

A Review of Public Transportation Needs in AAMPO's Smaller Cities

Summary

Additional stakeholder outreach and research was conducted to assess public transportation needs in the AAMPO area, and particularly in the smaller cities of Jefferson, Millersburg and Tangent. This included two focus group meetings with transportation stakeholders from each city and the region as a whole, a review of 'travel to work' data provided through the U.S. Census, analysis of non-emergency medical trip patterns of Medicaid and Oregon Health Plan eligible individuals, and a review of Drive Less Connect carpooling program registrants. This work is intended to augment work already completed through *Technical Memorandum #5 Transit Existing Conditions* and *Draft Technical Memorandum #9 Transit Future Conditions*.

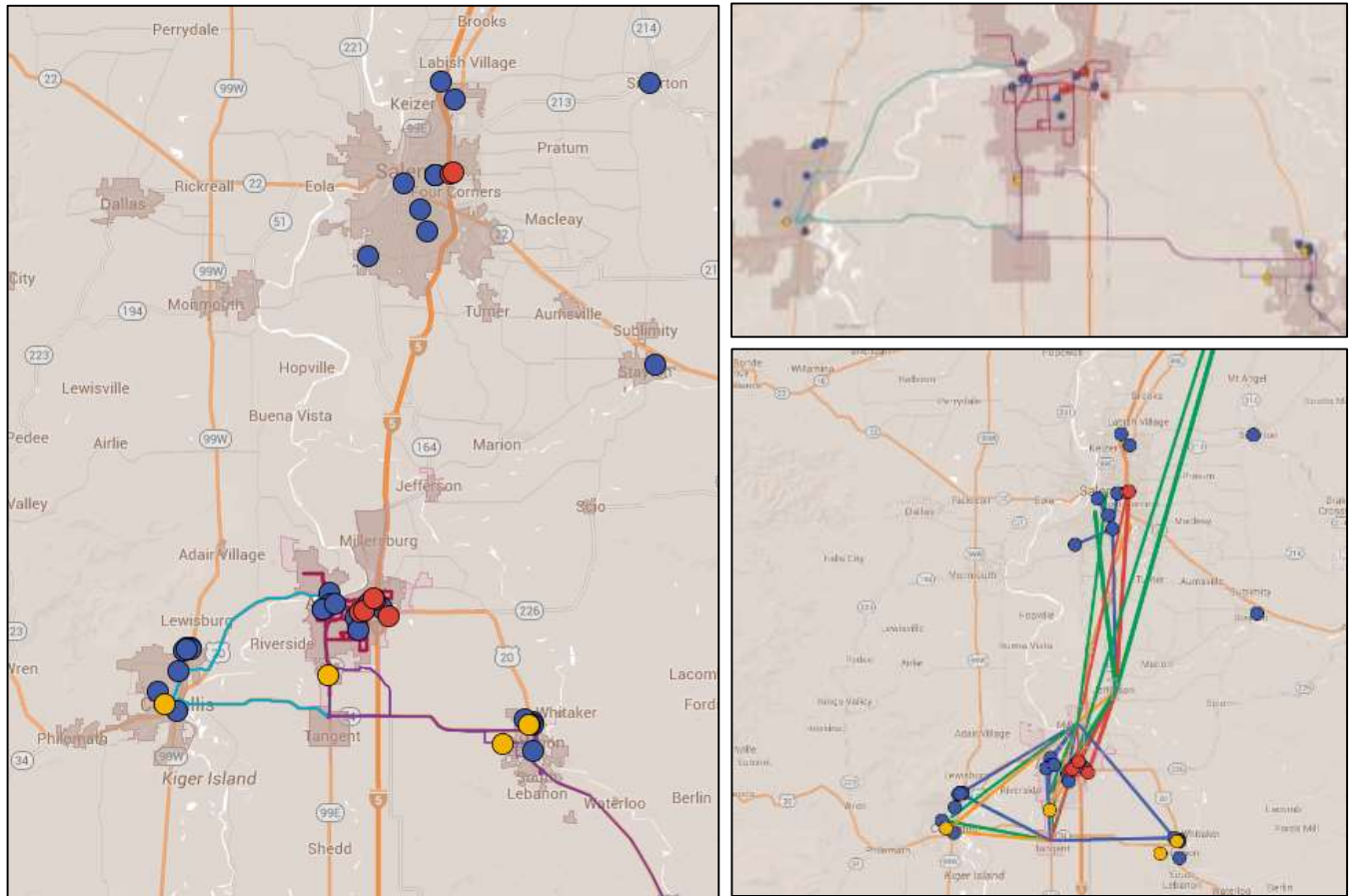
Key Findings:

- The key gap in the current public transportation system is service for younger disabled individuals and lower income individuals in smaller communities who are not eligible for Medicaid. These individuals may not have a vehicle, physical capacity, money, or family/friends that are available to assist with transportation. Albany is a key destination for low-income workers from all three of the smaller cities.
- There are opportunities to increase existing programs to support usage of current transportation options. This includes expansion of Transportation Options programming throughout the AAMPO area and expansion of volunteer programs like Volunteer Caregivers and the Good Samaritan Senior Companion. These volunteer driver programs can help fill the gaps in small cities, provided the programs have the resources and volunteers to provide increased service in those communities.
- In Tangent, a need was identified for 'last mile' connectivity to/from the existing Linn-Benton Loop service for school and work commuters. For those in need of life-line transportation, a demand-responsive service similar to the arrangement in Millersburg may work.
- In Jefferson, commuter and medical trips represent the greatest unmet need. Residents tend to travel to both Salem and Albany for work and shopping, and university students tend to travel to Albany (LBCC) or Corvallis (OSU). Anecdotally, residents are seen walking, hitchhiking or bicycling to work in Albany, indicated a need for improved commuter connections.
- The draft Millersburg Transportation System Plan has a strong emphasis on improving the bicycle and pedestrian network and less emphasis on public transportation. An aging population may point to a need for improved non-driving options in the future, however. In the short-term, existing Call-A-Ride services can be advertised on the City's website.

The following Google Maps illustrate an 'affinity-shed' for residents of AAMPO's smaller communities. The illustrations are a compilation of comments received through the methods described above. They are not intended to be comprehensive, but simply illustrate potential travel patterns of Jefferson, Millersburg and Tangent residents who may be more inclined to use public transportation.

Blue dots identify common destinations for medical trips, red dots identify common shopping destinations, and yellow dots identify common educational destinations. Lines of the same colors illustrate common trip patterns from Jefferson, Millersburg and Tangent to those destinations. Green lines illustrate common commute trips. Existing Albany Transit, Linn-Benton Loop and Linn Shuttle services are illustrated in two of the maps; the other illustrates general trip patterns.

Affinity Shed Illustrations



Source: OCWCOG

Albany Area Transit Focus Group Meetings

Two focus group conversations were held to gather information about observed public transportation needs and travel patterns in Albany Area. Meetings were held on May 16, 2016 at the Jefferson City Hall and at the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG) office in Albany. Participants included staff with the Volunteer Caregivers, Albany Transit Service and Albany Call-A-Ride, the City of Jefferson Cascades West Rideline, Linn County Special Transportation Program, and the OCWCOG Adult and Disabilities Resource Connection (ADRC). Additionally, City Councilors from the cities of Jefferson and Millersburg participated. Below are notes from the focus group meetings and information from the ADRC which was provided separately via email.

Existing Services

- **Volunteer Caregivers** provides transportation to individuals 55 and over in Linn County and a 50 mile radius around the County, which would include Jefferson. The program has two sedans and

one ADA accessible van. Volunteer drivers can also use their own vehicle and be reimbursed. The program can provide trips for medical appointments, shopping, or other errands, filling gaps in other services. (Rideline can only serve medical trips.) Each year the program denies up to 90 individuals because they are outside of the program's age parameters or service area.

- The **Good Samaritan Senior Companion Program** provides companionship and transportation services for the elderly and disabled individuals of all ages in Linn and Benton Counties
- **Albany Call-A-Ride (CAR)** is a curb-to-curb ADA paratransit and demand response service for residents 60 and over and those with a disability. CAR serves the City of Albany and ¾ mile outside of the city limits, and also provides approximately 600 rides per year to Millersburg residents, and the City reimburses CAR on a per-ride basis. CAR can pick up non-Albany residents at the Albany Station, and bring them to medical appointments. If individuals live outside of the current CAR service area, they can take a different service in to the station and transfer to CAR for door-to-door service. 20-30% of Call-a-Ride riders are seniors without a disability and could potentially use a fixed route service. CAR limitations include the number of vehicles and staffing.
- **Cascades West Rideline** is the Medicaid (InterCommunity Health Network – Coordinated Care Organization (IHN-CCO) and Oregon Health Plan (OHP)) Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) broker for Linn and Benton Counties. Contracted providers transport eligible riders for qualifying medical trips throughout the region and beyond. The **TriPLink Call Center** operated by Salem-Keizer Transit serves the City of Jefferson.
- **Albany Transit Service** - Good transit access to medical facilities in Albany, apart from the Linn County Health Department facility at 2730 Pacific Blvd (near Costco).
- The **Mennonite Services** company has three facilities and a bus that serves them (Lydia's House, Mennonite Village, and Mennonite Home). Mennonite Village also has personal attendants who can accompany residents on errands and appointments, which is a more desirable service for those that can afford it. ATS does not go as far as to serve Mennonite Home – Del Rio is as far as ATS goes southeast. The ATS Shopper Shuttle used to go through Mennonite Village but no one used it; now it goes through Columbus Greens manufactured home park and see better ridership. Volunteer Caregivers fields a number of calls from Mennonite Village residents.
- **Albany Transit Service** provides good service to most larger medical facilities in Albany, except for Linn County mental health office off of Waverly on 7th Street. The offices recently relocated there and are in a difficult spot to serve by bus, tucked behind Napa Autoparts and Anytime Fitness on OR99E. That stretch of OR99E is not served by transit. If a current bus route was re-routed to go down 99E, it would be very difficult to turn onto Waverly toward 99E.

Service Gaps

- Scheduling - Transportation needs to be part of the appointment scheduling process. Providers don't realize the transit limitations, for example, that the Benton County Dial a Bus only runs up to Albany on Tuesday and Thursday. There needs to be better coordination of medical appointment times, dates, and locations with where patients live and what their circumstances are. If they have an appointment in Portland at 7:30 am it will be difficult to find a volunteer driver who is willing to make such an early drive. Many of the drivers are retired and it isn't realistic for them to be making such early trips. Volunteer Caregivers has tried coordinating with Samaritan Health on these issues, but these efforts have yet to result in better coordination.
- Cultural Norms - It can be hard to find volunteers. Seniors often prefer to ride alone, families often act as caregivers and provide rides

- Transportation services for those without Medicaid and for younger disabled individuals. Lower income individuals may not have a vehicle, physical capacity, money, or family/friends availability to assist with transportation. Taxi rides can be \$6 per leg for an in-town trip – this is an issue for those of low or fixed income.
- Individuals with surgical appointments cannot take regular transit and often need assistance.
- In the smaller communities, it is harder to access services, grocery stores and shopping. Even if one can bicycle to a grocery store, it is difficult to return with groceries.
- Bike racks on buses and bike storage to help with ‘last mile’ connectivity
- People on SSI changed to Kaiser as insurance provider, and now need to go to Salem or Portland for appointments. It can be difficult to get there, especially for early morning appointments.
- Eugene to Portland (via Albany) Disabled American Veterans van is not wheelchair accessible
- Not everyone can use the bus systems that are in place.
- Regional Destinations - Community Services Consortium, Mental Health, Disability Services offices, Portland, Albany, Corvallis and Salem, Eugene. Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center.
- Volunteer Caregivers receives calls from younger people with a disability needing rides and cannot help them.

Jefferson Destinations and Needs

- Jefferson residents travel to Albany, Lebanon, Corvallis, and regional Good Samaritan facilities for medical appointments. Trips are made to VA facilities in Salem and Portland and also Kaiser facilities in Salem. There are an increasing number of retirees in Jefferson, and there is a mobile clinic 1-2 times a week in Jefferson.
- Residents travel to Salem for shopping at Best Buy, clothing stores, or sporting goods stores. Youth go to Salem. A general lack of grocery stores in Jefferson results in travel to Heritage Mall, Fred Meyer, Winco/Costco area, Walmart/Coastal Farm area. The new Albany Winco should reduce the current demand for travel to the store on Commercial in south Salem.
- Commuters to Salem and Albany (99E including LBCC, Oregon Freeze Dry, ATI Wah Chang). People are seen walking and biking to work in Albany, or hitch-hiking.
- Students generally go to LBCC or OSU. Jefferson is in the Chemeketa District and it has programs with the Jefferson Library and High School, but LBCC is closer.
- Many young people are leaving, anecdotally because they do not want to or can’t afford to drive and are leaving due to lack of transportation.
- Poverty and isolation could be alleviated with better connectivity
- Lower income residents are scattered throughout the community, including in south and southwestern Jefferson. St Vincent DePaul housing also in the center of town. Clients also live farther outside of the urban centers, for example in Holley and Lcomb
- Commuter and medical trips represent the greatest unmet need with social/recreational trips to a lesser degree.
- Jefferson if very walkable and bus stops at one or two locations near downtown could service most residents without mobility constraints. Jefferson Station could serve as a convenient and comfortable stop.

Millersburg Destinations and Needs

- Young people drive themselves
- The Millersburg TSP has a strong emphasis on improving the bicycle and pedestrian networks. There were no public comments addressing a need for public transportation.

- Our population is aging and there may be a greater need for non-driving options including public transportation. How will we support people aging in place?
- Century Drive area is unserved by transit – the closest stop is at Knox Butte

Tangent Destinations and Needs

- Commute to Corvallis and Albany
- Many people live in the area of N Lake Creek Dr
- Some need to grocery shop for those without driver’s license
- Gradeschool students are bussed into Tangent from outlying areas
- Bicycling connectivity can help fill gaps in transportation options for Millersburg and Tangent, but major corridors such as 99E are uncomfortable to bike along.
- Bike/ped connectivity and bicycle storage at bus stops in Tangent, including “last mile” connections with Loop stop at Hwy 34 interchange
- Demand-responsive service may work – call ahead to schedule a trip. Tangent can contract with Albany Call-A-Ride similar to the City of Millersburg
- Employers are concentrated in at Tangent Industrial Park on Old Hwy 34
- Could the Linn Shuttle jog south into Tangent? Could the Linn Shuttle go up Seven Mile Lane, past Selmet towards LBCC?
- Tangent lacks a tax base making it difficult to fund local priorities

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation

Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) is provided to Oregon Health Plan and Medicaid clients in the AAMPO area through two primary services. The TripLink Call Center operated by Salem-Keizer Transit serves the City of Jefferson and the Cascades West Rideline operated by the OCWCOG serves the remainder of the MPO area, including Tangent, Millersburg and Albany. The most frequent destinations for these two NEMT providers are listed below. While these destinations reflect trips of residents throughout the region, they can point to patterns and key destinations at the local level.

Currently, there are 258 active status clients with home addresses in Jefferson¹. The majority of trips taken by these clients are to Salem, and less frequent trips are made to medical facilities in Stayton, Corvallis, Albany, and the Jefferson Medical Clinic. There are 31 active clients with home addresses in Tangent, 2 in Millersburg and 2,073 in Albany.

Common NEMT Destinations

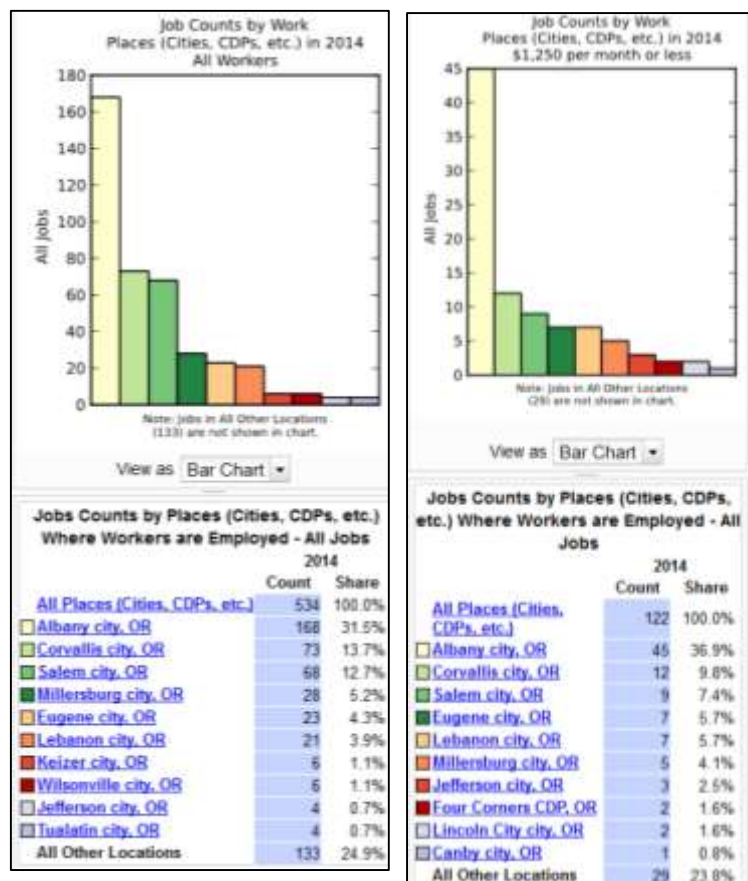
Marion County Facilities	Address	City
Willamette Valley Methadone Clinic	3871 Fairview Industrial Dr SE	Salem
Marion County Health Department	2035 Davcor St SE	Salem
DaVita NE Salem Dialysis	4792 Portland Rd NE	Salem
Linn and Benton County Facilities	Address	City
Samaritan Lebanon Community Hospital	525 N Santiam Highway	Lebanon
North Albany Samaritan Clinics	400 NW Hickory St	Albany
Mental Health Department – Albany	445 SW 3 rd Ave	Albany
Mental Health Outpatient – Albany	2730 Pacific Blvd SE	Albany
Benton County Health Department	530 NW 27 th St	Corvallis
Grace Center Adult Day Center	980 Spruce Ave	Corvallis
Linn County Mental Health – Lebanon	1600 S Main St	Lebanon

¹ Data provided electronically by Salem-Keizer Transit Service and Cascades West Rideline for 2009-2016. Active was defined as having made a trip within the last seven years.

Fresenius Dialysis Center – Corvallis	3580 Samaritan Dr	Corvallis
Fresenius Dialysis Center – Albany	1050 SW 7 th Ave	Albany
Fresenius Medical Care - Lebanon	665 N 5 th St	Lebanon
Albany General Hospital	1047 SW 6 th Ave	Albany
Cascade View Medical Center / Mid-Valley Gastroenterology / Samaritan Internal Medicine	3521 NW Samaritan Dr	Corvallis
Samaritan Regional Medical Center	3600 NW Samaritan Dr	Corvallis
Samaritan Family Medicine	1700 Geary St SE	Albany
Mid-Valley Medical Plaza	425 N Santiam Highway	Albany
Samaritan Professional Center / Bariatric Surgery	3517 NW Samaritan Dr	Corvallis
Emergency	1856 Grand Prairie Rd SE	Albany
Corvallis Clinic / Asbury Building	3680 Samaritan Dr	Corvallis
Corvallis Pain and Spine	545 SW 2 nd St	Corvallis
Linn County Alcohol / Drug	104 SW 4 th Ave	Albany
Physical Therapy Corvallis	3580 NW Samaritan Dr	Corvallis
Serenity Lane of Albany	1050 SE Price Rd	Albany
Samaritan East Linn Health Center	100 Mullins Dr	Albany

Commute Patterns

The following charts illustrate job locations of residents of Jefferson, Millersburg and Tangent in 2014, using US Census data². In each case, the majority of working residents commute elsewhere for work.



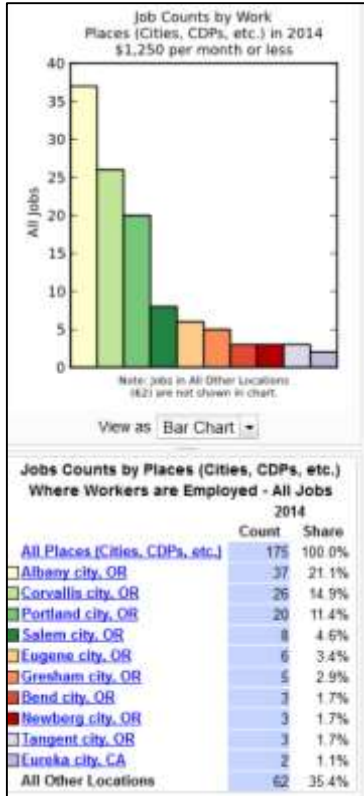
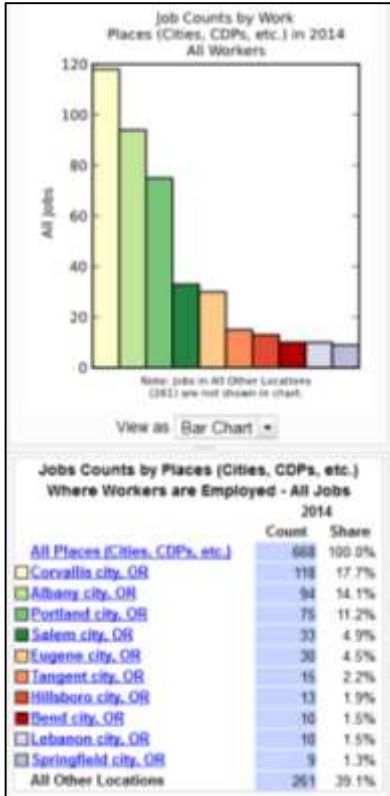
Millersburg Commute Patterns

Overall, 31.5% of Millersburg workers commute to Albany for work, followed by 13.7% to Corvallis and 12.7% to Salem.

5.2% of all Millersburg workers stay in Millersburg for work.

When looking specifically at lower-income workers, these travel patterns continue although the percent traveling to Albany for work increases to 36.9% and the percent traveling to Corvallis and Albany decreases.

² U.S. Census Bureau. 2016. OnTheMap Application. Longitudinal-Employer Household Dynamics Program. <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

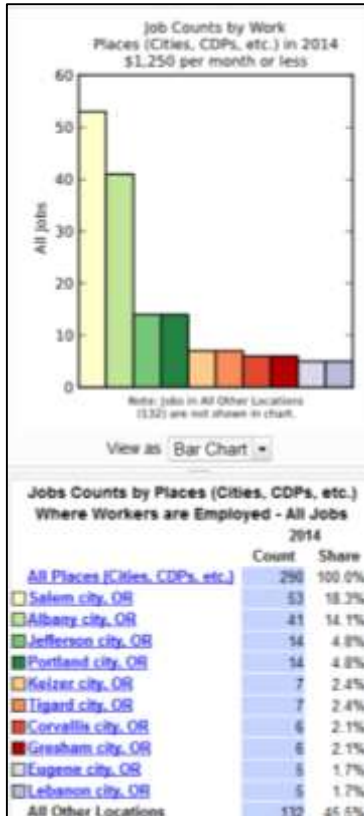
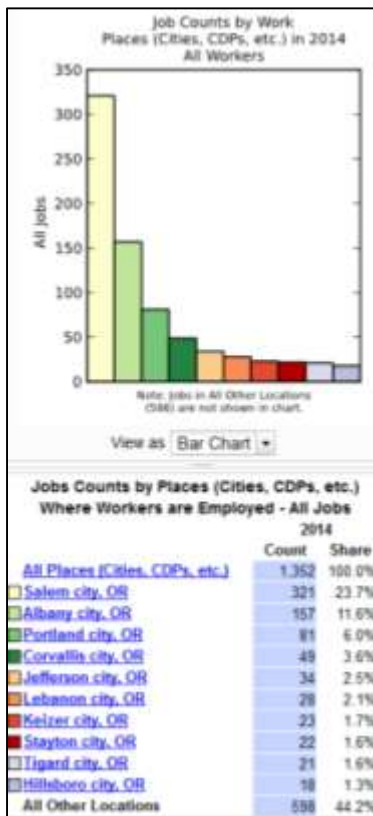


Jefferson Commute Patterns

The majority of Jefferson workers commute to Salem for work (23.7%), followed by Albany at 11.6% and Portland at 6.0%.

The most common destination for low-income workers is Salem, followed by Albany, Jefferson and Portland. More low-income residents also work in Keizer and Tigard and less work in Corvallis or Lebanon.

Overall, 2.5% of workers stay in Jefferson for their jobs and 4.8% of low-income workers are employed in Jefferson.



Tangent Commute Patterns

The majority of Tangent workers commute to Corvallis (17.7%), followed by 14.1% to Albany and 11.2% to Portland.

When looking specifically at lower-income workers, these patterns shift. More low income workers travel to Albany for work (21.1%) and fewer travel to Corvallis (14.9%). The same percentage are employed in Portland (11.4%).

2.2% of Tangent workers, and 1.7% of low income workers, are employed in Tangent.

Carpooling Patterns

The 'Drive Less Connect' website allows people to connect with others to carpool and to track carpooling, walking and biking trips. Drive Less Connect registrants were reviewed to determine if there are registered users in the MPO area³. There are currently 671 registered users associated with the City of Albany, 21 associated with the City of Tangent, and none in the cities of Millersburg and Jefferson. It should be noted that 'registered' does not mean 'active'. For example, in Albany there are 671 registered users of Drive Less Connect but over 500 of them are inactive. The lack of registrants in Millersburg and Jefferson may point to either less propensity to carpool or take other modes, or simply a lack of awareness about the program.

On the Drive Less Connect website, you can set up 'trips' and invited people to carpool with you. 46 'trips' were set up with an origin in Albany, and none in Tangent, Jefferson or Millersburg. Of those 46 proposed 'trips', 7 are now listed as being active in a carpool.

³ Summary information provided electronically by the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments and Salem Keizer Transit