



Human Services Transportation Plan – 2022 UPDATE Amendment #1



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YVCOG Human Services Transportation Plan 2022 Update #1

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Introduction

The Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) Human Services Transportation Plan is a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan, the result of efforts to:

1. Obtain input representing public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers and participation by members of the public.
2. Identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, veterans, youth, people with low-incomes and others.
3. Assess the existing transportation resources, needs and service gaps of Yakima County, Washington
4. Provide strategies for meeting identified local needs
5. Prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation
6. Maximize the utilization of resources while minimizing duplication of services
7. Ensure compliance with Federal transportation laws.

The Washington State Department of Transportation provides funding and guidance to the Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (MPOs/RTPOs) to develop the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP or the Plan), which was implemented as follows:

- YVCOG is the lead agency for the Yakima County MPO/RTPO.
- Selected to serve as the Lead Agency for this effort, YVCOG facilitates the work of the Mobilizing Public Access to County-Wide Transportation Committee (MPACT) in developing the HSTP, coordinating the assessment activities and preparing the draft plan.
- The YVCOG MPACT Committee identifies and addresses transportation barriers for the special needs community with regional service providers; thereby allowing the special needs community to better access services, employment opportunities and daily quality of life activities. MPACT provides the framework for development of the Yakima County Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan. MPACT's goal has been:

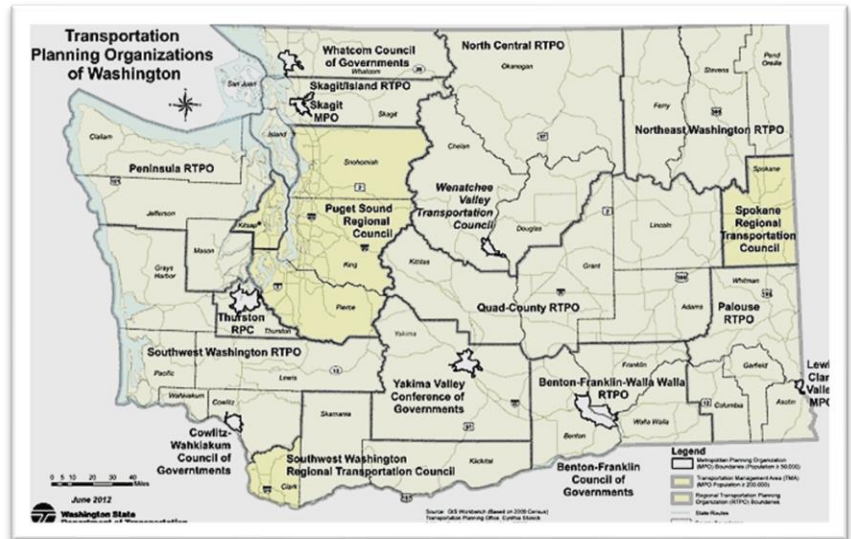
“Improving transportation effectiveness and efficiency throughout Yakima County by collaboration”.

The first version of the Plan was approved in April 2007 and updated in 2010, 2014, and 2018. Plans must be updated every four years to receive funding for the next biennium.

This update of the Human Services Transportation Plan provides the most current information available about Yakima County, with the goal of identifying new transportation services implemented since the last update of the Plan, as well as any changes in demographics, needs, gaps, barriers or resources.

The YVCOG Human Services Transportation Plan describes the overall transportation needs for those who need transportation due to lack of available services, communication barriers, limited income, youth, elderly, veteran, or disability.

The Federal Transit Administration requires the establishment of local developed and coordinated Human Service Transportation Plans for special needs transportation programs. In addition, Washington State Department of Transportation Consolidated Grant program applicants are required to participate in the planning process with their local Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) or Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO). These plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, youth, veterans, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation. Washington Revised Code RCW 81.66.010(3) defines “persons with special transportation needs.” A person with special transportation needs means those persons, including their personal attendants, who because of physical or mental disability, income status, or age are unable to transport themselves or to purchase transportation.



Stakeholder Description

MPACT, appointed by the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments Executive Policy Board, is the planning committee that maintains the Human Services Transportation Plan. Regular meetings are held to ensure completion of established goals leading towards the completion of the plan. MPACT consists of representation from the following agencies:

- Catholic Family and Child Services
- City of Union Gap (Transit)
- City of Selah (Transit)
- City of Yakima (Transit)
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Social and Health Services, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Educational School District 105
- EnTrust Community Services
- Medstar Transportation
- North Star Lodge
- People For People
- Protran East (NEMT Transportation)
- South Central Workforce Council
- SE Washington Long Term Care
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Wellness House
- Department of Services for the Blind
- Department of Social and Health Services
- WorkSource – Employment Security
- Yakama Nation Tribal Transit Program - Pahto Public Passage
- Yakima County
- Yakima County Veterans Program
- Yakima Specialties
- Yakima Police Athletic League (YPAL)
- Yakima Valley Conference of Governments
- Yakima Valley Farmworkers Clinic
- Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management
- Residents of Yakima County

Methodology

Planning

Preparations for this update of the Plan began in September 2021 and continued through August 2022, during which time the following activities took place:

- ☞ The MPACT committee identified its primary planning team and the stakeholders who would conduct outreach to people with disabilities, seniors, youth, veterans and limited income and communication barriers.
- ☞ In March 2022, YVCOG initiated the Yakima Valley Regional Transit Feasibility Study (TFS) effort that shares duplicate research and networking activities including a bilingual transit needs online survey to obtain or confirm current or updated contact information of stakeholders
- ☞ YVCOG, WSDOT and select jurisdictions and affected stakeholders *initiated* multi-modal corridor planning activities to address pedestrian, bicycle, and transit accessibility, safety, and efficiency opportunities including:
 1. SR 24 (Moxee) Corridor Study – Began 2019/20 – Currently underway
 2. West Powerhouse / SR 12 Corridor Study – Completed Summer 2022
 3. City of Naches / SR 12 Corridor Study – Scoping under development
 4. SR 97 / I-82 / Toppenish Freight Express Route – Planned for 2023 & 2024
- ☞ Surveys and existing outreach strategies to engage individuals with special needs were reviewed by the MPACT committee, paper and online surveys were developed
- ☞ Paper surveys and email invitations for electronic surveys were distributed
- ☞ Outreach activities were planned and implemented.
- ☞ YVCOG MPO/RTPO approved its annual update of the Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Architecture Plan in December 2021

Media

Local English and Spanish speaking media organizations provided an opportunity to share with the community the purpose of the HSTP and invite input regarding the transportation needs of people in the county.

English and Spanish “Quick Response” or (QR) Code posters and postcards were distributed to over publicly accessible facilities (city halls, libraries, post offices, social service agencies, rural retail businesses, community centers, medical clinics; in addition to transit, paratransit, and special needs transportation providers throughout July and August 2022.

Electronic announcements we distributed to YVCOG’s General Membership, Transportation Policy Board, Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and MPACT’s mass email lists; and multiple multi-modal transportation interest groups that YVCOG actively partners. Several municipalities added announcements of the study and associated survey to their website and/or shared with their email contacts.

Data Collection

A variety of strategies were employed, including:

- Obtain operational barrier information by through input from service providers and drivers
- Announcing the plan update and transit feasibility study and accompanying surveys to various transportation stakeholder groups, social service providers, and local government agencies,
- Providing “poster” and “postcard” announcements for potential survey takers with an internet link to take the survey at their convenience
- Producing a self-scheduled transportation survey in both English and Spanish, and available on multiple electronic platforms,
- Presentations and one-to-one visits, emails, or telephone communications.

Surveys

The online survey was developed in English and Spanish, and distributed between July 16 and September 15, 2022 through mass stakeholder emails, and posters/postcards at over 50 sites including libraries, city halls, post offices, the county courthouse, web pages and individual service providers and businesses. 159 surveys were completed with 37 (23%) identifying as being Hispanic, Latino/a/x or Spanish origin; 108 identified as white/Caucasian, 9 as American Indian/Alaska Native, 4 as Asian, and 3 as Black/African American. Respondents could provide multiple responses.

Surveys were returned and compiled to identify transportation needs, and identification of the unmet transportation needs. These surveys provided insight into the individual’s transportation needs, as well as assisting the service providers in determining how best to meet these needs through their services.

2022 Transit Feasibility Study / Human Services Transportation Plan Survey (Summer 2022)		
Jurisdiction (ZIP Code)	Responses	Percentage
Yakima (98901, 98902, 98908)	101	63%
Moxee (98936)	12	8%
Selah (98924)	9	6%
Other (Didn’t Specify)	7	4%
Sunnyside (98944)	5	3%
Tieton (98947)	5	3%
Grandview (98930)	4	3%
Union Gap (98903)	4	3%
Toppenish (98948)	3	2%
Naches (98937) / Buena (98921)	2 (each)	1% (each)
Granger (98932) / Mabton (98935) / Wapato (98951) / White Swan (98952) / Zillah (98953)	1 (each)	< 1% (each)
Cowiche, Goose Prairie, Harrah, Outlook, and Parker	N/A	N/A

Notable results of the survey include:

- 43% of respondents have access to a personal vehicle only part of the average week, while 32% have access two days a week or less

- Respondents regular travel needs (7 days a week) include: Errands (88%); Recreation (65%); Medical Appointments (61%); Work/Job Training (60%); Visiting Family/Friends (58%); Social Events (57%); School (19 %); Child Care (14%) and Senior Services (7%)
- If “Public Transportation is **sufficiently available...**” respondents would like to use public transportation for: Errands (50%), Work/Job Training (48%); Social Events (41%); Recreation (36%); Medical Appointments (33%); Visiting Family/Friend (30%); School (12%). Senior Services and Child Care (6% each)
- Expanded Service Hours (40%), increased frequency of service (39%), and improved transit connections between neighboring transit service areas “providers” (36%) were viewed as the most beneficial in improving the public transportation experience.
- When asked if the respondent had direct access to the following transportation modes via public transit

Yakima Airport	54%
Passenger Rail (if available in the future)	43%
Other Regional Bus Services	38%
Bike/Pedestrian Trail Facilities	36%
Park & Rides	31%
- Age of Responders:

16 and under	2
16-30	21
31-45	41
46-60	38
61+	40
No Response	17
- 10% of respondents reported being a military veteran.

A separate survey was presented to transportation and social service agencies that serve special needs populations. Agencies were asked to describe the transportation needs of those they serve, current services provided, and unmet needs or service barriers that providers/client experience. 14 agencies responded to the survey or were researched by YVCOG staff.

Statistical Data Analysis

To quantify the number of people with Special Needs throughout Yakima County, many data sources were utilized. The U.S. Census proved valuable when calculating the number of people who are low income, have a disability, are age of 18 or younger and 65 years of age or older. Other sources included the Washington State Department of Health, Office of Financial Management, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Yakima County Veterans Program, and Department of Social and Health Services.

General definitions of people with special needs include the following:

- **Low Income:** Poverty measurement has two official components - poverty threshold (income levels) and the person’s income compared with these thresholds. If a person’s total income is less than the threshold, the person is considered poor. The poverty thresholds are not adjusted for regional, state or local variation in the cost of living.
- **Elderly:** People 65 years of age or older

- **Youth:** People age 18 years or younger
- **Person with Disability:** The restriction in participation that results from a lack of fit between the individual's functional limitations and the characteristics of the physical and social environment
- **Veterans:** People who have served in active military duty as a member in a branch of the armed forces of the United States

Results

Survey data, comments from special needs populations, as well as existing resources, and recent changes (subtractions or additions in service) were evaluated to identify transportation gaps, duplication of service, or needs for more coordination amongst providers. A draft of the plan was presented to the MPACT committee for review and input during 2021 and 2022 scheduled meetings.

This review provided an opportunity for the MPACT committee to identify strategies to meet public transportation needs and prioritization of project ranking.

The 2022 Yakima County Human Services Transportation Plan (review draft) was presented at the August 24, 2022, meeting of the YVCOG MPACT Committee for comment and recommended to the YVCOG Policy Board at their September 28 meeting. The TAC was provided an opportunity to review the plan during their September meeting. The final plan was approved at the October 17, 2022 YVCOG Transportation Policy Board Meeting.

Yakima Valley Region Summary

Planning Area

Yakima County, the second largest county in Washington State in terms of land area, is located east of the Cascade Mountain range in South Central Washington, with a geographic area of 4,295 square miles, or approximately 2.75 million acres. For perspective, the entire state of Delaware and two (2) areas the size of Rhode Island would all fit into Yakima County at once. Yakima County has a population density of 59.8 persons per square mile compared to King County, which has a population density of 1,072.8 people per square mile.¹ The scattered population and geographically spread-out nature of the county contributes many transportation challenges for special needs residents and for those organizations attempting to serve them.



Three entities own or manage more than 1.7 million (63.4%) of the total acres of Yakima County; the Yakama Nation (1,074,174); the U.S. Forest Service (503,726) and the Yakima Training Center Joint Base Lewis-McChord Military Reservation (165,787). The City of Yakima, the eleventh largest city in the state, contains more than 1.25% of the state population (97,810). 90% of the state's

¹Census Bureau estimate 4/1/2020

population is within a 3-hour drive from Yakima.² The Washington State Office of Financial Management estimates total county population at 258,100 with 34.1% of residents living in unincorporated areas with the remainder living in fourteen incorporated cities and towns.³ In Yakima County, Yakima is the largest city with 37.8% of the County total population. In addition to its permanent residential base, the county has a large seasonal population related to the agricultural industry. This temporary population has been estimated at up to 50,000 during peak activity.²

Jurisdictional Population – Summer 2022				
City	Population		City	Population
Grandview	10,960		Sunnyside	16,400
Granger	3,690		Tieton	1,430
Harrah	580		Toppenish	8,870
Mabton	1,975		Union Gap	6,595
Moxee	4,405		Wapato	4,610
Naches	1,110		Yakima	97,810
Selah	8,235		Zillah	3,190
			Unincorporated	88,955

OFM population estimates for 2021 rank Sunnyside and Grandview as the second and third largest cities, with 16,400 and 10,960 residents respectively. The remaining cities and towns in the county vary widely in population ranging from 8,870 residents in Toppenish to 580 people in Harrah.

There are two distinct areas of Yakima County. Union Gap, sandwiched between Rattlesnake Ridge to the east and Ahtanum Ridge to the west, is the common dividing point that separates northern and southern Yakima County. The southern portion of Yakima County is less densely populated with tens of thousands of acres of livestock, farms, orchards, vineyards, hops, and row crops and residents living in small cities, towns and communities.

Yakima County is also home to the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The Yakama Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land had a total population of 30,647⁴. Of those reporting one race alone, 52.2% were white, 19.5% were American Indian or Alaska Native; 1.7% were Asian; and less than 0.7% were African American or Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; and 14.1% reported some other Race; 11.6% reported Two or More Races, while 57% indicated they were of Hispanic origin. Of the 30,647 general population, more than 1/3 was under age 18, and 12% of the population was age 65 and over.⁴

The Yakama Reservation is primarily agricultural with range and grazing land in the foothills and timbered forests to the south and west. Roughly 10,200 people were enrolled members of the Yakama Nation,⁵

Northern Yakima County consists of a mix of urban and rural. The city of Yakima is the most populated city and is the county seat. North of Yakima the county becomes greener and less densely populated with the cities of Selah, and Tieton and Town of Naches. The Yakima County

² Yakima County Development Association website, "Yakima County Profile," accessed July 2014.

³ Office of Financial Management, Population of Cities, Towns and counties, 2021.

⁴ Source: 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, My Tribal Area

⁵ Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, <http://www.critfc.org>. Retrieved on 9/5/2014.

region continues to experience growth. The Office of Financial Management estimates the county's population will reach over 307,592 residents by the year 2040.⁶

Demographics

The population that is most likely to have unmet transportation needs includes persons with disabilities, older adults, youth, veterans and individuals with limited incomes. Within Yakima County a significant percentage of individuals fall into one or more of the categories.

According to the 2020 census:

- 32.4 percent of the population is under 19 years of age
- 16.5 percent of individuals have incomes that fall below poverty level
- 21.5 percent of households receive food stamps/SNAP
- 13.4 percent of the population has a disability
- 19.5 percent of the population is 65 years of age and older
- 6.1 percent of the population are veterans
- 80.9 percent of the working population drive alone to work.
- 12.0 percent of the working population carpool to work
- 1.3 percent of the working population walk to work
- 0.3 percent of the working population bicycle to work
- 0.3 percent of the working population take public transportation to work
- 61.4 percent of the working population arrive at work between 6 and 9 a.m.
- The mean travel time to work is 19.5 minutes

Means of Transportation to Work	Total: 103,954
Car, truck, or van:	96,527
Drove alone	84,049
Carpooled:	12,478
In 2-person carpool	9,677
In 3-person carpool	1,321
In 4-person carpool	823
In 5- or 6-person carpool	552
In 7-or-more-person carpool	105
Public transportation (excluding taxicab):	268
Bus	265
Subway or elevated rail	0
Long-distance train or commuter rail	0
Light rail, streetcar or trolley	0
Ferryboat	3
Taxicab	14
Motorcycle	157

⁶ Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2018.

Bicycle	316
Walked	1,389
Other means	932
Worked from home	4,351

Median Age by Means of Transportation to Work

Car, truck, or van - drove alone	40.3
Car, truck, or van - carpooled	37.1
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	26.0
Walked	49.9
Taxicab, motorcycle, bicycle, or other means	36.2
Worked from home	47.4

Persons with a Disability

The 2019 U.S. Census projections identified 33,334 individuals as having a disability in Yakima County.

The 2019 U.S. Census projections identified that Yakima County's proportion of people with disabilities was 13.4%, which is slightly higher than the state average of 12.7%. The areas with the highest concentration of disabled persons were Harrah (9%), Union Gap (9%), Toppenish (7%) and Yakima (16%). In each instance, the elderly represents the largest age group with reported disabilities.

AGE	ESTIMATE %	MARGIN OF ERROR
UNDER 5 YEARS	.03%	±0.5
5 TO 17 YEARS	6.5%	±1.9
18 TO 34 YEARS	6.5%	±1.9
35 TO 64 YEARS	14.4%	±2.4
65 TO 74 YEARS	30.6%	±5.5
75 YEARS AND OVER	55.3%	±7.8

AGE BREAKDOWN OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES					
AGE	HEARING	VISION	COGNITIVE	AMBULATORY	SELF CARE
UNDER 5 YEARS	0.3%	0.0%	N/A	N/A	N/A
5 TO 17 YEARS	1.0%	1.0%	4.8%*	0.9%*	1.6%*
18 TO 34 YEARS	1.0%	1.5%	3.4%	1.6	1.5%
35 TO 64 YEARS	3.3%	2.4%	5.2%	7.6	3.6%
65 TO 74 YEARS	12.6%	7.4%	8.6%	16.8	6.7%
75 YEARS AND OVER	32.4%	9.6%	15.4%	31.8	19.1%

According to the US Census Population Profile (American Community Survey the 1-Year Estimates for 2016 see table below), among Yakima County's civilian non-institutionalized population, 13.9% reported a disability. The likelihood of having a disability varied by age—from 7% of people under age 18, to 19% of the people aged 18-64, and 60% of those aged 65 and over.

Yakima County's proportion of people with disabilities are compatible with national and state levels (12.8% compared to 13% and 12.8%, respectively). In the Yakama Nation Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, among the civilian non-institutionalized population 3,524 reported a disability in the 2015-2019 ACS. The likelihood of having a disability varied by age—from 3% of the people under age 18 to 10% of the people 18-64 years old, to 40 42% of those age 65 and older. Of the 13,070 civilian veterans age 18 and over, 2016 American Community Survey estimates 8,457 have no disability; 4,508 have a disability.

Older Adults

Residents 65 years of age and older represent 13.9%⁷ of the county's 2019 population, which is slightly lower than the state average at 15.8%, and in comparison, to the elder population on the Yakama Reservation and Off-Reservation Trust Land, which was 11.2% in 2015-2019 data.⁸ Yakima County is home to more than 35,395 seniors.⁹ The City of Yakima has the highest percentage of senior citizens at 15.3%,¹⁰

As the region's population continues to grow, so does the number of elder citizens within the population, representing the last of the aging Baby Boomers. With a projected county population exceeding 307,591 in the year 2040, the senior population is projected to surpass 54,133.¹¹ Additionally, Yakima County is appealing to people statewide and out of state as a place to retire. Yakima has much to offer -- sunshine, dry weather, wineries, golf, and other recreational amenities, all complemented by a lower cost of living. Some Central Washington communities have begun developing housing and recreational facilities to appeal to retirees for whom Yakima's comparatively lower housing prices are particularly attractive. Unfortunately, advancing years often bring increased needs for medical care, personal assistance, and reduced income while the ability to self-transport decreases.

Veterans

Age, experiences, disabilities, and exposure to hazards varies widely among veterans and makes it difficult to summarize their needs. According to the US Census American Community 2016 Estimates, 67% of veterans nationally are age 55 and older; 36.1% of veterans served in Vietnam. Just over 38% of veterans nationally are estimated to be Gulf War veterans.

According to the US Census American Community Survey, Yakima County is home to approximately 11,230 veterans, accounting for about 7.5% of the total county population 18 years of age and over, many of whom are senior citizens or disabled. 797 Yakima County Veterans have a service-connected disability rating of 10 to 20%; 429 veterans have a disability rating of 30 to 40%, 321 at 50-60%, and 534 veterans have a service-connected disability rating of 70% or higher. 8,583 Yakima County veterans have no service-connected disability.

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 Census projections.

⁸ US Census Bureau 2020 My Tribal Area

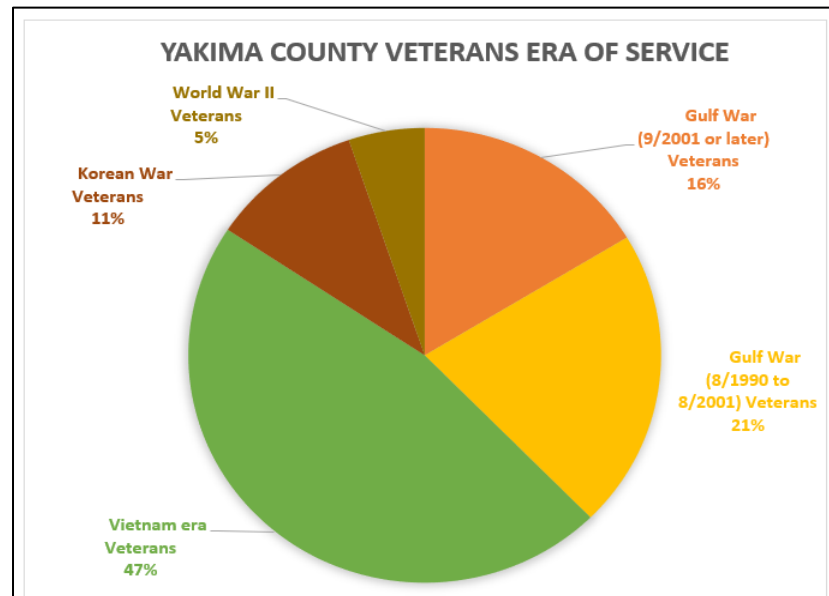
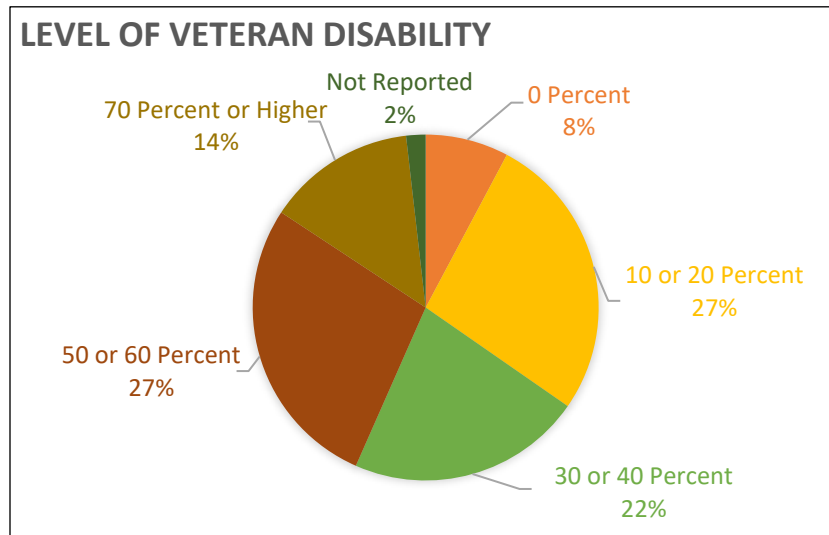
⁹ U.S. Census Bureau 2019 ACS 1 year estimate table

¹⁰ US Census My Tribal Area

¹¹ US Census Bureau 2019 ACS 1 year estimate table.

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau 2019 ACS 1 year estimate table

¹⁸ Office of Financial Management, State of Washington, Population Estimates & Forecasts. 2017 (medium growth projections).



Youth

There are 74,272 youth (age eighteen and under) in Yakima County, representing approximately 30 percent of the county's population. 41% of the households have youth under eighteen years of age. There are 24% of the total households with children living below the poverty level as compared to the state average of 14%.¹²

The 2016-2017 school district enrollments for Yakima County were 66,441 students, ranging from 662 students (K - 8 only) in the Union Gap School District to 16,419 (K-12) students in the Yakima School District. Yakima County's school districts have a high percentage of students that qualify for free or reduced lunch. Yakima School District reports 94% of students are free or reduced

¹² U.S. Bureau of the Census, American Fact Finder, 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates.

lunch eligible, Mabton (98.4%), Mt. Adams (100%), Wapato 100%) Toppenish (100%), and Granger (100%)¹³.

Highly dependent on a thriving agricultural industry, Yakima County is home to a large migrant and seasonal farm worker labor pool. This contributes to Yakima County having the highest enrollment of migrant students in the state (7,845)¹⁴. Migrant families are challenged with low-pay, non-standard work hours, relocating to new areas, and living in rural locations with limited access to health care and social services.

Youth Data – Yakima County			
<i>Sources: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction WA State Report Card 2021</i>			
Location by School District	Student Enrollment	Free or Reduced lunch	Drop-Out 2020-21
Yakima County			
Toppenish	4,385	91%	7.3%
Granger	1,490	100%	10.0%
Wapato	3,229	100%	12.4%
Mabton	829	98.4%	4.3%
Mt. Adams	825	100%	17.9%
Sunnyside	6,515	98.3%	7.6%
Grandview	3,661	86.9	5.5%
Yakima	16,052	94.0%	7.9%
Highland	1,100	87.4%	13.9%
Union Gap	589	100%	*
Zillah	1,267	58.7%	5.1%
East Valley	3,280	57.7%	8.5%
Selah	3,766	54.2%	5.2%
West Valley	5,433	47.7	15.1%
Naches	1,248	49.2%	4.8%
YAKIMA COUNTY TOTAL	53,669		
* Union Gap School District is K-8			

Low-income youth, migrant students, and teen parents represent a significant population that need transportation resources. With the high percentage of students that qualify for free or reduced lunch, there are high risk factors for Yakima County youth. The county's birth rate for women aged 15-19 in 2018 was 31.3 per 1,000 births, compared to 12.7 per 1,000 for Washington State.

Homeless Youth

The McKinney-Vento Assistance Act is a federal law that guarantees all children and youth the right to an equal education, even if their situation lacks an adequate nighttime residence.¹⁵ The Act was reauthorized in January 2002 to provide advocacy and other services for youth, one service being transportation to allow the students to attend their school of origin. School districts

¹³ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2012-2013)

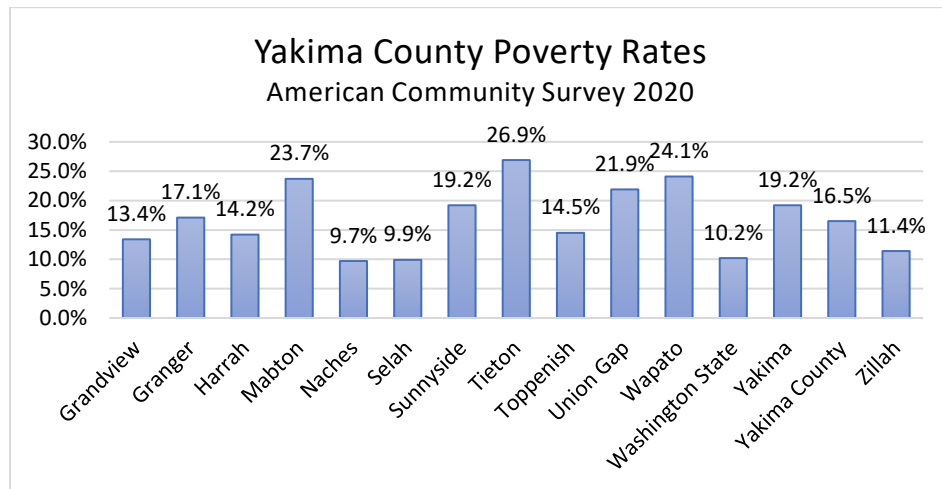
¹⁴ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. (2012-2013)

¹⁵ *The Most Frequently Asked Questions on the Education Rights of Children and Youth in Homeless Situations*, 11/09, National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth.

must eliminate the lack of transportation as a barrier for the homeless youth¹⁶ to attend school. Safe and appropriate transportation can be provided in the form of school district transportation, public transportation, gas vouchers, or mileage reimbursement. Through education and advocacy, there has been an increase in transportation for homeless youth throughout Yakima County.

Low Income

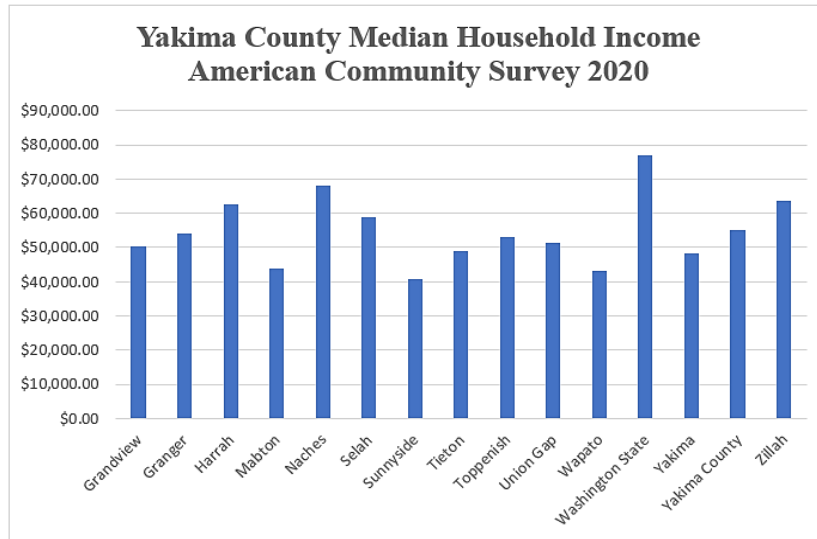
“Low income” is defined using official poverty measurements comparing the person or family’s income to the federal poverty threshold. This leads to the assumption that the person or family does not have the economic means to afford basic human needs. Yakima County has poverty rates among the highest in the state for several decades. The 2020 American Community Survey reported the state average poverty rate at 10.2% compared to 16.5% for Yakima County with some cities up to 26.9% (see Table)¹⁷.



The Per capita income is defined as the average obtained by dividing aggregate income by total population of an area. Yakima County’s per capita income is \$24,305, 40% less than Washington State income at \$40,837. Per capita income within cities range from Selah (\$34,474) to Wapato (\$17,233 which is approximately half the county average).

¹⁶ Children covered under the McKinney-Vento Act include those who share the housing of others due to a loss of housing, economic hardship or similar reason; living in domestic violence, emergency or transitional shelters; live in locations such as motels due to a lack of alternative accommodations; are awaiting foster care placement; live in a place not designed for sleeping; live in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, etc.

¹⁷ American Community Survey, Poverty Index, 2016.



Use of Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) services and assistance is another indicator of low-income status.¹⁸ According to DSHS, for the 2017 program year, Yakima County had the highest DSHS usage of any county in the state at 61.7%.¹⁹ The state average in the same year was 39.8%.

Unemployment rates are an indicator of an individual's self-sufficiency. People are counted as unemployed if they are without a job, available for work, and have made recent efforts to locate employment. For Washington, the unemployment as of February 2022 is at 4.7%; Yakima County is at 8.3%.

Yakima County's current labor force (CLF) increased 3.4 percent between 2016 and 2022 from 121,733 to 130,128 residents. The Covid 19 pandemic has caused some extreme fluctuations in Yakima County's unemployment rate over the past two years; the current rate is 8.3%, much higher than the State's 4.7%²⁰.

"Transportation helps our clients become self-sufficient, breaks the poverty cycle and help the clients get off public assistance."

- Case Manager

Highly dependent on a thriving agricultural industry, the Yakima County region is home to a large migrant and seasonal farmworker labor pool. According to the Washington State Employment Security Department's 2015 Agricultural Workforce in Washington State Report, agriculture, a key component of Washington State's economy, produced a monthly average of more than 96,167 jobs in 2015, over half of which were seasonal. The area of Yakima and Klickitat Counties contributed the largest number of total agricultural jobs each month for the year of 2015.

Agricultural workers are usually immigrants from Latin American countries that speak little or no English, have limited education, and work in the fields and orchards for low wages and no benefits. Yakima County has the highest population of Migrant/Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW)

¹⁸ DSHS services include, as examples, child abuse reporting, alcohol prevention, senior services, food assistance, economic services, housing, and medical services.

¹⁹ Department of Social and Health Services, Washington State

²⁰ Employment Security Webpage February 2022; <https://esd.wa.gov/labormarketinfo/labor-area-summaries>

in Washington State, an estimated 52,476 individuals. When family members are included in the population, Yakima has a total of 81,175 workers and family members. Traditionally, MSFW will face layoffs during the winter months leading to higher unemployment and poverty rates.²¹ Because most farms and orchards in Yakima County lie outside the Yakima City limits, where access to public transportation is limited, workers moving from farm to farm must find alternative types of transportation to get to work sites. Many use their own vehicles or carpool; because of low wages many not only have automobiles in poor working condition but are also hardest hit by high fuel rates.

The fresh fruit crops, especially apples, significantly affect the agricultural infrastructure of the state. The volume of the apple harvest over the harvest season is the major factor affecting longer-term seasonal employment. The cherry crop has a significant impact on state agriculture since the harvest period is concentrated in such a short time period. The pear harvest is important as a bridge in labor demand from the tapering of the cherry harvest to the full surge in labor demand for the apple harvest. Hence, the “job site” for a single worker or group of workers may be a cherry orchard in Wenatchee in July, a pear orchard in August, and an apple orchard in Yakima in October.

According to the *EASTERN WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL VANPOOL PILOT PROJECT PLANNING SUMMARY* conducted in July 2013 by People For People, of **660 worker interest surveys** from agricultural workers living in thirteen cities along the I-82 corridor and **35** local growers, the following data was gathered regarding implementation of vanpools to serve agricultural workers:

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS:

- More than 35% of agricultural workers reported they had quit or lost a job due to lack of transportation and over 80% of agricultural workers surveyed stated they would be willing to pay a small fee for daily transportation.
- Almost 100% of workers surveyed reported working Monday through Friday. About 90% reported working on Saturdays and almost 40% reported working seven days per week. These results differed from grower surveys which reported that 75% of their workers are employed seven days per week. However, the workers surveyed in the Yakima Valley may be employed by a grower who was not surveyed. Either way, the need for an operating vanpool seven day per week is supported by data.
- Most workers begin their day between 5 AM and 6 AM. However, about 8% start before 5 AM and about 13% at 7 AM. This revealed a unique set of challenges regarding the scheduling of routes that would be able to accommodate workers employed at a variety of grower locations.
- Almost 100% of workers surveyed report working June through September. As few as 20% report working in winter months such as November, December and January. This data suggests that most agricultural workers are seasonal employees and may migrate to follow crops and workload. According to outreach staff, most workers who are employed



²¹ Larson, Alice C., Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Enumeration Profiles Study

- in winter non-harvest months' work at packing houses or other fruit warehouses as opposed to in the fields. The migrating agricultural worker population clearly requires a unique set of circumstances and schedules to make a vanpool convenient for them.
- Most workers reported they currently drove their own vehicle and would continue to do so if no vanpool system were implemented, or if the daily fee was unreasonable. The second most common response was receiving a ride from a friend, family member or co-worker. Some workers reported they were already part of a carpool system but would prefer to participate in a formal agricultural vanpool system. Sadly, a small percentage of workers reported walking to work if they could not find transportation.
 - Of the 660 Agricultural Worker Interest Surveys collected, only 18% would be willing to become a volunteer van driver.

GROWER RESULTS:

- Over 35% of growers reported their workers had no concrete schedule for end of day times. Depending on crop, weather and workload, time may vary from 2 PM to 8 PM.
- Almost 80% of growers reported a shortage of workers in past harvest seasons. Over 75% believed it was due to lack of transportation to and from work.
- Growers were asked if they believed a vanpool system would benefit them. An overwhelming 94% responded that they believed having a vanpool system would benefit their business by allowing their workers to have a safe, reliable mode of transportation to and from work. By providing transportation, workers are less likely to experience difficulties with daily transportation and may reduce worker shortage for growers.
- Some growers were willing to pay a portion of their workers' daily fare to participate in the vanpool.

Limited English Proficiency

According to the American Community Survey 2020 Year Estimates, 20% of the Washington State population of individuals over the age of five speaks a language other than English at home. Of these 20%, there are 53.2% of individuals who speak English less than very well. There is a larger number of individuals that live in Yakima County, at 41.2% speak a language other than English where 39% of this population speak English less than very well. See the table below.

Limited English Proficient Statistics	Yakima County	Washington	Yakima County	Washington
	Total	Total	<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>	<i>Speak English less than "very well"</i>
Speak a language other than English	41.2%	20%	39.0%	53.2%
Spanish or Spanish Creole	39.5%	8.5%	39.3%	39.2%
Other Indo-European languages	0.6%	4%	19.1%	27.8%
Asian and Pacific Island languages	0.7%	6.1%	50.6%	43.6%
Other languages	0.4%	1.3%	14.4%	35.6%

Homeless Population

Homeless individuals are another population within the county that commonly lacks transportation services. Yakima County conducts a Point-In-Time (P.I.T.) survey to determine the number of people who fall into the homeless category. In 2021, the **Point In-Time** survey

captured the top five reported causes of homelessness to include 1) Eviction/Loss of Housing, 2) job loss, 3) family crisis 4) alcohol/drug abuse, and 5) unable to pay rent/mortgage.

Per Yakima County's 2021 P.I.T. Report, a partnered effort by the county's Department of Human Services and the Homeless Network of Yakima County.

"Due to COVID-19, the County was unable to conduct a Project Homeless Connect event. In response, and in accordance with guidance from Commerce, the Outreach Count was extended to one week. This count was conducted by trained outreach workers and the results were then analyzed to ensure that everyone was only counted once."

Key (2021) demographic factors of the homeless population in the Yakima Region include:

- 702 individuals, from 591 households, were interviewed, of which 663 from 553 (or 94.4%) were experiencing homelessness. The remaining were either "couch surfing or in unstable housing situations
- 39% of respondents reported living in unsheltered (outdoors, vehicles, abandon buildings, etc.), while 22% resided in transitional housing. The remaining 38% reported staying in emergency shelters (inc. medical respite and recipients of vouchers).
- 94% of homeless were of adults under age 65, 4% were over age 65, while the remaining 2% were children
- 24.1% (169 respondents) reported being disabled; 3.1% (22) were veterans; and 1.4% (10) reported to be victims of domestic violence.
- 37% of respondents residing in transitional housing were youth or young adults under 24.
- 74% of all household respondents stayed in the Upper Yakima Valley while 26% (or 154 households) stayed in areas south of Union Gap. The higher percentage of upper valley stays were attributed to the higher availability of temporary housing such as emergency shelters and transitional housing.
- Chronically homeless is defined as an individual with a disability who lives either in a place not meant for human habitation, a safe haven, or in an emergency shelter. 35% (235) of respondents identified to be chronically homeless.

Common Origins

The common points of origin were identified through, Transportation Surveys, and Service Provider Surveys. The US Census has identified where people of special needs are located throughout Yakima County.

Overall, people with special needs living within Yakima County have common origins that include:

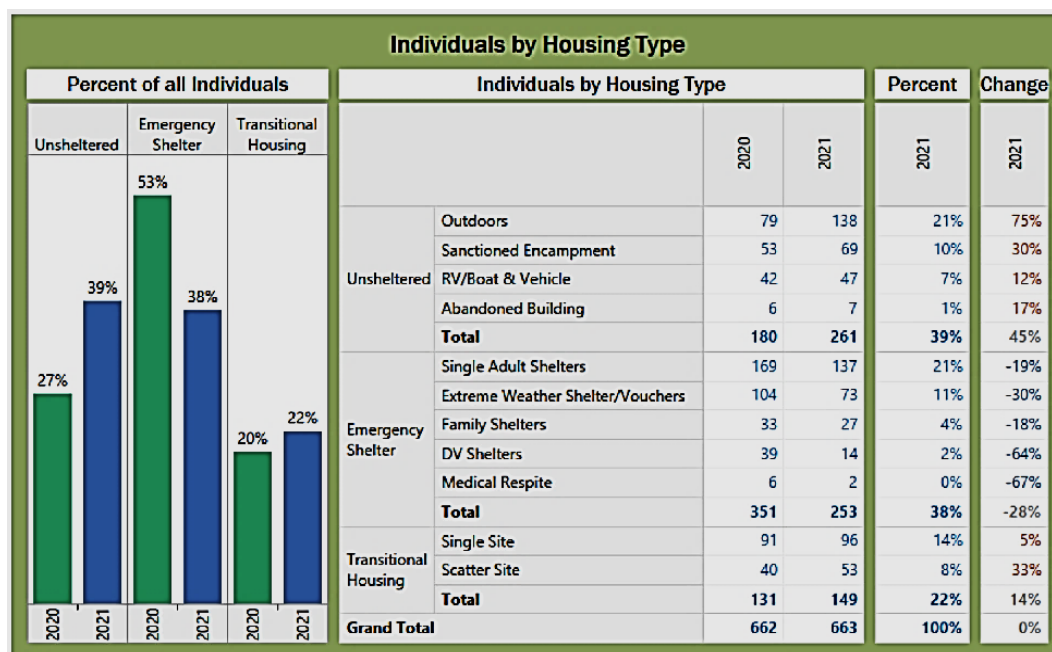
- Rural locations at individual residences in smaller towns and communities that are miles from service locations.
- Low-income housing, senior housing, veteran's housing, disabled housing, tribal housing, migrant seasonal farm worker housing, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, assisted living, and nursing homes are located across the county

The special needs population is distributed throughout Yakima County. According to the 2014 Yakima County Regional Profile from the Yakima County Development Association, 34.4% of the entire population resides in unincorporated areas of the region; the rural locations require individualized transportation services. The residents that live in unincorporated areas and smaller towns need transportation to access social services, health care, employment, education,

recreation, worship, and legal services that are in the larger cities. Service providers surveyed ranked common origins of their clients in this order: Yakima, Moxee, Selah, Tieton, Union Gap, Naches, Sunnyside, Tampico (unincorporated community 20 miles west of Yakima), Toppenish and Wapato, although it should be noted that most providers completing this question identified the City of Yakima as the location of their main offices, and not surprisingly, there were few providers from southern Yakima County.

Within the cities there are some common points of origin such as, subsidized housing units, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, assisted living, and long-term care facilities. According to the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services, within Yakima County there are 13 nursing homes, 34 adult family homes, and 21 boarding homes/assisted living. Six nursing homes, thirty-eight adult family homes, and sixteen assisted living facilities are in the city of Yakima. There is one nursing home in each of the following communities: Grandview Sunnyside, Toppenish, Union Gap and Wapato. There are two adult family homes in Wapato, one in Selah, and one in Moxee. There are two assisted living facilities in Sunnyside, one in Grandview, Selah and Glead.

Homeless shelters are also a point of origin within Yakima County. The 2018 **Point in Time** survey allows service agencies and local government agencies to spot trends in homelessness and evaluate the success of existing programs. At the beginning of January 2018, the Point in Time survey identified that there are 646 individuals who were considered homeless that varied from 0 to over 65 years of age. **The following table identifies the location of the homeless population in Yakima County.**



The Yakima County Jail and the Juvenile Justice facility are in the City of Yakima, and transportation is needed for individuals when they are released to return to their communities. There is the same need for the rural communities of Toppenish, Wapato, and Sunnyside to have transportation available for released prisoners to return to their communities.

Common Destinations

In 2018 respondents were asked in the Human Services Transportation Plan Survey (HSTP) to identify common destinations. In 2022, as part of a joint HSTP/Yakima Valley Regional Transit Feasibility Study, respondents were asked to provide current travel information. The reduction in travel and destination access during the COVID-19 Pandemic (March 2020 – December 2021) reduced both private and public transportation usage. These numbers have gradually increased as the pandemic has waned.

Yakima County historically has been a “privately owned vehicle” (POV) centric region despite the largely due to the significant distances between communities. However, in 2022, approximately 27% of survey respondents have limited or no regular access to personal (private) vehicle transportation.

Access to Personal Vehicle Transportation		
Seldom (1-2 Days per Week)	Frequently (3-5 Days per Week)	Always/Nearly Always (6-7 Days per Week)
16 %	11 %	70 %
Results reported as of August 22, 2022		

This requires residents access to other transportation provider options to address transportation services to meet their quality-of-life needs. While transportation services did not stop during the pandemic, statewide and regional providers did experience significant reductions in ridership. As COVID restrictions began to ease in late 2021 - early 2022, ridership numbers began to increase. The 2022 Transit Feasibility Study survey data indicates regional providers usage.

2022 Transportation Mode Use			
Travel Mode	%	Travel Mode	%
Pahto Public Transit (Yakama Nation Transit)	2%	Active Transportation (Bike, Walk, other)	58%
Selah Transit	6%	Taxi, Uber, Lyft, etc.	18%
Union Gap Transit	5%	Personal Vehicle (Self or Other)	79%
Yakima Transit	24%	Other Public Transportation Services	4%
Yakima/Ellensburg Connector	4%	Regional Transportation (Greyhound, Airporter Shuttle, etc.)	17%
People for People (Community Connector)	6%	Other [Motorized] Transportation Modes	3%
Note: The 2022 Survey, available on a bilingual webpage format was performed during July and August 2022 as part of a joint HSTP and Regional Transit Feasibility Study Survey. Results reported as of August 22, 2022.			

The 2018 HSTP Survey reported that work/job training, “errand” trips, and recreational/social-related activities were the highest travel destinations reported in over 50% of trips. Medical/Health related trips were also a highly reported destination at 44%. The 2022 study results found that “errand” trips were of significantly higher need as a regular destination location with recreational activities, work/job training, and social events/visiting and health/medical appointments all exceeding 60%. This indicates the need for regional transportation service accessibility to be flexible and frequent enough to meet a wide variety of traveler needs.

2018 vs 2022 Comparative Travel Destinations		
(Respondents allowed to select all activities as needed)		
Activity	2018	2020
Childcare	5%	16%
Errands (Shopping / Banking, etc.)	65%	89%
Faith Based Organizations & Activities	18%	n/a
Healthcare / Medical Appointments	44 %	62%
Recreational Activities	* 54%	75%
School	23%	20%
Senior Services	5%	8%
Social Events	(*)See Recreational Activities	65%
Visiting Family /Friends	(*)See Recreational Activities	66%
Work / Job Training	68%	73%
<i>Note: The 2022 Survey, available on a bilingual webpage format was performed during July and August 2022 as part of a joint HSTP and Regional Transit Feasibility Study Survey. Result reported as of August 22, 2022.</i>		

Residents who live in unincorporated rural areas or have limited social services in their own communities may be required to travel up to 40 miles to access basic services. Traveling to services like regional DSHS and WorkSource Offices in Yakima, Sunnyside, Toppenish, or Union Gap can be difficult if transportation services aren't effective or efficient options.

Miles to DSHS and WorkSource		
From City	To DSHS	To WorkSource
Grandview	8	8
Granger	11	10
Harrah	12	21
Mabton	8	8
Moxee	12	14
Naches	15	18
Selah	5	9
Sunnyside	0	0
Tieton	20	18
Toppenish	0	0
Union Gap	9	0
Wapato	20	9
Yakima	0	4
Zillah	5	5

Hospital services are available in Yakima, Toppenish, or Sunnyside. Patients seeking health care or other services not offered at these facilities must seek care outside the area, including Seattle/Tacoma, Portland/Vancouver, Spokane, and Tri-Cities Areas. Residents of outlying communities must travel long distances no matter where they seek acute care.

In January 2020, the Yakima Regional Hospital (formerly "St. Elizabeth's" or "Astris Regional") permanently closed its doors losing 214 hospital beds and 36 emergency beds and the region's state-certified heart center, weeks before the COVID-19 Pandemic impacted the region. To date, there are no plans to reopen the hospital.

Although the Yakima region has a new veteran’s clinic in Union Gap, veteran’s hospitalization and behavioral health services are not available in Yakima County. For reference, in order for Yakima City veterans to receive these types of services, they must travel 131 miles one way from Yakima to the VA Hospital in Walla Walla or 144 miles one way to Seattle. Employment and training services through WorkSource are in Yakima, and Sunnyside. Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), basic food, and social services are offered through the Department of Social and Human Services’ Community Service Offices in Yakima, Toppenish, and Sunnyside.

The top five Yakima County sectors in 2020 in terms of employment were:

Sector	Number of jobs	Share of employment
1. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	30,767	27.8%
2. Health services	16,543	14.9%
3. Local government	13,079	11.8%
4. Retail trade	10,623	9.6%
5. Manufacturing	8,010	7.2%
All other industries	31,778	28.7%
Total covered payrolls	110,800	100%

Yakima County itself has no single employer with more than 1,913 employees. This is unlike the Hanford Nuclear Reservation some 70 miles away, which employs approximately 8,000 people. Yakima County does have many opportunities for entry-level employment, and some common employment-concentrated destinations, such as cities’ central business districts, by public transportation services at times supporting evening or graveyard shifts. Retail shopping centers, and “fruit row” warehouses.

Yakima County top private employers, begin with Virginia Mason (formerly Yakima Valley Memorial) Hospital with 1913 workers, Other top private employers, (in order of most to least are noted below. Many operate only a single location, while others have multiple sites around the valley, including²²:

Large Employers in Yakima County		
EMPLOYER	CITY	EMPLOYEES
MultiCare Yakima Memorial Hosp (formerly Virginia Mason Memorial)	Yakima	1913 employees
State Fair Park	Yakima	700 employees
Rattle Snake Orchards	Sunnyside	650 employees
Stadelman Fruit LLC	Zillah	600 employees
Yakima Valley Community Clg	Yakima	550 employees
Snokist Growers	Yakima	500 employees
Cowin & Sons LLC	Wapato	500 employees
Yakama Legends Casino	Toppenish	400 employees
Washington Fruit & Produce Co	Yakima	400 employees
Conrad & Adams	Grandview	400 employees
Congdon Orchards Inc	Yakima	400 employees
CPC International Apple Co	Tieton	325 employees

²² Statistics from Washington State Employment Security Division

Roche Fruit LLC	Yakima	300 employees
Twin Peaks Orchard	Selah	300 employees
Le Chateau	Yakima	300 employees
Comprehensive Healthcare	Yakima	300 employees
Yakima City Public Works	Yakima	300 employees
Green Acre Farms Inc	White Swan	300 employees
Sunnyside Community Hosp-Clncs	Sunnyside	260 employees
Leo Gasseling & Sons Inc	Wapato	250 employees
Yakima Valley School	Selah	250 employees
Yakima County Corrections Dept	Yakima	248 employees
White Pass	Naches	230 employees
Frosty Packing	Yakima	200 employees
Kapstone	Yakima	200 employees
Sundome	Yakima	200 employees
Inaba Produce Farms Inc	Wapato	200 employees
YMCA Camp Dudley	Yakima	200 employees
Transportation Dept	Union Gap	200 employees
Olympic Fruit Co	Moxee	200 employees
Barbee Orchards	Zillah	200 employees
Wyckoff Farms Shop	Grandview	200 employees
Yakima Herald-Republic	Yakima	200 employees
Yakima County Road Maintenance	Yakima	200 employees
Sundown M Ranch	Yakima	200 employees
Monson Fruit Co	Selah	190 employees
Yakima City Police Dept	Yakima	182 employees
Snow & Son's Produce Co	Outlook	180 employees
Sunnyside High School	Sunnyside	180 employees
Northwest Horticulture LLC	Mabton	180 employees
Res-Care Inc	Yakima	180 employees
ESD 105'S Gallery	Yakima	180 employees
Living Care Retirement Cmnty	Yakima	175 employees
Zirkle Fruit Co	Selah	170 employees
People For People	Yakima	167 employees
Eisenhower High School	Yakima	163 employees
Yakima Neighborhood Health Svc	Yakima	160 employees
Yakima Cnty Surface Water MGMT	Yakima	155 employees
Roza Sunnyside Board-Joint	Sunnyside	150 employees
Heritage University	Toppenish	150 employees
Firman Pollen Co Inc	Yakima	150 employees
Price Co	Yakima	150 employees
OIC of Washington	Yakima	150 employees
Northwest Associates	Yakima	150 employees
Summitview Healthcare Ctr	Yakima	150 employees
Yakima Valley Farm Workers	Grandview	150 employees
Astria Toppenish Hospital	Toppenish	150 employees
Department of Assigned Counsel	Yakima	150 employees
Yakima School District 7	Yakima	142 employees
Matson Fruit Co	Selah	140 employees
Apple King LLC	Yakima	140 employees
Department of Ecology	Union Gap	135 employees

Home Care Svc Yakima	Yakima	130 employees
Garden Village	Yakima	130 employees
Educational Service Dist 105	Yakima	130 employees
Ambitions	Yakima	130 employees
Brulotte Farms	Toppenish	128 employees
Yakima Valley Farm Workers	Yakima	125 employees
White Pass-Comp Line	Naches	121 employees
White Pass Cross Country Ski	Naches	121 employees
Perry Technical Institute	Yakima	120 employees
Kinsey Farms	Sunnyside	120 employees
Washington Elementary School	Sunnyside	120 employees
Good Samaritan Health Care Ctr	Yakima	120 employees
Emerald Care	Wapato	110 employees
Yakima Valley Home Health	Yakima	110 employees
Cintas Uniform Svc Sunny Side	Yakima	110 employees
Gilbert Orchards Inc	Yakima	110 employees
Shinn & Son Inc Office	Toppenish	103 employees
Caribbean Casino	Yakima	102 employees
Olive Garden Italian Kitchen	Yakima	100 employees
Strand Apples Inc	Cowiche	100 employees
Catholic Family & Child Svc	Yakima	100 employees
Pride Packing Fruit Stand	Wapato	100 employees
Agri-Quest Marketing Inc	Selah	100 employees
Franklin Pool	Yakima	100 employees
Fuente De Frutas	Yakima	100 employees
Price Cold Storage & Packing	Yakima	100 employees
Pepsi Beverages Co	Yakima	100 employees
Triumph Treatment Svc	Yakima	100 employees
Pride Packing	Wapato	100 employees
Pioneer Elementary School	Sunnyside	100 employees
Landmark Care Ctr	Yakima	100 employees
Conrad Gilbert LLC	Grandview	100 employees
Starplex/Crowd Management Svc	Yakima	100 employees
Liberty Zillah Orchard	Zillah	100 employees
Yakima County Sheriff's Office	Yakima	100 employees
Cowiche Growers Inc Whse	Cowiche	100 employees
Roy Farms Inc	Moxee	100 employees
Immediate Care Yakima Vly Farm	Sunnyside	100 employees
Crescent Place	Yakima	100 employees
Zirkle Fruit Co	Wapato	100 employees
North Star Lodge Cancer Care	Yakima	100 employees
Black Star Ranch LLC	Moxee	100 employees
McBrothers Giftpack Ctr	Yakima	100 employees
Cwfm Clinic Facilities & Svc	Yakima	100 employees
Columbia Reach	Yakima	100 employees
Yakima Indian Health Svc	Toppenish	100 employees
Yakima Heart Ctr	Yakima	100 employees
Yakima School District	Yakima	100 employees

Under the provisions of RCW 70A.15.4000-4110 the Yakima Metropolitan/Regional Planning Organization is required to administer the Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) program for the area. The intent of CTR is to require local governments in counties experiencing the greatest automobile-related air pollution and traffic congestion, to develop and implement plans to reduce single-occupant vehicle commute trips. These plans require major employers and employers at major worksites to implement programs to reduce single-occupant vehicle commuting by employees.

Moxee, Union Gap, Selah, Yakima County and the City of Yakima have all adopted CTR Plans and codified administrative processes to implement them. Plans are typically subject to regular chronological updates, but in the post Covid 19 world the Washington State Department of Transportation has determined that many of the conventional strategies and methods may need to be reviewed and adapted to the new world order of where we go to work and how we get there. Charged with the administration of the CTR law, the YVCOG staff also recognizes that the Yakima region has many unique challenges and opportunities not found on the west side of the State.

Much of the CTR conditions and requirements revolve around the conventional “office” workday; large concentrations of people coming and going to the same place, at the same time, year round (think Amazon, Starbuck’s admin, Pemco... and such). Our region’s large employers tend to have less conventional shifts, seasons, and time frames. In the coming months and years staff will utilize this plan and its associated data, as well as other documentation and anecdotal information to develop a progressive, robust, and regionally relevant CTR Program, plans, incentives, and events with less sticks and more carrots. It is our intent to utilize multi modal, multi program, multi-jurisdictional, plans and programs to achieve the intents of the CTR law as well as equitably serve the people of the region with effective and affordable transportation, and infrastructure.

Current Transportation Services

People with special needs and providers of social and health services throughout the Yakima County region have indicated they use a variety of services to ensure transportation for their special needs clients. Due to lack of a comprehensive countywide transit service, some programs also try to overcome transportation shortfalls by transporting clients in their own vehicles.

Assisted living facilities and area churches provide some transportation to their members, but this is limited. Reports indicate those in adult family homes which are located in outlying areas may be able to get transportation to medical appointments but feel “cooped up” because they can’t coordinate or schedule trips for shopping, entertainment, or visiting family. They indicate that getting out of the home for shopping or another fun activity is a good mental health support. Those in larger long-term care facilities that do have vans may still be told to take Dial-A-Ride for various trips, but those surveyed stated they cannot afford the price.

Agencies providing or supporting transportation offered these services (in order of most responses): gas vouchers, public transit, bus service, bus voucher, door-to-door, volunteer driver, curb to curb, van shuttle, door through door, hand to hand and taxi service.

Yakima County has a limited “patchwork” of variably funded and operated public transit service. The only cities that have public (sales tax) funded transit service are Yakima, Selah, and Union Gap, of which only Yakima Transit receives federal transit funding. The Yakama Nation operates Pahto Public Passage, through a competitive federal tribal transportation grant, provides a free tribal transit service for all community members on the Yakama Reservation. People For People operates the Community Connector that provides service connections between Yakima and Prosser (in Benton County) Ben-Franklin Transit, Pahto Public Passage, Yakima Transit, Yakima-Ellensburg Connector, Airporter Shuttle, and Greyhound. This service is available to the public and funded through a state competitive Regional Mobility Grant through WSDOT.

These transportation services include myriad regular fixed routes, demand service, student transportation, and other services. The public transportation services cover different portions of the county, for different purposes, and service providers coordinate when possible. The current transportation services allow riders to travel to a variety of destinations, including medical appointments, grocery shopping, job training and social service appointments. The services provide riders with special needs options that range from public transportation to door-to-door service. While the connectivity of services enables users to access greater areas in the county, riders may be required to transfer between multiple transit services that may extend trip times and limit actual appointment or activity windows. This may be even further complicated by the need for a return trip.

Early Childhood Education Transportation

Enterprise for Progress in the Community (EPIC), operates five states funded Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) sites in Washington State, including four in Yakima County. Community Development Institute (CDI Head Start), Inspire Child Development Centers (formerly the Washington State Migrant Council), and the Yakama Nation all provide Head Start and ECEAP services. These programs provide transportation for eligible children to attend a full preschool curriculum. These programs promote school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families.



- **CDI Head Start** - CDI has assumed responsibility for EPIC’s Head Start program, which provided transportation for eligible children to attend a full preschool curriculum at 18 sites within Yakima County, transporting children to most facilities.
- **Inspire Child Development** - Inspire provides Head Start services for children in eight sites in the Yakima County region. Each site operates two 32-passenger buses. Over 90% of area children served each year rely on door-to-door transportation services because there are no fixed bus stop/routes.
- **Yakama Nation Tribal Head Start** - Transportation is available for eligible preschool children to attend Head Start centers in Toppenish, White Swan, and Wapato. Yakama Nation Tribal Head Start operates with three buses.

Greater Columbia 2-1-1 Mobility Management Program

Greater Columbia 211 (GC211) provides information and referral services for 16 counties across Washington State. GC211 utilizes a grant award from the Washington State Department of Transportation to provide a mobility management program for Yakima County. This program has been in effect since 2009. The Mobility Management program coordinates special needs and medical transportation, provides community education and outreach, and identifies transportation resources and needs in Yakima County.

Yakima County residents utilize the 211 information and referral call center to connect individuals with transportation resources available to them depending on their eligibility, destination, and type of transport needed. The Greater Columbia 211 Mobility Management program also helps callers identify transportation resources to travel outside of Yakima County, when necessary.

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Broker

Washington State Medicaid clients who have no other way to access healthcare may be eligible. Individuals with a valid Medicaid Provider One card that need assistance to a covered healthcare related service may contact a Regional NEMT Broker. People For People is the Regional Broker for the Yakima County region. People For People's Client Service Representatives screen clients for eligibility, mobility and then arrange the most appropriate, available, and least costly, available form of transportation assistance for the individual.

Transportation or related service options may include public fixed route bus, commercial bus (Greyhound), train (Amtrak), gas vouchers, client mileage reimbursement, volunteer drivers, community transportation providers, wheelchair equipped vehicles or taxi and lodging/meals. It is recommended that individuals contact the Regional NEMT Broker to request local transportation at least two business days in advance. For out of area trip requests, at least five business days is requested. Requests are accepted up to thirty days in advance of the appointment. This is to provide enough time for the NEMT Broker to obtain referrals or continued care letters from primary care physicians and to identify the most cost-efficient mode of transportation.

Yakima County Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Services by Type January 1 through December 2021	
Trip Mode	Trip Totals
Ambulatory Trips	24,057
Commercial Bus (i.e. Greyhound, Airporter Shuttle)	1
Gas Vouchers	3,787
Lodging Nights/Meals	7,832
Mileage Reimbursement (Client Associated Vehicle)	2,201
Non-Ambulatory Trips (Wheelchair)	13,384
Public Bus - Paratransit	4,587
Public Bus -Fixed Route	1,506
Stretcher	5
Train	1
Volunteer Driver Trips	976
Total	58,337

People For People

People For People provides special needs transportation in Yakima County with funding from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) consolidated grant program. During the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic, during fiscal year of July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021, People For People provided 30,710 trips and traveled over 369,371 miles with 19,038 service hours. Without these funds, thousands of vulnerable citizens will have no other means of accessing community resources.

Community Connector Express: People For People with WSDOT funding started a morning and afternoon Express run in 2020, with less stops, earlier start and a later end time to accommodate the working public. The designated stops are located along off ramps on the I-82 corridor with stops at Park & Rides and major truck stops **outside the cities** of Prosser, Grandview, Sunnyside, Granger, Zillah and at Yakima Transit in Yakima. In Yakima, the service provides access to the Yakima-Ellensburg Shuttle, Airporter, and Greyhound for travel to Kittitas and King counties. In Prosser, the service provides access to Ben Franklin Transit for travel to Benton City, Richland, Kennewick and Pasco.

Valley Shuttle – In 2018, People For People with the initial assistance from a Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) grant, and WSDOT funding, worked with the south county cities of Mabton, Grandview and Sunnyside on a planning project to determine how we could improve our transportation services in those communities. In October 2019, the Valley Shuttle started its fare-free, timed service looping through the cities three times per day. The Valley Shuttle connects with the Community Connector for access to Yakima with stops along the I-82 Corridor and Ben Franklin Transit in Prosser.

Paratransit Service: People For People, with WSDOT funding, provides paratransit services to individuals with disabilities, senior citizens 60 years of age and older, low-income individuals, veterans and children in Yakima County. Transportation to job training activities is provided to eligible participants with no other means of transportation. Older adults are provided access to locations providing nutrition services, health care and social services. Youth have access to post-secondary education, health care, social services, therapeutic care and gang prevention activities. Veterans have access to health care, veteran services, education and employment/employment related activities. Persons with disabilities have access to employment/job training, adult day health, social services, recreation, medical appointments and other activities to enhance their quality of life and independence. Eligible riders answer a brief initial telephone interview. For scheduling purposes, transportation dispatchers request a minimum 48-hour notification.



Senior Transportation: People For People, through a contract with Aging and Long-Term Care (ALTC) and WSDOT, provides senior transportation to residents who are 60 years of age or older and are living outside a public transit system. Transportation is available to nutrition/meal sites, medical appointments, necessary shopping, and other sites as funding allows.

Eclipse: People For People, through a contract with Catholic Charities Catholic Family and Child Services and WSDOT, provides transportation for children to access therapeutic treatment through the Eclipse program, formerly titled the Medicaid Treatment Child Care Program (MTCC).

School District Transportation

Each school district within Yakima County provides transportation services to students within their district boundaries. School districts provide their own equipment, driver training, maintenance, and operations. The state allocates funds to each school district based on the number of students needing transportation and their distance from school (see Table).

This allocation does not cover all transportation expenses and school districts must supplement their state allocation with local funds. Therefore, school districts must prioritize services to transport student to and from school and limit transportation for after-school activities. Yakima School District will transport students to and from school whose residence is beyond the one-mile radius from the school to which the student is assigned.



For all districts within the state of Washington, Special Education Students are provided with transportation as part of their Individualized Education Program and are transported within one radius mile.

2021-2022 School District Transportation Allocations <i>Per the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction Student Transportation Allocation (STARS) Report</i>		
School District	Transportation Allocation (est.)	Number of Students 2020-2021 Enrolled
East Valley (Yakima/Moxee)	\$1,795,387	3,146
Grandview	\$1,248,002	3,270
Granger	\$511,532	1,473
Highland	\$751,036	1,134
Mabton	\$161,118	884
Mount Adams	\$555,205	876
Naches Valley	\$668,453	1,324
Selah	\$1,680,368	3,389
Sunnyside	\$2,588,499	6,538
Toppenish	\$1,349,198	4,208
Union Gap	\$133,587	660
Wapato	\$1,417,716	3,309
West Valley (Yakima)	\$2,100,214	5,131
Yakima	\$2,782,747	15,768
Zillah	\$525,700	1,289

Taxi Services

As of May 2022, at least six (6) taxi companies serve Yakima County. Predominately, taxi services operate out of the cities of Sunnyside, Union Gap, or Yakima.

City of Yakima rate schedule of taxicab rates is established and adopted as the maximum rates that may be charged for taxi fare in the city of Yakima, and it shall be unlawful for any person driving or operating, or engaged in the business of operating, any taxicab to charge any greater rate for taxicab fare than that specified therein.

TAXICAB RATES (City of Yakima)

For one passenger for the first one-fifteenth mile or fraction thereof	\$3.00
Thereafter for each additional one-fifteenth mile or fraction thereof	\$0.17 and annually updated by the methods described in subsection (A)(2) of this section
For each additional passenger (per trip)	\$0.50
(No charge shall be made for children under six years of age when accompanied by an adult.)	
For each twenty seconds of waiting time after the first three minutes	\$0.20

Pahto Public Passage

Pahto Public Passage (PPP) transportation provides four route services within the interior boundaries of the Yakama Reservation including the cities of Toppenish, Wapato, Harrah, White Swan and Brownstown, with limited connecting service to Union Gap and Yakima Transit systems with a bus stop at Sears in Union Gap on its "Route 1" line.



PPP and People for People's Community connector have a connecting stop at the NCAC offices in Toppenish.

PPP provides a Monday-Wednesday-Friday service to the Georgeville community and City of Goldendale via US 97.

The service began because of the goal for the Yakama Reservation to provide a long-term transportation and transit plan that complements the currently existing community-wide transportation plans. In 2019 Pahto Public Passage provided 27,682 boardings, traveled 175,682 miles over 6,300 services hours. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, these numbers dropped to 9,998/132,380 mi/4,268hrs in 2020 and 11,685/191,405mi/6,652hrs in 2021 despite state and federal public health restrictions. PPP is on pace for 12,650 boardings, traveling 197,000 miles over 7,000 service hours for 2022 as pandemic safety guidelines have been eased.

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation currently provides transit services through funds from the Federal Transit Administration's Public Transportation on Indian Reservations, Tribal Transit Program. On May 7, 2007, the Yakama Nation received the first award letter from Federal Transit Administration approving year one startup of services. Yearly funding is currently still in place from the FTA to operate the program.

When service began, the Yakama Nation's Transit Program, contracted all components of the transit service out to third party vendors such as People for People and TC Transportation. Since 2013, the Yakama Nation maintains operational responsibility for all facets of the transit program. All components include: serving all people on the Yakama Nation reservation area; providing the service free; and connecting riders with essential daily living destinations. Program

objectives are to continually improve the quality and well-being of the tribal and non-tribal members who reside on the Yakama reservation and to allow access to employment, education, health care, social services, shopping, and cultural and spiritual events.

PPP does not provide service on New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, President's Day, Memorial Day, 4th of July Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day/Day After, PM Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

Yakima Transit

Yakima Transit is the largest transportation provider within Yakima County. Yakima Transit is one of five city-owned transit agencies in Washington State.



Yakima Transit provides multiple transportation services within the City of Yakima, including Fixed-Route, and Paratransit services. Yakima Transit also provides commuter bus services between the cities of Yakima, Selah, and Ellensburg.

Fixed-Route

Yakima Transit's fixed-route total service area, under FTA guidelines, is 27.7 square miles with a population area of approximately 96,969 people (2020 Census). Yakima Transit has 24 ADA accessible buses that serve the fixed-route system. Yakima Transit also provides weekday non-exclusive transportation services to Elementary, Middle, and High schools in its designated service area, as well as to Yakima Valley Community College and Perry Technical Institute.

As of 2020, Yakima Transit operated Fixed-route bus service along ten different routes that operate between the hours of 6:00am and 7:00pm within the City of Yakima:

- 10 routes Monday - Friday (6:00am - 7:00pm);
- 10 routes on Saturdays (8:45am - 6:00pm); and,
- 7 routes on Sundays (8:00am-4:00pm).

Weekday routes are operated on an hour & half-hour basis on most routes. Saturday & Sunday routes are operated on an hourly basis. Yakima Transit's system map, as illustrated in the Appendix E, depicts the 2020 fixed routes. Over the next six years, some routes may be cut, modified, or discontinued to maintain or expand more efficient routes.



Yakima Transit continuously strives to provide an updated fleet for its passengers. Yakima Transit replaced three buses in 2016, and four buses in 2017 with the help of \$2.4 Million in State and Federal grants. The bus purchases put Yakima Transit back on a regular vehicle replacement schedule. Six bus purchases are anticipated in late 2021-early 2022 with delivery in late 2022 early 2023 depending on the manufacturer. Future buses may potentially consist of electric buses or alternative fuels meeting the State of

Washington's alternative fuels regulations, using the most feasible and cost-effective option. Expansion routes outside of Yakima Transit's jurisdiction require service demand and funding support from either the State, Federal, or local jurisdictions (other than the City of Yakima).

In 2019, Yakima Transit provided 985,355 passengers trips on their fixed-route service. Ridership shrunk to 536,746 in 2020 because of the federal and state safety restrictions, “shelter-at-home” orders, and remote working resulting from the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Yakima Transit is always striving to update its fleet. Most recently, Transit purchased three new fixed-route buses in 2016 and four buses in 2017. Six new buses will be arriving at the end of 2022 and four new Paratransit vehicles will be ordered for delivery in mid-2024.

Yakima Transit has been an activist in seeking City support for both sidewalks and pathways that connect to the fixed-route system. So far, Yakima Transit has been dedicating roughly \$100,000 a year towards ADA sidewalk improvements. Transit received a grant in 2019 to place 20 new solar-lighted shelters throughout its fixed-route system. With these new lighted shelters in place, passengers will have better defense against the elements, as well as a more secure environment.

Throughout the fixed-route bus system, Yakima Transit generally provides stops on average every two blocks. Bus signs are installed along the routes and a limited number of benches and shelters are installed. For the 144 directional miles of fixed-route service, Yakima Transit currently has 32 passenger shelters (not including the 20 that will be added by June 2019) and 205 passenger benches.

Yakima Transit Fares

Fixed Route Rates:

- Adult \$1.00 single ticket and \$25 monthly pass
- Youth \$0.75 single ticket and \$18 monthly pass
- Reduced Fare - \$0.50 single ticket and \$9 monthly pass
- Yakima-Ellensburg Commuter: \$5.00 single ticket and \$150 monthly pass

Youth account for 34% of Yakima Transit’s fixed-route passengers and reduced fare passengers (over age 62 or disabled) account for 21%, combined at 55%

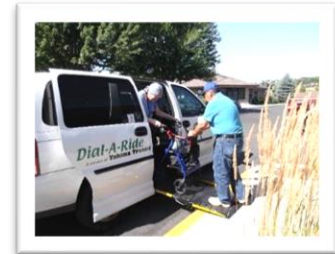
In 2022, Yakima Transit terminated its vanpool program due to a reduction in demand in its Hanford (WA) destination needs and the withdrawal funding supporting the vanpool program. Service is suspended pending a future increase in demand. YT’s vanpool fleet was put up for surplus to eligible agencies as WSDOT no longer holds title to their operation.

Paratransit (Dial-a-Ride)

Yakima Transit contracts with MedStar (a for-profit organization) to provide complementary paratransit service in the cities of Yakima. The FTA mandated Demand Response, Dial-a-Ride, service is available during the same operating days and hours as the scheduled fixed-route service. The service is available to residents who qualify for service under the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

The Dial-a-Ride service is provided, door-to-door, to eligible riders and serves the areas within the city limits of Yakima as well as some medical-related trips into Union Gap and Selah. Qualifying disabilities include mobility, vision, respiratory or cardiac impairment, mental disability, or developmental disability. Individuals must submit an application form accompanied by medical verification of the disability status. Age or the inability to drive, are not considered qualifying factors. The Dial-a-Ride service is operated with 24 vehicles of which 22 are ADA accessible.

Similar to the fixed-route service, the paratransit service is also facing similar issues with high-mileage vehicles and limited funding to replace them. The overall program costs to operate the service have consistently increased every year. Passenger trips in 2021 totaled 116,436 which represents a 3% gain from the previous year.



Vanpool

In January 2022, Yakima Transit terminated its vanpool program due to a combination of major impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic in 2020/21 and overall year after year reduction in public demand for vanpooling service over the last 6 years.

Additional Capital and Technology Investments

Yakima Transit has made and plans to make several changes to move ahead into the future both in technology and capital investments, mainly to make sure that resources can be provided to help passengers more fully utilize the system and to make the system more efficient.

In an effort to make the system more efficient, Yakima Transit has purchased route planning software for its fixed-route system and automated passenger counters fitted to its fixed-route buses. The passenger counters give Yakima Transit route and stop data to provide better information on where services should and shouldn't be offered.

In 2013, Yakima Transit installed cameras inside and outside on all the fixed-route bus system. All of Yakima Transit's buses have GPS devices linked to its **DoubleMap** software which is accessible to the public on a phone app to let them track and know where their bus is. GPS is also being considered for the paratransit program in the near future for dispatching and tracking purposes.

In 2019, all of Yakima Transit's buses had new automated stop announcers and reader boards installed to meet ADA stop announcement requirements. Those announcers utilizing geo-fencing technology to announce stops at all locations without need of the driver announcing them.

Selah Transit

The City of Selah began public transit service in 2008 through a contract with Yakima Transit. In May 2018 the City of Selah ended its contract with Yakima Transit and contract with Medstar Transportation to provide transit services in Selah. Selah Transit provides fixed route as well as Dial-A-Ride Paratransit services.

Selah Transit operates 2 fixed-route buses. The Selah Route operates within the City of Selah Monday through Friday from 6:45 a.m. to 5:50 p.m. and Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 5:07 p.m. The Selah/Yakima Route operates Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:33 p.m. and



Saturdays from 10:30 a.m. to 4:31 p.m. Each route has a midday break in the schedule. There are no fixed route services on Sundays or federal holidays.

For the Yakima Training Center, there were 4 new stops added in 2020 for a while, and a citizen, Margaret, reached out and reported that she is very happy with the update and thanks to the City administration for more services as before there were many hours in between the first two stops.

Dial-A-Ride Paratransit service operates the same service hours as the fixed-route service. For further details on our local fixed route services or Dial A Ride rules and applications, please visit us at <https://selahwa.gov> or www.gomedstar.com.

Selah Transit currently offers free services to all transit riders. Vehicles are provided by and operated by Medstar Transportation and include a combination of ADA accessible passenger cutaway chassis vehicles and Grand Caravan mini vans.

Selah Transit connects with Yakima transit routes 3 and 4 at 40th Ave and N 16th Ave. It also connects with route 7 at 40th Ave and Route 8 at N 16th Ave. Selah Transit connects with Union Gap Transit at Sears passenger shelter on Valley Mall Blvd and Main St as well as connections with Pahto Public M-F at 10:45 a.m. and again at 4:30 p.m. These connector routes meet up with The Ellensburg Commuter, CWA Airporter Shuttle for trips to Seattle, and the Community Connector for trips throughout Yakima County as well as connections to Ben Franklin Transit.

Union Gap Transit



The City of Union Gap began public transit service in 2008 through a 2/10th of 1% sales tax. Union Gap Transit provides fixed route service, and Dial-A-Ride Paratransit service. Union Gap Transit operates three fixed route buses Monday through Friday and 2 fixed route buses on the weekend Bus service operates Monday through Friday 6:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. The Monday through Friday bus service

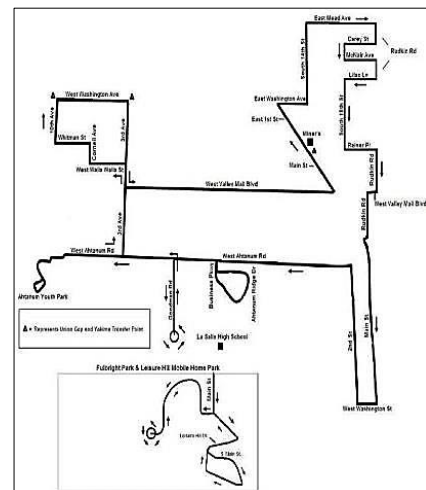
operates on half-hour headways with the reverse route operating on a one-hour frequency.

Saturday bus service operates on a one- hour frequency.

Dial-A-Ride Paratransit service operates the same service hours as fixed route service. Additionally, Dial-A-Ride Paratransit service also operates Sunday 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. For further details on local fixed route service or Dial A Ride and applications, please visit us at

www.cityofuniongap.com or www.gomedstar.com.

Currently, Union Gap Transit offers free service (no boarding fee) to all transit riders. Riders can access the Union Gap community including stops at medical facilities, the post office, city hall, agricultural museum, parks, schools and more. The vehicle are provided by and operated by Medstar Transportation and utilize a combination of passenger cutaway chassis vehicles, smaller wheelchair vans, sedans and mini-vans. In 2017 Union Gap Transit provided 23,160 boarding's on the fixed-route service and provided 8637 boarding on Dial A Ride.



Union Gap Transit provides fixed route service to the Sears passenger shelter on Valley Mall Blvd, and Main Street for connection with Yakima Transit #7 and #9 as well as connections with Selah Transit. The Pahto Public Passage bus connects at the Sears Bus Stop M-F at 10:45a.m. and again at 2:30p.m. These connector routes meet up with the CWA Airporter Shuttle for trips to Seattle, the Ellensburg Commuter and the Community Connector for trips throughout the Yakima Valley as well as connections to BenFranklin Transit in the Tri Cities.

MedStar

Medstar Transportation is a privately-owned company providing safe and reliable transportation services 24 hours per day, 365 days a year. Medstar Transportation is both a Paratransit and a Fixed Route Transportation System. Both systems offer ADA compliant, wheelchair accessible vehicles, and highly trained and professional drivers. We provide contracted transportation services for several State Medicaid Brokers, Transit Agencies and Facilities throughout Washington and Oregon.



MedStar provides the Dial-A-Ride service for Yakima Transit and operates Selah and Union Gap Transit. MedStar is a provider of Non-Emergency Medical Transportation in Yakima County. MedStar provides transportation options for individuals with special needs. Providing ambulatory and non-ambulatory transportation, MedStar provided 40,249 Dial-A-Ride and 20,277 Medicaid riders in 2020 and 45,089 Dial-A-Ride and 21,943 Medicaid riders in 2021.

Protran East Transportation Services

Protran East is a non-profit agency that provides long distance non-emergent medical transportation (NEMT) services to low income, disabled, and senior clients who have no other means of getting to their important medical appointments throughout Yakima County and Washington State, where volunteer drivers receive IRS approved mileage reimbursement. With a volunteer drivers corps, trips are accepted at the discretion and availability of the individual driver who contribute their time and vehicle to provide transportation service to eligible NEMT patients. Volunteer drivers must pass an FBI background check, maintain a clean driving record and insurance, and well maintained (inspected) vehicle.



In 2019, Protran East began providing an agency-subsidized service to “non-Medicaid eligible” individuals needing transportation to medical appointments but do not qualify for state funded NEMT program services. Protran East is eligible to obtain donations and/or grants to support this service

Protran East transports clients to Seattle, Spokane, Vancouver, Wenatchee, Tri-Cities and many other locations throughout Washington State. Clients are transported in privately owned sedans, SUV's and Minivans owned by the volunteer drivers. Protran East provides personable, professional, dependable door to door service. Protran East accepts private pay clients and can bill insurance with five days' notice for long distance transportation. Protran East does not currently provide wheelchair transportation.

Protran East performed 2,461 individual NEMT Medicaid trips in 2019. During the COVID-19 Pandemic when social distancing and video medical appointments were commonplace, Protran East provided 1,663 individual trips in 2020 and 1,474 trips in 2021.

Veteran's Services

The Yakima County Veteran's Program provides gas vouchers for qualifying veterans to travel to medical/health care, employment, education, and shopping. Qualifying veterans include seniors, disabled and low-income individuals.



The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) operates a shuttle van to Veterans Administration (VA) medical facilities for injured and ill veterans. The DAV began their services when the federal government terminated the program that assisted veterans to pay for transportation to and from medical facilities. The Yakima County DAV program provides transportation to the Walla Walla VA Medical Center every Wednesday and to the Seattle VA Medical Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with a capacity of up to 10 riders.

Entrust Community Services

Entrust Community Services transportation program offers door-to-door transportation to and from employment and community-based activities for clients enrolled in its various programs. Services cover all of Yakima County. There is no cost to passengers. Must be a client of Entrust Community Services to qualify.

Services are individualized and available 7 days a week from 7 Am to 7 Pm. Entrust has a fleet of 19 passenger vehicles with 3 wheelchair capable vehicles.

WorkFirst

The WorkFirst program, through DSHS, provides eligible parents with vouchers for transportation. Eligible parents are individuals who qualify for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Transportation is provided to assist with employment related activities including job search and participation in the Community Jobs program. The local DSHS Community Services Office (CSO), Employment Security, and Community Jobs contractors can provide transportation vouchers to eligible clients. Vouchers may be used to purchase bus passes, fuel, driver's licenses, or vehicle repair.

Yakama Nation

Yakama Nation Area Agency on Aging: Yakama Nation Area Agency on Aging provides transportation for older adults to access healthcare, shopping, and recreation. The agency utilizes one 12-14 passenger bus and one nine passenger van to provide service to seniors living within the boundaries of the Yakama Reservation. Clients are transported to medical appointments within the Yakima Valley, for essential shopping and to nutrition locations in Wapato and Toppenish. Pahto Public Passage serves the communities of Toppenish, Wapato, Harrah, White Swan, Goldendale, Union Gap, and Satus.

Tribal School: The Yakama Nation provides limited transportation to and from the Tribal School that is located in Toppenish with four buses.

Yakama Nation Veterans' Services provides transportation for veterans to access various services. Transportation is provided to Veterans Affairs offices in Seattle, Walla Walla, Spokane, Portland, and Boise. Transportation is provided for homeless veterans to social service offices in Yakima, Wapato, and Toppenish with a veteran van.

Cross Jurisdictional Transportation

Yakima – Ellensburg Commuter (Yakima & Kittitas County)

The Yakima-Ellensburg Commuter (Yakima Transit Route 11) began service by Central Washington Airporth in November 2011 through funding from Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), via a partnership between the Cities of Ellensburg, Selah, and Yakima, Yakima Transit, and Central Washington University (CWU). Operational responsibility was transferred to Yakima Transit in June 16, 2014.



Changes were made to the schedule upon the switchover, effectively reducing the service and increasing fares. The Commuter operates seven roundtrips when CWU is in session and six round trips when CWU is not in session.

On an annualized basis (Pre-COVID 19), the service provided approximately 24,000 passenger trips over 143,000 miles and 4,900 service hours. Passengers trips associated with higher education are the highest at close to 65% of total ridership who go to either Yakima Valley Community College or Central Washington University. The other 35% of passengers are typically individuals who work in one of the communities, need access to life services (medical, dental, social services, etc), or are simply visiting friends or family.

The service operates between the Yakima Airport and Central Washington University. The service operates Monday – Friday from 6:00 AM-6:40 PM.

The commuter will offer bus service between Yakima and Selah for \$1 per ride. Yakima Transit bus passes will also be accepted for transit riders trying to get between the two cities.

Grape Line (Walla Walla and Benton-Franklin)

The Grape Line Bus Service, which began in November 2007, operates three round trips from Walla Walla to Pasco along State Route 12, allowing passengers to connect with Ben-Franklin Transit (BFT). Ben-Franklin Transit serves Kennewick, Pasco, Richland, West Richland, Prosser and Benton City. BFT riders can travel to Prosser, where they can access the People For People Community Connector to ride to Yakima. Along the way, service is also provided to Grandview, Sunnyside, Granger, Zillah, Toppenish, and Wapato. Washington Department of Transportation provides funding for Central Washington Airporth to operate the Grape Line.

Apple Line (Kittitas, Chelan, Okanogan)

In a partnership with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Northwestern Trailways is the transportation provider for daily, regularly scheduled bus service between Omak and Ellensburg. Connections can then be made from Ellensburg to Yakima by using the Yakima-

Ellensburg Commuter. The service operates one-round trip seven days a week with discounted fares for older adults, children and veterans.

Greyhound Bus Line

Greyhound provides limited commercial bus line transportation in the Yakima County region, serving the cities of Sunnyside and Yakima since 2004. Neither city maintains a formal bus terminal facility (closing in 2012) with current stops located with contracted commercial businesses in each city. There is limited connection between the greyhound stops and local transit services.

One-way service between Sunnyside and Yakima, adults are \$15-17, an adult traveling with one child is \$30-34. Students, military personnel, veterans (and their families) may qualify for a 10% fare discount. Groups of 10 or more may also qualify discounts when booking in large groups.

The Yakima to Seattle route is once a day, in the early evening. The Seattle to Yakima bus leaves in the early morning and arrives three hours later. One-way fares from Sunnyside to Seattle are \$23-37 for adults, one adult with one child, and seniors, depending on the day of the week. One-way fares from Yakima to Seattle are \$23-45 for adults, one adult with one child, and seniors, depending on the day of the week traveled. All buses are equipped with ADA equipment and provide priority boarding, seating, and transferring if needed.

Fronteras Del Norte

Fronteras Del Norte specializes in the transport of individuals along the west coast through Washington, Oregon, and California. The purpose of the service was to provide the Hispanic community a reliable and efficient way to transport seasonal farm workers. Fronteras Del Norte has two locations where they pick up riders in Yakima County and transport them to Tijuana. Riders can be picked up in Yakima or Sunnyside. Additional in-state stops can be made to Wenatchee and Pasco, WA

Airporter Shuttle to Seattle (Yakima, Kittitas and King County)

Since 2003, the Central Washington Airporter has offered residents of Central Washington the option of riding over Snoqualmie Pass to get to Seattle instead of driving. Medical procedures, other care or services not locally available, hazardous winter weather conditions affecting departures from the Yakima Air Terminal or a desire to fly from Sea-Tac Airport, as well as access to Downtown and the Seattle Convention Center are all within access thanks to three daily round-trips. Services are not available on Easter Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas day holidays. (See table for routes and fares).

Central Washington Airporter Shuttle from Yakima to Sea-Tac Airport via Interstate 90 (I-90).				
Destination	To / From Sea-Tac Airport		To / From Sea-Tac Light Rail	
Adult Rate	OW	RT	OW	RT
Yakima – Airporter Office	\$49	\$98	\$49	\$98
Yakima – Air Terminal	\$54	\$108	\$54	\$108
Yakima – Training Center Chevron	\$49	\$98	\$49	\$98
Ellensburg – CWU Starbucks	\$43	\$86	\$43	\$86
Cle Elum	\$39	\$78	\$39	\$78
North Bend – Factory Outlet	\$27	\$54	\$27	\$54
Youth Rate	OW	RT	OW	RT
Yakima – Airporter Office	\$44	\$88	\$44	\$88
Yakima – Air Terminal	\$49	\$98	\$49	\$98

Yakima – Training Center Chevron	\$44	\$88	\$44	\$88
Ellensburg – CWU Starbucks	\$37	\$74	\$37	\$74
Cle Elum	\$35	\$70	\$34	\$69
North Bend – Factory Outlet	\$22	\$44	\$22	\$44

Intercity Fares				
Intercity Destinations	Adult Rate		Youth Rate	
	OW	RT	OW	RT
Yakima Office – Ellensburg	\$12	\$24	\$12	\$24
Yakima Airport – Ellensburg	\$17	\$34	\$17	\$34
Yakima Training Center Chevron	\$12	\$24	\$12	\$24
Yakima Office – Cle Elum	\$25	\$50	\$20	\$40
Yakima Airport – Cle Elum	\$30	\$60	\$25	\$50
Yakima Training Center Chevron – Cle Elum	\$25	\$50	\$20	\$40
Ellensburg – Cle Elum	\$10	\$20	\$8	\$16
North Bend – Yakima Office	\$40	\$80	\$35	\$70
North Bend – Yakima Airport	\$45	\$90	\$40	\$80
North Bend – Yakima Training Center Chevron	\$40	\$80	\$35	\$70
North Bend – Ellensburg	\$30	\$60	\$27	\$54
North Bend – Cle Elum	\$25	\$50	\$21	\$42
(Fares in U.S. Dollars)				
OW = One Way RT = Round Trip ADULT = Age 16 & Older YOUTH = Age 2 to 15 CHILD FARE = Children under 2 ride free				

Other Services

Air Passenger Service

Alaska Airlines (partnered with Horizon Air) provides air passenger service at the Yakima Regional Airport – McAllister Field, a regional commercial and general aviation airport owned by the City of Yakima. The airport is a full service, TSA compliant airport with daily flight service to Sea-Tac International Airport with domestic and international linkage. Character service is available. The Yakima Airport has historically maintained three flights daily between Yakima and Sea-Tac. However due to a national pilot shortage Yakima will be reduced to a single flight per day starting in September 2022. Reduced service to Yakima and other small markets throughout the Pacific Northwest will remain until the airline can upgrade its aircraft fleet and certified pilot levels.

The Yakima Airport is a participant facility in WSDOT’s ongoing research into environmentally friendly electric aircraft service. Nine-passenger electric aircraft could eventually operate at both the Yakima and Sunnyside Airports providing regularly scheduled chartered flights between small city airports without the need for commuter to travel to Sea-Tac airport for a connecting flight to other PNW destinations. This potential change in regional air travel could ultimately reduce capacity issues at Sea-Tac.

Passenger Rail Service

The Yakima-Kittitas County region has been without passenger rail service since AMTRAK terminated service along the Stampede Pass line in October 1981. Yakima, Toppenish, Sunnyside, and Ellensburg in Kittitas County lost rail access to Pacific Coast Cities to the west and Pasco/Spokane and Cities east.

A Passenger Rail Study sponsored by the Washington State Legislature Joint Transportation Committee in 2020 determined that returning passenger rail service to Central Washington with a gross population of nearly 300,000 people, was feasible. The non-profit passenger rail advocacy group “All Aboard Washington” has coordinated with the Cities of Cle Elum and Ellensburg (Kittitas

County), City of Toppenish and Yakima (Yakima County) and the Yakima Valley Conference of Governments to consider opportunities afforded by the 2021 **Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law** (BIL) Act to revisit former passenger rail routes for potential re-establishment of service throughout the nation as passenger rail is viewed as a more environmentally friendly travel mode. Additionally, passenger rail can accommodate travelers with special needs and is relatively affordable compared to other modes of transportation.

Fiesta Foods:

Fiesta Foods offers a one-way shuttle ride to their customers' homes for all three of their grocery market locations (Yakima, Sunnyside, and Pasco). Sunnyside Fiesta Foods offers transportation to the lower valley areas such as Grandview, Granger, Outlook and Sunnyside. Yakima Fiesta Foods offers transportation in Yakima and Union Gap.



Fare-free service is offered seven days a week from 10 AM-8 PM on a first come first serve basis. There is one transportation van per grocery store location. Vans are not ADA accessible. There are no eligibility requirements other than customers must be shopping at the Fiesta Foods location. Fiesta Foods ridership can vary from 0 to 30 trips per day.

Yakama Nation Legends Casino:

Yakama Nation Legends Casino provides free shuttle transportation for Legends guests aged 18 and over only. Transportation, requiring passengers to arrive 15 minutes prior to departure time is available from the Yakima and Tri-Cities areas using the following schedule:

Yakima Locations: Tuesday & Saturday	
• Jack in the Box: 3907 Tieton Dr.	9:40am pick up 4:00pm drop off
• Sun Tower: 6 N. 6th St.	10:00am pick up 3:45pm drop off
• Chamber of Commerce: 10 N. 9th St.	10:10am pick up 3:40pm drop off
• At Home: 2530 Rudkin Rd. Union Gap	10:20am pick up 3:30pm drop off
Tri Cities Locations: Tuesday-Saturday	
• Pasco Walmart: 4820 North Rd. 68	10:30am pick up 6:55pm drop off
• Kennewick Lowes Lot: 1020 N. Colorado St.	10:55am pick up 6:40pm drop off
• Richland Comm. Center: 500 Amon Park Dr.	11:15am pick up 6:25pm drop off
• Benton City Conoco: 10806 E. Kennedy Rd. NE	11:30am pick up 6:00pm drop off

Catholic Community Volunteer Chore Services (also known as Yakima County Volunteer Chore Services)

Yakima County Volunteer (Chore) Services is a state funded program of Catholic Charities and has provided transportation services since 1981 for low-income elders 60 years of age and older, and physically impaired adults 18 years of age and older with household incomes of \$1,000 or less for a single person and \$1,500 or less for a couple. No fees are charged, and transportation is local only. Persons must be ambulatory as this service is unable to provide for those who are non-ambulatory. Individuals are provided door-to-door service to local medical appointments, civic centers, grocery stores, laundromats and essential errands. Drivers for this service are volunteers and provide their own vehicle for transportation of clients and dictate their own schedules. All volunteer drivers are Washington State Background checked for any criminal activity.

Other Resources

Lyft / Uber - Lyft and Uber (transportation mobility services) are available in the greater Yakima area utilizing online or smartphone applications to schedule private location to location trips with individual private drivers for a pre-determined fee.

Rideshareonline.com - RideshareOnline.com, managed by the Washington State Department of Transportation, is your resource for commuting options in the Northwest. RideshareOnline.com is a convenient and easy-to-use tool for the traveling public to help reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality, and sustain the quality of living in our region. Employers, commuters, event-goers and parents of school-aged children will all benefit from this "best in class" service.

RideshareOnline.com is the gateway to free information on travel options and incentive programs for commute and non-commute trips. It also offers tools for employers to implement effective commute reduction programs. This online service is available in Spanish and English.

RideshareOnline.com assists commuters by providing free carpool, vanpool, and bicycle ride matching services, bus/rail options, SchoolPool carpooling programs for parents, and information about the benefits of teleworking from home. Many commuters may be able to access information on their employer's in-house commute program and promotional incentives through RideshareOnline.com.

RideshareOnline.com provides a free, comprehensive online tool to assist employers in managing their employee transportation program. The tool can help them develop and implement a customized employee benefit program that lowers employer costs, increases productivity, distributes incentives online, and helps protect the environment.

For more information or questions about RideshareOnline.com, contact your vanpool providers or call toll-free, 1-888-814-1300 in Washington. TTY users, please dial your relay service at 7-1-1 to get in touch with rideshare staff (available 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday).

RideshareOnline.com translation service is available to ESL customers via a conference by calling 206-625-4500 (available 8 AM to 5 PM, Monday through Friday).

Park and Rides

Park and Rides facilities are defined as **"parking lots with public transport connections** that allow commuters and other people heading to city centers to leave their vehicles and transfer to a bus, rail system (rapid transit, light rail, or commuter rail), or carpool for the remainder of the journey".

Recognized Yakima County Region Park and Ride Facilities (Listed generally within Yakima County from NW to SE)				
"Lot" Name	Location	Address	Jurisdiction	Oversight
SR 410 & US 12	SR 410 & US 12	50 Washington SR 410	WSDOT	WSDOT
Cleman's View	Hwy 12 @ Cleman's View Sports Park	8894 US Hwy 12	Naches	Naches
Selah Civic Center	Selah Civic Center Facility Campus	216 S. 1 st Street	Selah	Selah
Firing Center	I-82 & Firing Center Road	51 Firing Center Road	Selah	WSDOT / Yakima Co.
Resthaven Exit	I-82 & Resthaven Road	24 Resthaven Road	Selah	WSDOT
Yakima Public Works	N 21 st St. & Fruitvale Blvd.	2301 Fruitvale Blvd	Yakima	Yakima Transit
Gateway	N Fair Ave (At Target Center)	101 N. Fair Avenue	Yakima	Yakima
University Parkway	SR24 & Riverside Rd (NE Corner)	1703 University Parkway	Yakima	Yakima Co.
Beaudry Road	SR 24 & Beaudry Road	7208 Postma Road	Moxee	WSDOT

Deeringhoff	SR 24 & Deeringhoff Road	171 Deeringhoff Road	Yakima Co.	WSDOT
I-82 (Parker) Exit 40	Yakima Valley Highway & Exit 40 Off Ramp	2052 Yakima Valley Hwy	Yakima Co.	WSDOT
Harrah	NW Corner of Northover Street & Harrah Road	4000 Block of Harrah Rd.	Harrah	Private
Teapot	Next to Teapot Dome / E of I-82 (Exit 52)	113 First Ave	Zillah	Zillah
SR 241 Sheller	North Sunnyside	SR 24/Sheller Road	Sunnyside	Sunnyside
Sunnyside SR 12	YVH & 16th	YVH and 16th Street	Sunnyside	Sunnyside
Sunnyside Shell Station	I-82 Exit 69/SR 241	I-82 Exit 69 and SR 241	Sunnyside	Sunnyside
Sunnyside Bi Mart	I-82 Exit 67-S. 1st St/S. Hill Rd	Midvale Rd/So. Hill Rd.	Sunnyside	Sunnyside
Mabton (In development)	SE Corner of SR22 / S. Main St Intersection	Governor's Park Vicinity	Mabton	Mabton
West Wine County Road	Wine County Road Near N. Euclid Rd	1000 Block of W Wine County Road	Grandview	Grandview
Rose Garden	North Side of E. Wine County Rd. & West of SVID Canal	400 Block of E Wine County Road	Grandview	Grandview
Prosser	Stacy Avenue Transit Center	7 th Street & Stacy Avenue	Prosser	WSDOT

Emergency Management

Hazard risk assessment

The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management has identified that, due to its location and geological features, Yakima County is vulnerable to the damaging effects of 55+ potential hazards in two major categories: Natural and Technological.

These hazards include but are not limited to these natural/technological disasters: drought, extreme cold, extreme heat, fires, floods, landslides, earthquakes, snow/ice, windstorm, tornado, epidemic, volcano, hazardous materials, dam/levee failure, transportation accident, civil/political disorder, weapons of mass destruction.

Mobility dependent populations more vulnerable

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, the ability to evacuate people with special needs, as well as the general population may be required to ensure their safety. If an evacuation is required, identification of the location of special needs populations is critical to a successful emergency response.

Emergency action plans and regional coordination

The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management is in the process of updating their Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP) that outlines strategic emergency planning guidelines to follow during an emergency or disaster situation was approved by the state. The plan is required to be updated every four years.

The Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management (YVOEM) coordinates and facilitates resources to minimize the impacts of emergencies and disasters on people, property, economy and the environment.

Through planning, it is the mission of the YVOEM in cooperation with other jurisdictions to endeavor to mitigate, prepare for, respond to and recover from natural and technological emergencies and disasters and provide coordination of transportation resources and the identification of emergency transportation routes for the movement of people and materials.

The Comprehensive Emergency Management Program (CEMP) is separated into Functions according to implementation aspect of the plan. Emergency Support Function number one speaks directly to transportation. Overall responsibility for the implementation of emergency management activities, (for transportation), rests with elected or appointed government officials, i.e., County Commissioners, and mayors of the 14 cities and towns; and governing bodies of those jurisdictions with responsibilities during an emergency or disaster. Transportation resources may be obtained from public agencies, the private sector and volunteer resources for the movement of people and materials.

Support agencies included in the plan are:

- Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management
- Yakima Sheriff's Office – Search and Rescue
- Public Safety Dispatch Centers
- Private Ambulance Providers
- School Districts and Private Schools
- Critical Infrastructure – Private Sector
- Volunteer Organizations

Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management utilizes an online database of vulnerable populations that has been developed by Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). The DSHS Geospatial Information System (EmGIS) provides relevant information to emergency management decision makers within minutes. EmGIS makes it fast for DSHS to evaluate the need for additional assistance among its clients affected by an emergency. As a part of the EmGIS system, Aging and Long-Term Care (ALTC) provides a list of clients served by their agency. The list includes the number of clients and the cities in which they reside and will assist those addressing the emergency to have knowledge regarding where people with special needs may reside.

Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management has developed Memorandums of Agreements with providers of transportation resources to help during an emergency or disaster situation. Yakima Valley Office Emergency Management schedules practice emergency drills that include transportation providers.

Yakima Transit has a fleet of buses that are available to assist with emergency evacuation services. Yakima Transit has designated their Safety Office to be the contact for the YVOEM team to assist with the coordination of evacuation services. Yakima Transit participates in table top exercises with Yakima Valley Office of Emergency Management.

People For People is another agency that plays a role with the CEMP. Through a Letter of Agreement, the agency has agreed to support the concepts, process, and structures and carry out assigned responsibilities to ensure effective and efficient incident management, including designating representatives to staff interagency coordinating structures, as required. Due to operating transportation services and the 2-1-1 Information and Referral phone system, this agency plays the following roles:

- Assist with transportation when available for clients who utilize wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- Assist with the dissemination of information to the public. 2-1-1 is utilized as a resource, as it provides a toll-free information and referral line for the community to access social

service resources. During an emergency, 2-1-1 is provided information so that the community may call in to obtain resources, information about the emergency and venues for receiving assistance.

- Participate in practice emergency drills.

Policies and Strategies from the UPWP

The 2020 - 2045 Yakima Valley Regional Transportation Plan contains information related to transit and transportation. The plan provides the following:

The 2020 – 2045 Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan (M/TRP)

identifies five regional priorities: Preservation / State of Good Repair

- Safety
- Economic Vitality
- Freight Mobility
- Transit and Transportation Demand ManagementPublic Transportation, active transportation, and other complementary public and person conveyance modes provide either direct or indirect benefit to Preservation/State of Good Repair (reduced wear and tear on road system), Safety (pathways with safe buffers way from motorized traffic, improve safety crossing facilities), Economic Vitality (promotion of health options, tourism, or walkable communities), and Transit & Transportation Management (commute trip reduction programs, multi-modal integration opportunities) all support our M/RTP efforts.

Strategies to enhance transit and transportation demand management (TDM) programs are important elements of the M/RTP. These strategies include expanding fixed-route transit, paratransit, and Commute Trip Reduction (CTR) programs in the greater Yakima metropolitan area. Expanding the availability and types of transportation choices in and between communities throughout the Yakima Valley is a priority for the region.

Fixed-Route Transit

Suggested strategies for Yakima Transit, Selah Transit and Union Gap Transit to continue meeting the transportation needs in the Greater Yakima-Selah-Union Gap Urbanized Area are to:

- Improve frequency of service.
- Improve speed and reliability on primary commuter corridors.
- Expand hours and days of service.
- Extend service to and develop a transit hub in East Valley.
- Add new service to developing areas of Moxee.
- Add demand response service for developing areas that cannot support fixed-route service.
- Invest in capital programs to acquire new buses as well as constructing benches and shelters at bus stops.
- Maintain connections with PFP's Community Connector and Pahto Public Passage to continue access to and from the lower valley cities to metropolitan services.
- Increase opportunities to link with regional and city pathways, trailheads, park & rides, and multi-modal transportation connectors

Rural Mobility

Rural transit services provide access to basic services for people who do not have other transportation services. Disabilities, age, and income are some of the barriers that prevent people from being able to transport themselves.

People for People provides a single-route Lower Yakima Valley connector service between the cities of Yakima, Wapato, Toppenish, Zillah, Granger, Sunnyside, Grandview, and Prosser. This Community Connector service should be expanded to directly serve both medical and educational facilities.

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation's Pahto Public Passage plans to continue expansion of their fixed route Tribal Transit system. The service helps meet the rural transit needs of the lower valley by improving access to employment, health care, shopping, and other activities for persons living on the reservation and surrounding communities. The Yakama Nation Tribal Transit provides transportation to the communities of Toppenish, White Swan, Harrah, Brownstown, Wapato. The service provides one route on the Yakama Reservation and coordinate connections to three other transit service providers – Union Gap Transit, Yakima Transit and People For People's Community Connector.

Possible areas for improving regional mobility.

- Continue coordination between intra-city and inter-city transportation providers that maximized transferability between services
- Region's rural transit provider should continue to coordinate with existing and expanded rural transit service to the community colleges, hospitals, and other regional facilities and attractions.
- Intra-city routes, such as PFP's "Route 201" (the Sunnyside/Mabton/Grandview Loop) should be considered for areas such as the Granger-Zillah (Buena)-Toppenish area and/or Naches-Tieton-Cowiche-West Valley "clusters".
- Consideration of a transit district concentrating on core regional corridors (I-82, SR 97, US 12, SR 22, and SR 24) with sufficient frequency that supports increased services to inter-/intra-city transit programs
- Increase frequency and stops with municipal jurisdictions and rural corridors to improve "first mile – last mile" accessibility

Paratransit

The existing paratransit services should be maintained to provide transportation access for special needs populations. Additional paratransit services are necessary to continue meeting the transportation needs of residents who require access to employment, health care, social services, education, shopping, and activities that improve their quality of life.

Transit enhancement and Transportation Demand Management

The M/RTP framework includes strategies for expanding transit to meet the future travel demands throughout the Yakima Valley Region. Strategies to reduce peak period demands also are included. The transit and transportation demand management (TDM) strategies include:

- Improving transportation services for people with special needs
- Expanding fixed route service coverage in metropolitan area.
- Expanding service hours to address nighttime and weekend needs
- Enhancing service to regional designations such as colleges, medical facilities and regional commercial areas.

Non-motorized Transportation

Proposed improvements will include enhancements for pedestrians and bicyclists. The framework of the M/RTP supports the completion of high-priority missing links to the non-motorized system. This will support growth in non-motorized travel options, will improve safety, and will enhance access to transit. YVCOG is involved and continuing to support local and regional programs and projects in categories of Complete Streets and Safe Routes to Schools.

Non-motorized Transportation strategies may include:

- Promote participation and coordination with area bike/pedestrian or other active transportation groups or stakeholders.
- Coordinate partnerships and transit connections to city and regional pathway systems.
- Partner with non-motorized transportation groups in seeking active transportation grants that improve access for “first mile – last mile” travel to and from transit services
- Participate in both rural and urban Complete Streets and Safe Routes to School projects with overseeing jurisdictions to maximize all mobility modes as appropriate.

Transportation Needs Assessment

Yakima County is a large rural region with public transit available in a “patchwork” form that leaves many county residents with either limited or no transit service available to them to meet their basic daily needs. The Cities of Selah, Yakima, and Union Gap maintain sales tax-based transit and dial-a-ride operations but do not entirely cover their city boundaries.

Through WSDOT Public Transportation Program grants, some special needs transportation services are provided throughout the county through social service agencies like People for People, ENTRUST, and Area on Aging; while Federal Transit Administration’s Public Transportation on Indian Reservations Program provides funding resources to operate fixed-route and complementary ADA service by the Yakama Nation Pahto Public Passage Reservation. These existing transportation services are limited and do not provide comprehensive transportation options. While special needs populations utilize existing services, they must rely upon friends, family, and other options because current transportation services are not sufficient to meet their needs.

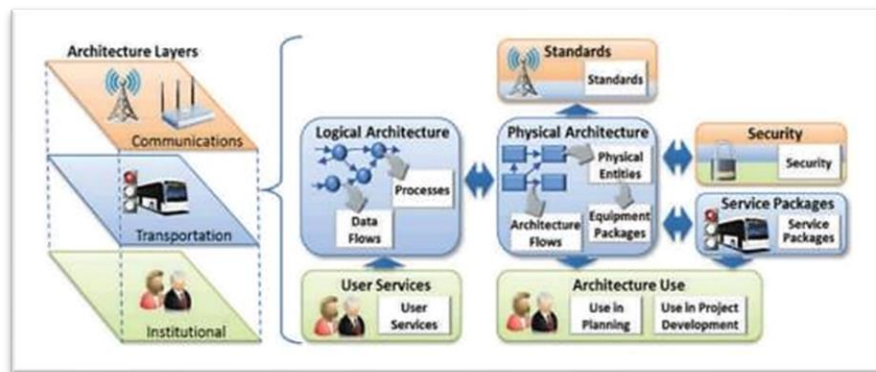
With an extensive network of county roadways that do not have sidewalks, shoulders, or bike lanes, pedestrians, bikers, and especially individuals with limited mobility that reside in remote and isolated areas are very limited in their ability to safely access services. These conditions require door-to-door service for the special needs populations residing in the rural regions.

Role of Technology

The Yakima Valley Conference of Governments (YVCOG) drafted its Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) architecture in 2017 and update it as needed annually. As the architecture notes, “A regional transportation system is composed of many different sub-systems that are planned, implemented, and operated by multiple jurisdictions and agencies. Integrating communications technologies into the transportation infrastructure is critical to ensure the safety and mobility of the transportation network.

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are technology solutions to improve the functionality, safety and cost-effectiveness of transportation systems. An ITS architecture is a document that illustrates what advanced technology systems are in place or being planned for the future, in this case, within the Yakima Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) boundaries.”

The *Yakima Valley Regional ITS Architecture* coincides with the current MPO/RTPO Long Range Transportation Plan 2020-2045 and focuses on a 10-year timeframe, including: traveler information, traffic management, transit, and public safety / emergency management-oriented services within Yakima County. The *Yakima Valley Regional ITS Architecture* was last updated in December 2022 (For more information see <http://yvcog.org/ITS/web/index.htm>).



Stakeholders in the ITS architecture include:

- Local city public works departments
- Local police and fire departments
- Media
- Transportation and transit providers
- Private information service providers
- Local & state agencies involved for emergency response
- The traveling public
- Washington State Department of Transportation
- Union Gap Transit
- Selah Transit
- Washington State Patrol
- Yakima City Streets and Traffic Division
- Yakima City Transit Division
- Yakima County Fire, Sherriff, and Transportation Services
- Yakima Training Center
- Yakima Valley Emergency Management
- Yakima Valley Conference of Governments
- Yakama Nation

ITS systems help address transportation priorities by providing cost-effective alternatives to physical infrastructure improvements that allow for greater mobility, safety and preservation while minimizing environmental impacts.

The Yakima County ITS architecture complies with WSDOT ITS guidelines and is built on the US National Architecture version 7.0, which means it can also be used to tie Yakima County projects or types of equipment into state or other participating project architectures. ITS projects include data gathering systems, variable message signs, vehicle-to-vehicle communications, and emergency dispatch centers – to name a few.

The Yakima Valley Regional ITS Architecture focuses on local agencies and organizations in the Yakima Valley, the interfaces between these agencies, and specific local interfaces to the WSDOT South Central Region and other state agencies.

The Yakima region is covered by the broader South Central Regional and Washington State ITS architectures, which focus on Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) infrastructures, projects, and initiatives, which makes sense because WSDOT owns and maintains the majority of intelligent transportation system components in the region, including fiber, variable message signs, data stations, etc. WSDOT also collects remote weather information, which is sent, along with transportation data, to be coordinated out of the WSDOT Traffic Management Center in Yakima. WSDOT also works with the Washington State Patrol to share real-time information.

Technology can increase the operational efficiencies for transportation providers. Technology can be utilized to locate the closest vehicle to a rider. Technology can be used for door-to-door service to notify the rider when their pickup is scheduled to arrive and decrease the number of no shows and wait time. Technology can also help with identifying the accurate location of a rider. Across rural communities, transportation drivers have difficulty locating remote addresses. With technology, there is the need to provide training and education to riders to help them understand additional options for scheduling and canceling a trip.

Coordination of Transportation

Coordination of transportation is key to ensure efficiency, leverage resources and address community priorities. The following are examples of how coordination can and does occur:

- Coordinate reservations, maintenance, purchase and maintenance of equipment, staff training, coordinate pupil and public transportation wherever possible.
- Coordinate social service transportation resources to provide universal access.
- Coordinate, develop and expand alternate transportation resources with volunteer drivers and a re-licensing program for individuals with suspended licenses to secure their driver's license (re-licensing program), loans for automobiles, and van pools.
- Coordinate trips for individuals to include multi-purpose activities (e.g. medical appointment, shopping, nutrition).
- Coordinate transportation resources with central information & referral centers (2-1-1).
- Coordinate transit schedules to assist passengers utilizing more than one transit service.

In 1999, People for People formed the Yakima Special Needs Coalition to provide a coordinated transportation system for Yakima County residents with special needs. YVCOG took over the administration of the group in 2016 and changed the committee's name to Mobilizing Public Access to County-Wide Transportation (MPACT). The committee is an advisory body to the

YVCOG Transportation Policy Board for Multi-modal transportations issues. MPACT's vision for coordinated special needs transportation is a system that:

- Serves all people with special transportation needs
- Contributes to a livable community, a vital economy, and a sustainable environment
- Is easy to access regardless of who need the ride or is paying for the ride
- Efficiently coordinates all community transportation resources
- Is integrated and interdependent

The MPACT committee generally meets quarterly, but more frequently (monthly to bi-monthly, and responsibilities require) to improve transportation options for individuals with special needs in Yakima County, using a collaborative process that involves transportation providers, social and health providers, consumers, and businesses. Responsibilities of MPACT include:

- Oversee 4-year updates to the Human Services Transportation Plan (HSTP)
- Advise development of regional transit studies, and provide coordination and assistance to public transportation and other modal-alternative planning opportunities
- Prioritize Public Transportation Grant applications for submittal to policy board
- Network and develop partnerships with other transportation stakeholders who may benefit from public/special needs transportation.
- Recruit government, business, and private entities interested in expanding MPACT's reach.

Updates and Amendments to the HSTP

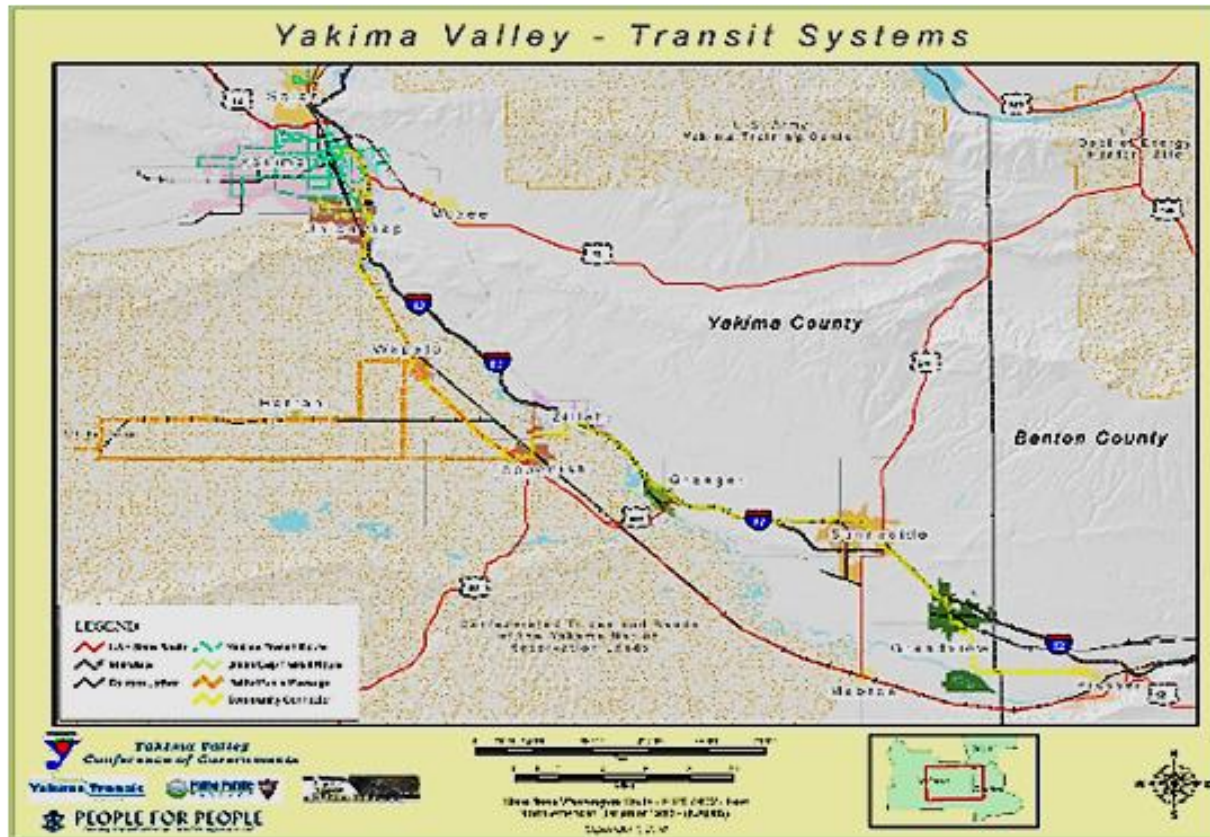
Provisions have been made and a process is in place for amending this document should it deemed appropriate or necessary. Whether it be a change in circumstance, updated data, or a change in infrastructure or service, alterations or additions can be initiated by members of the MPACT board or YVCOG staff. In either event, the draft language will be constructed and reviewed; then presented to the MPACT commission for recommendation to the Policy Board for approval and adoption. It is anticipated that following the completion of the Transit Feasibility Study the conclusions and findings will warrant such an amendment. In addition, there may be updated geospatial data regarding the region's demography from the Census Bureau which will enhance the map information found at the conclusion of this plan.

Transit System Coordination

Yakima Transit, Pahto Public Passage, Union Gap Transit, Selah Transit and People For People's Community Connector provide routed transit service to Selah, Yakima, Union Gap, Wapato, Harrah, White Swan, Toppenish, Zillah, Granger, Sunnyside, and Grandview. PFP's "201 Route" provides loop service to Mabton, Grandview, and Sunnyside

Yakima Transit links to Union Gap and Selah Transit. Community Connector links to Ben-Franklin Transit, Pahto Public Passage and Yakima Transit. Riders can also access Yakima-Ellensburg Commuter, Greyhound and Airporter Shuttle via the Community Connector and Yakima Transit.

NOTE: Map will be updated in January 2023 – add PFP's "201 Route



Community Needs

Being just a bit smaller than the state of Connecticut, Yakima County has a large geographical land area to contend with. Improved transit service opportunities are needed throughout Yakima County. The table below outlines specific agency needs, their sources, timelines and their projected cost in condensed tabular form for review.

Project Activity	Brief Description	Time Frame	Agency	Secured or Planned	Funding Source	Cost
Transit B2:H14 Feasibility Study II	An analysis of methodologies to improve the existing transit systems without significant expense	2024	YVCOG	Planned (Consolidated grant applied for)	WSDOT Consolidated	\$250,000
Transit Feasibility Study III	An analysis of methodologies to improve the existing transit in the most economic manner	2025-2026	YVCOG	Planned	WSDOT Consolidated	\$250,000
Switch to Alternative Fuels	Make the transition to electric or hydrogen powered vehicles.	2023-2035	All transit services	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$20,000,000
Technnology Upgrades	Bus and van tracking, scheduling, dispatch, route optimization, digital fare collection, service scheduling,	2025-2035	All transit services	Secured and proposed	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$5,000,000
Shelters and amenities	Bus stops, benches, signage, bike racks, public space and infrastructure installation and enhancement	2025-2035	All transit services	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$2,500,000
Micro Transit Services	Investigate and solicit possible forms and vendors of micro transit. Feasibility Study?	2025	Selah; possibly others	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$50,000
New Transit Facility	Construct a new transit service, storage and administrative facility taking into account E-bus and other future transit needs	2025	Yakima Transit	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$15,000,000
West Valley Demand Analysis	Comprehensive analysis to determine need and volume of service for the West Valley	2026	Yakima Transit	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$40,000
Yakima to Toppenish Demand Analysis	Comprehensive analysis to determine need and volume of service for the West Valley	2026	YVCOG	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$40,000
West Valley Transit Center	Construct a new transit service, storage and administrative facility taking into account E-bus and other future transit needs	2027	Yakima Transit	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$2,000,000
Wheel Chair Capable vehicles	Procurement of vehicles large and small to accommodate wheel chairs	2025	Entrust, Protran	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$10,000,000
Small Four Passenger Cars	Seven vehicles to enhance existing services	2026	Entrust	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$250,000
Transit Education	Development of a program to educate ridership on logistics, best practices, advocacy, and technology	2027	All agencies	Planned	FTA / WSDOT Consolidated Grant / CMAQ / CRP	\$50,000

Impacts from COVID-19, 2020 to Present

Ridership on our region's transit systems shrunk between 65-90% during the COVID-19 pandemic (comparable rates to other systems around the state). Transits and other special needs transportation programs adhered to state-directed health guidelines dramatically reduced ridership capacity to ensure "social-distancing" was practiced as well as possible. This included significant impacts on operating costs as sanitizing supplies, physical barriers, and personal protective gear was needed at facilities and in vehicles. Despite a scaling back of many state guidelines, regional service providers are maintaining several safety protocols and intend to continue those practices. Ridership is slowly returning to pre-COVID levels.

Operational issues for providers

Budget constraints, inflationary increases in employee wages and benefits, increasing gas prices, aging bus fleets, supply chain delays, etc. are all placing pressures on operating capabilities. In 2022, Governor Inslee approved the law (SB 5974) that sets a goal that "all publicly owned and privately owned passenger and light-duty vehicles of model year 2030 or later that are sold, purchased, or registered in Washington state be electric vehicles". This conversion from carbon-fueled to "electric or other alternative fuels" will require significant investment in infrastructure and support systems (operations) that currently are not available in sufficient quantities or structure.

Additional Service Hours

The 2018 HSTP survey showed a need for transit services more days of the week and longer hours. These needs continue as evidenced in the 2022 HSTP / Regional Transit Feasibility Study Survey. Even though service may be available from a smaller town into the Yakima Metropolitan Area, riders requested more frequency of service, as current service may not allow enough time to attend appointments, or too long of a wait time before returning to their original destination. More services are needed to respond to same day appointments. Presently, current transit provider service hours cannot adequately support employees/employers operating during evening and graveyard shifts.



Limited Service

The special needs populations are located throughout the county. Rural and isolated communities have limited transportation options and lack basic services. It was noted that some individuals who are extremely heavy have difficulty identifying transportation options.

Marketing

Understanding the service schedules, eligibility, and connection times has been difficult to individuals. Address the perception that public transportation is only for “poor people”, but a viable transportation alternative with positive environmental benefits. Need to change with technology. Smart phone apps and web site information can be enhanced to keep riders up to date. More information is needed in Spanish and other language formats.

Education

Utilizing 2-1-1 to help educate special needs populations on the services that are available, how to utilize services and the benefits of the service therefore lead to increased usage. More education is needed for social service agencies to help clients find the services they need.

Affordable Service

Those who are not Medicaid eligible have limited options for non-emergency medical transportation. Those who live outside regions with public transportation in rural locations are often isolated from services. A high number of low-income individuals rely upon the free or low-cost transportation available to travel to work, school and services for daily living. Yet this service

is not always available countywide. Same day service is needed because of need for a doctor or other type of appointment made that day.

Countywide Service

There are significant gaps in coverage leaving areas of the county without service. People with special needs are located throughout the county yet basic routed service isn't available countywide.

The good news is that existing services are utilized and, in many cases, serve unique needs well and effectively. Several more opportunities become apparent when learning the transportation needs of the special needs population and the community.

- Expand intra and inter-city fixed route and demand response transportation to all areas of Yakima County and beyond.
- Continue to enhance coordination between providers, including Mobile Data Terminals (MDT) for all transit systems to reduce "silos."
- Continue the use of the MPAT committee to coordinate between providers.
- Do more to help riders understand what transportation services are available, what are the differences between them, how to access them and how they connect. Include more technology such as apps for smart phones and web sites.
- Continue to provide safe sites for bus stops with shelters, lights, and signage.
- Support the return of Passenger Rail Service to Central Washington. Support the expansion of commercial airline services by adding additional airlines to the Yakima Airport. Also, support "electric" aircraft technologies and development of electric aircraft charter services at the Yakima and Sunnyside Airports. ~~Expand airline services.~~
- Support development of ~~add~~ electric car share, electric bike rental, and micro-transit technologies.

Measurement Tool for Prioritization of Community Priorities

To address the needs for the special needs population, the following rankings are used when prioritizing projects for state or federal transit grant opportunities including "Regional Mobility", "Consolidated Grant", and "Vanpool Investment" programs.

- **Preservation:** Ensure that current transportation resources remain in place.
- **Unmet/Greatest Need:** Identify the needs of the population.
- **Coordination:** Assure non-duplication and coordination of resources
- **Effectiveness/Cost Efficient:** Transportation resources are available, accessible and adaptable to meet the needs. Transportation resources provide community savings.

Transportation Service Plan

Special needs transportation is a critical element to maintaining quality of life. The populations that are most likely to have unmet transportation needs include persons with disabilities, older adults, veterans, youth, and individuals with limited incomes. Within Yakima County a significant percentage of individuals fall into more than one of the special needs categories.

Preserve and expand transportation services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, youth, veterans, and individuals with low incomes.

DEMAND RESPONSE TRANSPORTATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- Provide door-to-door transportation service in the rural and isolated underserved areas of the county for special needs population.
- Transportation services to access employment, healthcare, social services, education, shopping, and activities that improve their quality of life.
- Additional transportation services are needed like passage trains and vehicle sharing including electric car sharing

FIXED ROUTE AND ROUTE DEVIATED TRANSPORTATION

- Expand consistent and reliable transportation is needed for individuals with special needs and the general public to access human services, healthcare, shopping, education, employment, and social activities by connecting isolated communities and connecting across counties.

Promote safe and accessible transportation services for individuals with special needs by educating and advocating for special needs transportation.

SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

- Provide community education and advocacy on available transportation services and how to access.
- Provide advocacy to support special needs and public transportation options.

CAPITAL EQUIPMENT THAT PROMOTES ACCESS AND SAFETY

- Maintain and purchase ADA accessible vehicles to accommodate transportation for those with special needs.
- Provide safe sites for bus stops with shelters, lights, and signage.
- Provide bike racks to accommodate options for access.
- Purchase technology for the safety of riders that include video cameras and radios.
- Purchase smart phone apps and programs that provide up to date information for transit users

Coordinate transportation and human services for increased efficiencies and utilization of resources.

COORDINATE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATION

- Maintain the MPACT committee to provide on-going coordination of human services and transportation resources to serve more people without duplication of services.
- Coordinate reservations, maintenance, purchase and maintenance of equipment, staff training, and transportation service.
- Coordinate, develop and expand alternate transportation resources with volunteer drivers, re-licensing program, loans for automobiles, and van pools.
- Coordinate trips for individuals to include multi-purpose activities (e.g., medical appointment, shopping, and nutrition).

- Coordinate transportation resources with centralized information and referral (2-1-1).
- Coordinate transportation services with other Regional Transportation Planning Organizations, State Agencies, Federal Agencies, and local programs.
- Purchase and support technology for dispatching, vehicle location, screening customers for eligibility, customer reservations, and Apps for smart phone technology

**PROMOTE MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES FOR SPECIAL NEEDS
POPULATION AND GENERAL PUBLIC**

- Promote alternative and active transportation and connectivity options for travel outside of the County for special needs population via regional or national bus lines.
- Coordinate transportation service throughout the County, including the development of a countywide transit service through a public transportation benefit area (PTBA) or other mechanism.
- Promote increased access (both flights and service providers) to commercial aviation services at regional airports, including installation of ADA accessible facilities at airports.
- Promote reintroduction of passenger rail service between Seattle (via Auburn, WA) and Pasco, to Central Washington Area (Cle Elum, Ellensburg, Yakima, Toppenish) and multimode transportation access improvements at each location.
- Promote increased transportation mode cross-accessibility improvements that allows travelers the ability to utilize multiple transportation forms during a single trip (as needed).
- Promote local “first mile – last mile” infrastructure facilities (sidewalks, pathways, micro-transit systems) that improves access at “initial” origin and “final” destination locations.

Appendix A: Title VI

Yakima Valley Conference of Governments is an equal opportunity employer and provider of services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.

Title VI Policy

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs and activities receiving Federal financial assistance. It is Yakima Valley Conference of Government's policy to assure that no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, or sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subject to discrimination under any of its programs or activities receiving Federal financial assistance. For additional information regarding Title VI compliant procedures and/or information regarding Yakima Valley Conference of Governments' non-discrimination obligations, please contact: Yakima Valley Conference of Governments 311 North 4th Street, Suite 204 Yakima, WA 98901 (509) 574-1550

El Título VI de la Ley de Derechos Civiles de 1964 prohíbe la discriminación por motivos de raza, color u origen nacional en los programas y actividades que reciben asistencia financiera federal. . Es política de la Conferencia de Gobierno del Valle de Yakima asegurar que ninguna persona en los Estados Unidos, por motivos de raza, color, origen nacional o sexo, sea excluida de la participación, se le nieguen los beneficios o esté sujeta a discriminación bajo cualquiera de sus programas o actividades que reciban asistencia financiera federal. Para obtener información adicional sobre los procedimientos que cumplen con el Título VI y / o información sobre las obligaciones de no discriminación de la Conferencia de Gobiernos del Valle de Yakima, comuníquese con: Yakima Valley Conference of Governments 311 North 4th Street, Suite 204 Yakima, WA 98901 (509) 574-1550.

American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Notice

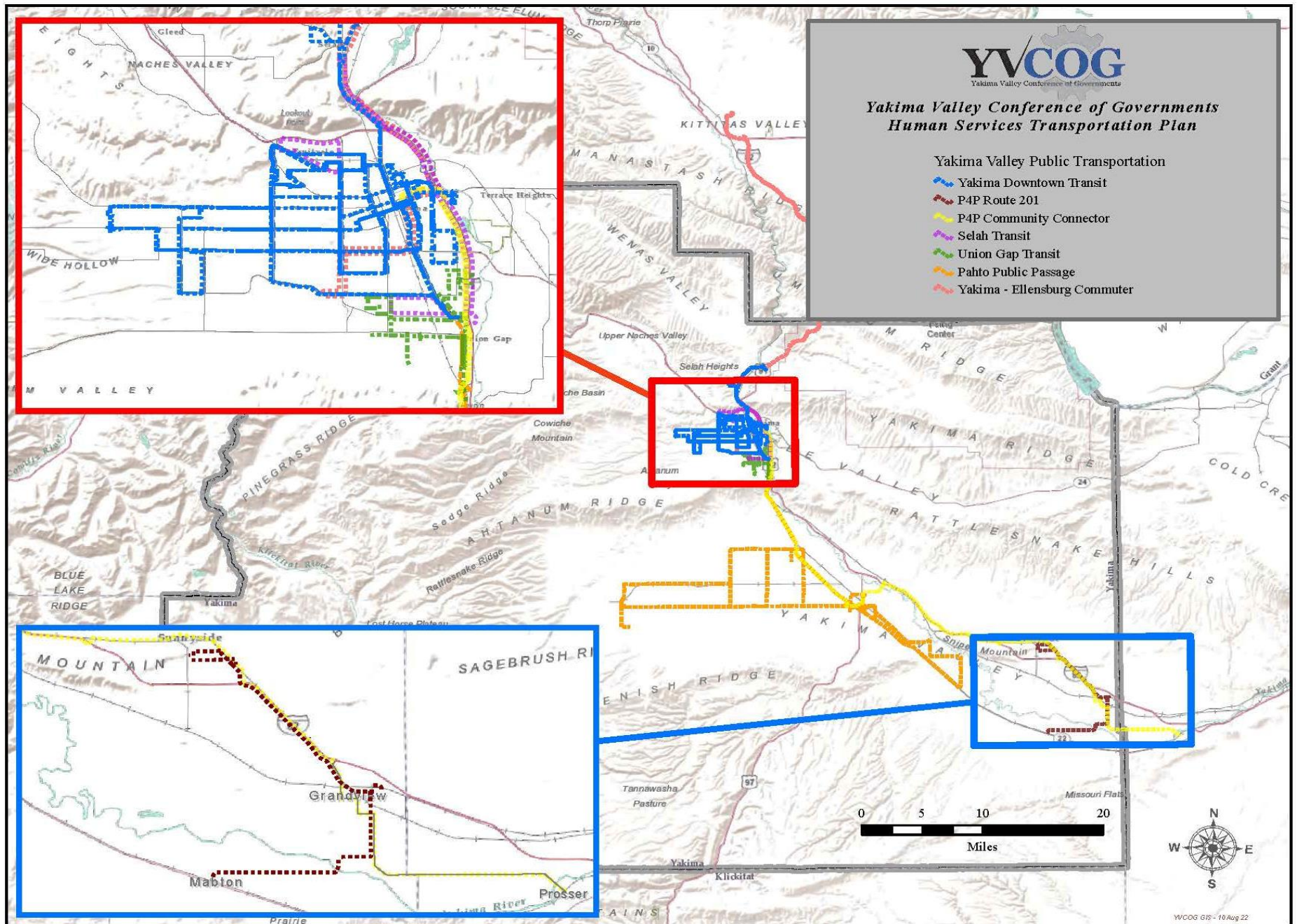
YVCOG is committed to providing equal access in its programs, services, and activities for persons with disabilities. Civil rights legislation requires that no qualified individuals with disabilities shall, solely based on their disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any of the YVCOG's programs, services, or activities, in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), as amended; and Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

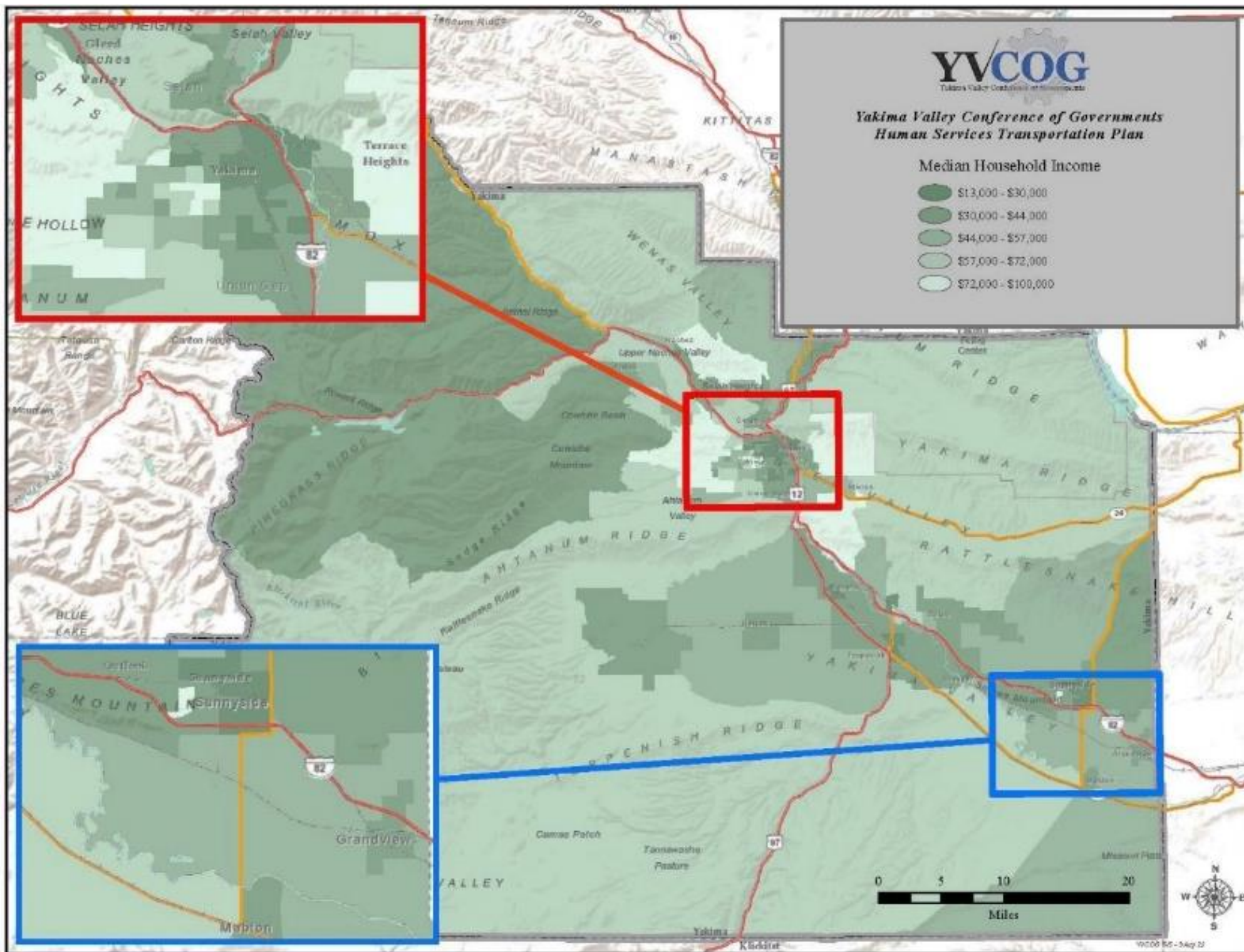
It is the policy of the YVCOG that, when viewed in their entirety, services, programs, facilities, and communications provided directly by the agency, or by a contracted service provider, are readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This is achieved through maintaining an ADA-compliant Website; holding events in accessible spaces; and providing program materials in alternative formats on request.

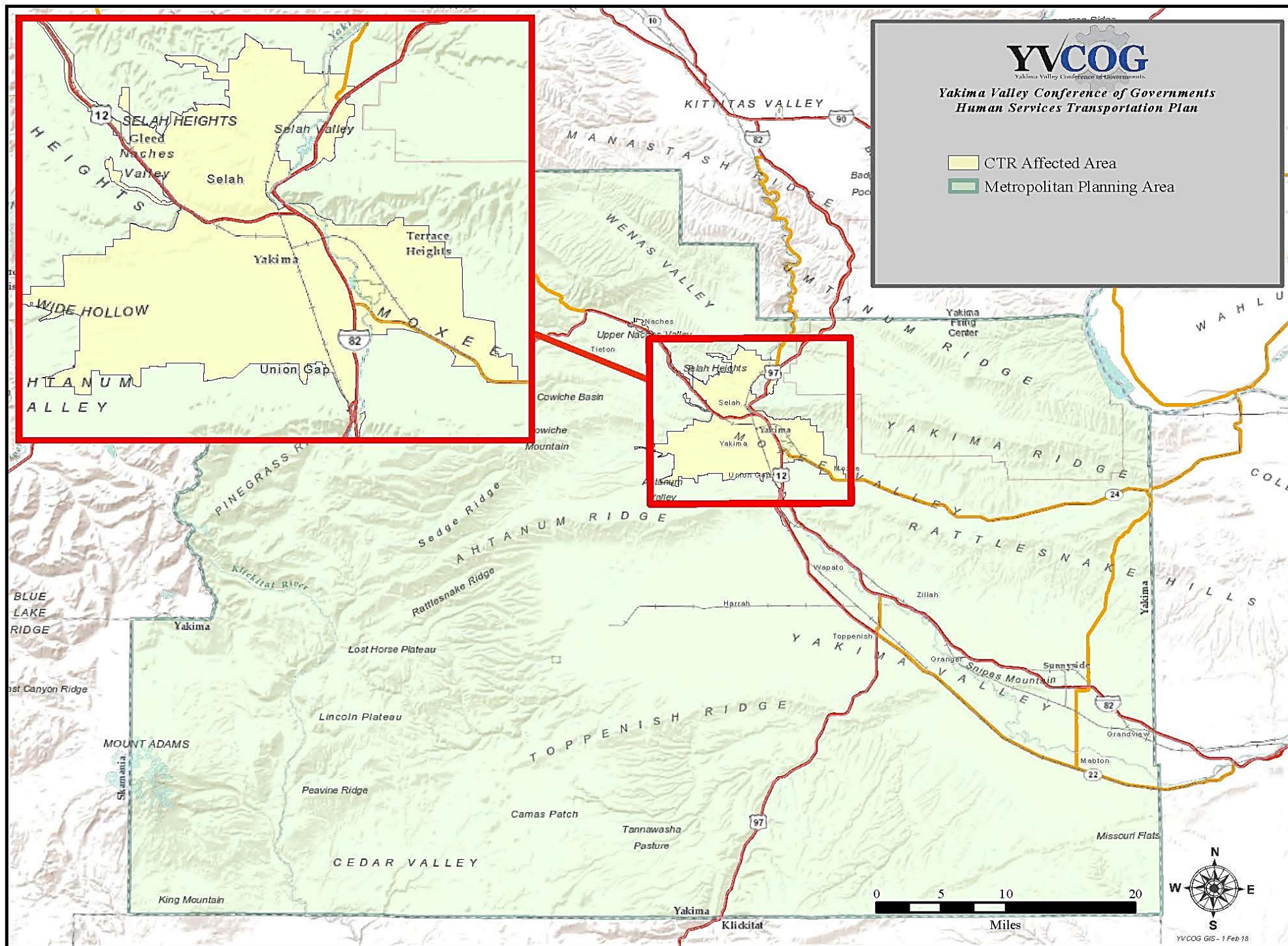
YVCOG se compromete a proporcionar igualdad de acceso en sus programas, servicios y actividades para personas con discapacidad. La legislación de derechos civiles requiere que no haya personas calificadas con discapacidad, únicamente en función de su discapacidad, serán excluidas de la participación en, ser negado los beneficios de, o ser objeto de discriminación bajo cualquiera de los YVCOG programas, servicios o actividades, de acuerdo con la Ley de Estadounidenses con Discapacidades de 1990 (ADA), en su forma enmendada; y los artículos 504 y 508 de la Ley de Rehabilitación de 1973, como irreparable.

Es la política del BFYVCOG que, cuando se ve en su totalidad, los servicios, programas, instalaciones, y comunicaciones proporcionadas directamente por la agencia, o por un servicio contratado proveedor, son fácilmente accesibles y utilizables por personas con discapacidades. Esto es logrado a través del mantenimiento de un sitio web compatible con la ADA; celebrar eventos en accesible Espacios; y proporcionar materiales del programa en formatos alternativos a pedido.

Appendix B: MAPS



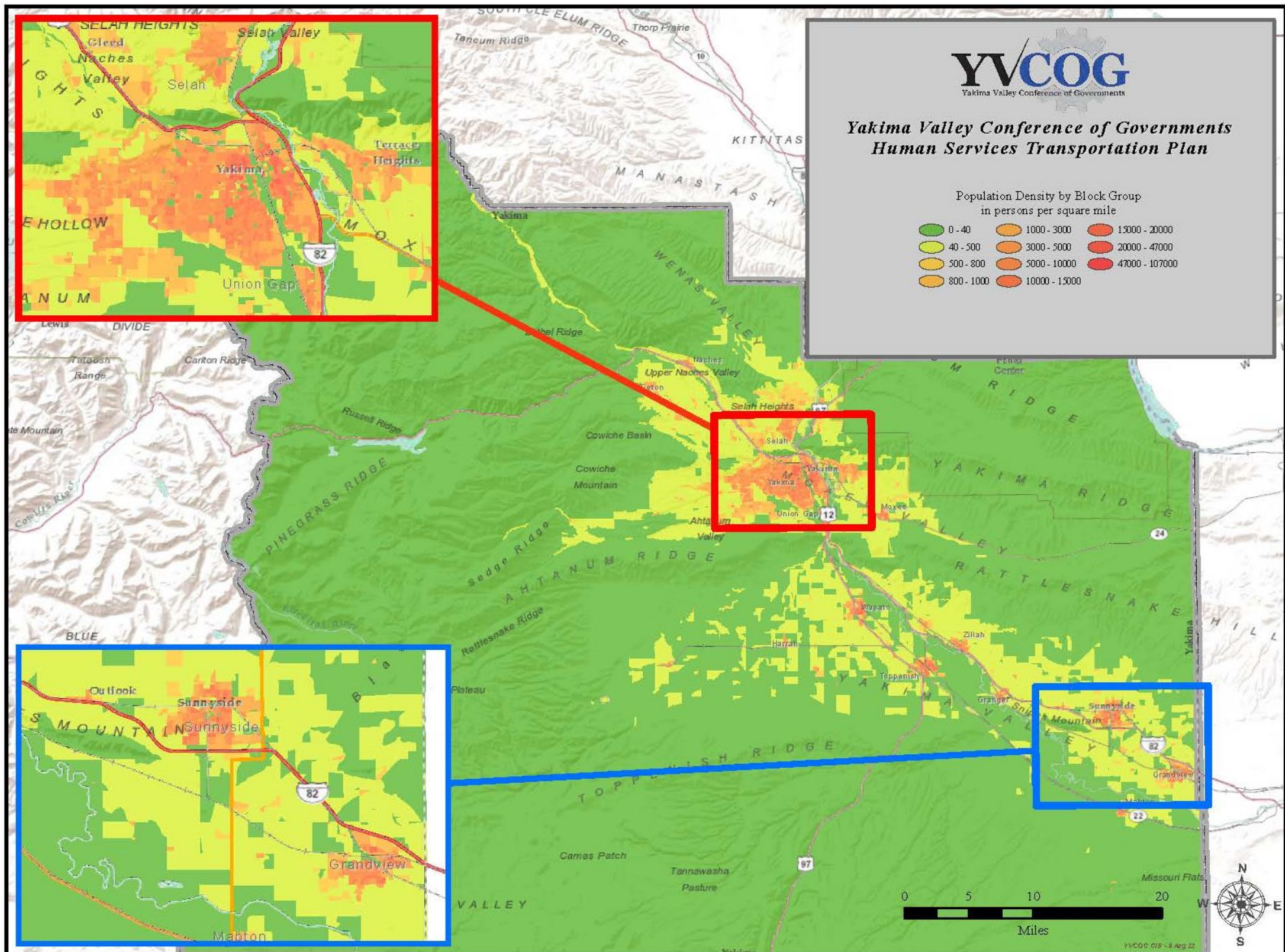
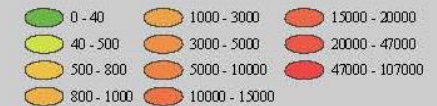






Yakima Valley Conference of Governments Human Services Transportation Plan

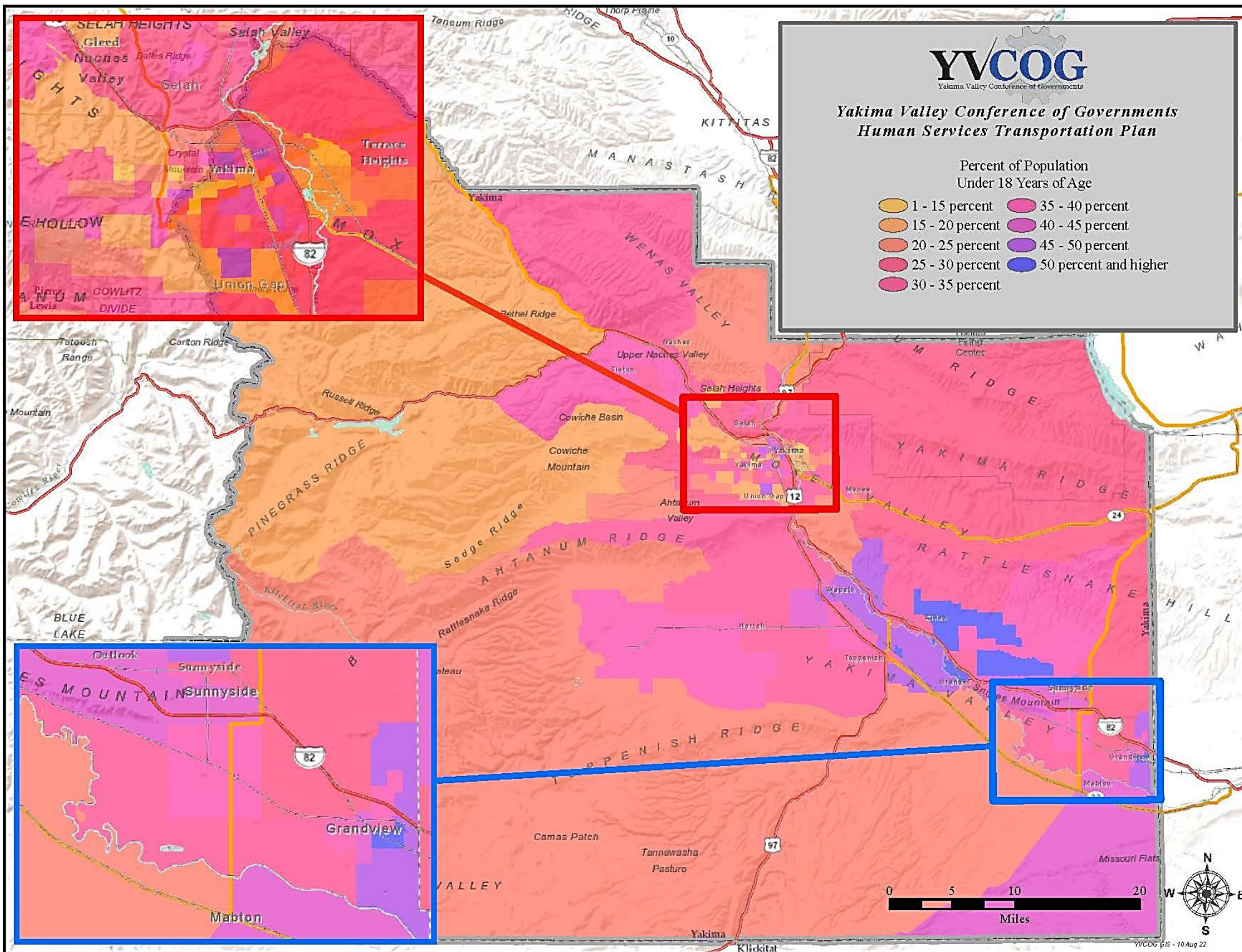
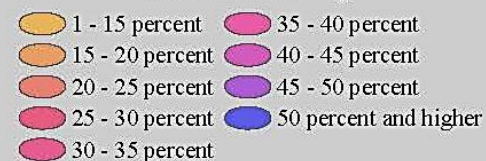
Population Density by Block Group
in persons per square mile

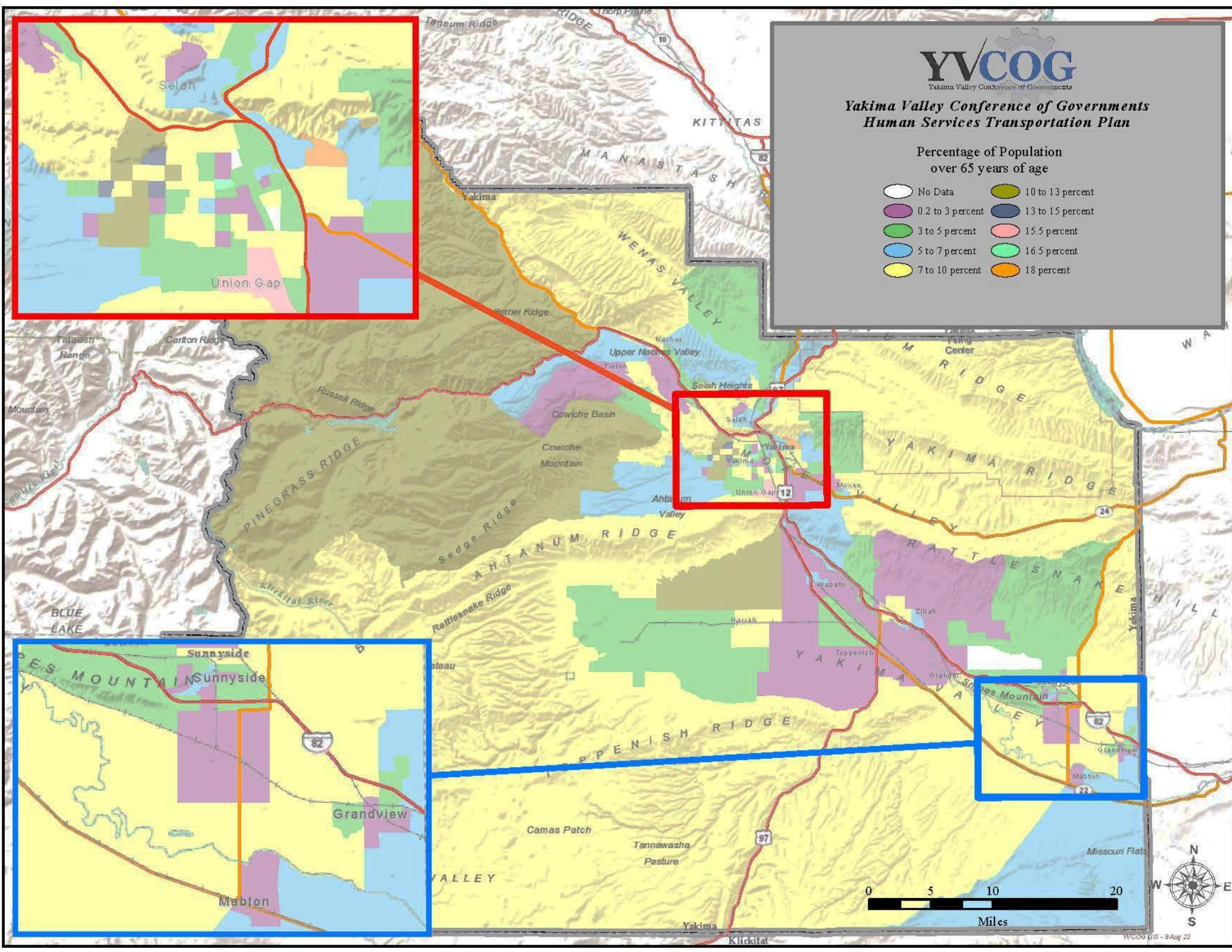




Yakima Valley Conference of Governments Human Services Transportation Plan

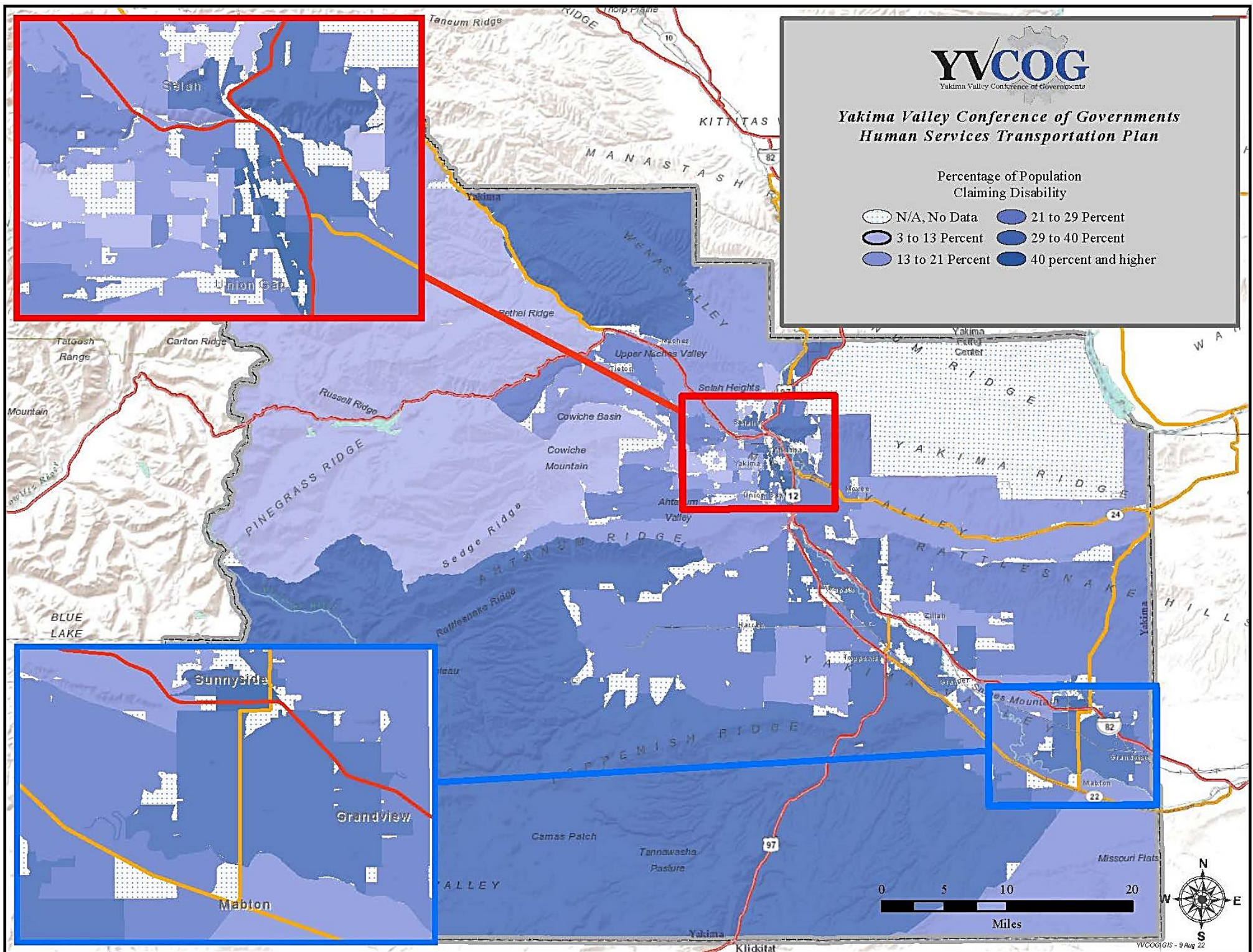
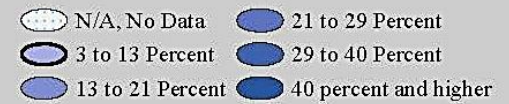
Percent of Population
Under 18 Years of Age





**Yakima Valley Conference of Governments
Human Services Transportation Plan**

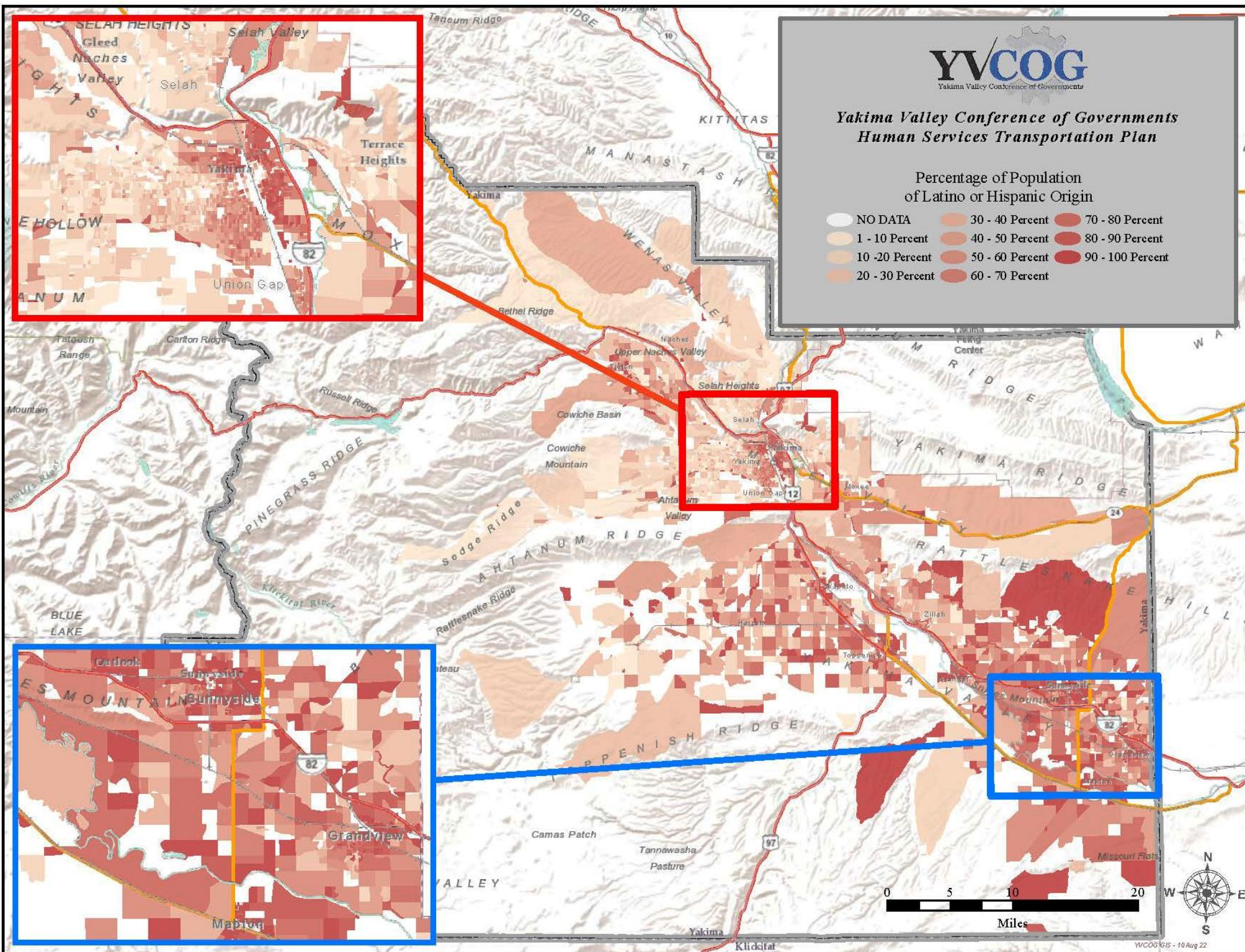
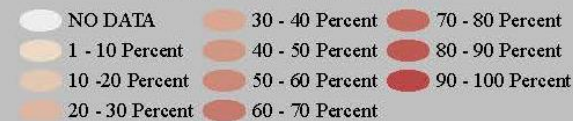
Percentage of Population
Claiming Disability

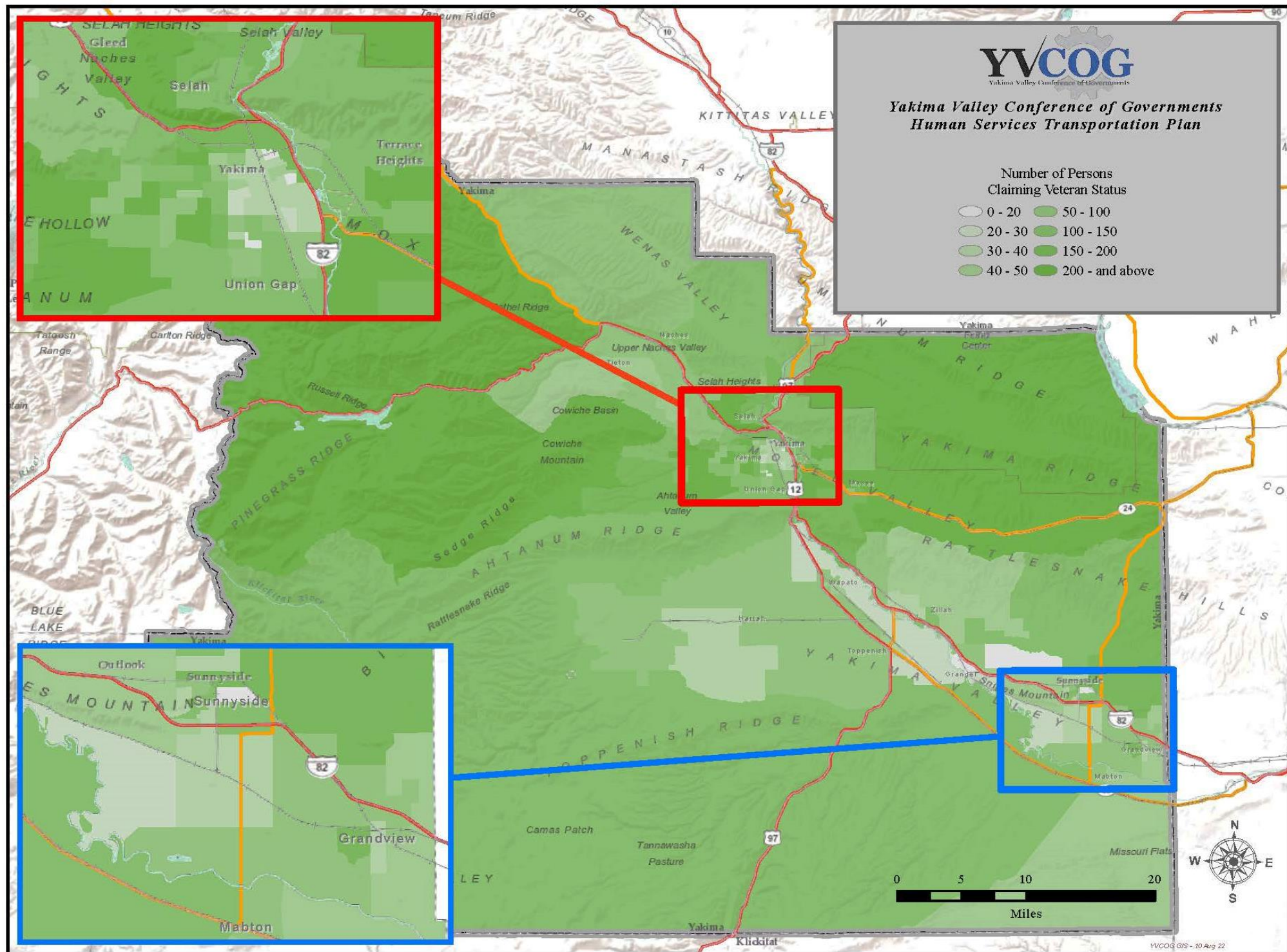


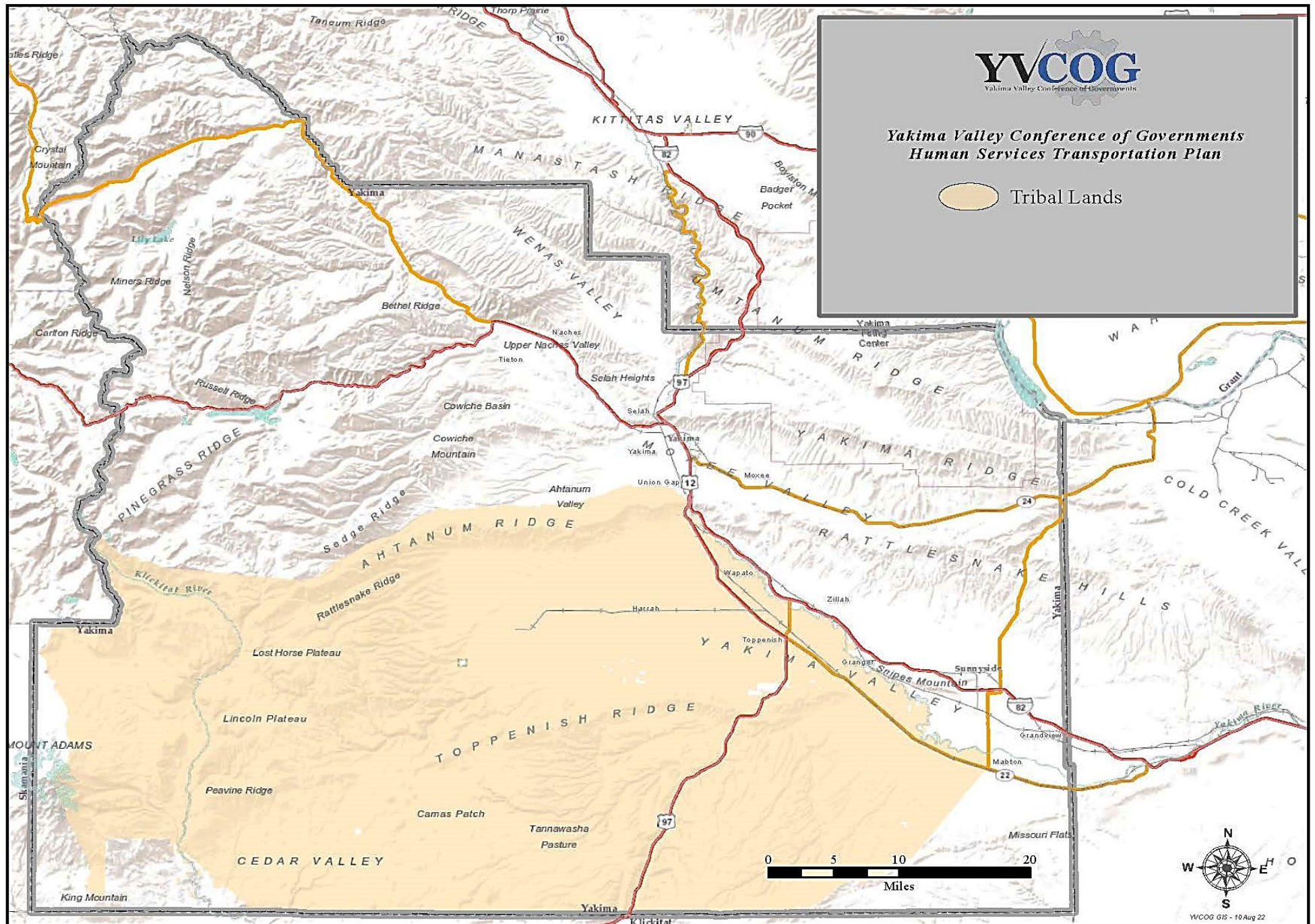


Yakima Valley Conference of Governments Human Services Transportation Plan

Percentage of Population
of Latino or Hispanic Origin







Appendix C:

Transit Feasibility Study Outreach Needs Table & Executive Summary Report

Table below developed through a regional public transportation provider interview process

<i>Transportation Feasibility Study & Outreach Identified Needs</i>	Outreach Identified	TFS Identified	Yakima Transit	Entrust	Medstar	Pahto	Selah	PFP	Protran	UG
Switch to alternative fuels		X	X					X		
Drivers/employee shortage and retention	X				X	X		X	X	
Social service providers to MPACT										
Vehicle cost and supply	X							X		
First mile-last mile		X								
Reliable ongoing funding	X			X		X	X			
Fixed grants are hard with inflation (fuel)										
Support for disabled clients	X									
Provide transportation Technology Upgrades (GPS, Scheduling, planning)		X		X	X			X		
One-on-one transit training		X		X						
Need for more wheelchair-capable vehicles	X		X	X					X	
County wide dial-a-ride	X			X						
Easier fee collection administration		X								
Underserved private paying non-medicaid	X								X	
South county connectivity		X								
Expanded hours/area/routes	X	X	X			X				
Yakima to Toppenish		X								
West Valley demand	X		X							
Inter-operator Consistency/Cooperation/Expansion	X	X		X		X				
Information conveyance		X								
Bus stop amenities	X		X							

MEMORANDUM

Date:	January 6, 2023	TG:	1.21305.00
To:	Alan Adolf, Transportation Program Manager		
From:	Chris Titze – Transpo Group		
Subject:	YVCOG Transit Feasibility Study – Executive Summary Report		

Introduction

The Yakima Valley Regional Transit Feasibility Study (“Yakima Valley Transit Study”) is designed to evaluate and develop planning-level strategies for public transportation access within and connecting to the Yakima Valley. Yakima County is the second largest county (by area) in the State of Washington at over 4,300 square miles. Transit service in Yakima County is primarily provided in and around the county's urbanized areas, including Yakima, Selah, and Union Gap. In addition, limited but valuable service is provided outside those cities through fixed-route and demand-responsive services.

In coordination with the Yakima Valley Council of Governments (YVCOG), the following goals and objectives were developed for the Yakima Valley Transit Study:

- Inventory existing transit services and assets available throughout the region to enhance mobility
- Understand the challenges and priorities of transit riders and stakeholders for future transit service
- Assess potential transit service delivery models and strategies for more effective accessibility and delivery of transit services
- Develop an implementation framework or “road map” that identifies a timeline, key partners, and milestones for enhancing transit

Planning and Asset Inventory

This section summarizes the review of pertinent planning documents and the inventory of existing transit services and assets available throughout the region.

Relevant Planning

A review of previous planning efforts relevant to the Yakima Valley Transit Study was conducted to:

- Provide context for the transit study
- Ensure the transit study builds on previous work rather than duplicating it
- Allow the transit study to consider recommendations and meet goals set forth by the previous planning efforts.

The following eight previous and ongoing planning projects undertaken by Yakima County, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Confederate Tribes and Bands of the Yakima Nation, and other associated agencies were reviewed:

- Washington Transportation Plan 2035 (Public Review Draft) – Washington State Commission (2014)
- Yakima Valley Metropolitan and Regional Transportation Plan (March 2016) – YVCOG
- 2018 Human Services Transportation Plan – YVCOG (2018)

- Travel Washington Intercity Bus Program – WSDOT (2019) Plan Update
- Feasibility of an East-West Intercity Passenger Rail System for Washington State – Steer (July 2020)
- Yakima Valley Transportation Plan YVTP 2020-2045 Final – YVCOG (3/20/2020)
- Heritage Connectivity Trails Concept Plan – Confederate Tribes and Bands of the Yakima Nation (July 2021)
- Washington State Active Transportation Plan 2020 and Beyond (2021)

The detailed review of these eight planning studies is provided in Appendix A. Key findings of the review include:

- High-level transit and transportation demand management strategies have been identified for the region, including improved services for people with specific needs, expanding fixed-route service coverage in urbanized areas, extending service hours during weekday evenings and weekends, targeting employee-based transit opportunities and enhancing service to regional destinations.
- Existing gaps in coverage have been identified, particularly as it relates to areas of the County that still need to be served by transit, services for riders with special needs, and technology needs. To address these gaps, solutions could include additional fixed route service, non-conventional public transit options exploration, and opportunities to use transit assets more efficiently and cost-effectively.
- Many trips are currently made by single-occupant vehicles (SOV) with heavy travel patterns between Yakima and communities on the periphery of the Yakima Valley. Therefore, transit enhancements are a high priority for the Yakima Valley to decrease SOV trips and alleviate congestion along critical corridors.
- Connectivity to existing and future trails and non-motorized facilities, potential future intercity passenger rail service, and intercity bus service should be considered as part of the transit study.

Transit Asset Inventory

The transit asset inventory aims to understand when, where, and how frequently transit service operates, what transit assets exist, what funding mechanisms exist, and what multimodal connections may be feasible. The following existing services span traditional fixed-route public transit service, demand-responsive transit service, medical/veteran services, educational services, Yakama Nation services, intercity services, and other services.

- Public Transit Services
 - Yakima Transit
 - Union Gap Transit
 - Selah Transit
 - Pahto Public Passage
 - People For People
- Medical/Veteran Services
 - Disabled American Veterans
 - American Cancer Society
 - Medstar
 - Protran East
- Educational Services
 - CDI Head Start

- Inspire Childhood Development
 - Yakama Nation Tribal Head Start
 - Public School Districts
- Yakama Nation Services
 - Yakama Nation Area Agency on Aging
 - Yakama Nation Tribal School
- Intercity Services
 - Central Washington Airporter
 - Grape Line
 - Apple Line
 - Greyhound
 - Fronteras Del Norte
- Other Services
 - Yakima County Volunteer Chore Services
 - Fiesta Foods
 - Yakama Nation Legends Casino
 - WorkFirst
 - TNCs (taxi, Uber/Lyft, etc.)

As available, the following information was compiled for each transit service and the region as a whole:

- Fleet Inventory
 - Vehicle Type (Year/Make/Model or general vehicle type (bus, minibus, van, etc.))
 - Passenger Load
 - Wheelchair Accessibility
 - Age
- Agency Information
 - Types of services provided
 - When services are provided
 - Where services are provided
 - Eligibility requirements
 - Funding mechanisms
- Supportive Mobility Asset Inventory
 - Bicycle facilities
 - Multi-use trails
 - Park-and-ride facilities
 - Transit/mobility hubs

The detailed inventory is provided in Appendix A. Key findings of the transit asset inventory include:

- Providers in the Yakima urbanized area are well-coordinated (operations and informational distribution) but compartmentalized in a way that may impact the ease of use
- Understanding service areas and connections to other transit providers are not immediately apparent for most providers

- The number of individual services can lead to a higher learning curve for users and inconsistent distribution of information.
- The fleet composition matches well with the services provided (correct tool for the job), but many vehicles are old and need to be replaced.
- There need to be more zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) within the regional fleet, but the age of the current fleet may provide opportunities to invest in ZEVs.
- Many specialized services exist that serve specific geographics or populations and support regional mobility.
- Shorter trips have many transit options; limited options exist for longer transit trips within the County (People for People fills this gap to an extent along the I-82 corridor, but service is catered to commuting trips rather than general purpose trips).

Understanding and Assessment

The Yakima Valley Transit Study included significant efforts to understand the region, the services, the riders, and the current gaps to assess the goals and strategies for improving local and regional transit service in a forward-compatible way. The “understanding” process centered around four key tasks:

- **Data Gathering:** Analyzed transportation, land use, and demographic data to understand existing transit travel trends and identify potential service gaps.
- **Stakeholder Interviews:** Interviewed key transit providers to understand existing operations' strengths and weaknesses and plans or goals for future service.
- **Transit Survey:** Administered a transit survey to understand how existing and prospective riders currently use (or don't use) transit, what issues exist, and how service can be improved.
- **Public Outreach:** Held two in-person events to gather feedback from riders and stakeholders, and during one of the events, administered the transit survey in person.

The information obtained allowed for assessing transit gaps and needs by incorporating quantitative data and qualitative feedback.

Data Gathering

Transportation, land use patterns, and demographic data were gathered from a variety of sources to perform a quantitative transit demand analysis with the following goals:

- Understand the local market related to transit demand
- Examine the underlying demographic and transportation conditions of the study area
- Identify areas with the largest concentrations and densities of residences, transit-oriented populations, employment centers, etc.
- Assess trends as they relate to the current and ongoing demand for transit services and travel patterns

Key elements from the transit demand analysis are summarized below and provided in detail in Appendix C.

Transit Propensity

Transit Propensity is an index used to understand how likely it is that the population in an area would use transit services. The transit propensity is calculated based on a set of demographic characteristics that influence ridership. Figure 8 displays the overall transit propensity for Yakima County by census block group. Transit propensity is calculated here as a function of population

density, total employment, number of households without access to a car, and number of service sector jobs within the geographic area (i.e., census block groups).

The transit propensity index shows that Yakima County generally has a low level of expected transit ridership in its unincorporated areas, with pockets of high expected transit ridership in the higher population areas. These include many cities already served by transit, such as Yakima, Selah, and Union Gap. However, some smaller communities not currently served by transit or served by limited transit have a noticeably higher transit propensity. The transit propensity results suggest that there may be a demand for transit connections between these smaller communities and higher-population areas within Yakima County.

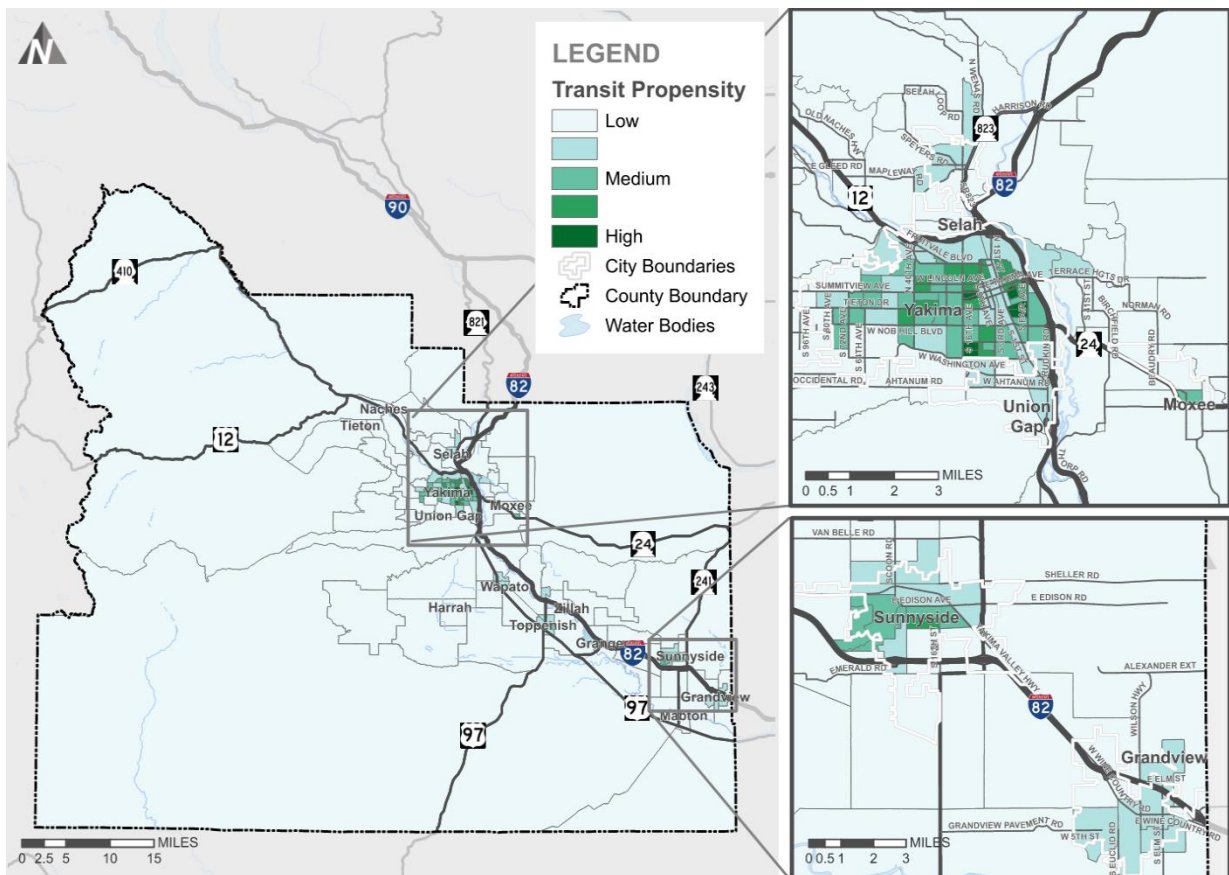


Figure 1: Transit Propensity

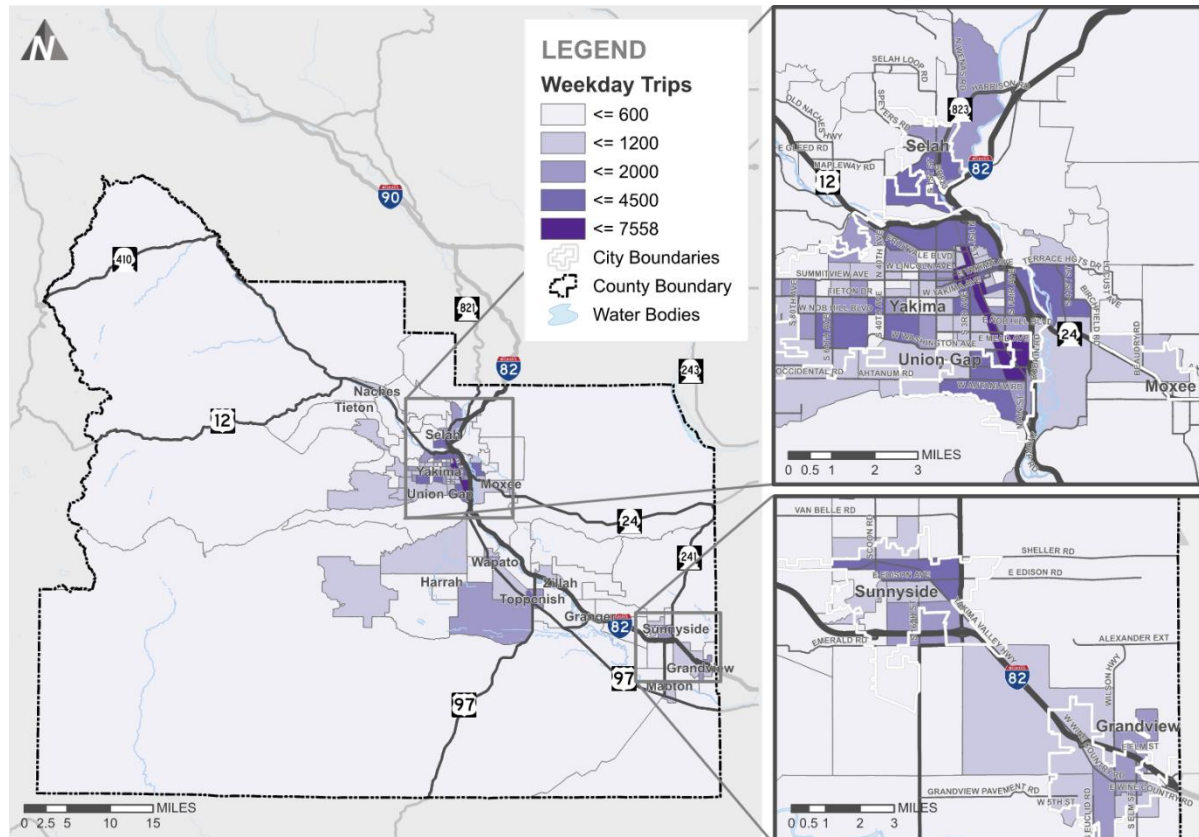
Travel Patterns

Daily travel patterns in the Yakima Valley were modeled using Replica²³, a nationwide activity-based model developed from a range of data inputs, including mobile phone data across all modes of transportation, publicly available traffic counts, credit card transaction information, and other publicly available sources. Replica provides the number of trips beginning or ending in a block group for a given period based on existing conditions and can be filtered to represent trips taken by likely transit candidates. For this study, “likely transit candidates” were determined by selecting trips taken by households with a yearly income under \$50,000 and having access to 1 or fewer cars. The

²³ <https://replicahq.com/>

trip data shows that much of the travel activity in the county is focused on the cities, with the city of Yakima showing the highest density of trips overall. The weekday daily trip data, shown in Figure 2, indicates that much of the travel activity in the county is focused on the urbanized areas, with the city of Yakima showing the highest density of trips overall.

Figure 2: Existing Weekday Trips Map



The data was also used to develop high-frequency origin-destination (O-D) pairings at the census tract level for the daily weekday trips by populations with high transit potential. Due to the significant amount of data available, the O-D data were aggregated to show trip pairings with at least 30 daily trips. As shown in Figure 3, there is considerable movement of likely transit users between the urbanized areas along the US-97 and I-82 corridors, with key O-D pairings between Yakima and Toppenish, Yakima and Harrah, West Valley and Wapato/Toppenish, and Toppenish and Sunnyside.

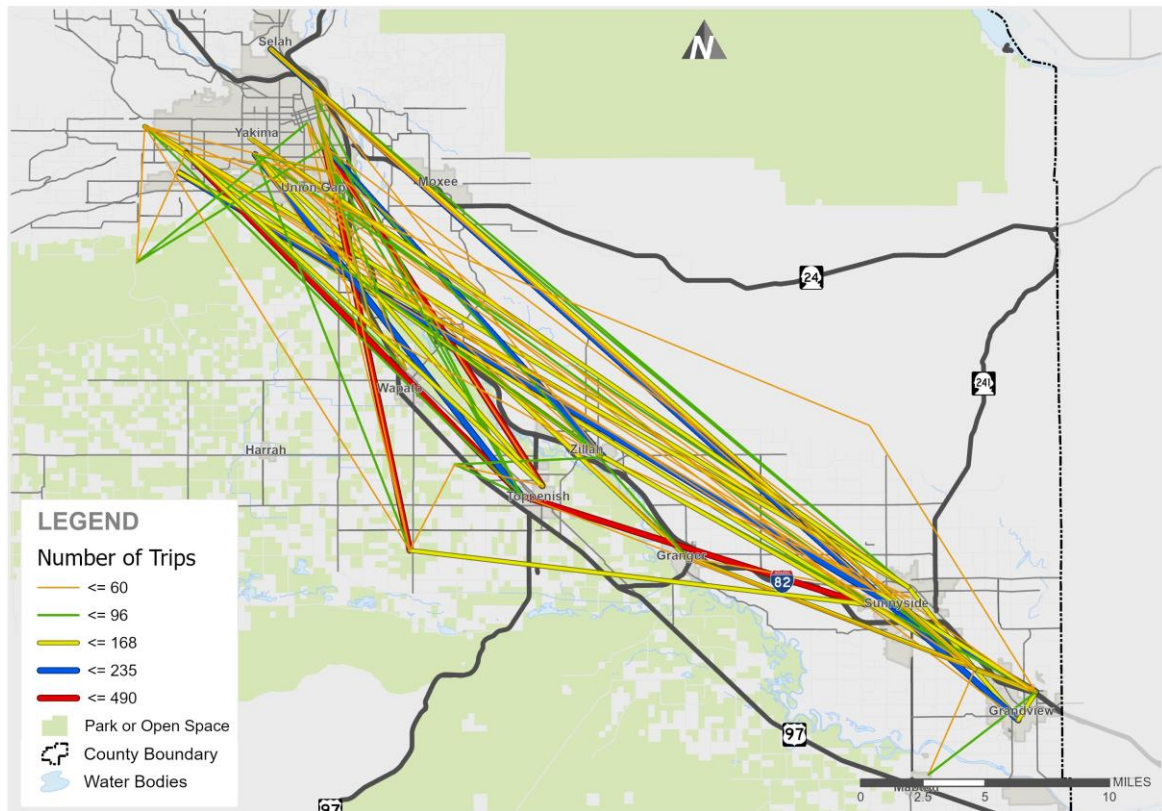


Figure 3: High-Frequency O-D Pairings by Populations with High Transit Potential

Additionally, existing and future land use data was provided by YVCOG and used to understand how travel trends are anticipated to change between 2020 and 2045. The forecast 2045 daily trip estimates show moderate trip increases within Yakima, Union Gap, Wapato, Toppenish, Sunnyside, and Grandview. Outside these urban areas, trip growth is projected to remain relatively static. The most prevalent origin-destination patterns shown in Figure 3 are between areas with anticipated growth. Therefore, these connections are key in both the short- and long-term.

Stakeholder Interviews

Participation from stakeholders was key to understanding the local challenges and opportunities for public transit in the Yakima Valley region. A total of ten (10) stakeholders were contacted, with a total of seven (7) interviews ultimately performed with the following transit providers:

- Yakima Transit
- Selah Transit
- People For People
- Pahto Public Passage
- Medstar
- Protran East
- Entrust Community Services

Detailed information from the stakeholder interviews is included in Appendix B, with key takeaways summarized below:

- **Funding.** Concerns were noted regarding the reliance on grant funding and rising costs when dealing with fixed funding resources – particularly for specialized transit services.

- **Hiring/Retaining Drivers.** Many agencies/operators noted challenges with hiring drivers and retaining drivers. Poor retention of drivers can be particularly costly, given the initial investment into driver training. Some operators may have opportunities to rely more heavily on a vehicle fleet that does not require CDL drivers.
- **Agency/Operator Coordination.** Collaboration between services occurs both informally and formally (through MPACT). Many agencies/operators noted direct coordination with at least one other agency/operator to align schedules, but more targeted coordination may be achievable.
- **Technology.** Recent pushes have been to incorporate technology improvements that aid in service efficiency. These technology improvements are beneficial in eliminating inefficiencies, and in many cases, consistent technology improvements across the region as a whole would be the most advantageous.
- **Geographic Coverage.** Most agencies/operators noted that they would like to extend their geographic coverage if the necessary funding was available. Still, expansion of fixed-route service can be exceptionally costly due to the reciprocating need to expand paratransit service.
- **Route Efficiency.** There may be additional regional opportunities to improve route efficiency and on-time performance by reevaluating existing bus routing and updating based on current and future needs.
- **Alternative Fuel Fleets.** Concerns were noted regarding the future need to accommodate alternative fuel fleets. The accommodation of such vehicles and the associated infrastructure should be considered as part of long-term recommendations.

Transit Survey

A transit survey was administered to understand residents' perception and usage of public transportation in the Yakima Valley region, determine what barriers currently exist that limit the usability of transit, and understand what types of mobility strategy would best benefit existing and prospective riders under existing conditions and into the future. The survey questions were hosted on the Yakima Valley Transit Study project website from early June to mid-September 2022 in English and Spanish. In addition to preparing the online survey, postcards advertising the transit survey were distributed to transit operators and other key stakeholders.

The survey questions, postcards, and comprehensive responses to each survey question are included in Appendix B, but the following outlines some of the key findings and trends.

- **Trip Types**
 - Most common weekday trip types included errands, medical appointments, and work/job training.
 - The most common weekend trip types included recreation, social events, and visiting family/friends.
 - The most common trip type for weekdays and weekends collectively was errands.
- **Transportation Challenges**
 - The most common transportation challenges faced by transit riders were as follows and primarily related to trips for errands and work/job training:
 - The trip takes too long due to infrequent service
 - The trip takes too long due to transfers
 - The service does not operate when I need it

- Few challenges were noted for medical appointment trips despite being a common trip type
- Recreation trips were rare, but many respondents indicated that the service does not go where they need it for this trip type.
- **Time of Day Travel Needs**
 - At least 50 percent of respondents noted needing weekday transportation between 5 a.m. and 10 p.m.
 - At least 50 percent of respondents noted needing weekend transportation between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m.
- **Transportation Strategies**
 - When asked what type of transportation strategies would be most beneficial in improving the respondent's public transportation service, the three top responses included:
 - Extended service/operating hours
 - Increased frequency of service
 - Improved transit connections between neighboring transit service areas

Public Outreach

Two (2) in-person public engagement events were held during the project. The first public engagement event took place on September 1, 2022, and the second public engagement event took place on November 15, 2022.

The primary focus of the first public engagement event was to introduce the project to residents and gain insight from passengers on how transit is used today and how transit can be improved in the future. The project team set up informational booths at the Yakima Transit Center in the morning and the Valley Mall bus stop in the afternoon to speak with riders and administer the transit survey in person. Specific feedback and findings from the first in-person engagement event are included in Appendix B and are summarized below:

- **Service hours.** Several riders expressed specific interest in extended service hours, including earlier service on the weekends, more frequent service on weekends, and later service during weekday evenings.
- **Bus stop amenities.** Many riders desire more benches and amenities at bus stops, mainly during long wait times.
- **Service frequency and transfers lead to long travel days.** Transfers and frequency of service result in passengers spending a significant portion of the day riding transit to complete a few errands.
- **Fare Structure.** There were few complaints about the service cost and most noted that fares are reasonable for convenience.

The purpose of the second public engagement event was to share the findings and recommendations of the Yakima Valley Transit Study, confirm that such findings and recommendations accurately reflect the input of stakeholders, and solicit any additional feedback. Those who attended the second public engagement event were generally in agreement with the findings and supportive of the study recommendations that are outlined within this report.

Observed Gaps and Needs

The quantitative analysis and qualitative feedback were used in coordination to inform the observed transit gaps and needs. Gaps and needs are categorized and summarized below:

- **Geographic**
 - Demand along US-97 and I-82
 - Travel demand between the urbanized areas is projected to continue growing
 - Yakima to Toppenish is a significant demand lane that is not currently served by frequent transit
 - Noticeable demand between the West Valley and other urbanized areas in the Yakima Valley
 - Currently, only two Yakima Transit routes serve this area, and there are no direct connections to anywhere outside of Yakima
 - This area could benefit from more direct connections to other urbanized areas in the Yakima Valley
- **Temporal**
 - As part of the transit survey results and speaking directly with residents and transit riders, a desire for later weekday and additional weekend service was noted.
 - The service hours for many operators are centered around a typical workday schedule. Still, many riders noted needing transit for other reasons, such as running errands that may need to be completed outside the current service hours.
- **Operational**
 - Currently, many services and operators need to be more compartmentalized, which limits the ability to provide efficient, consistent, and well-connected service outside each operator's immediate service areas.
 - Some operators take advantage of technology enhancements which can lead to more cost-effective service. Still, there needs to be more consistency between operators, leading to inefficiencies from a regional perspective and varying user interfaces.
- **Informational**
 - Transit information is dispersed across several resources. Resources such as the Bus Book provide consolidated information for some operators but not all.
 - A lack of easy-to-use information for some services can lead to a high learning curve for users.

Findings and Recommendations

The following summarizes the essential findings and areas of focus from the Yakima Valley Transit Study that was imperative in defining transit values for the Yakima Valley region, developing tools to address the current gaps and needs, and creating the implementation framework for continued progress and improvement of transit access throughout the region.

Key Findings

Based on a comprehensive understanding of the observed gaps and needs, as well as an understanding of future priorities for key stakeholders and transit users, the following overarching findings and areas of focus were developed:

- **Transit Technology and Consistency.** Services within the region are currently compartmentalized with few consistencies from an operations and user interface standpoint. As a result, there may be opportunities to explore technology enhancements that could aid in service efficiency, particularly if enhancements are uniformly implanted across the region's transit service offerings.
- **Fleet Composition.** As vehicles are retired, there may be opportunities to downsize vehicles for some operators/agencies, which could aid in the hiring and retention of drivers and the efficiency of service (both as it relates to the time of runs and fuel efficiency). There should also be consideration given to alternative fuel sources, which is becoming an increasingly strong initiative in the State of Washington.
- **Operator Priorities (Geographic) vs. Rider Priorities (Temporal).** Several transit operators/agencies noted wanting to expand geographic coverage; however, the more significant issue noted by passengers was the frequency of service, the service hours, and the time it takes to transfer from one route to another or one service to another. Overall, temporal gaps were noted as being a more significant barrier to current riders than geographic gaps. Targeted geographic expansions should still be considered in the future, but many existing concerns may be better addressed through temporal expansions. While temporal expansions require additional resources from an operational perspective, they would not require the paratransit expansion required as part of geographic expansions.
- **Build on Existing Successes.** While there may be opportunities to provide more consistency between services or even consolidate some services, the existing specialty services that provide services for riders with specific needs (such as medical transportation) operate well today. It will be essential to ensure that regional transit enhancements do not come at the expense of these specialty transit services, as they currently play an important role in regional mobility. Additionally, the region should build on the existing fixed-route services and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of those services rather than add additional operators to the region. For example, the existing People For People routes do a great job of serving the I-82/US-97 corridors and operate well for 9 to 5 commuters. Still, regional connectivity could be improved for other trip types if service is provided more often or during extended operating hours.

Transit Values and Implementation Tools

To chart a course for the Yakima Valley region going forward, transit values were developed to steer future progress and priorities:

- **Transit as a core function of regional mobility**
 - Transit can be for everyone, not just for transit-dependent populations
 - De-silo transit trips to use resources more effectively and enhance overall connectivity
- **Collaborative approach to transit service delivery**
 - Work towards efficiency for riders, not individuality of operators
 - Streamline the process of finding the right provider for the right trip

- Gain operator/provider buy-in
- Define stakeholder champions
- **Seamless transit system**
 - Multiple systems that are universally coordinated/branded OR
 - Regional transit organization

This study recommends the following tools to achieve the core transit values:

- Regionally consistent transit branding and marketing
- Regionally contracted transit software and vendors
 - CAD/AVL, fare payment, etc.
 - Help operators coordinate trips, reduce deadhead, and better utilize the fleet.
 - Results in more efficient and less complicated travel for riders
- Transit Education
 - Travel training
 - Centralized repository for transit services (public-facing website)
 - Searchable trip planner
- Explore new mobility solutions
 - Geographic/temporal expansion through demand-responsive services (micro transit)
 - First-mile/last-mile connectivity
- Invest in the right-sizing fleet for the types of services
- Evaluate zero-emissions future
 - Future fleet procurements
 - Shared charging facilities

Implementation Framework

The following outlines critical short- and mid-/long-term action items needed to progress and enhance transit service within the Yakima Valley region.

Short-term

- Vet and research industry-standard transit software (for scheduling, fare payment, etc.) to be implemented region-wide or in an initial pilot format by a designated operator
- Formalize a centralized repository for transit services and develop a public-facing website
- Formalize a zero-emissions fleet plan for the region to ensure consistency and effective cost-sharing for regional infrastructure needs
- Formalize a plan for consistent transit marketing and branding
- Identify specific roles and responsibilities and establish a working group to ensure individual transit goals and projects are progressing in a regionally beneficial and consistent manner
- Prepare a second phase of the Yakima Valley Transit Study that develops a more detailed strategic plan for addressing the observed gaps and needs of the regional transit system and aligning the system with the key transit values

Mid-/Long-term

- Develop RFP to procure a CAD/AVL vendor
- Evaluate the feasibility of a centralized demand-responsive call center

- Develop a public-facing multi-operator searchable trip planner
- Invest in capital improvements such as new vehicles and bus stop improvements
- Conduct route-level system evaluation for fixed-route services
- Evaluate operational and market feasibility of micro-transit solutions to supplement temporal and geographic service expansion and first/last mile connectivity
- Conduct regional transit service delivery redesign and implement selected transit service improvements

Example of Public Comment Postcard / Poster
provided to community facilities and businesses during outreach period.



Spanish & English QR code Postcard, double-sided.

Bilingual Poster of Transit Feasibility Study

