



MOBILITY
EFFICIENCY
INTEGRATION



IDAHO Human Services Transportation PLAN

Locally Coordinated Plan for Boundary, Bonner,
Kootenai, Shoshone and Benewah Counties

April 2018

Prepared by:



Idaho Public
Transportation Plan



Contents

- 1 Overview 1
 - 1.1 Purpose of Plan 1
 - 1.2 Scope and Development of the Locally Coordinated Plan 2
 - 1.3 Stakeholder Participation Process 3
 - 1.3.1 Notification and Outreach 3
 - 1.3.2 Online Surveys..... 3
 - 1.3.3 Local Coordinated Planning Workshop..... 4
 - 1.3.4 Public Open House 4
 - 1.3.5 Transit Provider Interviews..... 4
- 2 People and Transportation Services in District 1 5
 - 2.1 Transit Propensity: Who is Most Likely to Take Transit?..... 5
 - 2.2 Reasons for Using Transit in District 1 12
 - 2.3 Current Transportation Services and Providers 12
 - 2.3.1 Intercity Bus 18
 - 2.3.2 Fixed Route..... 18
 - 2.3.3 Deviated Fixed Route Service 18
 - 2.3.4 Paratransit Service and Publicly Available Demand Responsive Transit 18
 - 2.3.5 Private and Other Human Services Transportation Providers 19
 - 2.3.6 Volunteer Driver Networks 19
 - 2.4 Current Funding Framework..... 20
 - 2.4.1 Federal Transit Administration Funding 20
 - 2.4.2 Federal Highway Administration Funding Available for Transit Purposes 21
 - 2.4.3 Local Funding 21
- 3 Needs and Gaps..... 22
 - 3.1 Geographic Service Gaps 23
 - 3.2 Temporal Service Gaps 24
 - 3.3 Trip Type Gaps 24



3.4	Accessibility Needs	24
3.5	Technology Challenges	25
3.6	Information Gaps	25
3.7	Affordability Gaps.....	26
3.8	Coordination Gaps	26
4	Strategies for Meeting Needs.....	26
4.1	Information Solutions.....	26
4.2	Service Enhancements	27
4.3	Complementing the Existing Network.....	27
4.4	Accessibility Improvements	28
4.5	Technology Improvements	29
4.6	Other Potential Solutions	29
4.7	Setting Priorities.....	30
5	The Plan	32
Appendix A – Provider Profiles.....		37
Appendix B – Online Survey Results		38



Idaho Public Transportation Plan Locally Coordinated Plan for District 1

Your Safety | Your Mobility | Your Economic Opportunity

Figure 1. ITD District 1

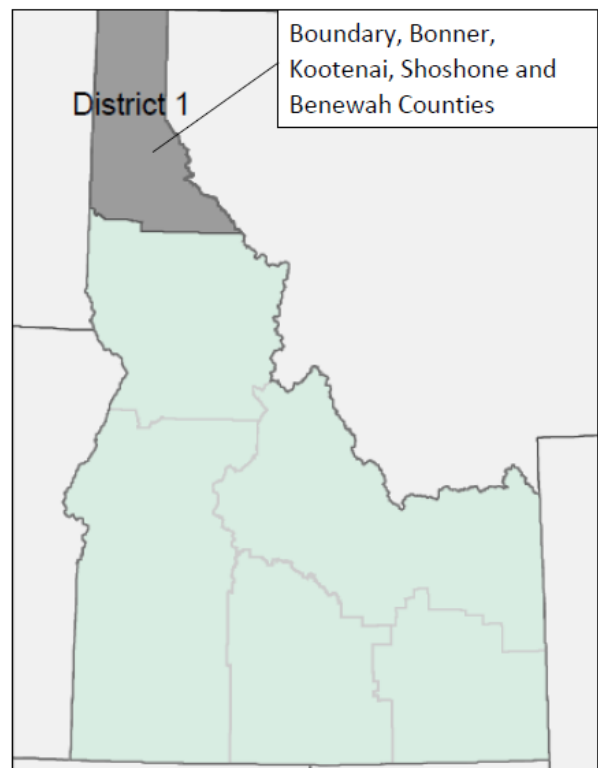
Overview

Purpose of Plan

Older adults, people with disabilities, people with low incomes, and other socio-economically disadvantaged people depend on affordable, accessible transportation. Without it, people cannot access medical services, shop for necessities, or get to work, and may become isolated in their homes. This condition can present a health and safety risk for some, and may result in seniors or residents with disabilities being forced from their homes before they need to be, due to a lack of transportation options.

If organizations wish to secure federal funding *specifically* for projects to ***enhance the mobility of elderly individuals and people with disabilities***, (rather than transportation open to the general public) projects must be included in a locally coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.¹ Consideration of other key populations, such as individuals with lower incomes, is a recommended, but not required, element of these local coordination plans.

In 2017, the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) prepared the Idaho Public Transportation Plan to evaluate current transit services, estimate future needs, identify



¹ 49 USC 5310 (e) (2) (A) (i)

public preferences for potential investment, and identify potential strategies to help Idaho meet its public transportation goals. To provide specific strategies for the key target populations tailored to varying regions of the state, Locally-Coordinated Plans (LCPs) were concurrently prepared for each ITD District.

This LCP covers ITD's District 1, which includes Boundary, Bonner, Kootenai, Shoshone and Benewah counties.

In addition to considering the travel needs of the broader public, the LCP fulfills federal requirements for addressing the special mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged groups.

Like many regions across the country, District 1 has limited public transportation options in rural areas. This LCP aims to address needs and fill gaps in existing transportation programs and services that may leave vulnerable populations without adequate travel options. The ultimate goal is regional collaboration to provide more effective transportation services for all, with attention to the needs of those with special mobility issues.

Scope and Development of the Locally Coordinated Plan

The LCP includes three principal elements:

1. An inventory of **existing transportation services**, to assess the current state of mobility within the District.
2. Assessment of **current service gaps and travel challenges**. This step included communicating with a variety of stakeholders, including members of the public, transit providers, healthcare providers, senior centers, human services groups and others.
3. Development of **strategies and priorities** to address gaps and improve mobility. Stakeholders again played a valuable role in proposing and prioritizing strategies to address unmet mobility needs.

Development of the LCP was integrated with the Idaho Public Transportation Plan, so that resulting recommendations and strategies introduced at the local level are compatible with broader policy development and decision-making at the statewide level.

In Kootenai County, regional transportation planning falls under the purview of the Kootenai Metropolitan Planning Organization (KMPO). This LCP does not supplant existing public transportation plans prepared by KMPO, nor is it intended to fulfill federal requirements for a locally coordinated public transportation plan within KMPO's planning area. Rather, development of the LCP for District 1 emphasized rural areas of the District, outside of KMPO's planning area. That said, in many instances rural stakeholders need access to urban services within KMPO's planning area. Therefore, KMPO's existing plans were reviewed as the LCP was developed, and transportation providers within KMPO's planning area were invited to participate in the LCP planning process.

1.3 Stakeholder Participation Process

1.3.1 Notification and Outreach

Outreach to the general public as the LCP was prepared was combined with the overall public engagement effort for the Idaho Public Transportation Plan. Press releases and newspaper display advertisements were used to notify the public about the planning process and opportunities for input.

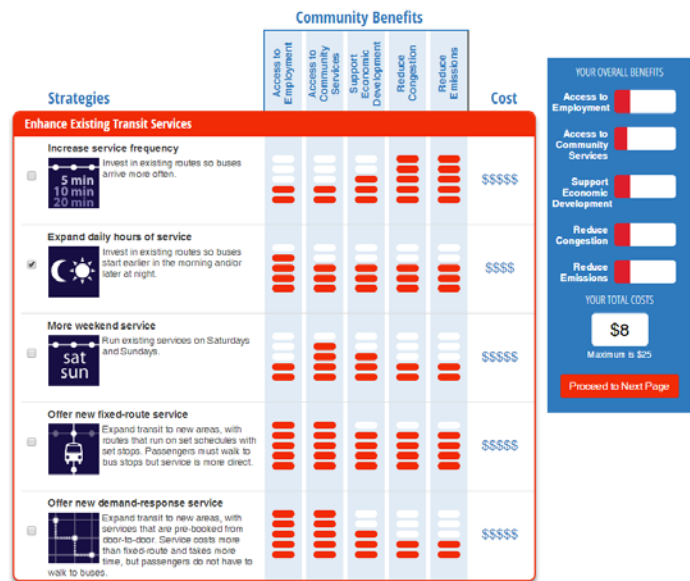
In addition, ITD’s Public Transportation Office maintains an interested parties list for email messaging. This list was used to disseminate email messages about the statewide planning process and opportunities for input.

The LCP planning team expanded ITD’s email list to prepare a large outreach roster specifically for District 1 that included seniors and people with disabilities, educational institutions, students, youth, medical care facilities, low-income populations, military veterans, and native tribal populations. The more robust LCP roster was used to communicate with stakeholders about District 1 LCP activities and invite stakeholders to District events.

1.3.2 Online Surveys

In November and December of 2016, the planning team distributed a “Design Your Transit System” survey statewide, to capture input on transportation needs and preferences from the general public. 665 responses were received from across the state, including 89 responses from District 1. The interactive survey asked participants to provide opinions about potential strategies for enhancing existing transit services given a constrained budget. Participants could then view the relative benefits of their investment choices with respect to employment access, access to community services, economic development support, reduced congestion and reduced air pollutants.

Figure 2. "Design Your Transit System" Online Survey



A follow-up survey was distributed online during April and May of 2017, providing an additional input opportunity for interested stakeholders who were unable to attend District-specific work sessions.

1.3.3 Local Coordinated Planning Workshop

A stakeholder work session was held in District 1 on January 11, 2017 to confirm existing services, discuss needs and gaps, and brainstorm potential strategies for enhancing existing transit service. Participants considered geographic and temporal gaps in service, as well as accessibility needs, technology challenges, information gaps, affordability issues, and coordination between providers.



The LCP workshop in District 1 was attended by a variety of stakeholders representing state and local agency planning staff, transportation providers, human service agencies, people from senior living communities, and disability populations. Time was provided for networking during the workshop, to encourage collaboration and help build connections between stakeholders and service providers who have few opportunities to meet in person during their day-to-day work.

1.3.4 Public Open House

A public open house was also held in District 1 on January 11, 2017, following the LCP workshop. Attendees viewed and responded to existing conditions information, and preliminary survey findings, helping to identify additional needs and gaps, and providing feedback on potential solutions.

1.3.5 Transit Provider Interviews

The planning team held one-on-one interviews with public transportation providers to understand strengths, challenges, and opportunities affecting the existing and future delivery of public transportation services in the District. The following providers were interviewed for District 1:

- Citylink
- SPOT
- Silver Express
- Valley Vista Care

Questions covered each organization’s mission, customer base, as well as their approach to service and service development. The planning team also asked about each provider’s existing funding and revenue sources, including major funding challenges, as well as organizational and operational factors that affect their cost-effectiveness. Interviews also explored each provider’s current inter-agency partnerships and relationships with neighboring transit providers, institutions, large employers, human service agencies, KMPO, ITD, and private sector partners.

2 People and Transportation Services in District 1

2.1 Transit Propensity: Who is Most Likely to Take Transit?

Figure 3 shows the relative density of populations most likely to need and use public transportation around the state. This includes older adults, people with disabilities, people without access to a car and people with limited income. Many areas of District 1 have high transit propensity, especially the greater Coeur d’Alene metropolitan area, areas of Bonner County along the US2 and US95 corridors, and Silver Valley communities in Shoshone County along the I90 corridor.

Looking specifically at populations of seniors as shown in Figure 4, there are concentrations of older adults within these same areas, with the greatest densities located within the Coeur d’Alene metropolitan area, and around Sandpoint, Dover, Ponderay and Kootenai.

Concentrations of people with disabilities, shown in Figure 5, are densest within the Coeur d’Alene metropolitan area. As Figure 6 shows, there are notable areas where households with no vehicles are concentrated in District 1, specifically in the Coeur d’Alene metropolitan area, within the Bonner County communities of Sandpoint, Dover and Ponderay, and in Shoshone County near Pinehurst.

Access to employment for lower-income individuals is an important function of public transportation. Figure 7 shows the locations of jobs where people who earn less than 150% of the federal poverty level are employed. Most of these jobs in District 1 are centered around Coeur d’Alene; however, there is also a moderate concentration in the Sandpoint area.



Figure 3. Transit Propensity Index



Figure 4. Older Adult Populations



Figure 5. People with Disabilities



Figure 6. Zero Vehicle Households

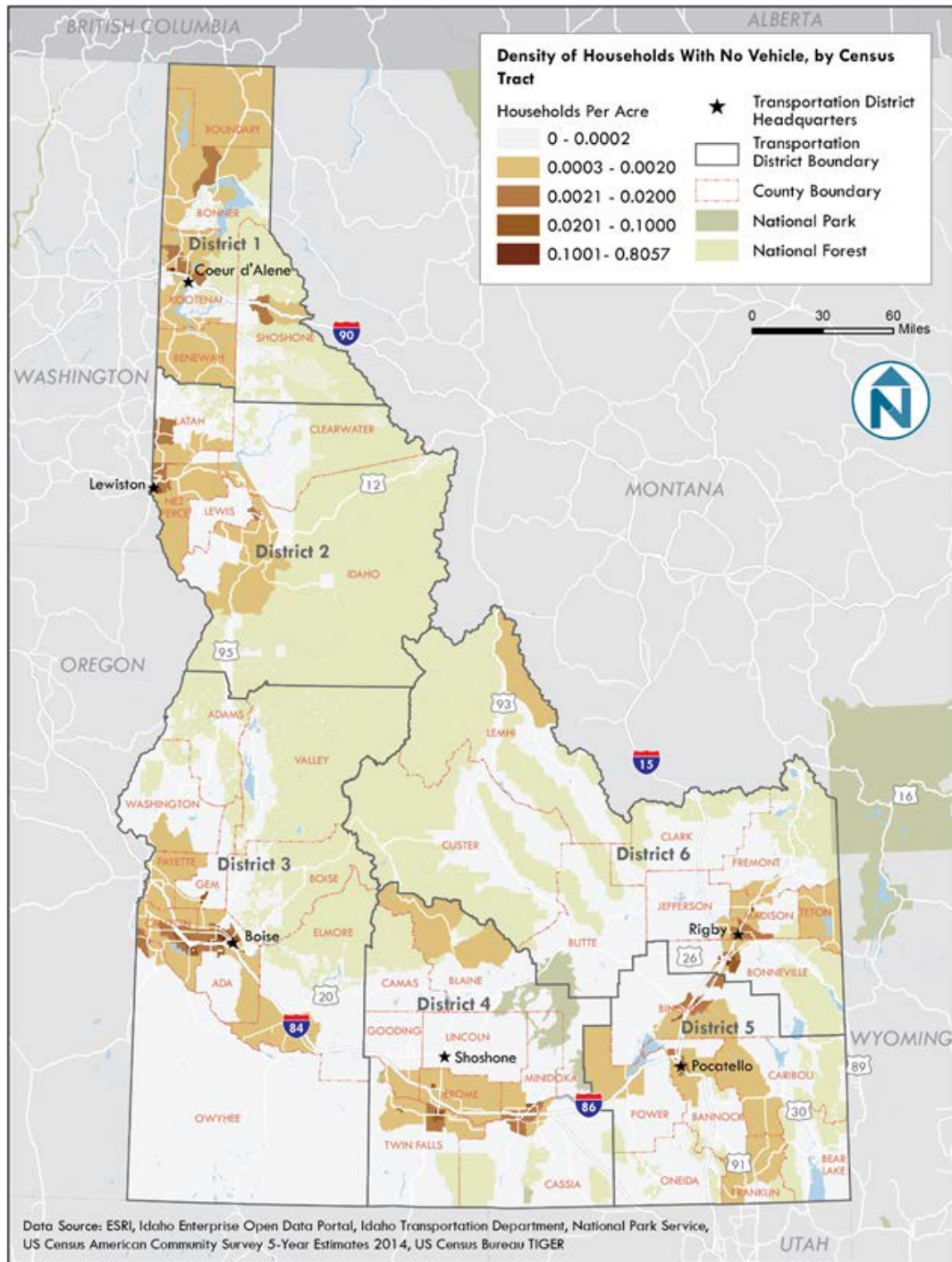
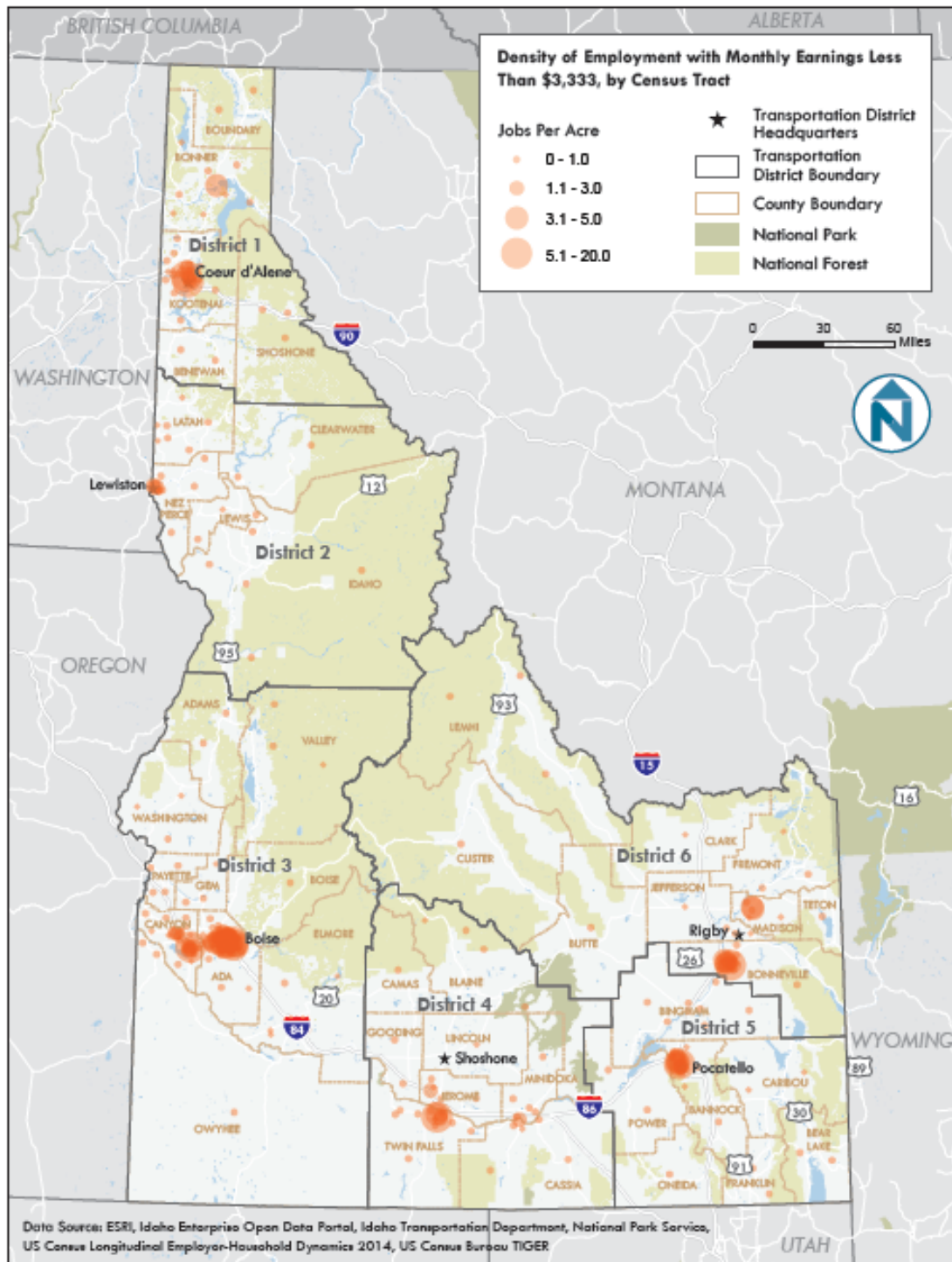


Figure 7. Low Income Employment Density



2.2 Reasons for Using Transit in District 1

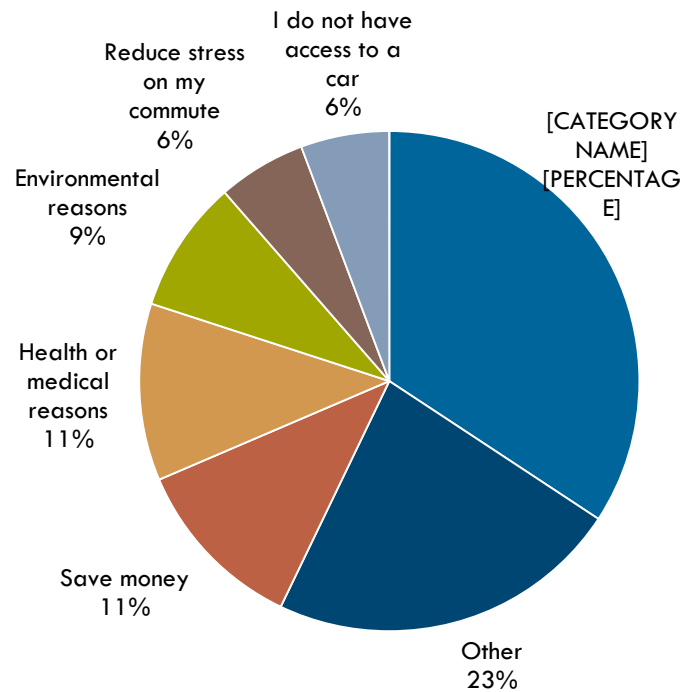
Participants in the online survey distributed in November and December of 2016 cited several reasons for taking transit as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Reasons for Using Transit in District 1

Convenience, affordability and access to health and medical services topped the list of reasons why District 1 respondents choose to take transit. (Responses in the “other” category were related to recreational travel, one-time trips for special purposes and responses from people who do not currently ride.)

2.3 Current Transportation Services and Providers

Typical public transit/human services transportation systems consist of an interconnected network of different service styles and types, as shown in Figure 9.



Demand-response services allow passengers to call for rides, with door-to-door or curb-to-curb service.

Fixed route service offers regularly scheduled bus service along established routes with defined stop locations and set arrival/departure times.

In areas where fixed route service is provided, federal funding rules require a complementary para-transit (demand-response) service for passengers who are unable to access regular stop locations. As an alternative to separate paratransit service, fixed route providers may opt to provide **deviated route** service, where the fixed route bus deviates off course to pick up passengers. (Commuter bus service, a form of fixed route service operating in peak periods with limited stops, may be exempt from the paratransit requirement.)

Intercity transit service is like fixed route service in that the bus has defined routes, stops and times; however, the purpose of intercity transit is long-distance travel to connect people with broader destinations in other regions or states.

Taxis, shuttles, rideshare networks, vanpool programs and similar services can supplement available public transportation services. Human and social services

organizations may also provide special transportation services for the general public or select populations.

Figure 9. Typical Public Transportation Service Types

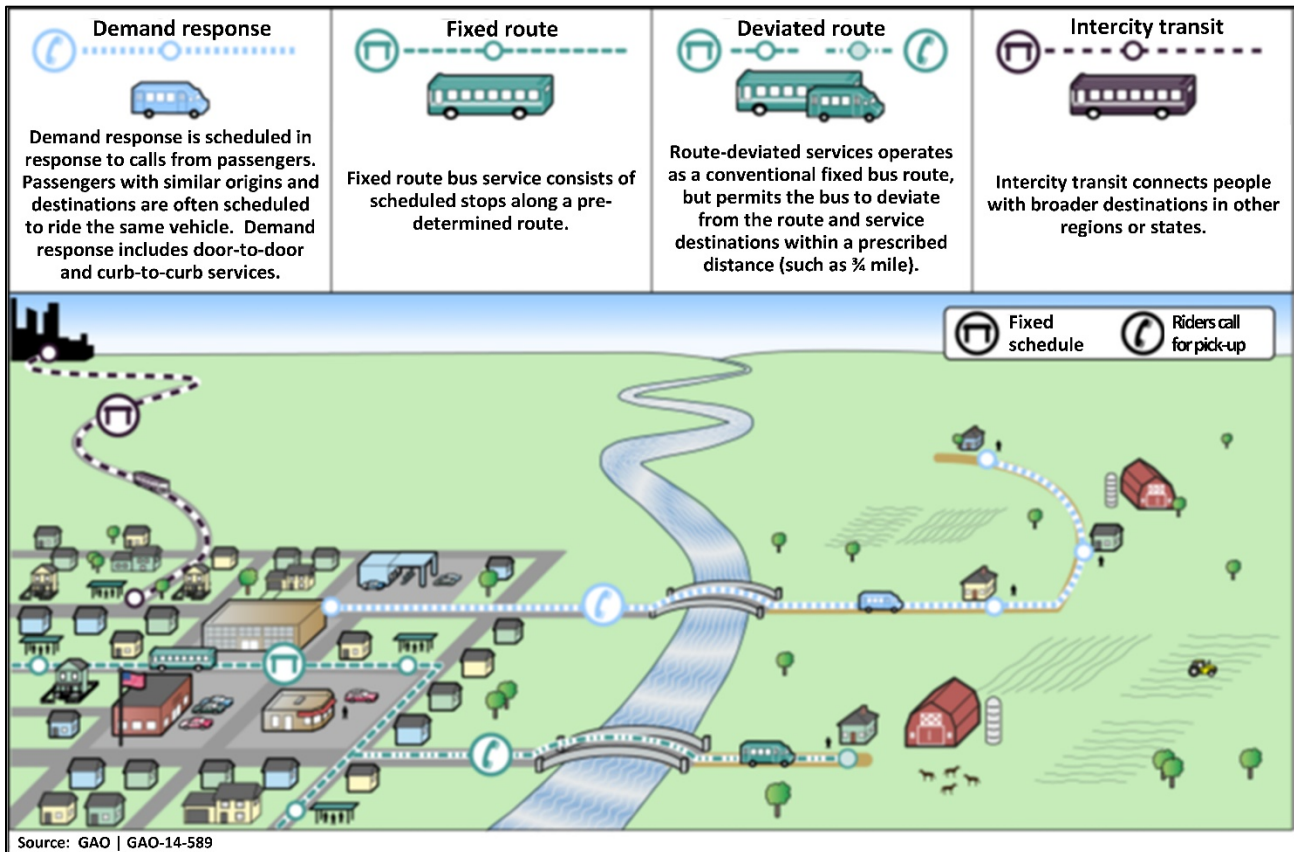


Table 1 and Figure 10 show public transportation providers currently serving communities in District 1. Provider profile information for the four systems in District 1 that have service available to the general public may be found in the appendix, and a brief overview of all available services follows.

Table 1. Current Transportation Service Providers in District 1

Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Services Operated	Demand-Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size (2015)
				Fixed Route (FR) Demand Response (DR) Vanpool (VP)	Riders	Trip Purposes	
Intercity Transit Service Provider							
No intercity providers currently operate in District 1.							
Regional							
Citylink North (Kootenai County Transit)	Kootenai	Kootenai, Post Falls, Coeur d'Alene, Dalton Gardens, Hayden	Weekdays: 6:00 AM – 7:00 PM Saturday 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM	FR, DR	General Public	General, Medical	19
SPOT (Dover)	Bonner, Boundary	Dover, Sandpoint, Ponderay, Kootenai, and Schweitzer	7 Days/Week: 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM	FR, DR	General Public	General, Medical	6
		Bonnors Ferry	2 days/Week	DR			
		Bonnors Ferry to Sandpoint	1 day per week	DR			
		Moyie Springs	1 day per week	DR			
		Coeur d'Alene to Sandpoint		VP		Commuting between Silver Lake Mall (Coeur d'Alene) and Quest Aircraft (Sandpoint)	
County Transit Service Provider							
Shoshone County -	Shoshone	Shoshone County, Coeur d'Alene	Weekdays: 8:00 AM	FR	General Public	General	2

Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Services Operated	Demand-Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size (2015)
				Fixed Route (FR) Demand Response (DR) Vanpool (VP)	Riders	Trip Purposes	
Silver Express			- 5:00 PM	DR	People with disabilities and others not able to use the fixed route bus		
Shoshone County Veterans Van	Shoshone	Shoshone County, Coeur d'Alene, Spokane	Weekdays: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM	DR	Veterans	Medical	1
Kootenai County Paratransit Service (Citylink Paratransit)	Kootenai	Locations within ¾ of a mile of any regular FR bus route	Weekdays: 6:00 AM - 10:00 PM Weekends: 7:00 AM - 10:00 PM	DR	People with Disabilities and others not able to use the fixed route bus	General	NA
Municipal Transit Service Provider							
No Providers							
Other Transit Service Provider							
Valley Vista Care - Benewah Area Transit	Benewah	Benewah County--Greater St. Maries area	Weekdays: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM	DR	General Public	General, Medical	7
Disabled American Veterans	Kootenai, Bonner	Coeur d'Alene, Sandpoint	NA	DR	Veterans	Medical	NA
Veterans Transportation Service	Kootenai	Coeur d'Alene area	NA	DR	Veterans	Medical	1



Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Services Operated	Demand-Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size (2015)
				Fixed Route (FR) Demand Response (DR) Vanpool (VP)	Riders	Trip Purposes	
Kootenai Health Transportation Services	Kootenai	Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Hayden, Rathdrum	Monday-Friday (greater Coeur d'Alene area) Tuesday/Thursday (Rathdrum area)	DR	Kootenai Health patients	Medical	5
White Tail Transportation	Bonner, Kootenai	Coeur d'Alene, Post Falls, Sandpoint	Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	DR	Medicaid patients	Medical	18
Home and Away Medical Transport and Shuttle	Kootenai	Coeur d'Alene and surrounding areas	Monday – Friday 8:00 AM – 6:00 PM	DR	Medicaid patients	Medical	1



Figure 10. Transportation Providers in District 1



2.3.1 Intercity Bus

No Idaho intercity carriers currently operate within District 1; however, Amtrak has a railway station located in Sandpoint that allows access to broader regional and inter-state destinations.

Access to Greyhound and Amtrak is available at the Spokane Intermodal Center in neighboring Spokane County, Washington. However, to reach the intermodal center, District 1 residents must currently drive, or use a rideshare service (such as Uber or Lyft) from the Coeur d'Alene area.

2.3.2 Fixed Route

Fixed route service in District 1 is available in the following areas:

- Within the Coeur d'Alene Metropolitan Area, Citylink provides two circulator routes: One route serves Post Falls, and another serves Coeur d'Alene, Dalton Gardens and Hayden. The two routes connect at the Riverstone Park and Ride in Coeur d'Alene.
- Citylink also provides fixed route service between Coeur d'Alene and smaller communities to the south along the US 95 corridor. Citylink's Link route connects Coeur d'Alene to a transfer station at the Coeur d'Alene Casino in Worley, and an additional Rural route provides service further south between Worley, Plummer, Tensed and Desmet.
- Within the cities of Dover, Sandpoint, Ponderay and Kootenai SPOT operates two fixed route circulators: One with generally east-west service between Dover, Sandpoint, Ponderay and Kootenai, and another with generally north-south service between Sandpoint and Ponderay. Four transfer points within Sandpoint connect the two routes.
- Along the I-90 corridor in Shoshone County, the Silver Express operates a single loop route from Kingston to Mullan and back, three times daily, connecting the cities of Pinehurst, Smelterville, Kellogg, Osburn, Wallace and Mullan.

2.3.3 Deviated Fixed Route Service

Deviated fixed Route service may be used to meet Federal Transit Administration (FTA) requirements for ADA complementary paratransit service, and this approach has been used in the past in District 1. However, fixed route providers found it challenging to maintain on-time performance when the bus was called to passenger pickup points and destinations that were not on the regularly scheduled route. As a result, current fixed route providers in District 1 now offer separate paratransit services for riders with disabilities.

2.3.4 Paratransit Service and Publicly Available Demand-Response Service

For those who are unable to access fixed route service, paratransit services are available during fixed route operating hours to complement each of the fixed route services listed above in Section 2.3.2. Paratransit service is generally available within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of the fixed route bus lines, although Citylink does serve some passengers beyond the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile distance, mostly in tribal communities south of Coeur d'Alene.

In addition to paratransit supporting fixed route services, there are several other publicly-available demand response services in District 1:

- City link...
- Demand-response service for the general public between the Silver Valley and Coeur d'Alene, operated by Silver Express, is available on Tuesday and Thursday mornings.
- Demand-response service is provided by SPOT within Bonners Ferry two days per week and within Moyie Springs one day per week.
- Demand-response service between Bonners Ferry and Sandpoint, operated by SPOT on Thursdays only, is also available to the general public.
- Demand-response service in the St. Maries area, operated by Valley Vista Care - Benewah Area Transit (BAT) is open to the general public but serves predominately medical trips.

2.3.5 Private and Other Human Services Transportation Providers

Several private providers offer transportation services for select groups in District 1:

- Kootenai Health Transportation Service offers demand-response service within Kootenai County for Kootenai Health patients.
- Home and Away Medical Transport and Shuttle provides non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid customers and privately paid medical trips in Coeur d'Alene and surrounding areas.
- Whitetail Transportation provides non-emergency medical transportation for Medicaid customers within Bonner and Kootenai Counties.
- Valley Vista Care provides limited demand-response to communities outside the St. Maries area in Benewah County, for medical purposes only.
- The Coeur d'Alene Casino in Worley operates a shuttle to bring gaming customers from the Spokane area to the casino.

In addition, private transportation networks such as Uber and Lyft are available within the Coeur d'Alene metropolitan area.

2.3.6 Volunteer Driver Networks

Volunteer driver programs provide an essential link for specific groups in District 1:

- SPOT provides a van for commuter service between the Silver Lake Mall in Coeur d'Alene and Quest Aircraft Company, a large employer located in Sandpoint. Vanpool drivers travel free if they drive Quest employees.
- Shoshone County provides a van for veterans' transportation to the VA Medical Center in Coeur d'Alene or Spokane, using volunteer drivers. Similar transportation for veterans in

other areas of District 1 are available through Disabled Veterans of America, also using volunteer drivers.

2.4 Current Funding Framework

2.4.1 Federal Transit Administration Funding

FTA provides grants for public transportation capital expenditures, planning and operating assistance. The various federal transit funding programs are named according to their governing sections of US Code Title 49.

Section 5310 provides grants to enhance the mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities. In addition to funding demand-response vehicles and service, 5310 funds can be used for projects that improve access to fixed route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on paratransit. Capital projects are funded with 80% federal share. Operating assistance is limited to a 50% federal share. To be eligible for 5310 funding, projects must be identified within a Coordinated Public Transportation Human Services Transportation Plan (such as this LCP).

Section 5307 provides grants to urbanized areas of 50,000 or more population. Funds flow to a designated recipient of local government, and the funding formula is based on a combination of bus revenue vehicle miles, bus passenger miles, population and population density. In District 1, transit services within the KMPO planning area are eligible for 5307 funding, and Kootenai County serves as the metropolitan area's designated federal funding recipient.

A non-federal match is required to use 5307 funds. The federal share is typically 80 percent of the cost of capital projects, but may be increased to 90 percent for the cost of vehicle equipment needed to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Clean Air Act. For operating assistance, the federal share may not exceed 50%.

Section 5311 provides formula funding for rural transportation services in areas with populations of less than 50,000. Capital expenditures may receive 80% federal funding. Operating assistance is capped at 50% federal funding. In District 1, Citylink, SPOT, Silver Express and Valley Vista Care are current recipients of 5311 funding for projects and services.

Section 5311(c)(2)(B) provides formula funding to federally recognized Indian tribes to provide public transportation services on and around Indian reservations or tribal land in rural area, with an annual maximum of \$300,000 per tribe. In District 1, Citylink, which is operated by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, is eligible for tribal transit funding.

Funding for intercity transit service is also provided under Section 5311(f), and 15% of the state's 5311 funds must go to intercity services. District 1 currently has no 5311(f) funding recipients.

Competitive FTA Programs, such as Section 5339 Buses and Bus Facilities grants, or Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program grants, provide periodic competitive funding opportunities for capital purchases and other one-time investments.

2.4.2 Federal Highway Administration Funding Available for Transit Purposes

Some transit investments are also eligible for several funding programs originating from US Code Title 23 - Highways.

Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding may be used for infrastructure projects that improve non-driver access to public transportation, and other transportation investments that focus on alternative modes, community enhancement and environmental mitigation. ITD offers a competitive application process for this program, and approximately \$3.5 million is available annually statewide. Federal funding of up to 92.66% of the project cost is possible.

Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) funding may be used for transit projects and services that access National Parks, National Forest Service lands, National Wildlife Refuges, BLM Lands, US Corps of Engineers, or Tribal lands. The FHWA Western Federal Lands Highway Division offers a competitive application process for this program. In Idaho, approximately \$2.8 million is available annually. Federal funding of up to 92.66% of the project cost is possible under this program.

Local Funding

Local Sales Taxes

Local revenue for transit is scarce in Idaho, due to statutory limitations on local agency taxing authority. Local funding for public facilities and services is generally limited to property tax revenues and utility service fees. Sales taxes are generally not permitted by Idaho statute. An exception is made for resort cities that derive the major portion of their economic well-being from businesses.

Resort cities may create a local tax on goods and services to help balance the additional financial burden of providing infrastructure and public services to visitors who do not pay local property taxes. A resort community may elect to apply a resort tax to all retail sales, or may elect to impose a resort tax only on the sale of specific items such as lodging, alcoholic beverages and food at restaurants. A sixty percent voter majority is needed to approve a resort tax. Not all resort cities in Idaho currently take advantage of this revenue source, and of those that do, not all use local sales tax revenues for transit.

In District 1, the cities of Sandpoint and Dover currently exercise their options as resort cities to impose a resort tax. These communities designate their local option sales tax revenues for transit purposes, helping to lend financial stability to SPOT.

Local Funding Partners

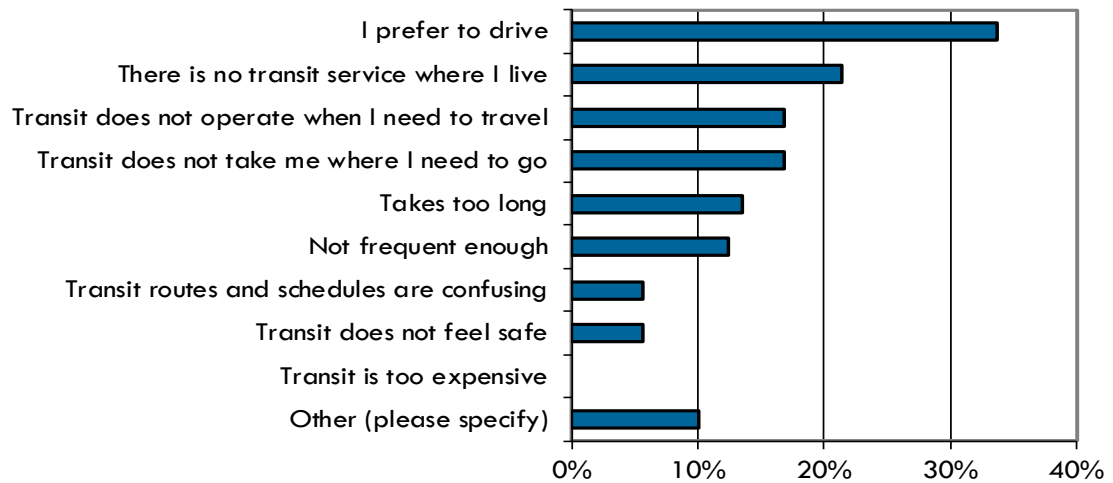
Local funding partnerships and private donations are essential financial tools for providers in District 1.

- The Coeur d’Alene Tribe and Coeur d’Alene Casino provide significant funding for Citylink operations in Kootenai and Benewah Counties.
- In Benewah County, while Medicaid pays for some rides provided by Valley Vista, funding for BAT also comes from private donations and from the Valley Vista Care organization itself.
- In Bonner County, SPOT has a financial partnership with Schweitzer Mountain Resort to help pay for transit access to the ski area, and a partnership with the Kootenai River Casino in Boundary County to help fund service between Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry. A partnership with the Eureka Foundation for disadvantaged youth is providing SPOT with youth labor for installing bus shelters. SPOT also partners with the Area Agency on Aging to help fund service that benefit seniors, and they receive a small number of private donations (about \$100 per month).
- In the Silver Valley, the Area Agency on Aging helps to fund a portion of the Silver Express, based on the number of rides provided to seniors. Shoshone County provides a significant portion of the cash match needed for federal grants, and the Silver Express has an exemplary program for raising private donations, which provides the remaining matching funds needed to operate the service.

3 Needs and Gaps

The online survey distributed by the project team in November and December 2016 asked members of the public who do not currently ride transit about their reasons. Top responses to this question for District 1 participants, shown in Figure 11, provide insight about issues and challenges with existing services. The most common response was that survey participants simply preferred to drive; however, lack of available service, either spatially or temporally, was also a barrier for many respondents. Concerns about convenience of service were also barriers for some survey participants. (“Other” responses generally reinforced the top three responses, as well as a lack of information about available services.)

Figure 11. Reasons for Not Using Transit in District 1



In addition to the online survey, stakeholders attending the January 2017 work session helped the project team to explore existing needs and gaps within the region’s transit system, looking at service locations and times, trip types, service accessibility, use of technology, information and communication, transit affordability, and coordination between providers.

3.1 Geographic Service Gaps

A number of geographic gaps were identified for District 1:

- There is no direct public transportation connection from most areas of District 1 to Spokane.
- There is no public transportation connection to the Spokane International Airport or to the Spokane Intermodal Center for access to intercity bus service. Lack of a convenient intercity transit service for access to broader regional and inter-state travel was also identified as a critical service gap.
- For medical customers, crossing the state line to access specialty medical services in Spokane County is problematic under the current service structure.
- Several cities in District 1 currently have no public transportation service. This includes:
 - Oldtown, Priest River, Coolin/Nordman, Hope, Clark Fork, Sagle and Bayview in Bonner County Spirit Lake, Rathdrum, Hauser and Harrison in Kootenai County
- While there is a commuter van for travel between Sandpoint and Coeur d’Alene, there is currently no fixed route or intercity service available to the broader public to connect the fixed route system in Sandpoint with the transit system in the Coeur d’Alene Metropolitan Area.

- Access to public lands and recreational areas throughout the District is lacking. This includes access to:
 - National forest areas in all five counties.
 - Round Lake, Farragut and Chatcolet state parks.
 - Silverwood Theme Park.

3.2 Temporal Service Gaps

There are no public transportation services available after 8:30 pm anywhere in the District. For employees engaged in shift work this means that they might be able to get to their jobs using transit, but would not have a trip home, making job access via transit impractical.

While service is offered on weekends in the Coeur d’Alene metropolitan area and the Sandpoint area respectively, other public transportation services in District 1 are limited to weekdays. LCP workshop participants generally agreed that weekday service is a higher priority than weekend service; however, it was noted that job access is needed on weekends too, especially for lower-income people.

3.3 Trip Type Gaps

The following gaps in trip types were identified in District 1, based on LCP workshop participant discussions and transit provider interviews:

- Trips for students to access the North Idaho College campus are difficult, especially for those living outside the Coeur d’Alene area.
- Trips of all types for people with disabilities and seniors are difficult when stop locations are not accessible, especially during winter months.
- Travel to employment for low income people can be difficult since many lower wage jobs require working on evenings or weekends when service is not available.
- While programs are in place to provide medical transportation for veterans, travel times are limited to only one or two days per week, and only certain hours of the day, making it challenging to align medical appointment times with available transportation. In Shoshone County, finding volunteer drivers to operate the County’s veterans van has been a challenge.

3.4 Accessibility Needs

A number of general accessibility needs were identified by the planning team and LCP workshop participants:

- ADA accommodation at stop locations, and accessible routes between stop locations and passenger destinations are often lacking. This includes gaps in sidewalk infrastructure in many areas, and highway crossings which be uncomfortable or unsafe for pedestrians.

- The number and placement of stops can make transit access challenging. For example, stops located too far from desired destinations may require walking long distances at one or both ends of a transit trip, which can be a barrier for older adults and people with disabilities. Similarly, large contiguous properties fronting roadway corridors without pathways through them can inhibit access from residential areas to bus stop locations on those corridors.
- A significant issue in District 1 is access to transit during inclement weather, especially during and after snowfall. Bus stop and curb side pickup locations can be blocked by large berms left by snowplows. This situation requires passengers to clamber over a two to three-foot-high berm of ice and snow to reach the bus – a challenging feat for the fittest, and an impossibility for most older adults and people with disabilities.
- Bus shelters are needed in all areas of District 1 to protect passengers from the elements as they await the bus.
- For those who use electric wheelchairs, there are no charging stations available at existing transit stop locations.
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments to develop plans for bringing public facilities into compliance with current ADA standards. While the effective date of this requirement was January 26, 1992, many smaller communities in District 1 have not had the resources to comply. Where local agency ADA plans do exist, they are often out of date and do not address transit accessibility.

3.5 Technology Challenges

LCP workshop participants identified these existing technology challenges in District 1:

- Not all passengers have smartphones. Also, some lower income people who do use smartphones may rely on wireless internet (wi-fi) instead of paid cellular data plans, which is problematic since wi-fi access is not consistently available in District 1.
- Fixed route providers do not currently provide route and stop information in internet map programs through General Transit Feed Specification (GTFS) data, a common transit trip planning tool used ubiquitously across the U.S. and internationally.
- Demand response service throughout District 1 is generally “dial-a-ride”. LCP attendees would benefit from more online scheduling opportunities rather than calling to schedule a trip.
- Customer service by phone is lacking, especially outside of business hours.

Information Gaps

Currently there is no single location for information on available transit services in District 1. Transit providers each have individual websites for information on their respective services; however, the project team found that online information is not always kept current on these

sites. Online information is lacking for other providers, and none of the District 1 providers currently have route and schedule information in GTFS, as noted previously in Section 3.5.

Affordability Gaps

Most publicly available services in District 1 are fareless, making transit an affordable option. However, trips for medical transport in rural areas can be expensive due to long distances that must be covered to reach medical services.

Coordination Gaps

LCP workshop participants and transit providers identified these gaps in coordination between providers in District 1:

- There are no formal connections or passenger transfer points between services offered by different providers.
- **Some participants see the benefit to have all transit providers included in a localized transit planning effort. 4 Strategies for Meeting Needs**

Planning workshop participants discussed a variety of strategies for meeting needs and filling gaps in current service.

4.1 Information Solutions

Workshop participants discussed potential strategies for improving communication with customers. Preliminary suggestions offered by the planning team included:

- A centralized transportation service directory
- Trip planning assistance
- Trip reservations assistance
- Online trip reservations
- A One-Call/One-Click system including some or all of the above.

A centralized service directory was the top choice of workshop participants in this category, provided that it could be kept current. Participants noted that in some instances out of date or inaccurate information can be more harmful for potential transit customers than no information at all.

A brochure or pamphlet describing transit providers, available services and phone numbers could be published and distributed to local governmental agencies, libraries, food banks and other locations; however, this strategy was felt to be more appropriate for remote, rural areas of the District. To assist people with limited visibility, printed information should use a sans

serif font (such as Arial or Helvetica) at least 12-point, and in some instances a larger font size may be warranted.

Improved online information is desirable for all areas of District 1, including a centralized location to house current transit information, with routes available in GTFTS data to make finding transportation more user friendly.

Transit providers and workshop participants were also interested in a program of ongoing newspaper advertisements to help raise and maintain public awareness of available transit systems and services.

4.2 Service Enhancements

LCP workshop participants discussed the potential for enhancing existing service by extending or expanding service hours, making more trip types eligible for existing services, or providing or linking to out-of-county services.

This category of strategies received significant interest and support from LCP workshop participants; however, the group also recognized that most service enhancement strategies would require an infusion of additional funding which may be beyond the existing means of transit providers and their current funding partners. Nevertheless, workshop participants identified these top priorities for District 1, as resources allow:

- Extending services hours for areas that are currently served, with an eye toward providing better job accessibility for low income workers.
- Expanding service areas to increase the coverage of service and close the geographic gaps identified in Section 3.1.
- Implementing intercity services so that District 1 residents can access broader regional and inter-state destinations using transit.

4.3 Complementing the Existing Network

The planning team offered several cost-effective suggestions for making the most of the existing transit network or offering additional mobility options in unserved areas.

Suggestions included:

- Maximizing the use of available demand-response vehicle seats, potentially through centralized scheduling or contracting among providers
- Implementing a volunteer driver program.
- Providing travel training for existing and potential fixed route or paratransit services customers
- Enacting a flexible voucher program where agencies can sponsor the cost of vouchers used for trips provided by public, private or nonprofit operators, or friend/family member volunteer drivers.

Workshop participants felt that volunteer driver programs would be the most beneficial strategy in this category for District 1. Volunteer drivers to help operate existing vehicles are needed, and a network of volunteer drivers who would be willing to help transport those without other travel means would be beneficial, especially in rural areas that currently lack ridesharing networks such as Uber and Lyft.

Participants also discussed the need to find ways around administrative barriers to make better use of existing vehicles and services. Often these barriers arise as a condition of funding. For example, a van purchased with funding from the Veterans Administration in Shoshone County is restricted to transporting veterans for medical purposes only. Finding ways to make vehicles like this available for other transportation purposes while they are idle would be beneficial.

Similarly, most medical transport trips, such as trips funded by the VA and Medicaid, are restricted to single-purpose trips for medical access only. However, these trips from rural areas to an urban center often involve a significant investment of time and financial resources. To make the most of the medical transport trips, the flexibility to allow passengers to do secondary errands, such as essential shopping or visiting other urban services, is needed. Alterations to current federal regulations would be required to permit this. District 1 providers and transit stakeholders could help raise awareness of the issue and promote solutions through ongoing communicating with funding administrators and their Congressional delegates.

4.4 Accessibility Improvements

Transportation services can be made more accessible to the public, through infrastructure improvements such as new sidewalks or curb cuts, more visible crosswalk signage, signalized crosswalks, and bus shelters. Priorities identified by LCP workshop participants for this category of strategies included:

- Improving sidewalks, crosswalks and curb ramps for better access to bus stops, and coordinating with cities to maintain these facilities.
- Adding bus shelters.
- Providing power wheelchair chargers at stop locations.
- There was also interest in providing signals or crossing signs with special features to improve safety for people with visual impairments and other types of disabilities.
- Winter snow removal was an item of significant discussion since limited resources make it difficult for transit providers to clear each stop location after snowstorms. Discussions with city street maintenance staff and elected officials are needed to help raise awareness of the issue. A pilot project to set up neighborhood bus stop sponsors or coordinate volunteer shovel brigades could be constructive.

4.5 Technology Improvements

New technologies offer opportunities to cost-effectively augment existing services and improve, enhance or expand the flow of information between providers and customers. The planning team offered several suggestions for using technology, including:

- Using scheduling/dispatch software to maximize the number of passengers on each trip and minimize the bus miles needed.
- Implementing automatic vehicle location (AVL) systems, to allow transit managers to monitor bus locations and on-time performance in real-time.
- Providing tablets onboard vehicles so that customers can find travel information and plan connecting trips.
- Implementing Smartphone apps with mobile information, reservations, and real-time vehicle location.

Of these, District 1 LCP workshop participants felt that mobile applications would be most beneficial – specifically having fixed route and stop information in Google Maps and other programs so that users can more easily plan trips, both before and during travel. For demand-response services, the ability to reserve seats and schedule rides online would be beneficial for customers.

Wi-Fi access for transit riders was mentioned several times during workshop discussions for more than one category of strategies. Providing Wi-Fi service on board vehicles and at stop locations would help improve transit affordability since customers would not need to use a paid cellular data plan for access to online information as they travel.

4.6 Other Potential Solutions

Continued work to improve and enhance a central park and ride facility in Coeur d'Alene could be beneficial. This location could serve as a connection point for passengers arriving on services from surrounding counties to transfer to the Citylink system in the metropolitan area. There was moderate interest in establishing additional park and ride lots outside of the Coeur d'Alene area, to help make it easier for rural residents to access transit, and also to help facilitate transfer of passengers between providers. These either could be formal transit park and ride locations, or informal locations arranged in cooperation with a local business or shopping center.

A significant concept that emerged from LCP workshop discussions is the need to educate local elected policymakers, the business community and the public about the value of public transportation as an essential community service. Information on the economic benefits of transit service, such as the positive effect of transit on property values and advantages of broader workforce access could help to improve policymaker knowledge and understanding at the local level. A project to develop presentation materials and create a team of speakers from the transit community in District 1 could be valuable for this purpose.

Finding additional funding to enhance and extend existing transit services is a chief desire expressed by all public transit providers and District 1 workshop participants. The planning team noted that several District 1 providers have developed unique funding strategies that could be of interest to the other providers. Specifically:

- The Silver Express has been highly successful in garnering private donations from individual community members to assist with transit operations. (This is especially notable since Shoshone County’s population has a lower average income than other counties with far less private funding for transit.)
- SPOT has a successful track record of securing local funding using the special taxing option available to resort cities. SPOT has also demonstrated significant skill in cultivating financial partners from the business community for service expansion.
- Kootenai County and Citylink are successfully leveraging tribal funding for system operation and development.
- Valley Vista Care, a private company, fills a critical rural service need by leveraging 5311 funds to expand transportation services offered to their own nursing home residents into a broader public transportation service for the greater good.

In short, each of these providers has implemented a successful local funding approach that could be applicable to other areas of the state. On an ongoing basis, it is important for District 1 transit providers to attend statewide public transportation conferences and other regional forums to share their successes and lessons learned with other providers.

Setting Priorities

Limited funding for public transportation projects and services necessitates prioritizing potential solutions. Setting priorities is a delicate balancing act. The value of existing programs and services must be weighed against new or changed services to address needs and fill gaps. Effective prioritization means dealing with changing priorities, being realistic about available resources and staff capacity, and making difficult decisions when funding is not adequate to address all needs.

For this LCP, priorities were developed through a qualitative process that considered feedback received from online surveys, LCP workshop participants and other public comments.

After brainstorming strategies with the planning team at the LCP workshop, participants used a dot voting exercise to help identify priority strategies for District 1. This input provided a basis for



the recommended projects and priorities that comprise the plan as outlined in Section 5.

In addition, the planning team considered public input on transit investment priorities from the online survey that was distributed in November and December 2016 (Figure 12 and Figure 13). It is important to note that the survey was taken by 88 people in District 1, which is a small sample size. While the survey therefore cannot be considered statistically valid, responses nonetheless provided the planning team with some insight about public perceptions and preferences.

Figure 12. Top Priorities for District 1 from Online Survey

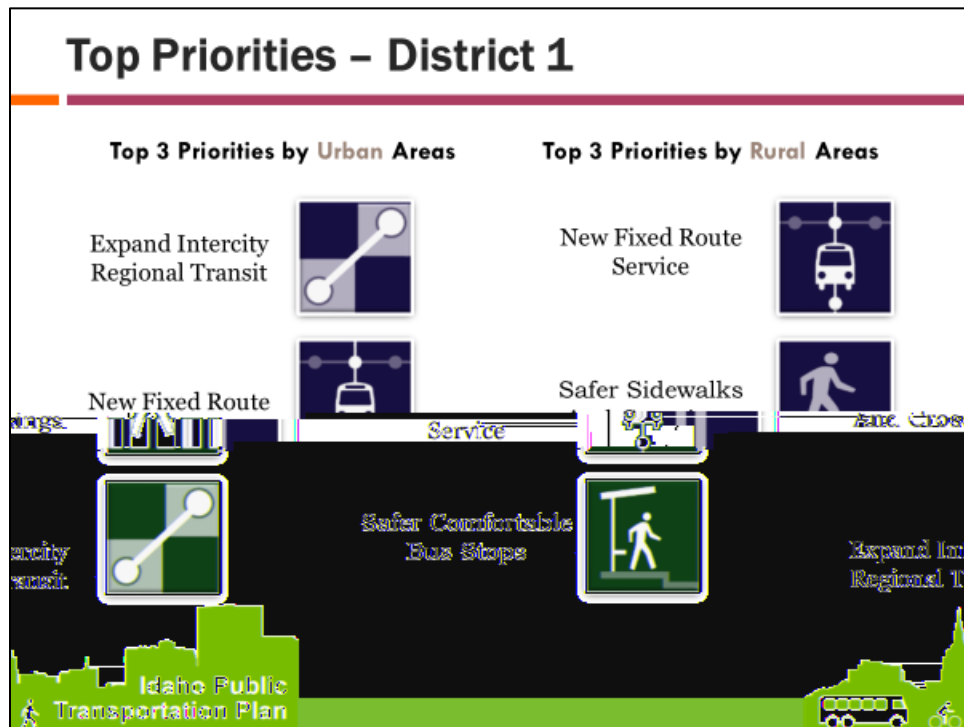


Figure 13. Bottom Priorities for District 1 from Online Survey



The Plan

Table 2 lists priority investments and strategies for District 1.

The order of strategies in the table reflects general priorities for the District; however, all strategies would be beneficial and they need not be implemented in the order shown. Similarly, timeframes for implementation are also approximated. Each strategy could be implemented as resources and/or partnering opportunities allow.

Table 2. Locally Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan

Recommended Strategy	Category							Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Source(s) of Funding (Key at end of table)	Other Resources for Implementation
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility	Technology	Other				
1. Continue existing fixed route and demand response services in District 1	√							Ongoing	\$\$\$\$\$	FTA §5311/5307	
2. Replace existing fleet vehicles at the end of their useful service life (as defined by FTA for each vehicle type)	√							Ongoing	\$\$\$ to \$\$\$\$ (per vehicle)	FTA §5339 FTA §5311/5307	
3. Include transit provider representation on regional transportation planning groups, including Boundary Area Transportation Team (BATT), Bonner County Area Transportation Team (BCATT), Kootenai County Area Transportation Team (KCATT), Silver Valley Transportation Team (SVTT), and Benewah Transportation Team.							√	Ongoing	-	Commitment of staff time	
4. Extend existing fixed route services as needed to establish formal connections and passenger transfer points between existing fixed route systems in District 1.			√					2-5 Years	\$\$\$\$	FTA §5310 FTA §5311	
5. Complete or update ADA transition plans for cities and counties in District 1 to include transit facilities and accessible routes to transit stop locations.					√			2-5 Years	\$\$\$ (per plan)	FTA §5310 Local funding	Possible city and county staff time.
6. Add shelters to bus stops.					√			Ongoing	\$ (per shelter)	FTA §5339 TAP	

Recommended Strategy	Category							Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Source(s) of Funding (Key at end of table)	Other Resources for Implementation
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility	Technology	Other				
7. Work with roadway jurisdictions to address sidewalk gaps, add curb ramps where needed and improve the safety of roadway crossings near transit stops.					√			Ongoing	\$\$\$\$\$	TAP FTA §5310	These improvements could also be incorporated into roadway improvement projects funded through other federal state and local means.
8. Work with local jurisdictions to develop programs for bus stop maintenance, including removal of winter snow and ice at transit stop locations.					√			5-10 Years	\$\$ (per community)	Community partnerships	
9. Extend service hours for existing fixed route and demand response services, focusing on locations with job access needs on evenings and weekends.			√					2-5 Years	\$\$\$\$	Community partnerships Possibly FTA §5311	
10. Extend service areas to provide public transportation to communities that are currently underserved or completely without service. Focus on locations described in Section 3.1.			√					5-10 years	\$\$\$\$	FTA §5311 Possibly FLAP Community partnerships	
11. Initiate inter-city service for access from District 1 communities to the Spokane Intermodal Center and the Spokane International Airport.			√					5-10 years	\$\$\$\$	FTA §5311(f)	
12. Ensure transit provider participation in statewide conferences, to network and learn about successful funding strategies.							√	Ongoing	\$	RTAP Commitment of staff time	
13. Implement GTFS for all fixed route services in District 1, and dedicate resources for maintaining GTFS data.				√		√		0-2 years	\$\$	FTA §5311/5307	
14. Maintain existing automatic vehicle location systems and further develop the use of those systems for improved passenger information.	√			√				Ongoing	\$\$	FTA §5311/5307	
15. Develop a roster of volunteer drivers in each county and implement or expand volunteer driver programs.		√						2-5 years	\$\$\$\$	Possibly 5310 Commitment of staff time	

Recommended Strategy	Category							Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Source(s) of Funding (Key at end of table)	Other Resources for Implementation
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility	Technology	Other				
16. Provide a centralized online source of information for all public transportation services available in District 1, with contact information and links for individual service providers. Alternatively, work with state agencies to expand the statewide 511 and/or 211 systems for this purpose.				√				2-5 years	\$\$	FTA §5310	
17. Develop a simple brochure with information about all public transportation services available in District 1. Include contact information for each provider. Identify a responsible party for keeping the brochure current and managing its distribution.				√				0-2 years	\$	FTA §5310	
18. Provide charging locations for electric wheelchairs on transit systems.					√			2-5 years	\$\$\$	FTA §5310	
19. Provide online tools for paratransit and other demand response passengers to reserve seats and schedule rides.						√		5-10 years	\$\$\$	FTA §5310	
20. Develop marketing materials, using both online and print media, and distribute to help raise public awareness of available services.				√				0-2 years	\$\$	FTA §5310 FTA §5311/5307	
21. Develop presentation materials to explain the value of public transportation for community economic vitality. Prepare a roster of speakers who can make presentations to local elected bodies and civic groups.							√	0-2 years	\$\$	Local funding	
22. Convene discussions between medical transport providers, Medicaid funding administrators, and Idaho's congressional delegates, to discuss restrictions on medical travel and potential legislative remedies.							√	0-2 years	\$	Commitment of staff time	

Recommended Strategy	Category						Implementation Timeframe	Estimated Cost	Source(s) of Funding (Key at end of table)	Other Resources for Implementation
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility	Technology				

KEY

Funding Sources
 FTA §5307 = Federal funding for transit services within urbanized areas (in District 1, this includes the portion of Kootenai County encompassing Coeur d’Alene, Post Falls, Dalton Gardens and Hayden)
 FTA §5310 = Federal funding for enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities
 FTA §5311 = Federal funding for transit service in rural areas
 FTA §5311(f) = Federal funding for intercity transit service
 FLAP = Federal Lands Access Program
 TAP = Federal Transportation Alternatives Program

Cost Categories:
 \$ \$0-\$10,000
 \$\$ \$10,000 - \$25,000
 \$\$\$ \$25,000 - \$50,000
 \$\$\$\$ \$50,000 - \$100,000
 \$\$\$\$\$ >\$100,000



Appendix A – Provider Profiles



Appendix B – Online Survey Results

