated, joint grant writing efforts will become increasingly important.



Based on which service options might be operated, how vehicle sharing options might be implemented, and what marketing/education/outreach efforts might be

## *Coordination Opportunities*

needed, different grant application objectives and priorities would be created. The overall goal remains the same—to increase the amount and predictability of grant funding for the tri-county area. If the total amount of grant funding is increased to the tri-county area, then real and perceived barriers to coordination become easier to address.

The implementation steps below are expanded from the work presented in previous chapters.

### Implementation Steps

- The agencies should review their needs and create a list of capital and operational requirements.
  - A common set of information about the needs should be provided for all needs in the list.
  - The list should reflect the next six years' worth of needs—a typical time frame for a municipal capital improvements program (CIP) or transit development program (TDP) list.
- The agencies should itemize their lists and determine a priority of needs based on at least the following:
  - Schedule of need during the next six years.
  - Benefits of receiving and consequences of not receiving funding.
  - Ability of the funded project/item to meet multiple needs.
  - Equity measure that provides some distribution of benefit, geographically (i.e., three counties), and project size (i.e., some large and some small).
- The grant(s) should be developed based on the priority list developed by agencies and approved by the Technical Advisory Committee and the Policy Board.
  - Match priority lists to grants by establishing procedures for recurring (i.e., yearly or bi-annually) versus non-recurring grants (i.e., very infrequent or one-of-a-kind.)
  - The priority list itself becomes a communication tool for common interests.
- The grant should be approved by each of the agencies' boards/councils, along with approval of any local match funding.

- ▶ Staff-level prioritization and agreement to that prioritization process often makes policy-level approval easier.
- ▶ Clarify whether local match is cash or in-kind and what, if any, reporting or other grant performance requirements exist.
- The agencies should ensure each grant references the additional agencies'/ providers' grants for the corridor.
  - ▶ Regular intervals (i.e., yearly) for updating basic agency information will make it easier for the grant writers to make appropriate references in grant applications.

### **Centralized Dispatching**

Chapter V described a step-wise, gradually increasing approach to the concept of centralized dispatching. The steps from least complex and least coordination-intensive to most complex and coordination-intensive are:

- Establishing a one-call center.
- Establishing a coordinated reservations, scheduling, and dispatching system.
- Consolidate reservations, scheduling, and dispatching into a single “brokerage.”

The purpose of the one-call center is to answer the transit user question, “Where do I get more information about transit services to...?” The purpose of the coordinated system is to put transit users onto transit bus services that operate independently. The purpose of the consolidated brokerage is to actively balance all transit operations and transit providers and place transit users onto transit bus services in the most efficient manner possible, making distinctions among the providers invisible to the transit user.

The benefits of all of these levels of coordination/consolidation efforts are as follows:

- Reduction in the duplication of administrative costs based on an economy of scale.
- Provides a single point of contact for transit system users.
- Increase in the marketability of the region’s transit service.
- Allows for the potential of improved fleet coordination.
- Greater potential to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.

## One-Call Center Implementation Steps

The information below is intended to provide an expanded, while not all-inclusive, implementation checklist. It is suggested that actual implementation will need to go far beyond the detail provided here. The costs for a typical call center are \$75,000 to \$150,000. These may not be all new costs as existing reservation functions are consolidated.



- Determine who will house the call center.
  - ▶ Housed within an existing agency or by a third party
  - ▶ Phone only, or phone plus Internet, including accessibility options for persons with disabilities
  - ▶ Static prerecorded information or a live operator
  - ▶ Capacity to receive/store voice messages or take e-mail messages
  - ▶ Transfer/referral decision “tree” or handling of calls in the absence of a live operator
  - ▶ Participating agencies versus non-participating agencies
  
- Determine what information will be provided to customers and how (i.e., marketing plan) it will be delivered to customers.
  - ▶ General call center information—purpose, hours, phone number, and/or e-mail address
  - ▶ Transit provider/agency hours, service frequencies, phone number, and/or e-mail address
  - ▶ Call center-specific brochure production
  - ▶ Print advertising—papers, Internet, community brochures/maps
  - ▶ Transit advertising—in-bus placards or “interiors,” on-bus/exterior advertising (i.e., bumper stickers to advertising panels)
  - ▶ County, reservation, city, town, or other municipal postings

(Also see the section on coordinated marketing, education, and outreach.)
  
- Identify each agency’s level of funding to cover the cost of the call center.
  - ▶ Determine total costs of the ideal call center.
  - ▶ Agree to funding commitments for a specified time period (i.e., six months, one year, or two years).
  - ▶ Scale start-up call center appropriately to funding partners available and initial ease of implementation.

- ▶ Specify cost-sharing commitments in an intergovernmental agreement.
- ▶ Provide “option” costs for any elements of the ideal call center that are not part of the initial start-up.
  
- Intergovernmental agreement needs to be created detailing the responsibility of each agency.
  - ▶ Who updates information?
  - ▶ How frequently is information updated?
  - ▶ Terms of participation—entry requirements, ongoing maintenance responsibilities, financial commitments, roles, and exit requirements.
  
- Start-up of the Call Center.
  - ▶ Develop a roll-out plan, including user training for participating agencies, a pre-test or partial implementation period to handle unanticipated issues if they arise, set target dates for partial and full implementation, and identify methods of ongoing technical support/training for people new to the system.
  - ▶ Purchase the service or equipment and service package and install in the selected agency’s location.
  - ▶ Communicate the roll-out plan to all prior to implementation.
  - ▶ Implement the roll-out plan.

### Coordinated Reservations, Scheduling, and Dispatching - Implementation Steps

The implementation steps for reservations, scheduling, and dispatching are similar to those outlined for the call center and involve more decisions about software, hardware, office space, and/or space on vehicles for some of the equipment.

The capital costs for a reservations, scheduling, and dispatch system are \$25,000 to \$100,000. This includes a geographic information system (GIS)-based reservation and dispatch software and hardware package. If mobile data terminals (MDT) and automatic vehicle location (AVL) devices are added, the cost is approximately \$9,000 per vehicle.

Start-up, training, and maintenance of the system also imply a higher level of operating costs as compared to a call center. Consequently the decision process leading to the implementation of this type of system is more involved.

### Consolidated Brokerage - Implementation Steps

The implementation steps for a consolidated brokerage are outlined for the call center and are an extension of the call center and reservations, scheduling, and dispatch discussions.

As compared to the reservations, scheduling, and dispatch discussion, the consolidated brokerage involves more of the management and invoicing functions being transferred or ceded to the person(s) acting as the broker. In addition to schedule information, the broker must have information about the cost structures of the various providers to be able to make decisions about the most cost-effective choices when assigning a passenger-trip request among a choice of available providers.

The decision process leading to the implementation of this type of system is more involved than a call center. Intergovernmental agreements and contracts are more complex for this type of system as compared to the reservations, scheduling, and dispatch system.

### **Coordinated Marketing, Education, and Outreach**

This section proposes options for coordinating marketing, education, and outreach efforts, focused on the possibility of a one-call center and/or any of the intercity service coordination strategies described below.

### Marketing of a One-Call Center

The purpose of a one-call center is to provide centralized information about available public transit services. The transit providers participating in this effort would need to decide whether their existing phone numbers and/or Internet addresses would continue to exist and be routed to a single center or whether existing phone numbers and/or Internet addresses would be phased out. Both options are functionally equivalent, with only a minor delay in rerouting calls or web pages if the existing phone numbers and web addresses are to stay active.

Under either scenario, whether keeping or phasing out existing phone numbers and web addresses, a new [additional] phone number and/or web address is

recommended. From this point in the text, the discussion uses the phone number as the example, with the same or very similar information applying to a web address.

The new phone number is the receiving end of calls. Customers calling into a new number or being connected through to the call center will need to be informed of what to expect in order to be comfortable with the service. The basic information needed is as follows:



- Recognizable identification information so callers know they have reached the number they intended to call.
- Hours of operation for the call center itself.
- Hours of operation for bus providers served by the call center.
- Information available and **not** available through the call center.
  - Participating transit providers.
  - Transit provider information only versus both transit and program information.
- Where to find information that is **not** available through the call center.
- How to leave messages and provide customer service feedback, including how frequently messages are checked and how feedback is handled.
- How to navigate the “phone tree” of information if a live operator is not available.

Customers will need to be able to find the new phone number or be informed that the call center is being implemented. The number could be a seven-digit number with a prefix (first three numbers) common to phone numbers in the Ferry, Stevens, and Pend Oreille Counties area. Alternately, a 211 or 511 number could be established. These operate like the three-digit 9-1-1 emergency service, with 2-1-1 calls being designated for local government services and 5-1-1 numbers being designated for transportation services. The availability of either or both 211 and 511 numbers varies widely.

The following is a list of ideas to inform people about the new call center number. This list is not intended to be exhaustive or all-encompassing.

## Coordination Opportunities

- Develop a brochure.
  - Distribute onboard transit services.
  - Distribute at program centers.
  - Distribute directly through a mailing to program participants.
  - Post in public places used and seen by program participants and/or the general public.
  
- Develop a press release of one-quarter to one-half page for distribution to the local newspaper, creators of program- or member-based newsletters, commercial publications such as those created by the Chamber of Commerce or by realtors, and broadcast media (radio and/or television).
  
- Pay for advertising if the budget allows or request for free as a community service:
  - Local newspaper.
  - Local commercial newsletters.
  - Billboards.
  - Radio and/or television.-
  - Window signs (like a political campaign sign) for businesses that wish to show support or affiliation with the transit service.
  - Community event fliers/pamphlets such as those used to promote holiday events (i.e., Fourth of July fireworks, Ocktoberfest, etc.), community events (fairs, festivals, etc.), and related community activities run by others (Bingo night, bowling night, etc.).
  
- Outgoing message recording that plays for callers to existing transit provider numbers, either after hours or if and when a person is placed on “hold” during normal business hours.
  
- Exterior bus advertising from small bumper stickers on existing vans/ buses (i.e., “Call 777-7777 to ride this bus”) to larger panel advertising on the side of vans/buses.
  
- Refrigerator magnets, stationery, pens, pencils, or other similar low-cost promotional giveaway items.

