



MOBILITY  
EFFICIENCY  
INTEGRATION



# IDAHO Human Services Transportation PLAN

Locally Coordinated Plan for Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Valley, Washington Counties

April 2018

Prepared by:



Idaho Public  
Transportation Plan



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# Idaho Public Transportation Plan Locally Coordinated Plan for District 3

Your Safety | Your Mobility | Your Economic Opportunity

Figure 1. ITD District 3

## 1 Overview

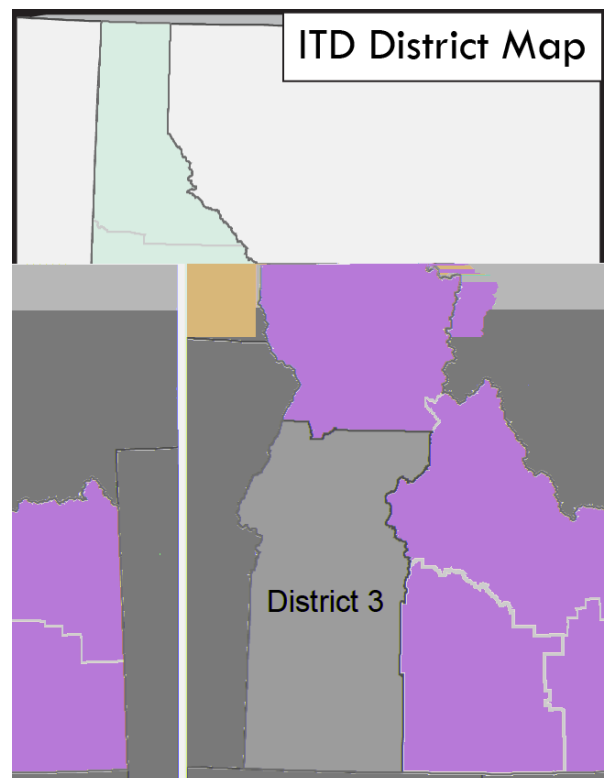
### 1.1 Purpose of Plan

Older adults, people with disabilities, individuals with lower 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 through the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Section 5310 grant program for projects to enhance the mobility of elderly individuals and people with disabilities, projects must be included in a locally-coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.<sup>1</sup>

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



<sup>1</sup> 49 USC 5310 (e) (2) (A) (i)

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

This LCP covers ITD's District 3, which includes Ada, Adams, Boise, Canyon, Elmore, Gem, Owyhee, Payette, Valley, Washington counties. For Ada County, please refer to COMPASS's Planning documents for more specific information. ITD-PT looked at just population as a factor for methodology. Valley Regional Transit and COMPASS looked at a multitude of additional factors.

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 3 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.

## 1.2 Scope and Development of the LCP

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 ITD's Statewide 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 Ada and Canyon counties, regional transportation planning falls under the purview of the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS). The LCP does not supplant existing public transportation plans prepared by COMPASS; nor is it intended to fulfill federal requirements for a locally-coordinated public transportation plan within COMPASS's planning area. Rather, development of the LCP for District 3 emphasized rural areas of the District, outside of COMPASS's planning area. That said, in many instances rural stakeholders need access to urban services within COMPASS's planning area.

Therefore, COMPASS’s existing plans were reviewed as the LCP was developed, and transportation providers within COMPASS’s planning area were invited to participate in the LCP planning process. For Ada County, please refer to COMPASS’s Planning documents for more specific information. ITD-PT looked at just population as a factor for methodology. Valley Regional Transit and COMPASS looked at a multitude of additional factors.

### 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.

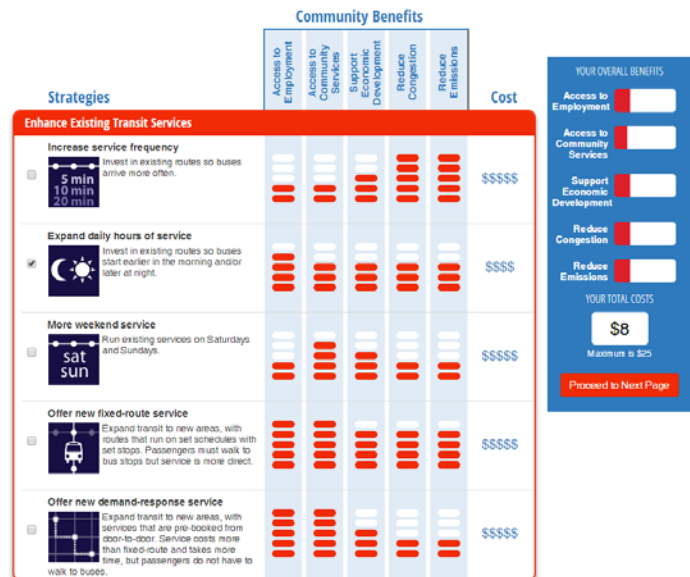
In addition, ITD’s Public Transportation Office maintains an interested parties list for email messaging. This list was used to disseminate email messages about the statewide planning process and opportunities for input.

The LCP planning team expanded ITD’s email list to prepare a large outreach roster specifically for District 3 that included seniors and individuals 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 3 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. From across the state 665 responses were received, including 378 from District 3. 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 3 on January 10, 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 3 on January 10, 2017 was attended by a variety of stakeholders representing Valley Regional Transit (VRT), VRT's Regional Coordinating Council, Treasure Valley Transit (TVT), and Metro Community Services. 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 over the course of their day-to-day work.



### **1.3.4 Public Open House**

A public open house was held in District 3 also on January 10, 2017, following the LCP workshop. Attendees viewed and responded to existing condition 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 3:

- Valley Regional Transit
- Treasure Valley Transit
- Boise State University Bronco

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, COMPASS, ITD, and private sector partners.

## 2 People and Transportation Services in District 3



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

Successful public transportation achieves highest efficiency levels in communities where clusters of people and destinations exist. Most transit systems consist of a mix of “choice riders,” or people who own a car or have access to a car but choose to take transit, and “transit-dependent” riders, or those who do not have any other option. 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. In District 3, the greatest concentrations of medium or greater transit propensity are located in Boise and Meridian (Ada County); Nampa and Caldwell (Canyon County); Emmett (Gem County); and Fruitland and Payette (Payette County). These areas of concentrated medium or greater transit propensity are along the I-84 corridor; this is similar to the rest of the state, where density is highest near interstate and US highway corridors.

Looking specifically at populations of seniors, people with disabilities and zero-car households (Figure 4 through Figure 6), Ada County has the highest number of individuals or households in all three demographic groups, and Canyon County has the second highest. This is not surprising because these two counties together contain 85% of the district’s total population.

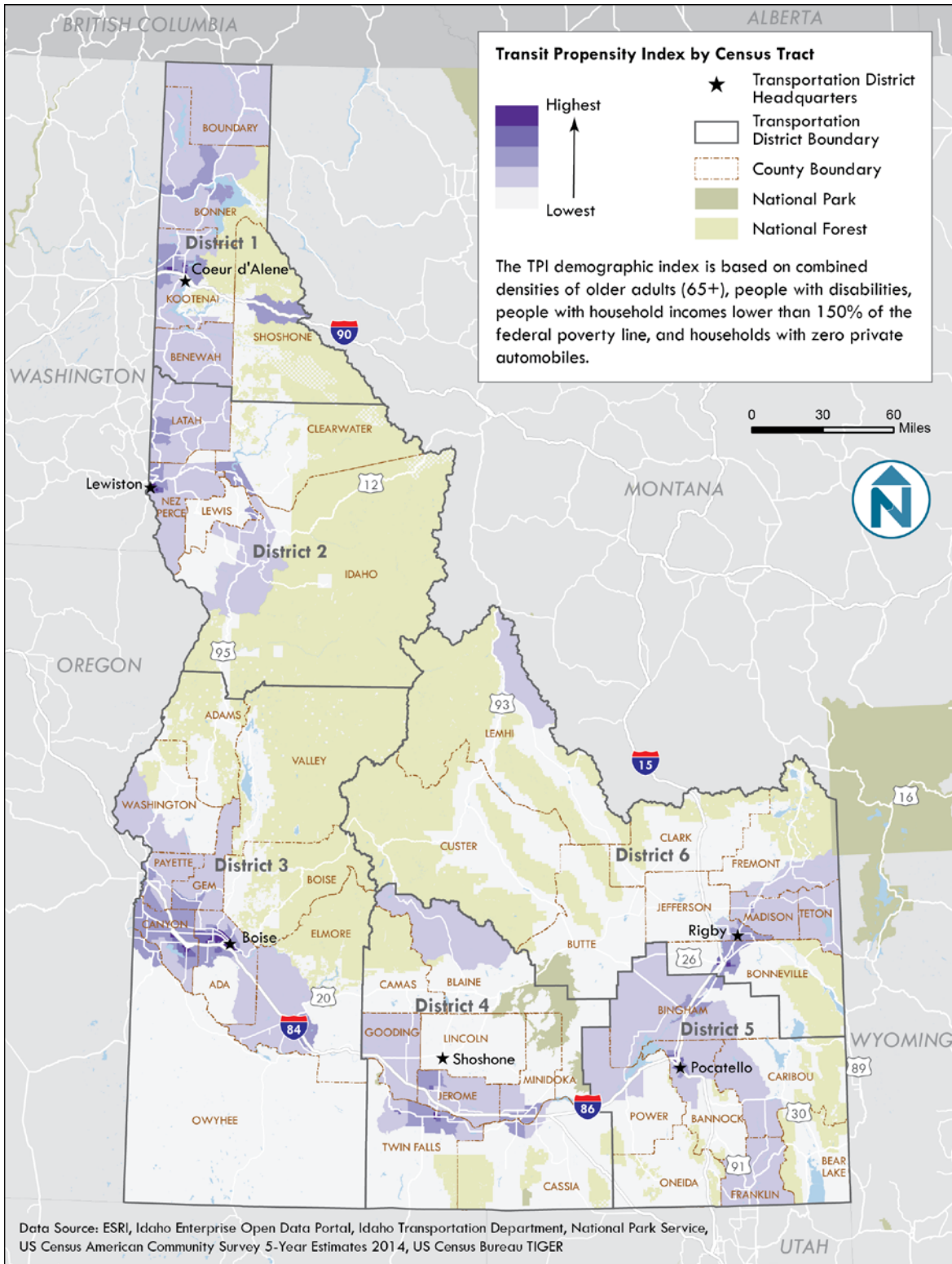
In District 3, older adults are concentrated in Boise and Meridian (Ada County); Nampa and Caldwell (Canyon County); Emmett (Gem County); and Fruitland and Payette (Payette County). District 3 contains 41% of all older adults within the state.

The highest densities of people with disabilities in District 3 are concentrated in Boise and Meridian (Ada County), and Nampa and Caldwell (Canyon County). District 3 is home to 41% of all people with disabilities in the state.

The highest densities in the district of households without a vehicle are concentrated in Boise and Meridian (Ada County); Nampa and Caldwell (Canyon County); and Emmett (Gem County). District 3 has 44% of all households without a vehicle in the state.

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 (jobs with monthly incomes less than \$3,333 per month). In District 3, the highest concentrations of employment overall are in the Boise metro area. With that, most jobs paying less than 150% of the federal poverty level are concentrated in and around the cities of Boise, Meridian, Nampa, and Caldwell.

**Figure 3. Transit Propensity Index**



**Figure 4. Older Adult Populations**



**Figure 5. People with Disabilities**





**Figure 6. Zero Vehicle Households**



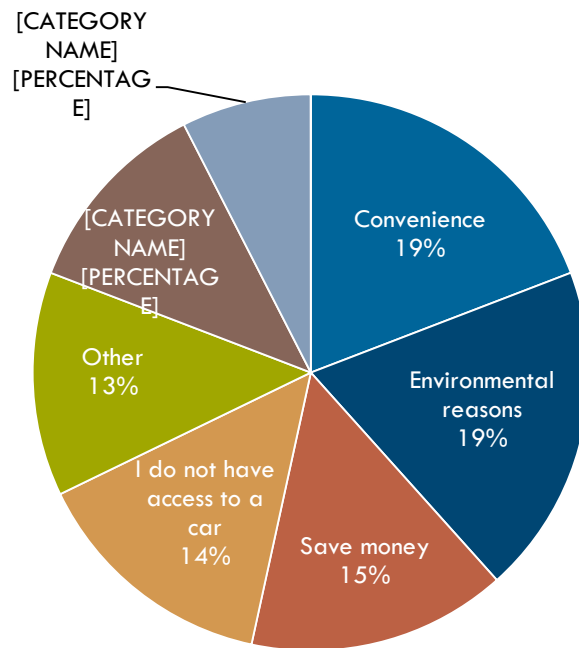
**Figure 7. Low Income Employment Density**



## 2.2 Reasons for Using Transit in District 3

Participants in the online survey distributed in November and December of 2016 cited several reasons for taking transit as shown in Figure 8. The main reasons respondents used transit are convenience, environmental reasons, and to save money. Respondents citing “other” reasons explained that they use transit to forego the need to find parking, when their car is being repaired, and to get home safely after an evening out. It is critical to note that the formula used in this analysis establishes a *baseline* for future needs, and is not intended to capture the maximum transit needs throughout the state. Further analysis such as surveys and stakeholder outreach, transit provider service level changes, tourism, and other factors outside of the per capita change are needed to get at a more robust number of potential public transportation riders on top of the baseline projections in the estimates shown below.

Figure 8. Reasons for Using Transit in District 3



## 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 to connect people with broader destinations in other cities, 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**

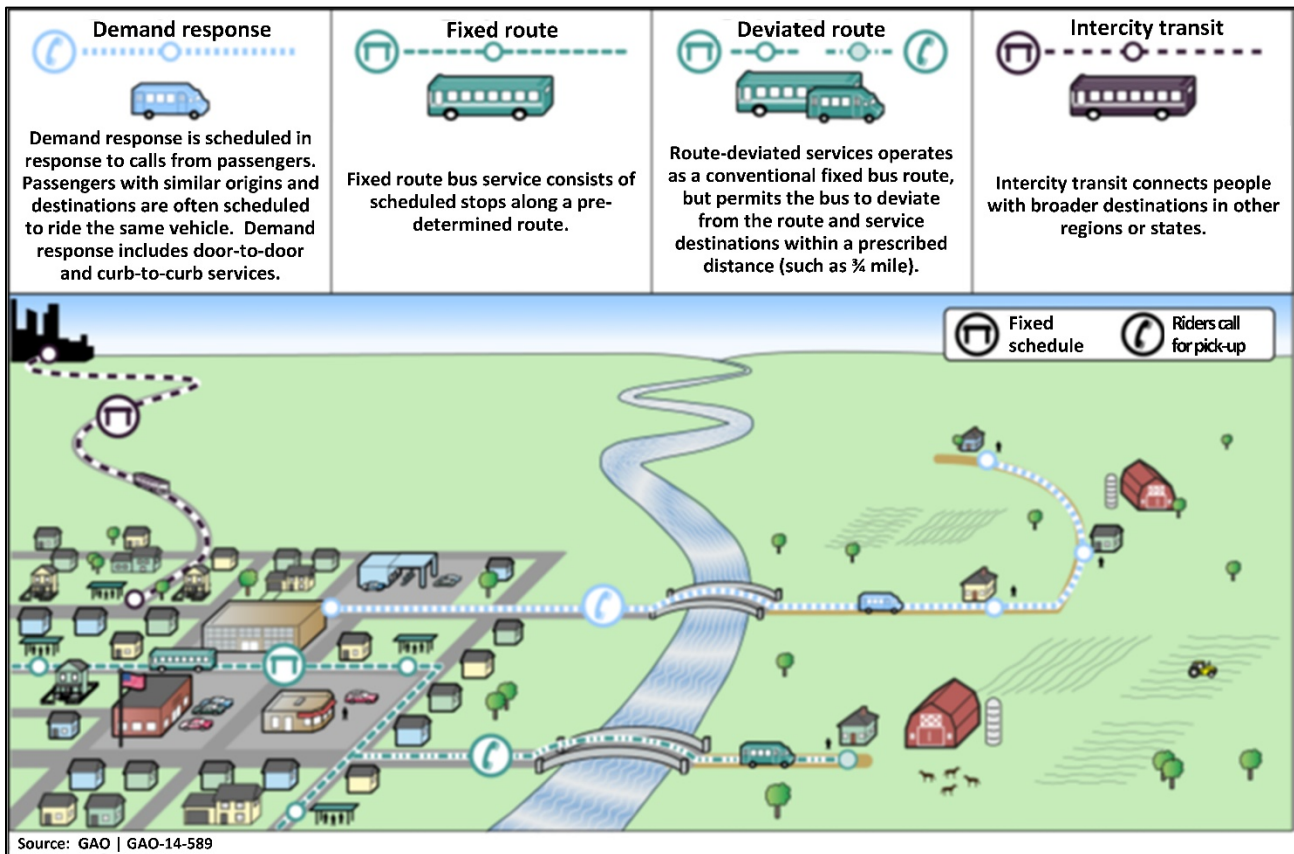


Table 1 and Figure 10 show public transportation providers currently serving communities in District 3. Provider profile information for each may be found in the appendix, and a brief overview of available services follows.

**Table 1. Current Transportation Service Providers in District 3**

Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Service Operated	Demand Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size
				FR / DR / VP / IP / BS	Riders	Trip Purposes	
<b>Intercity Transit Service Provider</b>							
Salt Lake Express	Ada, Elmore, Twin Falls, Cassia, Minidoka, Bannock, Bingham, Bonneville, Jefferson, Madison, Fremont	Idaho State: Boise City, Boise Airport, Mountain Home City, Twin Falls City, Burley City, Pocatello City, Blackfoot City, Idaho Falls City, Rigby City, Rexburg City, Island Park City  Other States: Montana, Nevada, Utah, Wyoming	24 / 7	IB	NA	NA	57
Northwest Trailways	Latah, Nez Perce, Lewis, Idaho, Adams, Valley, Boise, Ada,	Idaho State: Moscow City, Lewiston City, Craigmont City, Cottonwood City, Grangeville City, Whitebird City, Riggins City, New Meadows City, McCall City, Donnelly City, Cascade City, Horseshoe Bend City, Boise City  Other States: Washington	7 Days/Week: 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM	IB	NA	NA	23
Greyhound	Ada, Cassia, Kootenai, Twin Falls	Idaho State: Coeur d'Alene, City, Boise City, Burley City, Twin Falls City  Beyond Idaho: United States and Canada	24 / 7	IB	NA	NA	1,700
<b>Regional Transit Service Provider</b>							
Treasure Valley Transit	Canyon	Mountain Home City, Fruitland City, Payette City, McCall City, Cascade City, Owyhee County, Canyon County	MHCT & SRT: Weekdays 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM  MCT:	FR, DR, BS	GP	General	31





Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Service Operated	Demand Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size
				FR / DR / VP / IP / BS	Riders	Trip Purposes	
			Weekdays: 6:00 AM – 7:30 PM				
Valley Regional Transit	Ada	Ada County, Canyon County	Weekdays: 5:00 AM – 8:00 PM Saturdays: 8:00 AM – 7:00 PM	FR, DR	PWD	General	100
<b>County Transit Service Provider</b>							
ACHD Commuteride	Ada	Ada County	Weekdays: 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM	VP	NA	NA	128
<b>Municipal Transit Service Provider</b>							
No Providers							
<b>Other Transit Service Provider</b>							
Boise Basin Senior Center	Boise	Idaho City, Treasure Valley communities	Tue / Thu: 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
Boise Good Samaritan	Ada	NA	NA	DR	PWD; residents of BGS	NA	1
Boise State University Bronco Shuttle	Ada	Boise	Weekdays: 7:00 AM – 10:00 PM [Route schedules change with university calenda]	FR	NA	NA	
Cambridge Senior Center	Washington	Cambridge City (approximately 10-15 mile radius), Treasure Valley communities	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
Cascade Senior Center	Valley	Cascade City (approximately 10-15 mile radius), Treasure Valley communities	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	2
CCOA-Aging, Weatherization, & Human Services Inc	Canyon	NA	NA	DR	OA, PWD	Medical, Nutritional, Employment, Education, Social,	3



Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Service Operated	Demand Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size
				FR / DR / VP / IP / BS	Riders	Trip Purposes and Recreational Needs	
Council Senior Center	Adams	Council City (approximately 10-15 mile radius), Treasure Valley communities	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
Gem County Senior Center	Gem	Gem County (approximately 10-15 mile radius), Treasure Valley communities	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	2
Harvest Transit	Ada	Meridian	Mon – Sat: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	DR	OA, PWD	General	
Homedale Senior Center	Owyhee	Homedale City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	2
Horseshoe Bend Senior Center	Boise	Adams County, Boise County, Valley County, and Owyhee County	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
Idaho NEMT (via Veyo)	[State]			DR		Medical	
Kuna Senior Center	Ada	Kuna City, Meridian City, Boise City	Mon / Wed / Fri: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	DR	GP, OA, PWD	Medical, Shopping, Meals, To/From KSC	2
Marsing Senior Center	Owyhee	Marsing City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	2
McCall Senior Center	Valley	McCall City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	2
Melba Valley Senior Center	Canyon	Melba City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
Meridian Senior Center	Ada	NA	NA	DR	NA	NA	2
Mountain Home Senior Center	Elmore	Mountain Home City	Weekdays: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	DR	NA	NA	1
New Meadows Senior Center	Adams	New Meadows City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1



Service Provider	County	Service Area	Span of Service (Days of Week / Hours of Day)	Service Operated	Demand Response Eligibility		Vehicle Fleet Size
				FR / DR / VP / IP / BS	Riders	Trip Purposes	
New Plymouth Senior Center	Payette	New Plymouth City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	2
Parma Senior Center	Canyon	Parma City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	5
Payette Senior Center	Payette	NA	Weekdays: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM	DR	NA	NA	1
Rimrock Senior Center	Owyhee	Rimrock City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
St. Mark's Catholic Community	Ada	NA	NA	DR	NA	NA	1
Three Island Senior Center	Elmore	NA	Mon / Tue / Thu: 8:00 AM – 2:00 PM	DR	OA	To/From TISC	1
Weiser Senior Center	Washington	Weiser City (approximately 10-15 mile radius)	NA	DR	GP, OA, PWD	General	1
Western Idaho Training Company (WITCO)	Canyon	Nampa City, Caldwell City, Fruitland City, Ontario City	NA	DR	PWD	NA	20

**Key**

NA = Information not available

Services Operated

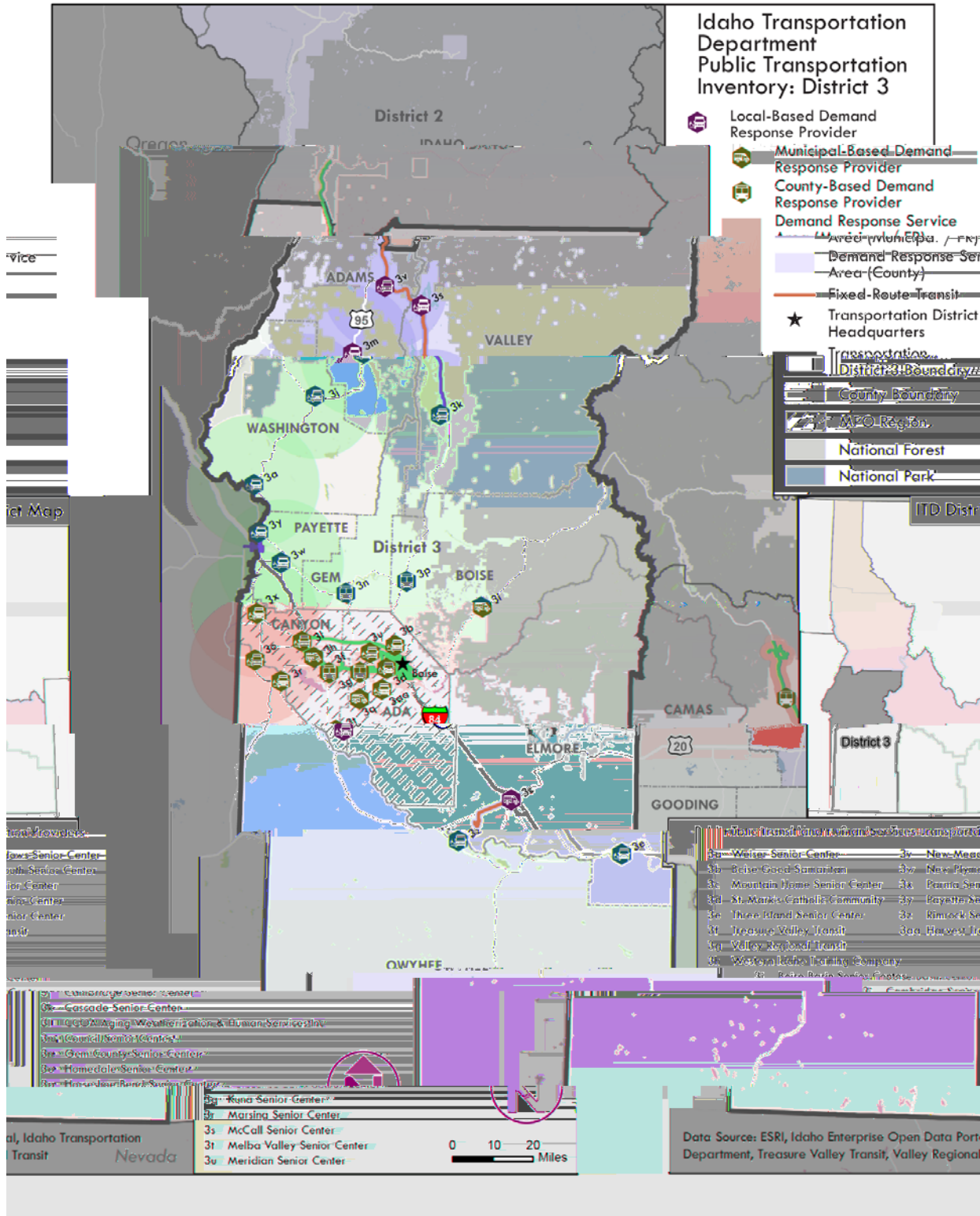
- FR = Fixed Route
- GP = General Public
- DR = Demand Response
- VP = Vanpool
- IB = Intercity Bus
- BS = Bikeshare

Eligible Riders

- OA = Older Adults
- PWD = Persons with Disabilities



Figure 10. Transportation Providers in District 3



### **2.3.1 Intercity Bus**

District 3 is served by three intercity bus services: Salt Lake Express, Northwest Trailways, and Greyhound. These three services connect southwest Idaho to communities in northern and eastern parts of the state, neighboring states, and beyond.

Salt Lake Express and Northwest Trailways are private regional services. Salt Lake Express is based in Rexburg, and serves Montana, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming, in addition to Idaho. Northwest Trailways is based in Spokane, serving Washington as well as Idaho. Greyhound, is a multinational intercity bus company providing service across both the continental United States and Canada.

All three companies serve Boise and operate seven days per week. Northwest Trailways provides the most connectivity throughout southwest Idaho, connecting Boise and communities in the SH 55 corridor to Lewiston, Moscow, and north into Washington. Salt Lake Express stops in Mountain Home in addition to Boise. Boise is the only Greyhound stop in District 3.

### **2.3.2 Fixed Route**

District 3 has three fixed-route public transportation providers. Valley Regional Transit (VRT) is the largest provider of fixed-route service in the state, serving over a million trips per year. The other two fixed-route providers are Treasure Valley Transit (TVT) and the Boise State University (BSU) Bronco Shuttle.

VRT and BSU serve the city of Boise, with VRT extending its service west to communities into Canyon County. VRT has 18 routes serving Boise and Garden City in Ada County, and five routes connecting Nampa and Caldwell in Canyon County. In addition, six routes connect Ada and Canyon counties, via the I-84 and US-26 corridors. All VRT routes run weekdays only, with the exception of eight Ada County routes, which also run on Saturdays.

The BSU Bronco Shuttle has five routes covering BSU's main campus south of the Boise River, two connecting the campus to downtown Boise, and one running between downtown, main campus, and the Elder Street Park and Ride, near the Boise Airport. The Bronco Shuttle runs fare-free, funded primarily by BSU parking revenue. The Bronco Shuttle only operates on weekdays. The number of routes in operation fluctuates based on the BSU academic calendar.

TVT's fixed-route system is non-traditional in that it operates three separate fixed route services that do not connect, rather than a traditional interconnected system. Each TVT service is separately branded. Mountain Community Transit has two routes, one connecting Cascade to McCall, and the other circulating throughout McCall. Snake River Transit features one route connecting Payette and Fruitland to Ontario, Oregon. Mountain Home Community Transit has two routes, one circulating the City of Mountain Home, and the other connecting the Mountain Home U.S. Air Force Base to the city. All TVT routes operate on weekdays only.



### **2.3.3 Deviated Fixed Route Service**

Deviated fixed-route service operates with a well-defined route and regular schedule, and deviates on request within a set zone around the path. Deviated fixed-route service is an application often used in rural communities as a blend of fixed-route and demand response services. This can allow a transit provider to satisfy ADA paratransit requirements without providing a duplicate service in the same service areas, lowering the cost to provide existing and additional service.

TVT is the only operator of deviated fixed-route service in District 3. TVT's Mountain Home Community Transit routes, Snake River Transit route, and Mountain Community Transit Red Line each serve deviations within a three-quarter mile buffer of their scheduled routes. Riders must call TVT ahead of time to request a deviation pick-up within the three-quarter mile buffer of either route. TVT does not charge any additional fare for deviation requests. Through deviated fixed-route service, TVT is able to serve riders unable to reach its scheduled routes, without needing to provide two separate services in the same service area.

### **2.3.4 Paratransit Service and Publicly Available Demand-Response Service**

Demand-response service, often called "dial-a-ride" service, is curb-to-curb service within a set service area, but without a set route, that a rider must schedule in advance. Demand-response services can be made available to the general public or for individuals with specific service needs, such as older adults or people with disabilities who are unable to drive, get to a local fixed-route transit stop, or use a fixed-route bus.

ADA paratransit service is federally required demand-response service offered to people with disabilities who are unable to access or use fixed-route service. Passenger origins and destinations must be within a three-quarter mile buffer of fixed-route service, and be offered during the same days and times as fixed-route service. People seeking paratransit service must first complete an application process verifying their eligibility for ADA paratransit. VRT is the only provider of ADA paratransit accompanying fixed-route service in District 3. ADARide administers paratransit rider applications for VRT.

In District 3, 28 of 33 public transportation providers provide this service – more than any other district in the state. All, except VRT and TVT, only offer demand response service. The majority of these demand response providers are local non-profit organizations including senior centers and faith-based groups. Demand response service is available throughout most of the I-84, US-95, US-26, and SH 55 corridors, with the additions of Gem County, SH 21 to Idaho City, and SH 78.

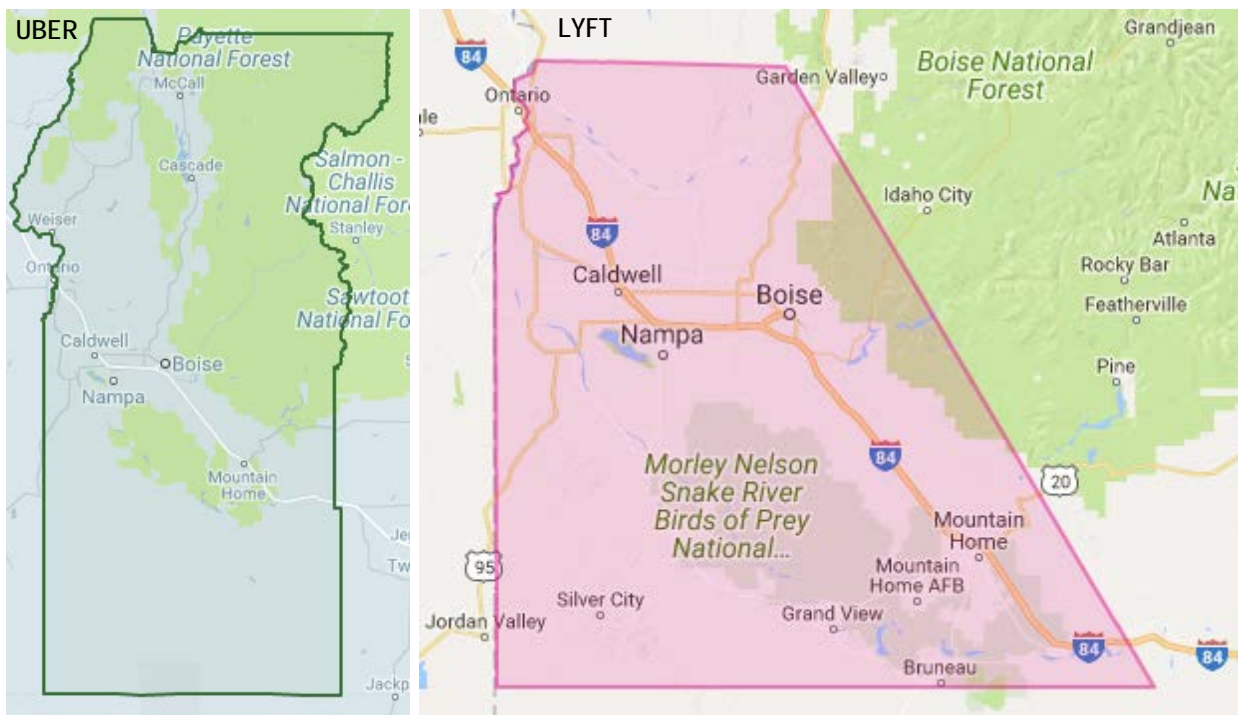
### **2.3.5 Private Transportation Providers**

There are several private taxi services available in District 3, especially in the Boise metropolitan area. Some taxi providers in active service include Green City Taxi Boise, Green Cab, US Taxi, Boise City Taxi, Boise Express Taxi, Idaho Cab Co, and ABC Taxi.

In addition, there are multiple private shuttle services offering shared-ride express routes, often to and from the Boise airport. Some shuttle services also offer charter service rentals. Examples of active private shuttles include SuperShuttle, GO Airport Shuttles, Caldwell Transportation, American Eagle Shuttle, and Metro Shuttle. In addition, some local hotels provide their own shuttle services to and from Boise Airport.

Transportation network companies (TNCs) Uber and Lyft are both active District 3. Uber's Boise service area is all of District 3 (Figure 11). Lyft's Boise service area is a smaller area bounded roughly between Mountain Home, Bruneau, Payette, and south of Garden Valley (Figure 11).

**Figure 11 District 3 Uber and Lyft Service Areas**



### 2.3.6 Volunteer Driver Networks

GoRide, a service of VRT, facilitates the largest volunteer driver network in District 3. Through GoRide, volunteers can use either their own vehicle, or one from the VRT Vehicle Sharing Program pool to provide trips to seniors, people with disabilities, and veterans. VRT reimburses GoRide volunteer drivers at the federal mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.54 per mile. The following organizations are GoRide members, contributing vehicles and volunteers to the program:<sup>2</sup>

- Supportive Housing and Innovative Partnerships (SHIP)
- Mountain States Group
- Calvary Chapel

<sup>2</sup> Valley Regional Transit. *GoRide Transportation Programs*. <http://www.gorideidaho.org/index.html>

- Idaho Division of Veterans Services
- Idaho Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Women's and Children's Alliance
- Special Olympics Idaho
- Northstar Charter School
- Meridian Senior Center
- Parma Senior Center
- Kuna Senior Center
- Melba Senior Center
- Harvest Transit (Harvest Church)<sup>3</sup>

In addition to GoRide, the Star, Homedale, and Eagle Senior Centers also provide demand response transportation through volunteer drivers.<sup>4</sup>

### **2.3.7 Other Human Services Transportation**

Since 2016, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare has contracted with Veyo to provide non-emergency medical trips for Medicaid patients. Veyo is a recent start-up company that uses the TNC service model in combination with real-time GPS, and traditional NEMT services such as call center services, and eligibility documentation and verification to get qualifying patients to and from medical appointments.

In addition, District 3 is served by many senior centers and human service agencies. These local organizations provide demand response transportation to older adults and people with disabilities. Many of these trips are between riders homes and area senior centers, grocery stores, and medical facilities. Some also provide general demand response service to the public (See Table 1). The following senior centers and human service agencies serve District 3, and report annual performance data to ITD:

<sup>3</sup> Harvest Church. *Harvest Transit*. <http://boiseharvest.org/project/event-one/>

<sup>4</sup> Valley Regional Transit. *Individuals: Transportation Options*. <http://www.rideline.org/individuals>

- Boise Basin Senior Center
- Boise Good Samaritan
- Cambridge Senior Center
- Cascade Senior Center
- CCOA-Aging, Weatherization, & Human Services Inc
- Council Senior Center
- Gem County Senior Center
- Homedale Senior Center
- Horseshoe Bend Senior Center
- Kuna Senior Center
- Marsing Senior Center
- McCall Senior Center
- Melba Valley Senior Center
- Meridian Senior Center
- Mountain Home Senior Center
- New Meadows Senior Center
- New Plymouth Senior Center
- Parma Senior Center
- Payette Senior Center
- Rimrock Senior Center
- St. Mark's Catholic Community
- Three Island Senior Center
- Weiser Senior Center
- Western Idaho Training Company (WITCO)

## 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 3, transit services within the COMPASS planning area are eligible for 5307 funding, and VRT 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. Capital expenditures may receive 92.66% federal funding. Operating assistance is at 57.5% federal funding.

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. The Duck Valley Reservation in southern Owyhee County in District 3 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. In District 3, Northwestern Trailways is the only current recipients of 5311(f) funding.

**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.

#### **2.4.3 Local Funding**

In Idaho, resort cities and auditorium districts are the only jurisdictions eligible to assess a local sales tax. The Greater Boise Auditorium, one of three auditorium districts in the state, is funded by a tax on lodging within the auditorium district. Resort cities can choose what to assess a local sales tax on; many limit this to lodging, alcohol, and restaurant food. Resort cities in District 3 with a local sales tax include Donnelly and McCall.

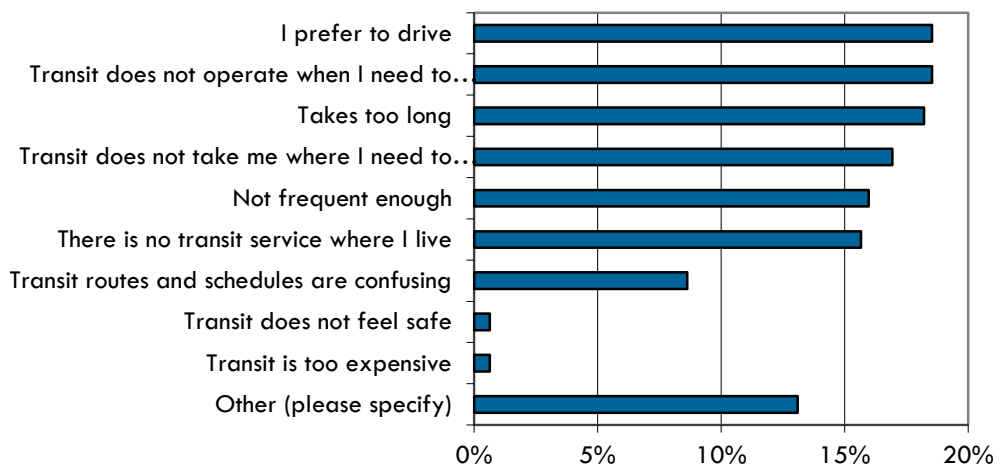
TVT and VRT receive local funds directly from local government general funds. While many communities receiving service from TVT and VRT contribute a share of local funds to these providers, both TVT and VRT must individually request a contribution from each community every year to ensure continued funds. Maintaining these separate annual contributions is a time-consuming undertaking for both providers. TVT is currently supported by municipalities it serves, including McCall, Payette, and Mountain Home. VRT is supported by municipalities it serves, as well as Ada and Canyon counties.



### 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 3 participants, shown in Figure 12, provide insight about issues and challenges with existing services. The main reasons respondents cited for not using transit are a preference to drive, or because of a lack of service or operating hours. Respondents citing “other” reasons named a preference to bicycle, and a lack of high capacity transit service

**Figure 12. Reasons for Not Using Transit in District 3**



In addition, 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

District 3 stakeholders identified geographic service gaps stemming primarily from shifting residential locations. Many people contacting them for service tend to be relocating to locations that are more rural. Despite lower housing costs, these areas tend to have less access to transit service and be further away from jobs. While some service providers expressed a desire to focus their route planning on a productivity model, as opposed to a coverage model, in many cases this is not seen as feasible due to large sources of human service demand in rural areas that would not likely be served under a productivity model.

Places identified as not having adequate transit service to meet demand include the following communities:

- Homedale
- Kuna

- Weiser
- Fruitland
- Eastern Payette
- New Meadows
- Riggins (District 2)

Providers reported receiving a number of calls from these communities, despite a lack of capacity to serve them.

### 3.2 Temporal Service Gaps

The most common temporal gap cited by stakeholders was the fact that many people are commuting outside a traditional 9am to 5pm weekday, and existing services are limited outside this window. Most routes throughout the district have limited operation or do not operate in the evenings and on weekends. Later and earlier service hours, as well as Sundays were identified as a definite need for workers in urban areas. In addition, many requests are received for grocery or religious services on weekends.

An additional temporal gap is the availability of demand response service from senior center providers on a daily basis. Some senior center providers only offer service on one to three days per week at limited times of day. This results in a community looking like it has demand response service, however, at most times service is not available.

### 3.3 Trip Type Gaps

Stakeholders highlighted non-emergency medical trips (NEMT) and commute trips as prominent trip type gaps. Current hours of service limit the usefulness of public transportation for work trips in the early morning, late evening, or on the weekends. Without increased spans of service, transit commuters are unable to work non-daytime shifts, and current workers of non-daytime shifts are unable to use transit.

NEMT is not only an underserved trip type, but also one with available federal funding. Dialysis patients are seen as a significant source of new demand that was not present in past years. Stakeholders also identified a difficulty in accurately forecasting the locations of people with disabilities.

### 3.4 Accessibility Needs

Riders identified a lack of bus stop amenities outside of downtown areas as a prominent accessibility need. Clearing bus stops of snow or any other debris is the responsibility of several jurisdictions, depending upon the location, and this has led to a lack of ownership by any one agency for monitoring stops. No providers have an adopt-a-stop program at this time; currently providers rely more on the courtesy of riders and neighbors, rather than a formal maintenance program.

In addition, some bus stops are dangerous due to the lack of a “yield to bus” law in the state. When drivers do not yield to buses re-entering traffic after picking up a passenger, it puts the

safety of passengers, transit vehicle operators, and other drivers is at risk, as well as impeding service reliability.

Taxis and transportation network company (TNC) vehicles present an accessibility challenge due to their lack of accessible vehicles for people who use wheelchairs or other mobility devices. This presents a challenge for both current taxi and TNC use, as well as the prospect of future TNC partnership for first-mile/last-mile demand-response coverage in rural communities.

### 3.5 Technology Challenges

Service providers expressed a strong desire for the state to take an active role in making technology capital more accessible to local agencies and organizations. Many smaller service providers lack negotiating, research, and training capacity for procuring and implementing new technology capital.

Stakeholders also identified the significant gaps in mobile phone and high-speed internet service in many rural communities as a hindrance to obtaining accurate real-time information on vehicle locations. This presents an issue for both dispatching and rider navigation.

### 3.6 Information Gaps

Stakeholders identified people with disabilities and underemployment as two significant information gaps. Providers know that there are people with disabilities and those who have given up on seeking employment who have service needs, but are not capturing these individuals through common information sources.

Inadequate capacity for local marketing of services is a pronounced need for many stakeholders. Many expressed that existing services are often underutilized due to a lack of public visibility and knowledge of service availability. In addition, many stakeholders reported a lack of information about connecting services between providers. This presents a gap for riders and prospective riders seeking service across multiple jurisdictions.

### 3.7 Affordability Gaps

The affordability of providing public transportation service is one of the most prominent challenges stakeholders expressed. The most commonly cited contributor to this challenge was the inability of local communities to implement their own local tax for public transportation funding. Idaho residents do not currently have the legal authority to enact local funding mechanisms to meet local funding needs.

This local funding gap is compounded by a lack of public transportation funding allocations from the state. Without state funding and a local tax option, providers are limited in their ability to finance local service needs.

## 3.8 Coordination Gaps

Stakeholders identified the following topics as opportunities for greater collaboration:

- Best practice information storage and distribution
- Transit capital and technology procurement
- Road capital construction projects
- Engagement with refugee populations
- NEMT service

Each of these topic areas present challenges for many providers in the district, and coordination amongst providers and with various state agencies could yield more efficient use of public funds and staff time, better service for people in need, and more accessible service overall.

A lack of coordination on branding and messaging contributes to information gaps among riders and prospective riders alike. Improving information availability between connecting service providers would better enable riders to understand how to transfer between services. In addition, coordinated branding of services can create reduce confusion for people seeking transfers.

TNC services such as Uber and Lyft present a challenge, as in many areas transit providers compete with them for riders. Stakeholders acknowledged that many younger people seem to prefer bicycling or riding with TNCs, over using existing public transportation service. This competition for younger riders could be influenced by temporal, technology, informational, affordability, or other gaps.

## 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.

In addition to public-facing information solutions, providers expressed interest in seeing an even more robust central source for public transportation best practices and policy information location for providers. Service Enhancements

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.

Service providers expressed interest in working towards providing daily 7am-7pm coverage throughout the district, to support current and future employment in southwest Idaho.

## 4.2 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:

- Supporting the continued maximizing of available demand-response vehicle seats, through centralized scheduling or contracting among providers
- Expanding volunteer driver programs
- 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.

Service providers also expressed interest in pursuing partnerships with TNCs to offer first-mile/last-mile demand response coverage in rural communities. Partnering with TNCs in rural communities could connect rural residents to transit service closer to jobs and medical appointments in urban locations. It could also offer a lower cost solution to providing rural service outside of the traditional weekday business hour schedule.

## 4.3 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. The addition of bus stop amenities outside of downtown areas was identified as a solution frequently requested by riders.

Year-round bus stop accessibility can be improved with better clarity and coordination on which agency is responsible for clearing bus stops of snow or other debris throughout transit service areas. Adopt-a-stop programs, in use by service providers in many other states, offer a venue for providers to partner with community members to maintain bus stops.

The passage of a state “yield to bus” law can improve both accessibility and service reliability. Multiple service providers expressed support for such a law.

## 4.4 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.

While some service providers in District 3 have implemented these technology improvements, many others have not due capacity challenges in pursuing funding opportunities. Service providers expressed interest in the state taking a more active role in assisting providers with public transportation technology procurements.

#### 4.5 Other Potential Solutions

Collaboration on asset management between the state and local service providers could yield both new efficiencies in capital resources, and better cross-agency understanding of what capital needs are shared. Service providers acknowledge that both providers and the state are currently pursuing asset management improvements individually, but seek a more collaborative approach. Through collaborative asset management, the state would be better equipped to fulfill a role securing state level pricing agreements with vendors for transit capital federal funding compliance standards.

#### 4.6 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.

The online survey distributed in November and December 2016 asked members of the public to weigh in on their priorities for transit investment, as shown in Figure 13 and Figure 14. It is important to note that the survey was taken by 378 people in District 3, which is a small sample size. While the survey therefore cannot be considered statistically valid, responses nonetheless provide some insight about public perceptions and preferences.

Figure 13. Top Priorities for District 3 from Online Survey

## Top Priorities – District 3

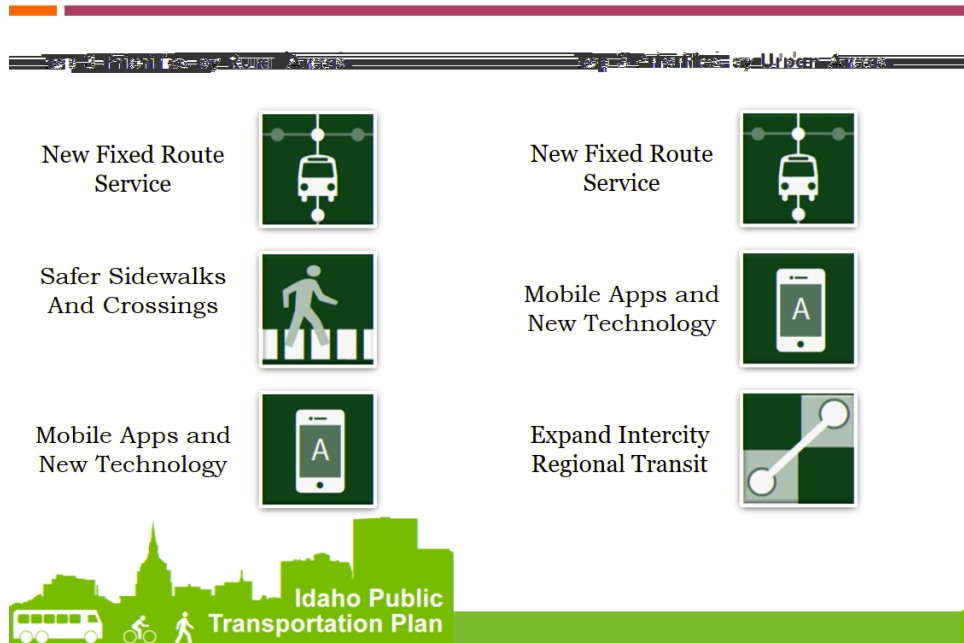
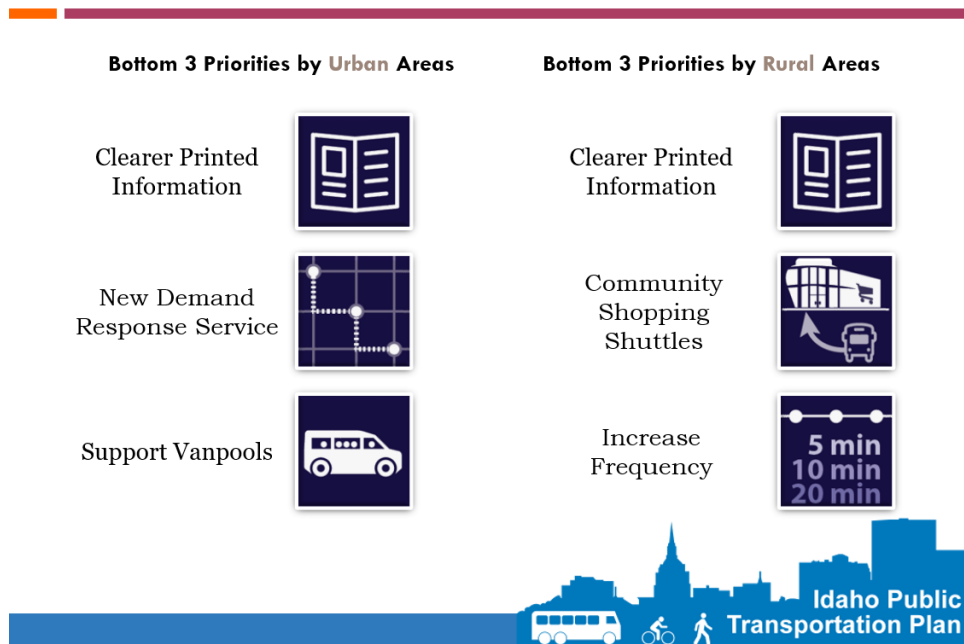


Figure 14. Bottom Priorities for District 3 from Online Survey

## Bottom Priorities – District 3





At the LCP workshop, stakeholders weighed potential benefits of solutions against the serious of stated needs. Meeting participants were given a list of 19 prospective solutions, and dot stickers to use in voting for solutions. Two additional solutions were also added to the list by participants. Figure 15 displays voting results from the District 3 LCP workshop.

Stakeholders voted for expanded service areas, improved marketing, new scheduling and dispatch software, longer service hours, and coordination to fill empty demand response seats as the top solutions. These solutions address geographic, information, technology, temporal, and coordination needs.

**Figure 15** LCP Workshop Participant Voting on Prospective Solutions to Identified Needs

## 5 The Plan

Table 2 lists priority investments and strategies for District 3. Most of these strategies can be implemented in the near term, and contribute to improved public transportation service. 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 approximate. Each strategy could be implemented as resources and/or partnering opportunities allow.

A key factor linking each of these strategies is improved regional coordination between ITD and District 3 service providers. Through greater coordination, existing and future expansions of service can better meet local needs for service provision, information, accessibility, and technology.

For Ada County, please refer to COMPASS's Planning documents for more specific information. ITD-PT looked at population as well as gathered stakeholder input to establish the recommended strategies below. Valley Regional Transit and COMPASS looked at a multitude of additional factors which can be located directly in their plan [located here](#).

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

Recommended Strategy	Category				
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility
1. Continue existing fixed route and demand response services in District 3	✓				
2. Replace existing fleet vehicles at the end of their useful service life (as defined by FTA and ITD-PT for each vehicle type)	✓				
3. Include transit provider representation on regional transportation planning groups, including but not limited to: Valley Regional Transit, Treasure Valley Transit, Boise State University Bronco Shuttle					
4. Extend existing fixed route services as needed to establish formal connections and passenger transfer points between existing fixed route systems in District 3.			✓		
5. Integrate multi-modal connections with public transportation infrastructure		✓			

Recommended Strategy	Category				
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility
6. Work with roadway jurisdictions to address sidewalk gaps, add curb ramps where needed and improve the safety of roadway crossings near transit stops.					√
7. Work with local jurisdictions to develop programs for bus stop maintenance, including removal of winter snow and ice at transit stop locations.					√
8. Coordinate road improvement projects with roadway jurisdictions and public transportation service providers to ensure that future road improvements and transit improvements mutually supportive.		√	√		
9. Extend service hours for existing fixed-route and demand-response services, focusing on job access needs on evenings and weekends.			√		
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.			√		
11. Maintain existing automatic vehicle location systems and further develop the use of those systems for improved passenger information.	√			√	
12. Link local public transportation service provider and ITD-PT asset management efforts.	√				
13.					
14.	√			√	

Recommended Strategy	Category				
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility
15. Provide a centralized online source of information for all public transportation services available in District 3, 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.				√	
16. Provide online tools for paratransit and other demand-response passengers to reserve seats and schedule rides.					
17. Develop marketing materials, using both online and print media, and distribute to help raise public awareness of available services.				√	
18. 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.					
19. Convene discussions between medical transport providers, Medicaid funding administrators, and Idaho’s congressional delegates, to discuss restrictions on medical travel and potential legislative remedies.					
20.	√				

Recommended Strategy	Category				
	Continue Existing Service	Complement or Optimize Existing Network	Service Expansion	Information	Accessibility

**KEY**

Funding Sources

FTA Section 5307 = Federal funding for transit services within urbanized areas (in District 1, this includes Hayden)

FTA Section 5310 = Federal funding for enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities

FTA Section 5311 = Federal funding for transit service in rural areas

FTA Section 5311(f) = Federal funding for intercity transit service

TAP = Federal Transportation Alternatives Program

Cost Categories:

\$ \$0-\$10,000

\$\$ \$10,000 - \$25,000

\$\$\$ \$25,000 - \$50,000

\$\$\$\$ \$50,000 - \$100,000

\$\$\$\$\$ >\$100,000

