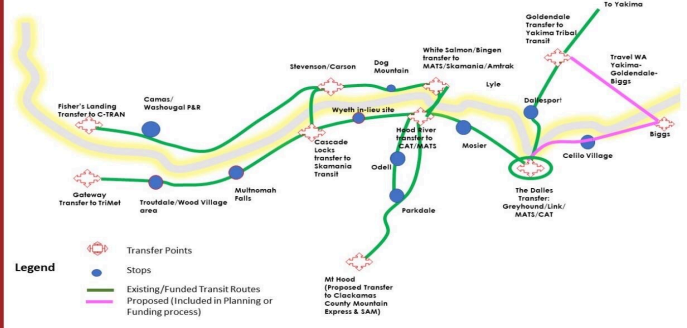


Gorge Transit: Existing and Proposed Routes



Transit Moves People. People Move Oregon.

Public transportation does a lot of important things that you might not even notice. It enables workers to get to jobs, older adults to medical facilities, younger people to schools, bike riders to urban centers, disabled adults to appointments and family members to shopping areas.

As public transportation matures and expands in Oregon, it will do many more important things. Electric buses will cut carbon emissions. Dial-a-ride and weekend service will give people more mobility options. Inter-community routes will expand the concept of neighborhood. On-demand scheduling and integrated payment platforms will empower statewide car-free travel. And that's just the beginning.

Oregon's 41 transit agencies have benefitted from additional funding through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) approved by the 2017 legislature.

In the attached backgrounders, the agencies tell their stories – what they did during the pandemic, how they invested their STIF funds and where they could invest additional STIF funding if it was available.



Check out the backgrounders at TransitMovesOregon.com

House District 32



Your Guide to Sunset Empire Transit District

Why SETD service is so vital

SETD provides Day Pass Vouchers to local service groups that are given to people to go to medical, dental or counseling visits.

The cost of a taxi between North Coast cities can cost \$40 one-way. Bus trips are much cheaper.

Many bus riders are also bicycle riders who find it easy to combine both – even riders with fat-tire bikes that now fit on SETD's bike racks.

SETD initiated a new service that assists veterans go to doctor and dental visits.

Long stretches of rural roads without streetlights in rainy weather can be dangerous for workers eager to get home after a long day on the job.

SETD doubled service on the busiest routes used by commuters.

Sunset Empire Transportation District (SETD) was approved as a special district by Clatsop County commissioners in 1993. Its service area includes all of Clatsop County, covering 1,085 square miles on the North Oregon Coast.

SETD provides rural transportation services between five incorporated cities, serving more than 41,000 county residents. SETD also serves riders from Columbia and Multnomah counties three times daily along the Lower Columbia Connector Route that extends 200 miles roundtrip from Astoria to Portland.

SETD offers routes for hotel and restaurant workers on the Oregon coast. Routes also serve Clatsop Community College and Tongue Point Job Corp Center staff and students. Employees from fish processing plants along the waterfront in Astoria and Warrenton also rely on SETD services.

Tourists traveling by boat, cruise ships, trailers and motor homes often use the bus routes to travel throughout the area. SETD has four shorter destination-to-destination routes specifically for the summer influx of tourists.

SETD routes go to Providence Seaside Hospital and clinic, Cannon Beach Providence clinic, Seaside Providence urgent care clinic, Columbia Memorial Hospital, the Knight Cancer Center, the Astoria Dialysis Center and several other medical clinics in Astoria.

Pre-COVID ridership averaged 4,645 rides per week. In FY 2022, SETD is averaging 2,762 rides per week.

NW Connector

SETD is a member of the NW Connector, a coordinated regional transit system that includes five transit agencies in NW Oregon: Columbia County Rider, Sunset Empire Transportation District, Tillamook County Transportation District, Benton County Transit and Lincoln County Transit.

The NW Connector transit system was created to provide seamless travel between the Willamette Valley and Oregon Coast from Astoria to Yachats. NW Connector bus schedules are linked to provide continuity of service, making it an easy-to-use alternative for auto travelers and bicyclists going to the coast to cycle. The NW Connector's network of stops allows riders to plan multiple stops and trip destinations. Riders can pay as they go or purchase a discounted three-day or seven-day pass. info@nworegontransit.org (See attached map).





SETD implemented real-time bus location programs, online ticket purchasing and trip planning for riders in the last three years

How many buses, vans and other vehicles do you operate?

SETD maintains 26 vehicles –16 for fixed routes, six buses for curb-to-curb service Ride Assist and four vehicles for operations and administration. Eight new buses have been ordered.

Key priorities for making service route decisions?



Twice a year, SETD adjusts routes based on driver and rider input, performance monitoring data, community need and seasonal traffic. As a member of the Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance (NWOTA), SETD makes schedule changes to provide smooth connections between transit services. SETD is running routes with reduced service it lacks CDL drivers. Altering or suspending routes is based on location, ridership numbers and equitable service coverage throughout the district. As funding allows and with increased staffing, SETD will add service in high demand areas and in line with the agency's Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan and Long-Range Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

How has SETD applied its funding from the STIF?

Initiated service for veterans to go to doctor and dentist visits

STIF funds have been used to expand service and increase frequency of bus service in areas with a high percentage of low-income households, fund implementation of programs to reduce fares, provide service for students and staff to the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station (MERTS) campus, install bus shelters and new signage and purchase replacement and expansion buses.

How would SETD apply additional STIF funding?

Design a mobility training and assessment center, which will expand educational, employment and social opportunities for riders with disabilities and people living in historically underserved areas

Add micro-transit on-demand service, expand fixed route service in high demand areas, increase accessibility and safety of bus stops and shelters and improve information to the public, travel assessments and travel trainings. These services would improve access to employment, human services, non-emergent medical appointments and encourage shared ride service.

Expand service in underserved rural areas, hire and train more drivers and build a new Operations Center out of the tsunami zone. Upgrade vans and buses, transit monitoring and maintenance systems. Create a public transit education and mobility training center. Replace older public transit vehicles with newer lower or no emissions ones.

Increase access to public areas including parks, trails, museums, and other historical and public areas and strengthen regional transportation networks.



Ordinary People Doing the Extraordinary



The transportation industry made profound changes in a short time during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sunset Empire Transit and partners Tillamook County Transportation District/NW Rides responded by bringing food to seniors and disabled persons.

“There was an elderly couple eating leaves off their garden plants for two days before their meal box delivery arrived,” recalled Jennifer Geisler, Paratransit Supervisor for Sunset Empire Transit. “It was devastating to hear.”

Drawing on resources from Ecolane and its scheduling software, Geisler set up routes, then coordinated with the food bank to pick up food boxes and deliver them. It turns out a paratransit van can hold 12 people – or 200 food boxes that weigh 30 pounds each.

In the first three weeks of the service, transit workers delivered 900 pounds of badly needed food. “We saw firsthand happiness and tears of joy,” Geisler says.

[Ecolane](#) CEO Steve Ross explained, “Transit is not just about ensuring people arrive from one place to another, it is about a community of individuals who care and who do what they need to do to assist others.”

nwCONNECTOR

Public Transit Across NW Oregon



CONNECTOR 3-Day (\$25) and 7-Day (\$30) passes may be purchased from drivers on any route served by CONNECTOR alliance partners. Visitor passes allow one trip to the coast from Portland or the Albany/Corvallis area, one return trip, and unlimited travel in Clatsop, Tillamook and Lincoln Counties (from Astoria to Yachats).

For more information please check out
www.nwconnector.org