


Observations

The primary observations of this amendment to the Coordinated Transit Plan include:

- There is a strong network of support for the continuation of the fixed-route Snake River Transit service (non-profit organizations, Advisory Council, and volunteers)
- The recommended fixed-route service has been implemented. 9,500 rides were provided by the service from September 15, 2008 to March 31, 2009.
- Transit professionals in eastern Oregon and western Idaho state that the ridership level on the fixed-route service is satisfactory, and serves as a basis for increased service levels in the future.
- Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services has been able to position their dial-a-ride and paratransit service as complimentary to the fixed route service.
- The current national recessionary economic conditions are affecting Malheur and Payette Counties and their respective municipalities. Four of the five municipalities have generally determined that a continued investment in the public transit service is warranted. As of the finalization of this plan amendment, the City of Ontario is wrestling with this budget decision.
- It will generally require continued funding by the Malheur and Payette Cities and Counties at the current levels in order to maintain the current level of transit services.
- Curtailing the fixed-route service in the short-term could lead to the inability to re-establish such a service for years to come.
- Recommendations for improved service, generally summarized below, will be dependent upon economic and budgetary conditions.

Recommendations

The primary recommendations of this amendment to the Coordinated Transit Plan are as follows:

- Maintain the existing public transit services
- Explore new funding opportunities
- Implement new transportation services between Ontario and Vale/Nyssa
- Establish a centralized point of access that provides information on all services
- Purchase all equipment and infrastructure necessary to support current and future service levels
- Implement new transportation services between Weiser and Payette
- Develop a bike path and trails system serving Ontario
-  Identify and implement Park and Ride locations
- Provide targeted shuttle service to access employment opportunities
- Conduct a Mobility Management study to ensure the needs of the public are being met.

The conclusion of this process is presented in Appendix G. As noted in Appendix G, the top priorities are as follows:

- Maintain the existing public transit services
- Explore new funding opportunities
- Implement new transportation services between Ontario and Vale/Nyssa
- Establish a centralized point of access that provides information on all services
- Purchase all equipment and infrastructure necessary to support current and future service levels
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Capital Replacement. Although the original plan did not recognize the need for capital replacement, but rather focused on the establishment of the new fixed-route service, it is clear that the transit equipment for the region should not be extended beyond its useful life.

Both the Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services and Treasure Valley Transit regularly assess their need for equipment investment, and seek the resources necessary to maintain a safe and high-quality fleet.

Performance Measures to Prioritize Strategies. During both the regular February 10 meeting of the Snake River Transit Advisory Council and the Public Hearing on the same date, all of the individuals evaluating the priorities for public transportation considered the following performance criteria:

- Is this an investment in the *basic infrastructure* necessary to provide public transportation?
- Are the needs for our *primary population* (low-income, people with disabilities, and seniors) being met with this investment?
- What are the *sustainability* issues related to this investment?

Overlap or Duplication of Services. The key issue related to overlap or duplication of services relates to the specific services being provided by both the Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services and Treasure Valley Transit.

Virtually all of the potential overlap has been eliminated by distinguishing the services as follows:

- Treasure Valley Transit operates the fixed-route service in Oregon and Idaho
- The Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services provides the dial-a-ride and paratransit service for the region.

The delineation of services and responsibilities is very clear between the two organizations. The Snake River Transit Advisory Council is in place to ensure that duplication of services is minimized or eliminated.

- ❖ The Malheur Council on Aging and Community Services and Treasure Valley Transit are ideally positioned to collaborate on public transit planning and delivery.
- ❖ Transportation professionals both at the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Idaho Transportation Department are eager to support the implementation of this plan with continued technical and financial resources.
- ❖ It is reasonable to expect enhanced transportation services serving Ontario, Payette, and Fruitland in 2008, and serving the more rural portions of the two-county region by 2009.

Recommendations

A series of eight recommendations are presented in Section 11.1. These recommendations have been vetted with existing transportation and human service providers, and early work is underway toward their implementation.

A broader summary of the recommendations include:

- ❖ Existing demand-response transit service should be maintained and augmented.
- ❖ Routed service, initially focused upon the Ontario/Payette/Fruitland sub-region should be established in early 2008, and then expanded throughout the region by 2009.
- ❖ Treasure Valley Transit should offer the routed service while MCOA should continue to offer expanded demand-response service.
- ❖ An umbrella organizational structure should be developed that coordinates the combined service delivery of MCOA and TVT. The delivery of service should appear seamless and unified by the general public.

Next Steps

The City of Ontario has received a grant from the Oregon Department of Transportation Public Transit Division to complete a *Transit Service Plan* for Malheur and Payette Counties. This next planning process should flow seamlessly from this effort, and be informed by the conclusions and recommendations of this plan.

Advancement of the Transit Service Plan should run concurrently with the implementation of the early stages of the new routed service. The Transit Service Plan, therefore, can help to shape the continued transit service design improvements “discovered” as routed service begins in the region.

Plan Methodology	
Section	Methodology
1.0 Executive Summary	A brief synopsis of the plan’s process, findings, and recommendations.
2.0 Purpose and Background	Largely identified in initial documentation provided by ODOT.
3.0 Methodology and Process	The timing and content of planning meetings were identified as the process matured. Ultimately, five planning meetings resulted in the