YOUR *Safety*

YOUR *Mobility*

YOUR *Economic Opportunity*

IDAHO **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** PLAN

Appendix A

Community Input Activities and Results

Final April 2018

Idaho Public Transportation Plan

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Introduction

This appendix describes the approach taken to obtaining input from the public and transportation stakeholders throughout Plan development activities. Comments and findings from the various surveys and outreach meetings are summarized. A more detailed look at Design Your Transit System (DYTS) Survey results, and open-ended comments from respondents to the Open House survey, are also provided.

Ongoing Communication with Stakeholders

Public outreach events were supported by regular communications through a variety of media, including:

- Project e-newsletters sent to a statewide list of more than 1,200 recipients. Individuals on this list were asked to share project materials with their organizations and professional networks to help spread the word about upcoming events and opportunities to provide feedback related to transportation options in their communities.
- Articles in ITD's monthly *Transporter* e-newsletter
- Press releases to media outlets
- Social media posts (Facebook, Twitter)
- Website updates to ITD's public transportation page

Design Your Transit System Survey

The DYTS survey launched in November 2016 and closed in May 2017.

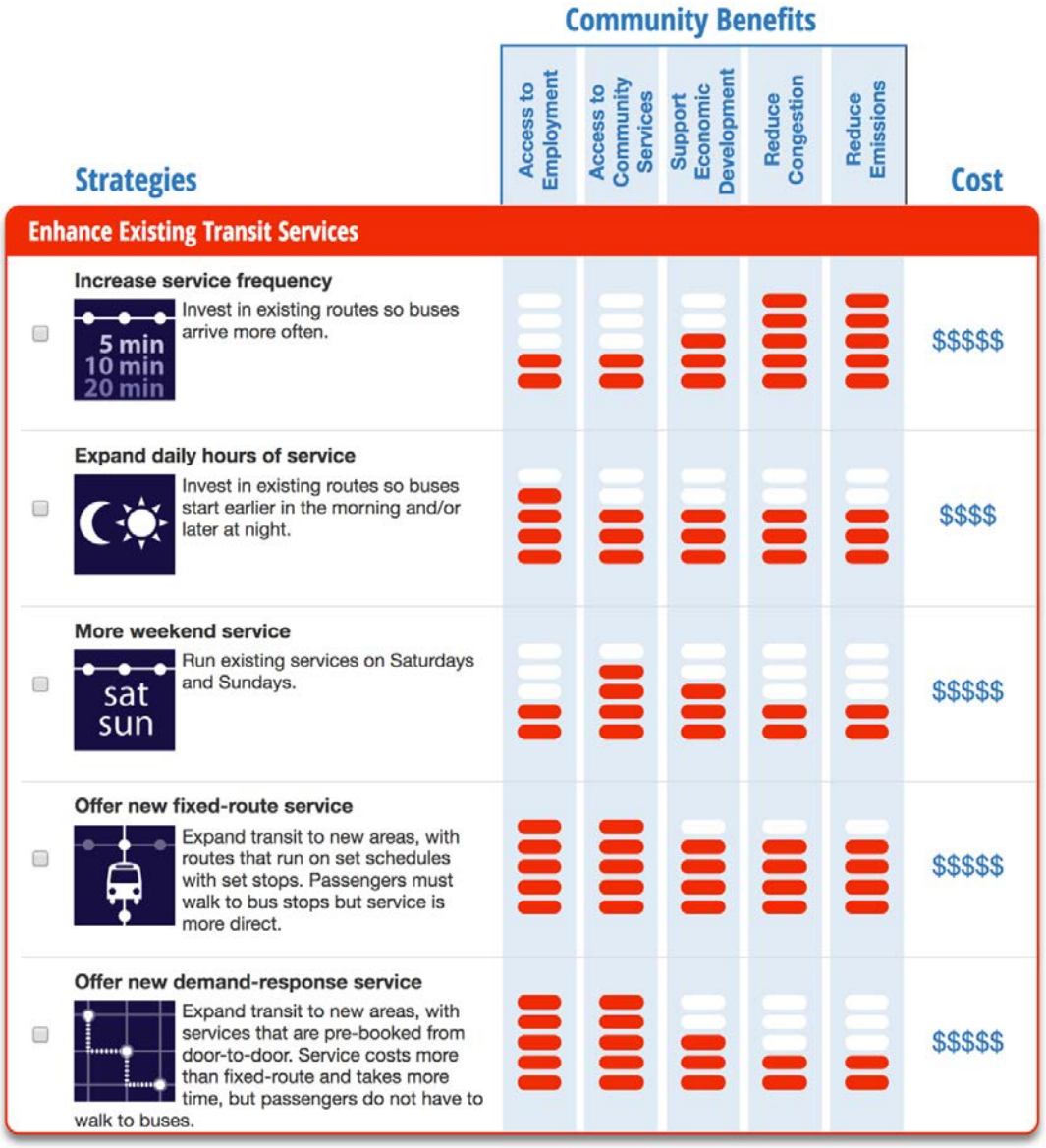
Survey respondents took a two-part questionnaire designed to evaluate transit improvement preferences, understanding, usage, and perceptions. The first part of the survey, an interactive Design Your Transit System "game," asked respondents to report on their preferences among a series of transit investment alternatives, an example of which is shown in Figure 1. The second part of the survey, a more traditional SurveyMonkey questionnaire, asked about respondents' transit knowledge and use, why they do or do not use transit, and some background information including place of residence.

Design Your Transit System Survey Results	
District 1	89
District 2	77
District 3	378
District 4	27
District 5	24
District 6	28
Unreported	42

The survey link was posted on the Public Transportation page of ITD's website and publicized through stakeholder e-newsletters, a Transporter article, Facebook and Twitter posts, and emails and calls to Indian tribes. In total, the survey received 665 responses.

Survey respondents were asked to report their home zip code, used by the study team to assign each survey response to its corresponding ITD district. Additionally, each zip code was classified as either an urban or a rural area by determining whether the zip code intersected with a Census identified urban area.

Figure 1 – Design Your Transit System Sample



Interactive "Design Your Transit System" Component

To begin, survey respondents were asked to provide feedback on transit strategies they would prioritize using a Design Your Transit System questionnaire. Using a hypothetical budget of $25, participants were asked to select as many strategies as they liked that could fit within that budget, though they were not required to utilize the entire amount. A total of 17 investments in five main categories and ranging between $2 and $5 were available to the participants.

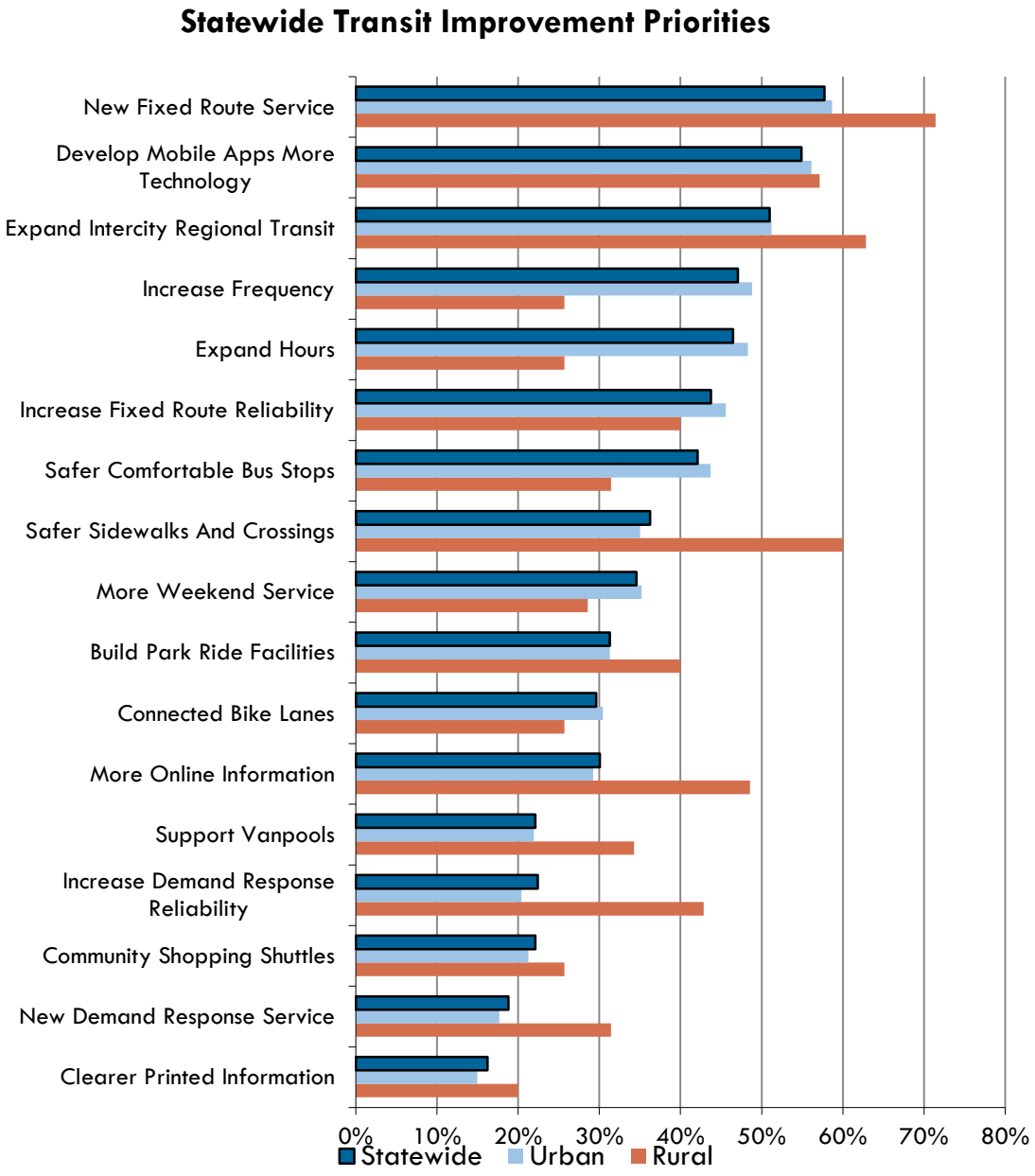
These five categories, the strategies identified in each category, and their relative price in the simulation, are listed below:

- **Enhance Existing Transit Services**
  - Increase Service Frequency _____ $$$$$
  - Expand Daily Hours of Service _____ $$$$
  - More Weekend Service _____ $$$$$
  - Offer New Fixed Route Service _____ $$$$$
  - Offer New Demand Response Service _____ $$$$$
- **Make Service More Reliable**
  - Increase Fixed Route Service Reliability _____ $$$
  - Increase Demand Response Service Reliability _____ $$$
- **Offer Different Types of Transit**
  - Support Vanpools _____ $$$
  - Build Park & Ride Facilities _____ $$$
  - Expand Intercity / Regional Transit _____ $$$$
  - Create Local Community Shopping Shuttles _____ $$$$
- **Provide Better Access to Transit**
  - Safer Sidewalks and Crossings to Walk to Transit _____ $$$$
  - Connected Bike Lanes to Transit _____ $$$$
  - Safer and More Comfortable Bus Stops for Waiting _____ $$$
- **Enhance Information about Transit**
  - More Online Information _____ $$
  - Clearer Printed Information _____ $$$
  - Develop Mobile Apps and New Technology _____ $$$

The results presented in this section are for all participants throughout Idaho. As shown below in Figure 2, the most frequently preferred statewide transit strategies were new fixed route service, more technology and mobile apps, and expanded intercity regional transit. Each of these three strategies was selected by over half of all participants statewide. While the preferences in urban areas were consistent with the statewide results, there was a much greater preference for safer sidewalks and crossings in rural areas than in the state overall. Rural areas also had a comparatively higher interest in new fixed route service, expanded regional transit, and more online information, as well as additional and improved demand response service.

While "New Fixed Route Service" was the most popular item for Districts 1, 3, and 4, the number one selection for District 2 was to "Expand Intercity Regional Transit." District 5 participants expressed the greatest interest in "Develop Mobile Apps and New Technology," while District 6 participants selected "Increase Fixed Route Reliability" most often.

Figure 2 – Statewide Transit Improvement Priorities



District Open House Meetings and Local Coordination Plan Meetings

In January 2017, the project team and ITD-PT staff held six open house meetings across the state at the ITD district offices or alternate locations. These meetings were designed to inform the public about the planning process, the results from the Design Your Transit System survey, and to help identify specific needs and service gaps within each district. The meetings featured a presentation, interactive polling, posters and opportunities to provide specific feedback on current public transportation services and transportation challenges in the district. In total, 20 individuals attended the open house meetings across the state. Harsh winter weather and hazardous driving conditions likely reduced meeting attendance and participation.

In addition to the Open Houses, the project team conducted meetings to discuss the public transportation—human services transportation plans required for projects funded by the FTA's Section 5310 grant program. Six Local Coordination Plan (LCP) meetings took place during these site visits to the districts. These meetings were held with local transportation providers and area stakeholders to provide information relating to the LCP and to collect information about area services, gaps and potential solutions for the districts. These meetings were highly interactive and had attendees provide responses to questions related to transit gaps and services in their local communities. These meetings were focused on planning for areas exclusive of Idaho's five Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) areas. The information collected at these meetings helped inform both the Idaho Public Transportation Plan and the LCP for each district. In total 60 providers, government officials and other stakeholders attended the LCP meetings.

29 in-person meetings were conducted over the course of the project

These two sets of meetings were publicized together in the following ways:

- An ITD press release was sent in November 2016 announcing the district site visits
- Flyers and posters were distributed to regional ITD offices and project partners and were put up around the community by ITD staff
- Three e-newsletters were sent to the project stakeholder list announcing the dates of the meetings and asking them to share the information with their colleagues and professional networks
- Two Facebook posts were made announcing the dates of the meetings and reminding people to mark their calendars. An additional six Facebook posts were made on the days of the district meetings.
- Personal emails and phone calls were made to key regional stakeholders asking for participation in the meetings
- Targeted emails and calls were made to tribal representatives from each of the five Idaho tribes
- The meetings were both announced and promoted on the ITD Public Transportation webpage

Online Open House Survey

To share information more broadly, and collect additional public input, the project team designed a survey that mirrored the January on-site open houses. This online survey was designed to collect user feedback related to gaps in services, transit preferences, user habits and to identify groups of individuals who are heavily impacted by transit system services in their district. The survey was open from April 17 to May 5, 2017 and received 430 individual responses across the six ITD districts.

The online Open House Survey was publicized in the following ways:

- A public service announcement from ITD on April 17
- Four social media posts. Two during the week of April 17, and two the week of May 1
- Three e-newsletter campaigns were sent to the project stakeholder list during the beginning, middle and end of the survey period. These campaigns asked recipients to share the survey link with their colleagues, and professional networks.
- An article in the April 21, 2017 issue of The Transporter
- Targeted emails to representatives from each of the five tribes of Idaho (Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Nez Perce Tribe, Kootenai Tribe, Shoshone-Paiute Tribes, Coeur d'Alene Tribe)
- The survey was publicized via the Public Transportation page of the ITD website

Open House Survey Responses	
District 1	40
District 2	64
District 3	201
District 4	43
District 5	31
District 6	51

Results of the Open House survey are summarized below and in Appendix B.

Public Transportation Advisory Committee Work Sessions (PTAC)

The Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) provided critical information to the project team related to existing transit conditions, service gaps, and community needs, and helped direct the process. Over the course of the project to date, two PTAC work sessions were held. PTAC members engaged in various exercises, including a SWOT analysis that helped identify opportunities for improvement and partnership in each ITD district, and provided feedback on technical reports and research as well as the statewide plan contents and direction. Conversations with the PTAC helped confirm and highlight trends and areas for improvement in each district.

Interagency Working Group Meetings (IWG)

The Idaho Public Transportation Plan project team met with the Interagency Working Group in August 2016 to share the project purpose, goals and timeline. The IWG is specifically tasked to advise and assist ITD in analyzing public transportation needs, identifying areas of coordination, and developing strategies for eliminating procedural and regulatory barriers to coordination at the state level[1]. The project team met with the IWG again in 2017 to review the draft plan and to share significant themes and findings.

[1] 2016 Idaho Interagency Working Group: Program, Usage, and Funding Report on Public Transportation. http://apps.itd.idaho.gov/apps/pt/2016-Annual-Report.pdf

Project Management Team (PMT)

ITD formed the PMT to provide additional input and guidance for the project team during development of the IPTP. Members included representatives of a number of ITD's departments and other Idaho state agencies. The project team met with the PMT to kick off the project in August 2016 and provided project updates via conference call in October 2016 and April 2017. The ITD project manager met with the PMT in June 2017 to review project status and findings to date.

Transit Provider Interviews

Targeted interviews with transit providers around the state provided an in depth look into transit system operations and the challenges that face providers and users. In total 16 in-person and phone interviews were conducted over the span of the project to date. Nearly all major service providers were interviewed and their input was critical in understanding public transportation in each of the six districts.

Presentation to National Federation of the Blind – Idaho Conference

A brief presentation at the annual conference in Boise was made to approximately 60 people, followed by a longer question-and-answer session where public comment was received regarding public transportation services. The presentation was also shared with the larger membership.

Outreach Results

This section summarizes the input received through the various outreach methods used to solicit comments from Idahoans throughout the planning process to date.

Public Transportation Ridership

Public transit providers made the following comments about their current ridership characteristics during interviews and in conversation at the Open House/LCP meetings.

- Riders consist of seniors, people with disabilities, and students, with an increasing number of choice riders.
- 50% of the riders' age range from 20-40 and majority are employed full-time. A good number of transit-dependent riders; many do not have a license or a car.
- We are building more choice ridership, particularly in service of employers.
- Wide range of ages
- 50% are members of the general public
- Varied and diverse
- Mostly transit-dependent riders
- Number of choice riders has gone up
- Students are a significant portion of riders
- Majority of our riders are low-income
- Seniors, low to moderate income, high portion have a disability, students, riders using employer passes
- Seniors are a huge user group in eastern Idaho's urban areas
- 75% general public, 15% youth, 5% older adult, 5% people with disabilities

Service Gaps and Needs

The following tables were created using feedback from meeting participants, the two surveys and transportation provider interviews. The tables identify service gaps and transportation needs for each of the six districts, according to stakeholder input. It is important to note that this information reflects participants' comments' and may not provide the complete picture of the gaps and needs in each district.

Figure 3 and Figure 4 summarize input about the types of trips and customer groups who make use of, or need, public transportation options.

Figure 3 – Trip Types for which Customers Use and Need Public Transportation Services

Trip Type Needs (Met and Unmet)	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Employment	X	X	X			
Medical	X	X	X	X	X	X
Shopping/personal business	X	X	X	X	X	X
Airport access	X	X	X			
Education/campus trips	X	X	X			
Human service programs		X	X		X	X
Recreation	X	X				X
Regional destinations	X	X	X		X	X

Figure 4 – Customer Groups Using and Needing Public Transportation Services

Customer Groups with Needs	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Older adults	X	X	X	X		X
People with disabilities	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dialysis patients			X			
People experiencing homelessness	X		X			
Workers	X	X	X	X	X	X
Students	X	X	X	X		X
Veterans		X	X		X	X
Low Income	X	X	X			
Youth	X	X	X		X	X
Refugees			X	X		

Figure 5 summarizes comments about service gaps and challenges noted by outreach participants and transportation providers, in each district.

Figure 5 –Transportation Service Gaps and Challenges

Service Gaps and Challenges	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Long distances and travel times	X	X	X			
Areas or destinations without service	X		X	X	X	X
Little or no early/late hours or weekend services	X	X	X	X		X
Infrequent service	X	X				
Rural areas		X	X		X	X
Reverse commutes to rural areas			X			
Limited options for wheelchair users	X	X	X	X	X	X
Inaccessible paths of travel to stops	X	X	X			X
Bus stops and shelters	X	X	X	X	X	X
Information about/image of transit	X			X	X	
Technology barriers		X				
Intercity travel	X	X	X	X	X	X

Figure 6 lists challenges that transportation providers indicated during interviews that they face.

Figure 6 – Challenges Faced by Transportation Providers

Transportation Provider Challenges	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Limited funding	X	X	X	X		X
Funding source restrictions	X					X
Difficulty obtaining local matching funds	X	X	X		X	X
Competition for local matching funds		X				X
Age of fleet	X	X				
Transition to Veyo		X				X
Staff limitations		X				

Procurement of services, equipment		X	X			

Recurring Themes

Themes that ran throughout the on-site public Open Houses and meetings with stakeholders, online surveys, and transportation provider interviews are summarized below:

- **Employment transportation:** people are using public transportation to get to work, but more services are needed, especially to and within rural areas.
- **Regional services:** important destinations for residents of most districts are outside of their home county or district, or in Wyoming, Washington, or Utah. Direct services or connections between providers are desired, as well as connections among cities.
- **Transportation for veterans:** existing services and needs were mentioned in a number of meetings/interviews.
- **Transportation for medical visits:** existing services and needs related to medical trips were mentioned in all six district meetings/interviews.
- **Transportation for people with disabilities:** a variety of needs were mentioned by people with disabilities. Many of these are the same as mentioned for other types of riders; those that were particular to people with disabilities included:
    - Prohibitions or barriers to bringing large equipment such as wheelchairs and portable ramps on buses
    - Vanpools do not accommodate riders who use wheelchairs
    - The need to accommodate service animals
    - Developing technology to help riders with disabilities, such as websites and apps
    - Year-round access to bus stops for people using wheelchairs, walkers and other mobility aids especially in poor weather conditions
    - Linkages and coordination among public transportation providers so riders with disabilities can more easily piece together itineraries among multiple service providers
    - Dependability of providers' services
- **Choice riders:** several providers noted that the proportion of choice riders among their customers is growing, especially for work trips. However, the need for stronger marketing and branding, as well as more easily accessible information about transportation services, was identified to change the perception that public transportation is just for older adults, people with disabilities, or those without cars.
- **Transportation infrastructure:** providers and riders alike identified the quality, location and number of bus stops as a barrier to transit ridership. Challenging terrain, a lack of consistent sidewalks and curb cuts on routes to current transit stop locations was also identified as a prohibiting factor in utilizing current transportation services.
- **Coordination:** the need for ongoing collaboration among providers and between providers and ITD was mentioned repeatedly to maximize use of resources and expand mobility options.
- **Technology:** providers recognize the potential of technologies such as reservations/scheduling software, AVL, and onboard tablets, to increase service efficiency, but may lack the funding or expertise to acquire such systems. Many customers would like and use mobile apps for real-time vehicle location, for example, but not all have smartphones with data plans. Many people with disabilities requested better phone line information and call numbers with informed providers who could advise on route selection, reservations and similar services.

- **Funding:** providers struggle with insufficient levels of funding and the restrictions that come with various funding programs. Local match to federal grants is challenging to find. On the positive side, colleges and universities, local businesses, and some employers are contributing financially to some systems.

Opportunities and Potential Solutions

Transportation providers, meeting participants and survey respondents specifically mentioned the following types of solutions to service gaps and other needs (Figure 7).

Figure 7 – Opportunities and Potential Solutions

Solutions and Opportunities	District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6
Path of travel improvements	X			X		
Bus shelters	X					
Bus park and ride facilities					X	
Expanded service areas	X	X	X			X
Extended hours of service	X	X	X	X	X	X
Expand weekend service		X	X	X	X	X
Increased service frequency		X	X	X	X	X
More funding	X		X	X		
Intercity or out of county services	X	X	X			X
Mobile apps for information, reservations, real time vehicle location	X					X
Technologies: AVL, reservations/scheduling software, power and Wifi on vehicles	X					
Volunteer driver services	X					
Centralized transportation information	X			X	X	X
Travel training		X				
Branding/marketing/outreach		X	X	X	X	X
Coordination and mobility management	X	X	X	X	X	X
Local option transit taxing ability			X			
TNC partnerships			X			
Flexible transportation voucher program					X	

Highlighted Solutions

- **Coordination and mobility management:** Creating better linkages between offered services and optimizing resources within a community to improved specialized transportation for a variety of customer groups was mentioned in conversations in all districts.
- **Branding and marketing:** Creating recognizable brands and better informing communities of their transportation options was rated highly as a way to increase ridership.
- **Centralized transportation information:** allowing easy access to information was mentioned frequently in conversations with providers and riders. Respondents identified difficulties navigating the disjointed information regarding area services. This is particularly true in areas where people may have to chain together transit options to reach a destination.
- **Expanded hours and weekend service:** expanded weekend service was rated as one of the top priority improvements in five of the six districts in the open house survey. Additionally, students and workers frequently mentioned the need to travel outside of the 9-to-5 weekday/workday time period.
- **Increased service frequency:** more frequent service routes and options was a priority in most of the districts.
- **Regional travel:** There was a strong desire for more intercity and inter-county travel. This connectivity was highlighted as a need for patients seeking medical services, people with disabilities, and for veterans.