



BAKER COUNTY COORDINATED HUMAN SERVICES PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PLAN

FINAL Plan

November 2022

**TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP
TERESA DUTCHER & STACI KUNZ**



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Baker County Plan 2022

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Acronyms

ACS – American Community Survey
CCNO – Community Connection of Northeast Oregon
DHS – Department of Human Services
FTA – Federal Transportation Administration
FY – Fiscal Year
GCTD – Grant County Transportation District
HRTG – Highly Rural Transportation Grant
LEHD – Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics
MCCOG – Mid-Columbia Council of Governments

NEMT – Non-emergency medical services

ODOT – Oregon Department of Transportation

OHP – Oregon Health Plan

STIF – Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund

STF – Special Transportation Fund

WOD – Workforce on Demand

1 INTRODUCTION

Baker County is undertaking an update to their Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan (the Coordinated Plan) to address a combination of regulatory and community goals.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) require recipients of FTA Section 5310 program funds and Statewide Transportation Improvement Funds (STIF) to engage in a coordinated planning process. The goal is to broaden the dialogue and support coordination between public transportation and human services transportation supporting key target populations: Seniors, Individuals with Disabilities, and Low-income households. Projects submitted for FTA and ODOT funding must be included in the Coordinated Plan. The Coordinated Plan must be updated every five years.

The Coordinated Plan is intended to focus regional resources on strategies with the greatest benefit to the target populations and the transportation service providers. Identifying critical needs, available resources, and strategies, are all steps intended to create efficiencies, reduce redundancy and continue to enable high-quality public transportation services. Funds are relatively limited for public transportation in general, particularly to the Section 5310 and STF target populations. Therefore, it is always important for public transit providers and their partners to make strategic, targeted investments that address critical needs.

The intent of the Coordinated Plan is for it to be a “living” document identifying needs and investment priorities. Transit providers operating within Baker County will use the plan to allocate funding, and along with local partners will use the plan to develop and enhance transit services. Since the plan must be updated every five years, it has been written in a way that can incorporate ongoing updates and revisions.

2 DEMOGRAPHICS

An analysis of the demographic and socioeconomic conditions highlights the transportation needs of community members throughout the public transportation region. This includes the particular needs of Seniors, Individuals with Disabilities, and Low-income households

Area Profile

Baker County is located in Northeastern Oregon. The region is bordered by the Snake River and Idaho on the east, Malheur County to the south, Grant County to the west, and Union and Wallowa Counties to the north. Interstate 84 runs through the central to southeast portion of the region, and several smaller Oregon state highways provide connections throughout the more remote areas of the county. Baker County is generally rugged, with 30% of the county covered with forest. The county terrain generally slopes to the Snake River’s valley.

The region measures 3,088 square miles, and is home to approximately 16,700 residents. The region has an average population density of 5.4 people per square mile. Figure 1 shows population and land statistics.

Figure 1 Population and Land Mass

County	County Seat	Land Miles ²	Population 2010	Population 2020	2020 Population per Miles ²	Population Growth
Baker	Baker City	3,088	16,134	16,668	5.4	3%

As presented in Figure 1, the county seat of Baker County, is Baker City. The population center is also Baker City at 10,099.

Figure 2 below represents population statistics for Baker County. The County as a whole has only marginally changed in population with a net addition of 534 residents between 2010 and 2020. The unincorporated portions of the County experienced an increase in population of 5.3% between 2010 and 2020 while the population in Census-Designated Places grew 3.3% during the same time period. Baker City and Halfway experienced the most growth, while Haines and Unity lost the most population.

Figure 2 Population Statistics

Baker County Cities	2010 Population	2020 Population	+/-	Percent Change
Baker City	9,828	10,099	271	2.8%
Haines	416	373	(43)	-10.3%
Halfway	288	351	63	21.9%
Huntington	484	502	18	3.7%
Richland	156	165	9	5.8%
Sumpter	204	204		0.0%
Unity	71	71	0	0.0%
Unincorporated	4,687	4,934	247	5.3%
Baker County	16,134	16,668	534	3.3%

Sources:

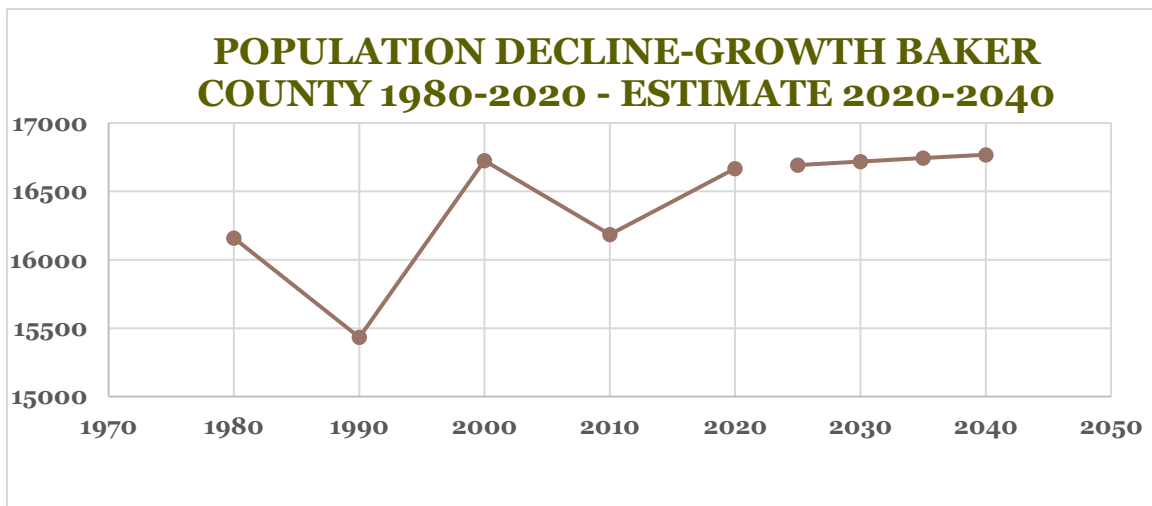
Data was found both with U.S. Census Bureau and Portland State University (PSU)

U.S. Census Bureau was located with their QuickFacts and PSU with their City Data Census

Figure 2 Population Statistics

Figure 3 shows the population trends historically and as projected by the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis. Population dropped significantly between 1980 and 1990, but rebound by the year 2000. There was a smaller drop between 2000 and 2010, but then rebound again by 2020. Population growth patterns and future projections estimate that the study area as a whole is expected to grow by 1.5% per year (on average) between 2015 and 2050. Baker County’s population is predicted to be relatively stable.

Figure 3 Population Decline-Growth

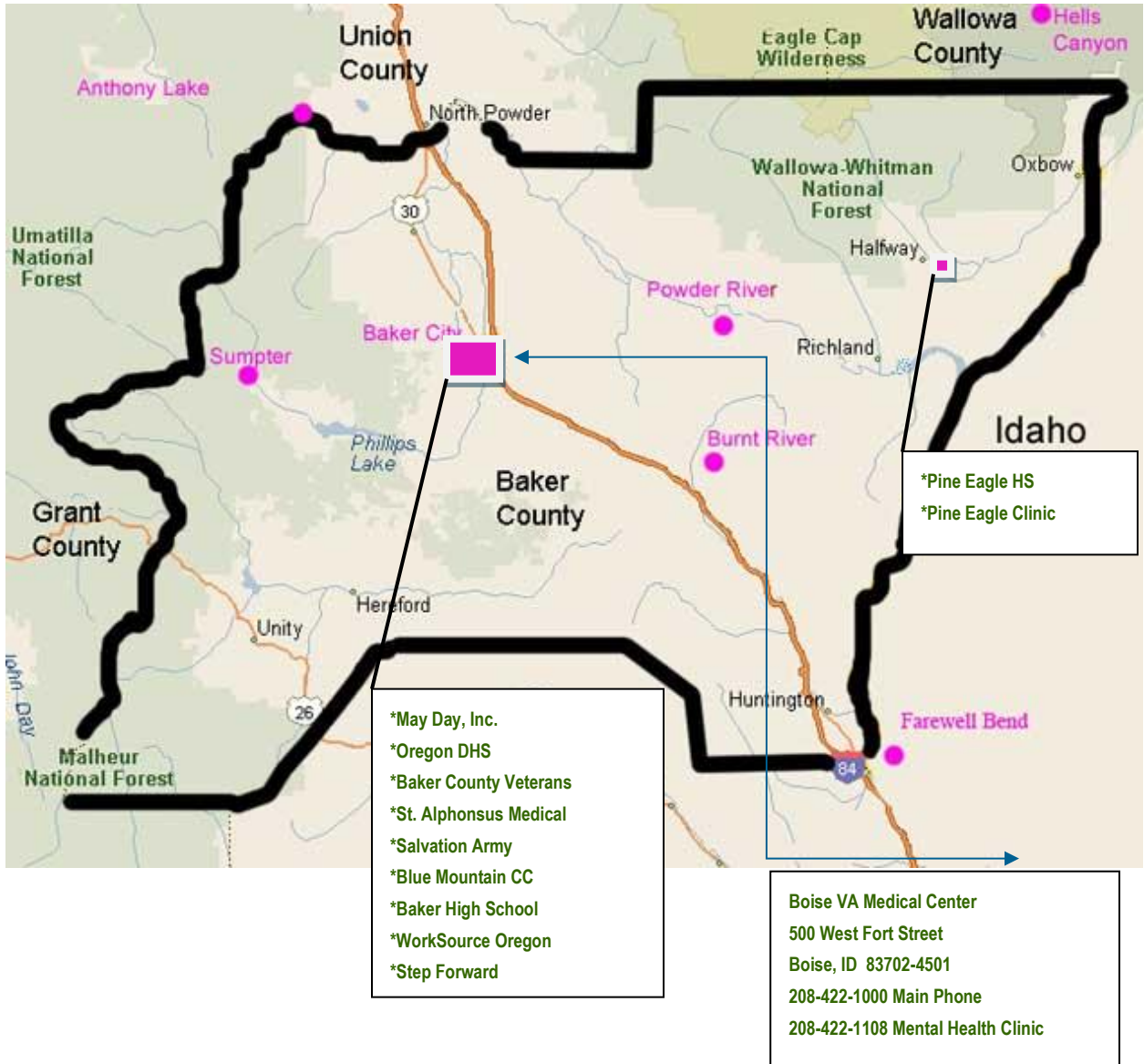


Note:

Estimated populations 2025 through 2040 were estimated at a 1.5% increase every five years.

Source: State of Oregon Office of Economic Analysis

Figure 4 Baker County-map



Socioeconomic Conditions

Demographic and socioeconomic conditions are strong indicators of the propensity for transit use, as specific population segments are considerably more likely to utilize transit for their transportation needs. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) were collected to analyze geographic distribution of older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low income. Socioeconomic data regarding job growth by sector also paints a picture of when and where transit service may be needed.

Transit Supportive Demographics

Human services transportation focuses on older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income populations because these are typically segments of the population that have lower rates of automobile access and use. These populations still require transportation to meet their everyday needs but may not have the means or the ability to drive an automobile.

Figure 5 summarizes vulnerable populations in the nation, Oregon, in the Baker County study area, and by incorporated community. The Baker County area houses greater numbers of older adults, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities than the state and country overall. These demographics indicate that transit service is especially critical in this region of the state.

Figure 5 Supportive Demographic Summary

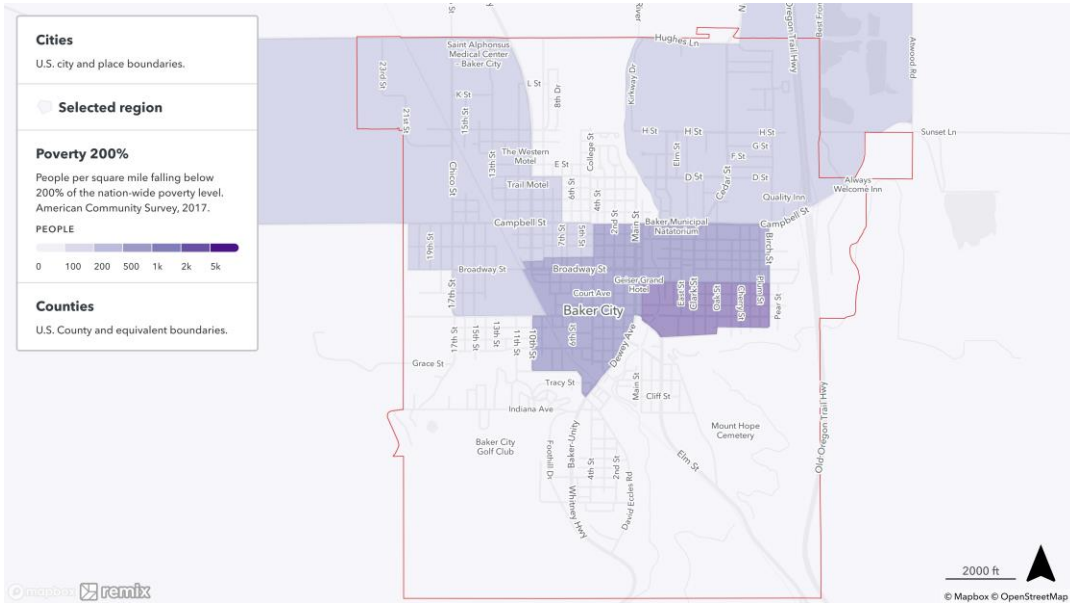
Places	Population 2010	Population 2020	Percent of County	Percent Population 65+	Percent Population Poverty	Percent Population Disability	Population Growth
Baker City	9,828	10,099	60.6%	23.6%	13.2%	14.9%	3%
Haines	416	373	2.2%				-12%
Halfway	288	351	2.1%				18%
Huntington	484	502	3.0%				4%
Richland	156	165	1.0%				5%
Sumpter	204	204	1.2%				0%
Unity	71	71	0.2%				0%
*Baker COUNTY	16,134	16,668		26.5%	14.5%	14.2%	3%
OREGON	3,831,074	4,234,256		18.6%	11.0%	9.9%	10%
USA	308,745,538	331,449,281		16.5%	11.4%	8.7%	7%

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and American Community Survey

Data not available due to low population centers under 5,000

*Data available for Baker County total population

Figure 6 Poverty Baker City (population center County)



Poverty 200% for population density area in Baker County (Baker City).

Selected Region Stats:

Population 2020 Census – 16,668

Households car-free – 17%

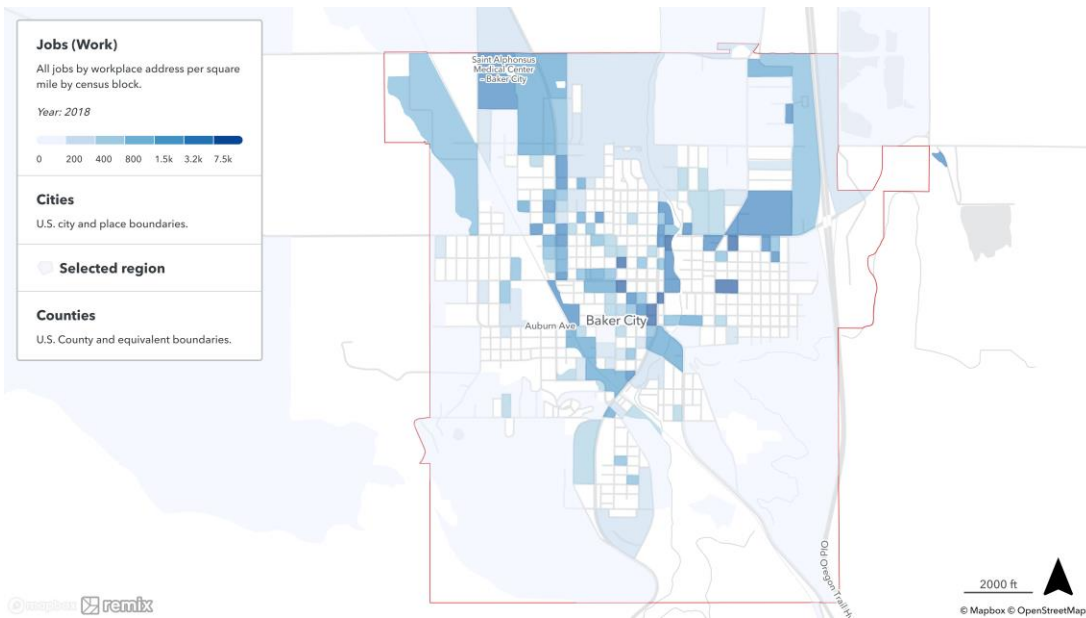
Seniors 65+ – 23.6%

Poverty – 13.2%

Living with a disability – 14.9%

Workers who bike to work – 2%

Resources: Maps by Remix/Mapbox, Stats estimated by geospatial intersections



Veterans

Veterans tend to have a higher propensity for using transit, relying on public transportation for work, education, work, healthcare, and other trip purposes. The proportions of the population that are veterans in Baker County and the State of Oregon are presented in Figure 7. Baker County has a higher proportion of the population that are Veterans than the statewide average of 8.3%. This indicates the need to focus on Veteran transportation as a specific market in the coordinated planning effort.

Figure 7 Percent Veterans

Geography	Proportion of Population over 18 that are Veterans
Oregon (state)	8.3%
Baker County	15.5%

American Community Survey 2020 5-year estimates

Limited English Proficiency

Persons with limited English proficiency (LEP) may have a language barrier that hinders their ability to obtain reliable transportation. LEP populations are also more likely to be unable to obtain a driver’s license and or be unable to afford a personal vehicle. In areas with a high number of people with limited English proficiency language, transit providers should offer bilingual or multilingual service information and train staff in languages common in the community so they can communicate with passengers. The proportions of persons with limited English proficiency in Baker County and Oregon are presented in Figure 8. Baker county has a significantly low LEP population at 0.8% in comparison with the State of Oregon and would not be required at this time, under this current plan, to duplicate information in another language. Websites, however, may change multiple languages with a click of a button and this may be a solution to anyone researching the County’s public transportation programs.

Figure 8 Percent Limited English Proficiency

Geography	Proportion of Population over 5 that have Limited English Proficiency
Oregon (state)	2.8%
Baker County	0.8%

American Community Survey 2020 5-year estimates

Migrant Workers

Migrant workers represent a proportion of local populations on a seasonal basis, and may not be captured in Census statistics. Migrant workers are typically employed in agriculture, manufacturing, or other low-income employment sectors, and are likely to utilize transit if available. These populations are not consistent throughout the year and may be working in the county during different seasons, depending on the nature of their employment. The Oregon Health Authority commissioned a 2018 enumeration study, which estimated that there were 192 migrant workers and associated persons (e.g., family members) in Baker County-throughout the year. Estimates for Baker County and State of Oregon are presented in Figure 9.

Figure 9 Estimated Migrant Seasonal Farm & Non-Farm Workers

Geography	Estimated Number of Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers and Non-Farmworkers
Oregon (state)	172,611
Baker County	192

Estimates of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers in Agriculture, June 2018 Update

Employment

From the information garnered in Figure 10, Baker County did very well, especially since the data is directly in the midst of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic. The major employment loss fell under Public Administration, but overall, Baker County only had a -2% job loss over the ten-year period.

Figure 10 Employment Distribution by Super Sectors - Comparison

	2010	2020	Job Growth
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	1050	1170	
Public Administration	1350	1110	
Education & Health Services	810	980	
Manufacturing	530	550	
Leisure & Hospitality	670	530	
Professional & Business Services	280	340	
Mining, Logging & Construction	250	310	

Other Services	270	170	
Financial Activities	210	140	
Information	80	40	
TOTAL	7510	7360	-2%
July Data for each year			150 Jobs

<https://datausa.io/profile/geo/baker-county-or>

Figure 11 Major Employers in Baker County

Employer	Sector
Local Government	Services
County Government	Services
State Government	Services
Powder River Correctional Facility	Corrections
Marvin Wood Products	Wood Products
Ash Grove Cement	Mining & Manufacturing

Sources: Baker County Economic Development

Major employers are highlighted in Figure 11. The prevalence of government jobs provide opportunities for transit as those employees typically commute during traditional business hours. Manufacturing jobs, which often include second and third shifts, may be better served by carpooling, vanpooling, and other flexible services rather than a traditional bus.

3 EXISTING SERVICES AND RESOURCES

The largest transit agency serving Baker County is Northeast Oregon Transit (operated by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon). Significant destinations include target populations such as senior centers, medical clinics, and social services. Demand-response transportation, regional transportation, and other transportation services operating in the County are also briefly described below. Reference information was obtained from NEO Public Transit Baker County Operations Plans and Community Resource Guide.

LOCAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Northeast Oregon Transit (NEO Transit)

Northeast Oregon (NEO) Transit is operated by Community Connection of Northeast Oregon (CCNO), a non-profit community service organization providing social services to seniors, children, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities. NEO Transit provides fixed-route and demand response services in the Baker County area.

Existing Services for Baker County

Deviated Fixed Route Service

Deviated Fixed-route services connect the major population centers. The Trolley Deviated Fixed Route runs between the NEO Transit and St. Alphonsus Medical Center from 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

Demand Response Services

The Demand Response (Dial-A-Ride) service ADA complementary paratransit, Monday through Friday from 7 am to 5 pm anywhere within the city limits of Baker City. Anyone within the city limits of Baker City is eligible for this service. Reservations must be made in advance the day before.

Intercity Connector to LaGrande

NEO Transit operates the Intercity Connector from Baker City to LaGrande serving the communities of Haines and North Powder in route. Intercity Connector leaves Baker City at 7 am and 4:15 pm, Monday through Friday, arrives in La Grande at 8:03 am and 5:18 pm. No reservations needed to ride. Riders can connect to local fixed-route service in La Grande and Island City plus ADA paratransit. Connections with Kayak Public Transit are made in La Grande.

Rural Demand Response Services

While most of the NEO Transit Demand Response services in Baker County are delivered in and around Baker City, the Rural Demand Response addresses the needs of the rural bedroom communities of Halfway, Richland, New Bridge, Huntington, Sumpter, Haines, Keating, Medical Springs and Wingville. also provides complementary paratransit and dial-a-ride in the population centers of the study area. The services are briefly described below.

Figure 12 NEO Transit Rural Demand Response Services

Element	Description
Service Area Description	Halfway and Richland to Baker City. Using a NEO Transit bus stationed in Halfway, NEO Transit offers service to Baker City. Distributes passengers to local destinations and collects them for the return trip upon completion of local business.
	Halfway to New Bridge. A NEO Transit bus stationed in Halfway, runs to the New Bridge Grange by way of Richland.
	Baker City and Huntington, to Ontario. Baker City residents along with a stop in Huntington and delivers passengers to various shopping and appointments in Ontario Oregon.
	Sumpter to Baker City. NEO Transit picks up Sumpter residents for shopping, appointments, and various points of interest in Baker City.
	Haines, Keating, Medical Springs and Wingville – NEO Transit picks up residents for shopping, appointments, and various points of interest in Baker City.
Operating times and fares	Wednesday – Bus leaves Halfway at 9 am and arrives in Baker City at 10 am and return not later than 3:30 PM.
	Thursday – Bus leaves Baker City at 9:30 am and return no later than 4:30 pm. Reservations must be made one day in advance. Serves Huntington in route.
	Friday – Bus leaves Sumpter at 10:30 am and returns no later than 4:00 pm. Reservations must be made one day in advance.
	Tuesday and Friday – serving Haines, Keating, Medical Springs and Wingville, 7 am to 5 pm. Reservations must be made one day in advance.

- Beginning July 2019 and supported by Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF)

Medicaid Contract

Delivery of Medicaid/Affordable Care Act service is considered incidental to the existing operation. A Medicaid assignment may be provided any day, at any time, to any authorized destination, from any authorized pickup address. The broker pays the fully allocated cost of the trip. NEO Transit provides Medicaid rides.

Highly Rural Veterans Transportation

Highly Rural Veterans Transportation is a grant-based program that helps veterans in transit jurisdictions characterized by less than 7 people per square mile access the Veteran's Administration (VA) authorized VA health care facilities. Services are available to eligible riders on the same basis as Medicaid - incidental to existing Public Transit services. The service can run any day, at any time, to any authorized destination. Highly Rural Veterans Transportation is subject to grant funding. Services may be limited or suspended in the absence of resources (or between allocation cycles).

High School Pass Program

Baker County high school student annual fixed route trolley pass. 500 free annual passes were distributed to Baker High School in September of 2019 and only expire when the individual is no longer high school student. Today the high school students just need to present a current student body card as their fare free pass. Supported by Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) funds.

Dispatch

CCNO-NEO Transit uses Adept by Stratagen for trip reservation, dispatch, and accounting. CCNO secured ODOT 5339 Funds to purchase a new dispatch software system called Trip Spark, which is Cloud based, user friendly and includes reporting options.

Special Events

Special Events within Baker County, NEO Transit will offer special routes and hours on a Route Deviation basis. Special events include Hells Canyon Motorcycle Rally and Sumpter Flea Market. All expanded services will remain open to the public. All access services are open to the public. We will in each instance strictly comply with the provisions of 49 CFR 604.

Emergency Services

In the event of a declared emergency, our services may be mobilized by the County, State or Federal emergency management officials. We will comply and prioritize such requests if we are called upon

Figure 13 Northeast Oregon Transit Fleet Inventory

County	Vehicle Type				Total
	Transit Bus	Cut Away	Straight Van	Mini-Van/Sedan	
Baker County	1	9	1	3	13
ADA Accessibility	1	9	1	3	13

Source: Community Connections of Northeast Oregon, Inc. Northeast Oregon Public Transit in Baker County Operations Plan (2022)

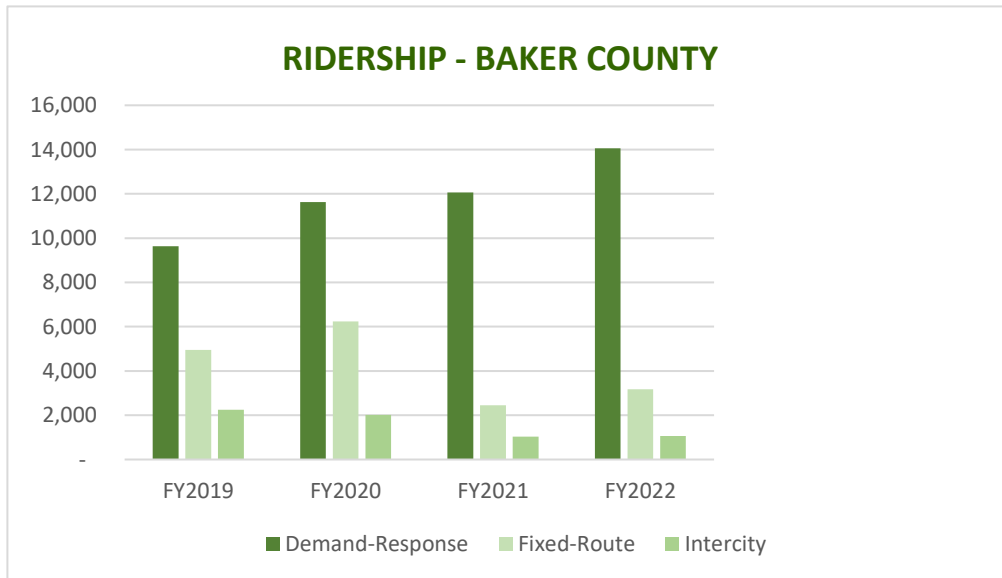
Ridership

Annual ridership in Baker County shown in Figure 15.

Figure 14 Annual Transit Ridership by Transit Providers 2019-2022

	Demand-Response	Fixed-Route	Intercity	TOTAL
FY2019	9,628	4,951	2,243	16,822
FY2020	11,624	6,240	2,013	19,877
FY2021	12,056	2,451	1,033	15,540
FY2022	14,059	3,176	1,060	18,295

*Paratransit is conducted through the Demand Response program.



TRANSIT IN BAKER COUNTY

Baker County has public transportation service providers and listed below are the services.

Figure 15 Primary Transportation Services

Provider	Transportation Programs
Northeast Oregon Transit	Deviated fixed route services - Local fixed route and complementary ADA paratransit (Baker City)
	Regional inter-city fixed-route Baker City to LaGrande serving the communities of Haines and North Powder in route
	Demand response services (Dial A Ride) within city limits of Baker City
	Rural Demand response services serving communities outside of Baker City
Elkhorn Taxi	Workforce on Demand (WOD) and Rides to Wellness
Veterans DAV	Rides to Caldwell and Boise Idaho VA Medical Center
Kayak Public Transit	Regional inter-city fixed route stop in La Grande; Route stops in Pendleton to connect riders to communities in Umatilla and Morrow Counties

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Greyhound

Greyhound intercity bus service is available for the general public in the cities of Baker City, LaGrande, Pendleton and Boise Idaho, on a first come, first-serve basis. Routes from the Boise Idaho area head towards Baker City, La Grande, Spokane, Seattle, Portland, and Salt Lake City. Baker Truck Corral, right off of Interstate 84 Exit 304, is the Greyhound bus terminal. The Greyhound stop is located at Baker Truck Corral provides 24-hour services such as restaurant, fuel station, store and services. Tickets may be purchased online or at a full-service terminal.

The People Mover – Grant County Transportation District

The People Mover located in John Day Oregon serves the residents of Grant County. People Mover offers a route from John Day to Baker City with a stop in Sumpter on 2nd and 4th Thursdays of the month. Riders are pay a small fee for the ride. Once in Baker City, stops are provided at St. Alphonsus Medical Center, Rite

Aid, and Bi Mart for shopping. Riders may also access the transit services provided by Northeast Oregon Transit (NEO), operated by CCNO, located in Baker City at the Senior Center. Additional marketing is needed in the area for riders to become familiar with the People Mover routes.

Kayak Public Transit

Kayak Public Transit provides free public transportation serving southeastern Washington and northeastern Oregon in 18 communities, cities, towns and 4 counties via fixed-route, ADA Paratransit. The service is operated by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), which is headquartered in Mission, Oregon in Umatilla County. The goal of the service lies in connecting towns and transporting people for employment, education, medical and other services.

Over time, service has grown from one 14 passenger vehicle to a fleet of 13 cutaway vehicles operating seven year-round fixed routes. Kayak Public Transit has a fleet of 12 buses, 2 vans & 1 trolley bus. All vehicles have wheelchair lifts and are ADA accessible. In 2014, CTUIR Public Transit rebranded service as Kayak Public Transit to help people understand that service is open to the public, not just tribal members. In November 2015 Kayak Public Transit ended contracted services for all bus routes and took over full operations. In January 2017 Kayak entered into an agreement to operate a local fixed route service within the City of Hermiston, Oregon. Kayak Public Transit’s ridership has continued to increase and in 2019 had 105,961 one-way trips. The service is open to the public and fares are free.

In January 2016, the Tri-City Trolley service, serving Tri-Cities (Pasco, Kennewick, and Richland), Hermiston, and Irrigon, was cut due to funding limitations. It is the future goal of Kayak Public Transit to reinstate the Tri-cities bus route between Hermiston, Oregon and Kennewick, Washington.

Kayak Public Transit celebrated its one millionth rider, a number unsurpassed by any other public transportation service within eastern Oregon counties. The press release stated, “The Tribes of the CTUIR have traveled the path and roadways that crisscross our region for thousands of years. The Transit program is an extension of our history and culture as a people who traded far and near. CTUIR also believes in giving back to our community to offer this free service to the public.

Figure 16 KAYAK Services Summary

Route Number and Name	Days of operation	Span of Service	Frequency or Number of Daily Trips	Communities Served
Arrow	Monday-Friday	5:10 am – 7:13 pm	3 one-way trips	Pendleton, Mission, La Grande
Hart	Monday-Friday	7:00 am – 7:05 pm	10 one-way trips	Hermiston ADA Paratransit is provided
Hopper	Monday-Friday	4:52 am – 7:56 pm	4 one-way trips	Pendleton, Mission Echo, Hermiston, Stanfield, Umatilla, Irrigon
	Saturday	8:30 am – 7:10 pm	2 one-way trips	
Metro	Monday-Friday	5:03 am – 8:33 pm	6 one-way trips	Pendleton, Mission ADA Paratransit is provided
Rocket	Monday-Friday	6:15 am – 7:00 pm	3 one-way trips	Pendleton, Mission, Pilot Rock
Tripper	Monday-Friday	7:02 am – 4:51 pm	3 one-way trips	Mission, Tutuilla, Pendleton
Whistler	Monday-Friday	4:31 am – 7:57 pm	4 one-way trips	Mission, Pendleton, Walla Walla
	Saturday	9:00 am – 7:15 pm	2 one-way trips	
Dispatch Services	Monday-Friday	4:30 am – 8:30 pm	541-429-7519	No dispatch software at this time

CLIENT-BASED TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Baker County Disabled American Veterans Association

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) van carries veterans from Baker City to the Veterans Administration (VA) medical centers in Boise or Caldwell Idaho. The Disabled American Veterans Association owns and operates the van through VA Medical centers. Veterans can work with volunteer DAV dispatcher and drivers, from Baker City, to schedule rides. DAV sets up the pickup and drop off location at the Baker City VFW Hall. Rides are free to the Veterans. Trips may take all day to complete.

Baker County Veterans Officer

Baker County Veterans Officers work directly with Veterans located throughout Baker County. The Officer provides access to a range of benefits and services offered to Veterans and their families by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Officer assists Veterans with a variety of services for medical benefits, transportation and more. The Officer has been successful reaching out to Veterans across the County through radio and other forms of advertisement.

Association of Oregon Counties – Veteran’s Affairs

The Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) is an inter-county coordination organization assisting counties in the State of Oregon with information sharing and consensus development. AOC’s Veterans Steering Committee works closely with County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) and the Oregon Department of Veterans (ODVA) to advocate for veterans’ services.

Baker County Health Department

Baker County Health Department provides immunizations, family planning/reproductive health appointments, WIC, home visiting, sharps recycling. The health department does not directly provide any transportation services, but their clients do utilize the local transit services.

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon (CCNO)

Community Connection of Northeast Oregon (CCNO) is a non-profit community service organization in Northeast Oregon advocating for and assisting seniors, children, low-income households, and persons with disabilities throughout the four-county area of Baker, Grant, Union and Wallowa. One of CCNOs programs is Northeast Oregon Transit (NEO Transit), which provides public transit services in Baker, Union, and Wallowa counties.

NEO Transit operates fixed route and demand response services in Baker County and Dial a Ride. NEO Transit provides and intercity route to La Grande. NEO

Transit Baker coordinates rides for Veterans with their Highly Rural Transportation Grants (HRTG) offered US Department of Veterans Affairs. NEO Transit is a recipient of public transit funds from Baker County to support public transit services in the county.

CCNO headquarters and Regional Food Bank is located in LaGrande Oregon. CCNO operates a Senior Center located in Baker City, which provides weekly lunches on-site or delivered, including deliveries to surrounding cities, social, health and fitness activities, transit rides offered by NEO programs, in home caregiver support and counseling to help Seniors live independently.

Baker Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau

The Baker Chamber of Commerce and visitor bureau supports business success and development in Baker County community. The Chamber of Commerce supports the use of NEO Transit by sharing information with local businesses.

Baker School District Bus Service

The City of Baker School System has a total of 14 buses that run 12 routes with 10 Individual Education Program (IEP) routes. They transport students to all six schools on a daily basis throughout the school year. According to the Department of Education they provide transportation for K-6 grade students that live 1 mile outside their school boundary. For 7-12 grade students they provide transportation for those living 1.5 miles outside their school boundary. They also provide other transportation services as needed and according to the availability of buses. We provide bussing to and from the following cities: Baker, Durkee, Haines, Keating, Hereford and Sumpter.

Blue Mountain Community College

Blue Mountain Community College (BMCC) is a higher education college serving Baker County. The main campus is located in Baker City. BMCC provide classes in person, online, and Hybrid for our students. BMCC does not directly provide or fund any transportation services. They refer students to use local transportation service - Northeast Oregon Transit (NEO Transit) operates the Baker City Trolley (a local fixed-route bus service).

City of Baker City

Baker City is the main population center of Baker County. The City of Baker City does not directly provide or fund any transportation services in the area. Northeast Oregon Transit (NEO Transit) operates the Baker City Trolley (a local fixed-route bus service) and an inter-city fixed-route bus service to La Grande from Baker City.

May Day

MayDay is a non-profit domestic violence and sexual assault support organization. It is located in Baker City and serves Baker County.

Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. (GOBHI)

Greater Oregon Behavioral Health is a department located under Mid-Columbia Council of Governance (MCCOG) coordinates and reimburses dial-a-ride trips for riders covered under the Oregon Health Plan (i.e., Medicaid) for 14 counties in eastern Oregon, including Baker County. Reimbursement funds are provided by Eastern Oregon Coordinated Care Organization (CCO). Trips are classed as Non-Emergency Medical Trips or (NEMT) are coordinated with various public and private providers based on the cost of providing a client’s trip and level of comfort of the trip. MCCOG uses EcoLane software to estimate these trip costs based on data from providers. CCNO provides rides through GOBHI.

Saint Alphonsus Medical Center

Saint Alphonsus Medical Center is located in Baker City, Oregon and nestled beneath the Elkhorn Mountains. Saint Alphonsus Medical Center - Baker City serves Baker County and surrounding areas. Saint Alphonsus Medical Center coordinates transportation after a patient discharge from the hospital or general medical appointments. They use public transit options to help patients get home or to the faculty of their choice.

State of Oregon Department of Human Services

The State of Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS) provides a variety of social services. The State of Oregon does not directly provide any transportation services. They refer clients to utilize public transportation in Baker County. The cost of fares to ride public transit can be a barrier. If a client does not own or operate personal transportation or have mobility restrictions and disabilities, public Transportation helps to eliminate barriers for individuals to reach medical, supplies and be healthier and independent.

State of Oregon Employment Department

The State of Oregon Department Employment Department also known as “WorkSource Oregon” provides employment services by in person, virtual and phone. The State of Oregon does not directly provide any transportation services. They refer clients to utilize public transportation in Baker County. Reliable transportation is important to maintain employment and provide for families.

Ashley Manor Senior Living

Ashley Manor Senior Living is an assisted living facility in Baker City. Medical professionals care for residents at the facility.

Meadowbrook Place

Meadowbrook Place is an assisted living facility in Baker City. Transportation is provided for residents during the day. Rides in the evening for residents are provided by Elkhorn Taxi.

Settler's Park

Settler's Park is an assisted living facility in Baker City. Settler's Park has a van to provide transportation for resident's excursions. Daily medical rides and shopping are provided by Northeast Oregon Transit and Elkhorn Taxi for residents.

Step Forward

Step Forward is a non-profit social service organization providing residential services, supported living opportunities, and community access supports to persons with disabilities. Transportation is provided to clients on a case-by-case basis. Step Forward is an STF recipient with matching assistance from Medicaid funding.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION SERVICE

Elkhorn Taxi

Elkhorn Taxi is a small independent taxi service based in Baker City Oregon and serving Baker County and the surrounding area. Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The taxi services include medical rides, rides to employment, shopping, prescription drop off & delivery, and fuel deliveries.

Elkhorn Taxi works in collaboration with Baker County to offer subsidized public transit programs called Baker County Workforce on Demand (WOD) and Rides to Wellness. The WOD are rides to/from employment locations and Rides to Wellness are non-emergency rides or late-night hospital discharge and both programs are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Medical rides are provided from Baker City to Boise Idaho.

Baker City Airport

The city of Baker City operates a private municipal airport located three miles north of Baker City, in Baker County Oregon. Forest Service and Life Flight uses the Baker City Airport to conduct their services.

PUBLIC TRANSIT FUNDING IN BAKER COUNTY

ODOT Special Transportation Fund (STF)

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Rail and Public Transit Division (RPTD) administers the funds for the State of Oregon. The Special Transportation Fund (STF) and was created in 1985 by the Oregon Legislature. The STF was originally funded with a \$.01 per pack cigarette tax. In 1989, this tax was raised to \$.02. Today, the cigarette tax revenue, as well as excess revenue earned from sales of photo ID Cards and other funds from Oregon Department of Transportation.

The Oregon Legislature intended that STF funds be used to provide transportation services needed to access health, education, work, and social/recreational opportunities so that seniors and people with disabilities may live as independently and productively as possible. The funds may be used for any purpose directly related to transportation services, including transit operations, capital equipment, planning, travel training Originally, the law identified 33 transit districts or counties as eligible to receive the STF moneys; subsequently, in 2003, the nine federally recognized Indian Tribes in Oregon were added as eligible recipients. The resulting 42 designated entities are called “STF Agencies.”

The STF Program is governed by Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 391.800 through 391.830 and Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 732. The STF Program provides a flexible, coordinated, reliable and continuing source of revenue in support of transportation services for people who are senior and people with disabilities of any age.

ODOT State Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF)

With the passage of House Bill 2017, Keep Oregon Moving, the Oregon Legislature made a significant investment in transportation to advance what Oregonians value—a vibrant economy with good jobs, strong communities with high quality of life, a clean and safe environment, and healthy people. The centerpiece of Keep Oregon Moving is the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF). This fund provides a new dedicated source of funding to expand public transportation service in Oregon communities. STIF resources are used for public transportation purposes and support the effective planning, deployment, operation, and administration of STIF funded public transportation programs. These uses include, but are not limited to, creating new transit systems, maintaining systems and plans to improve transit services. The STIF resources provide matching funds for state or federal grant dollars used to provide public transportation.

ODOT staff developed the STIF programs with significant input from the Oregon State Public Transportation Advisory Committee, public transportation providers, and other interested stakeholders. STIF is solely funded by a new one-tenth of 1 percent state payroll tax. STIF is broken down into four programs: Formula funds (90% of funds), Discretionary (5%) and Intercommunity program (4%) and an

ODOT supported technical resource center (1%). The fund provides dedicated source of funding to expand public transportation to access jobs, improve mobility, relieve congestion, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions around Oregon.

STIF/STF Consolidation During the 2019 session

The Oregon Legislature directed the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to develop a plan to merge two separate public transportation funding programs: Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and the Special Transportation Fund (STF). ODOT convened a Consolidation Advisory Committee (CAC), to task them with advising ODOT on key elements and priorities to ensure a successful program consolidation. Currently, the ODOT is working on a plan to fully implement the consolidation by 2023. Additional information can be located at <https://www.oregon.gov/odot/RPTD/Pages/STF-STIF-Consolidation.aspx>.

ODOT Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities 5310

This federal fund source supports public transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities by funding eligible capital, purchased service, and preventive maintenance projects for transportation providers. Funds are awarded every two years using an established formula. Lead, or Special Transportation Fund Agencies recommend projects for funding.

Funding comes from the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 program, which is distributed to states using a population-based formula in an amount set by Congress. Funding also comes from ODOT's transfer of Federal Highway Surface Transportation Block Grant funds to the Section 5310 program.

Transportation Advisory Committee Requirements

Baker County Transportation Advisory Committee (BCTAC) consists of at least five members appointed by the Baker County Board of Commissioners. The advisory committee meets at least twice per year or more to fulfill the duties of the program. The purpose of the committee is to advise and assist the Board of Commissioners on the distribution of funds, the enhancement of local and regional public transit services overall management and reporting of the funds, and the adopted coordinated plan for Baker County.

Baker County Transportation Projects

Baker County STF projects for 2021-2023:

Project 1: Step Forward Activities – Step Forward

Project 2: Seniors and People with Disabilities – CCNO

Project 3: Grant Administration – Baker County

Baker County STIF projects for 2021-2023:

Project 1: Grant Administration – Baker County

Project 2: Transit Manager – CCNO

Project 3: Coordinated Transportation Plan – Baker County

Project 4: Reduced Fares – CCNO

Project 5: Workforce on Demand – Elkhorn Taxi

Project 6: Transit District Development and Implementation - Baker County

Project 7: Building Expansion – CCNO

Project 8: Demand Response - CCNO

Project 9: Expansion of Hours – CCNO

Project 10: Student passes – CCNO

Baker County 5310 projects for 2021-2023:

Project 1: Capital - Vehicle Acquisition

Project 2: Purchase Services

Baker County Grant Administration

The Baker County Grant Administrator position was created due to the new Oregon public transit funding called Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF). The Grant Administrator works to provide coordination and collaboration with private and public providers in Baker County. Grant Administrator is the County liaison to the Transportation Advisory Committee, manages the ODOT Quarterly reporting, works in partnership to develop new transit projects, and enhance public transit services in a rural Baker County.

Future Funding Challenges may be on the horizon...

There is a movement to change state lines that will move much of eastern Oregon to Idaho State jurisdiction. This is new territory for everyone involved, as this has not happened anywhere within our lifetime. Information for this section was garnered through ODOT-RPTD and Idaho Department of Transportation-Idaho Transit Division (IDOT-ITD). Currently, however, there is not a timeline as to if and when this may occur. It could be two years, five years, ten years, or may not be at all. This is all contingent upon legislative authority in the participating counties, both Oregon and Idaho states and Federal legislation. For now, future funding will continue through ODOT-RPTD for STIF, 5310, 5311 or 5311(f), 5339 and other planning and discretionary grants. Because it is possible this change may happen

within a five-year time frame, this information has been provided in this Coordinated Plan. For more information regarding the transition of Oregon & Idaho, visit the website greateridaho.org.

4 STAKEHOLDER AND USER INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholder and user involvement is essential for a successful Coordinated Plan. Engaging the appropriate organizations and individuals in this planning efforts was critical to identifying the needs of the target populations, the public transportation resources, and prioritization of strategies.

STAKEHOLDER APPROACH AND OUTREACH

The Project Approach was composed of reaching out to members from community organizations to answer questions about the current public transit services, user needs, and future trends. Meetings were held to orientate and gather route information to update the coordinated plan. A list of Stakeholders was recruited to answer a survey about public transit.

- Met with County Grant Administrator and Public Transportation Service Providers to orientate about public transit in the communities and county
- Gathered agency information from the Community Resource Guide published by Baker County Health Department to identify Stakeholders
- Gathered public transit routes from CCNO – NEO Public Transit Baker County Operations Plan
- Rode the public transit system to complete user surveys and engage in conversations
- Invited Stakeholders to attend three public meetings to discuss the plan, needs, prioritize strategies
- Engage Stakeholders by phone and email to respond to a Stakeholder Survey questions regarding public transit in the County
- Provided final recommendations prior to plan adoption

STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH

The primary means for capturing input on needs and potential gaps included:

- Survey administered to the Baker County Transportation Advisory Committee members and selected community stakeholders by email, whose agency serves residents located in Baker County.
- Held three public meetings (in-person and Zoom) at the Baker County Courthouse in the Summer/Fall 2022. Stakeholders were invited to attend.
- Phone interviews conducted with key identified stakeholders throughout the plan
- Stakeholders were invited to participate in a discussion of findings during the public meeting to discuss the identified issues and opportunities gathered through this outreach helped shape the priorities for transportation services, projects, and investments within Baker County.

USER OUTREACH

The primary means for capturing input on needs and potential gaps included:

- Riding the public transit system to complete user surveys and engage in conversations
- The results are as follows:
 1. Are you aware of all transportation services available to you? Of those interviewed, 63% said yes, they knew of all the transportation services available.
 2. Are you a Veteran? Of those interviewed, only 1 was a Veteran.
 3. What is the primary reason you use public transportation today? Personal mobility, no vehicle, medical, errands, attend event at the Senior Center.
 4. If public transportation services were not available, what would you do for transportation? 63% would not have transportation, would need to ask for help from family/friend.
 5. Is there a place where you would like to board that is not currently available? One person would like to board at their personal home.
 6. Is there a place you would like to exit? None suggested another place to exit.
 7. How often do you use public transportation? 87% use the services weekly.
 8. Do you use public transportation to connect to other local transportation systems? Of those interviewed, none use the local system to connect to other systems, but some said they were interested in connecting to other regional systems.

TRANSIT IN BAKER COUNTY

Challenges in Providing Transit

The large land area of the counties and widely dispersed population makes it challenging for transit operators to provide service throughout Baker County.

The long-distance transit trips make operating costs expensive; agencies are interested in pursuing cost-saving measures such as smaller vehicles or integrating on-demand and peer-to-peer services. Connections to other transit providers in neighboring counties could also be optimized for passengers needing to make multi-county trips.

A major challenge lies in simply elevating the profile of transit in the community so that both those who use it and those who do not, recognize its need and value.

Role of Transit in the Community

Driving in Baker County is the cultural norm. In rural areas with long and dispersed commuting patterns, it is very difficult for transit to provide the level of convenience afforded by a private automobile, especially given abundant free parking provided at both ends of the trip.

The communities in Baker County area were highlighted by several stakeholders as being very ‘tight-knit;’ neighbors, friends, and families often provide transportation for others in need. This informal network of transportation provision helps those with social connections travel, but those without these connections remain isolated. Stakeholders highlighted the particular isolation of mentally or developmentally disabled individuals, and this is a key need to address.

Transit is important in the community primarily among seniors, persons with disabilities, and persons with lower incomes, and Transit Providers, primarily serves these populations.

Stakeholders highlighted that public transit in Baker County does provide services for seniors, persons with disabilities and students to aid in medical, social and school trips.

NEEDS & MARKETS

Residents in Baker County utilize transit for a variety of trip types, but three trip types were frequently cited by stakeholders as critical transit needs:

- Work trips. Workforce on Demand (WOD) serves Baker City and is a good source for work commute trips. Work commute challenges exist in the greater Baker County area, but WOD has aided in this challenge.
- Trips to medical appointments. Older adults and people with disabilities are both *more likely* to need specialized medical services and *less likely* to be able to transport themselves to medical appointments – this results in an increased need

for transportation services. Trips to medical appointments can be especially long because of the centralized locations of specialized medical care, and this difficulty is exacerbated in more rural areas of Oregon. Medical trips are among the most critical needs for transportation service in Baker County. Medical hospitals are outside of Baker County and the Veteran Administration Hospital mostly used is in Boise, Idaho, but some Veterans like to go to Portland, Oregon and Walla Walla, Washington. These trips are of great necessity, but also a challenge.

- Trips to shopping destinations. Grocery stores, pharmacies, and other shopping destinations are more sparsely located in rural areas of Oregon, potentially resulting in longer trips to reach shopping locations. Stakeholders highlighted that shopping trips are less frequent as work commute and medical trips.

Transit Markets

The markets for transit in Baker County include older adults, persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes, veterans, and the general public. Issues and opportunities relative to specific markets are discussed below:

- Older adults not covered under Medicaid (i.e., persons over 65 but with higher incomes) have difficulty in obtaining rides. These persons may be disabled or unable to drive but because of their ineligibility for Medicaid have decreased opportunities for utilizing transportation services to reach medical appointments and other destinations.
- Low-income populations. Stakeholders highlighted fare-free transit services, that this market is particularly vulnerable in the Baker County.
- Mentally/developmentally disabled individuals. Individuals with mental or developmental disabilities are more likely to be socially isolated, and thus not have as many opportunities for transportation by family or friends, and so are critical to provide transportation services for.
- Veterans' transportation. Veterans in Baker County regularly need to travel to VA medical centers in Boise Idaho, Portland Oregon and Walla Walla Washington, but service provision is irregular. Baker City currently has a volunteer-based, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) van serving Boise. Regular provision of veterans' transportation is a critical need in the area.

Future Trends

Several future trends that may affect the future supply and demand for transportation services in the Baker County:

- A growing aging population in Baker County. Research shows Baker County with a higher senior population than the State of Oregon and the United States overall. This growing aging population in the Baker County area (both as residents age in place and retirees move into the area) is a possible driver of

increased transit demand in the future. This is a trend to be cognizant of in future service provision and planning.

- Increased healthcare provision. Research indicated that increased healthcare provision in the area will likely increase demand for transit services. Transportation providers in the area can be key partners in the increased access to local healthcare services.

System Barriers and Findings

Transportation services within Baker County have encountered several key barriers to increasing their ridership and usefulness to residents and workers. The following are opportunities for overcoming those barriers and improving transportation services in the Baker County area:

- Improved medical trip provision to veterans, older adults, and low-income populations. **Medical trips are one of the primary markets for transportation services in the area, and the sparseness of both populations and medical services make these trips especially difficult to provide.**
 - Veterans need a consistent transportation service for reaching VA medical centers. Coordination may be key to ensure more people get access to services.
 - There is a need for increased coordination of medical trip provision with healthcare providers. Increased coordination of these trips can result in more medical trips provided at potentially lower cost per trip.
- Increased wellness ride provision. **Baker County has improved wellness rides, provided social trips and worked to keep their general populations healthy.**
- Increased transportation funding sustainability. **Transportation providers have always felt the uncertainty regarding the sustainability of transportation funding as a key issue inhibiting the expansion of existing services or the development of new services. For example, veterans' transportation is a key issue in the area, and recent grants have been key in supporting veterans' transportation in the area, but transportation providers are wary of the sustainability of these funds. Baker County is one of ten counties in the State of Oregon, eligible for Highly Rural Veteran's competitive grant administered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Sustainability has always been a key issue with transit providers with all of their transit programs. STIF funding source has aided in this sustainable challenge, and 5310, 5311, 5311(f) and 5339 are federal funds that are passed through ODOT-RPTD to qualifying agencies. These federal funds have specific qualifications, but once awarded, STIF funds can then provide the matching funds necessary to provide full funding for many transit projects.**
- Improved information provision and clarity. **Research shows a need for a centralized information repository on available services and corresponding policies. Many potential riders do not know where or when transit service operates, or who is eligible to utilize it.**
 - This would require improvements on current web assets (e.g., web site(s), social media, e-mail communications) as well as informational materials,

promotional materials, and personal outreach at events (e.g., farmer’s markets) and/or other locations (e.g., senior centers).

Increased service frequency. Baker City services operates hourly all day, which is a good level of service in a rural community. Intercity service is a prescribed schedule. Shopping or other errands that typically only take an hour or two, may require longer times to coincide with the bus schedule. As noted earlier, frequency is intricately tied to funding levels - providing more service would necessitate increasing operations and capital funding.

STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED

Figure 17 Agencies Interviewed

Agency/Organization	Type of Stakeholder	Area Served	Name of Interviewee	Interviewee Role
BC Veterans Officer	Veterans Officer	Baker County	Rick Gloria	Veterans Officer
BC Health Department	County	Baker County	Megan Chancey	Public Health
BC Transportation Advisory Committee	County	Baker County	Mark Estes	Advisory Committee member
BC Transportation Advisory Committee	County	Baker County	Bonnie Thiel	Advisory Committee member
Community Connections of Northeast Oregon	Transportation Provider	Baker County	Joe Hayes	County Transit Manager
Baker Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Bureau	Public Service	Baker City	Shelly Cutler	Executive Director
Baker School District Bus Service	Education	Baker County	Buell Gonzalez	Transportation Director
Blue Mountain Community College	Higher Education	Baker City	Jeff Nelson	Director
City of Baker City	Municipality	Baker City	Michelle Owen	Public Works Director
Elkhorn Taxi	Transportation Provider	Baker City	David Sanders	Owner
May Day	Non-Profit	Baker County	Leanna Gautney	Executive Director
Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc/Mid-Columbia COG	Council of Governance	Baker County	Kris Bolar, MBA	NEMT Manager
Saint Alphonsus Medical Center	Medical	Baker County	Shelly Laurence-Smith	Supervisor of Care Coordination & Utilization Review
Oregon State Dept of Human Services	Social Services	Baker County	Chris Evans	Community Development Coordinator
Oregon State Employment	Employment	Baker County	Matthew Wilson	Director
Oregon State Department of Transportation	Transportation	Oregon Region 5	Arla Miller	Regional Transportation Coordinator (RTC)
Step Forward	Individuals w/Disabilities	Baker City	Ashley Dixson	Chief Financial Officer

5 STRATEGIES

The following set of strategies was developed with input from the County Administrator, community stakeholders, and consultant team to address transit needs. Strategies are organized by category and include associated action items, responsible party, timeframe, level of effort, and estimated level of cost.

Using this information, each strategy was prioritized on a scale of high or medium, based upon input from the County Administrator and stakeholders. Please note the strategy numbering is for organizational purposes only and does not correspond to priority; priority is addressed in the ‘Priority’ field for each strategy.

STRATEGY DESCRIPTIONS

Maintain Existing Service and Programs

No. 1 – Maintain Existing Service and Programs			
Strategy		Description	
Preserve existing cost-effective services in Baker County.		All agencies and providers should seek to maintain their existing service offerings.	
Benefits		Action Items	
Baker County has a wide range of public transportation services that is serving a variety of riders – maintaining these existing services is the first step to ensuring a healthy transit system.		1. Sustainable funding sources – STIF, 5310, 5311(f), 5339 2. Prioritize transit projects to meet the needs of residents.	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County Transit Providers	Ongoing	Low	\$\$
Priority: High			

No. 2 – Preventative Maintenance to vehicles and replacements			
Strategy		Description	
<p>Complete preventative maintenance on a regular schedule to vehicles. Replace vehicles in a timely fashion.</p>		<p>Complete vehicle maintenance using a transit vehicle maintenance plan to track preventative maintenance and repairs. Keep up with capital costs by following ODOT's standards for vehicle replacement.</p>	
Benefits		Action Items	
<p>Well-maintained and current vehicles increase service reliability by reducing chance of breakdowns and provide for passenger comfort.</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify capital replacement needs: STIF, 5310, 5339 2. Replace vehicles as needed 3. Maintain records of preventative maintenance and repairs 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
<p>Baker County Transit Providers</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>\$\$\$</p>
<p>Priority: High</p>			

Information and Marketing

No. 3 – Information and Marketing			
Strategy		Description	
<p>Provide a brochure and consistent web materials across transit providers and other human service agencies, educations, employment, State & Federal agencies, etc.</p>		<p>Transportation providers should provide information materials for public consumption in all public areas.</p>	
Benefits		Action Items	
<p>Lack of information is often the biggest barrier to using public transportation. Stakeholders (63%) indicated a need for marketing and awareness.</p>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spot app or real-time route information application is needed. 2. Expand transit providers website with all services. 3. Provide information in hard-copy or digital to local agencies. Attend events to distribute information and connect in-person with riders. 4. Identify locations for and advertise with wrapped bus shelters for awareness and marketing. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
<p>Transit Provider</p>	<p>Short (0–2 years)</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>\$\$</p>
<p>Priority: High</p>			

Geographic

No. 4 – Geographic			
Strategy		Description	
Continue to support NEMT and Rides to Wellness programs		Support non-emergent medical transportation (NEMT) and Rides to Wellness programs for non-Medicaid recipients. Scheduling NEMT and Rides to Wellness to out-of-county or state medical providers with transit providers. Funding for NEMT and Rides to Wellness is limited or suspended in the absence of resources (or between allocation cycles).	
Benefits		Action Items	
Medicare-insured adults and people seeking wellness rides often are left without service as providers primarily focus on Medicaid trip provisions. Non-Medicaid service provided by NEMT and Rides to Wellness programs will enable Baker County residents to reach out of the county or state medical appointments. Transit providers have difficulty providing services for requested trips due to lack of, or shortage of funding.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Track performance of NEMT and Riders to Wellness programs Continue to support NEMT and Rides to Wellness funding for county residents. Medical trips are scheduled out of county and state. Apply for future STIF Funding in FY2023-2025 to continue to support NEMT and Rides to Wellness programs. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County Transit Providers	Short (0–2 years)	High	\$\$
Priority: High			

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No. 5 – Geographic			
Strategy		Description	
Provide service to employment clusters with the WOD Program. Explore carpool and vanpool programs as needed.		Transit providers and/or employers should provide increased service to areas of higher density employment within the county via Workforce on Demand, fixed route, carpools, vanpools or transportation option coordination.	
Benefits		Action Items	
This strategy benefits users that need to access employment clusters within Baker City or throughout Baker County.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify employment clusters 2. Market new WOD Program to employers and employees. 3. Conduct outreach to employers 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Transit Providers Employers	Short (0-2 years)	Low	\$\$
Priority: Medium			

No.6 – Geographic			
Strategy		Description	
Install Blus stops and shelters		Install bus stops with shelters for use by patrons.	
Benefits		Action Items	
To provide shelters for comfort during inclement weather for all patrons, especially seniors and persons with disabilities.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding source for this project may fall under 5310, 5339 and STIF 2. Acquire land and bids 3. Bid award to best, qualified agency for installation 4. May purchase shelter wraps for aesthetics and awareness (marketing). 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County	Medium (3-5 years)	Low	\$\$\$
Priority: Medium			

No.7 – Geographic			
Strategy		Description	
Continue to support intercity fixed-route service to outlying communities.		Outlying communities in the region, such as Haines, Halfway, Huntington, Richland, Sumpter, and Unity, have access to a fixed-route service due to new funding. Residents can access medical services, shopping or other basic needs. (Currently there is a fixed-route once weekly to La Grande and Ontario, Oregon)	
Benefits		Action Items	
Access to transportation services for County residents in these outlying communities is critical if they do not have access to a personal vehicle.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Market the fixed-route service 2. Continue funding support 3. Identify potential service solutions. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County Transit Providers	Short (0-2 years)	Medium	\$\$\$
Priority: High			

Temporal

No. 8 – Temporal			
Strategy		Description	
Expand weekend and evening services.		Transit Providers offer an increased, expanded service hours, including early morning and evenings. A taxi service is available to provide service on weekday evenings and weekends beyond the hours of the transit providers.	
Benefits		Action Items	
Irregular shift work and other activities taking place in the evenings or weekends can be served by transit.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify peak demand periods for service 2. Identify funding source – STIF, 5310, 5311(f) 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County Transit Providers	Short (0-2 years)	High	\$\$\$\$
Priority: Medium			

Organization

No. 9 – Organization			
Strategy		Description	
Coordinate long distance Veteran trips.		Continued coordination between medical providers (particularly VA Medical Centers in Boise and Caldwell Idaho), DAV services and local transit providers to offer transit options service to areas out-of-county.	
Benefits		Action Items	
This strategy benefits users that need to access long-distance medical facilities. By grouping passengers into one vehicle, more people can be served using existing resources.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify needed destinations (e.g., VA Medical Center in Boise or Caldwell Idaho) 2. Maintain collaboration between providers serving these areas 3. Maintain funding for Highly Rural Veterans Transportation and Rides to Wellness. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Transit Services DAV Service Elkhorn Taxi	Short (0-2 years)	Medium	\$\$R
Priority: Medium			

No.10 –Organization			
Strategy		Description	
Maintain Baker County Grant Administrator		STIF Funding has allowed Baker County to hire a part-time grant administrator to work closely with transit providers, prepare a transit plan, oversee reporting and distribution of grant funds and projects.	
Benefits		Action Items	
Baker County maintains a part-time grant administrator to assist transit providers with services, reporting and requirements, and maintain the Advisory Committee.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain County Administrator-STIF Plan project 2. County position is to ensure the transit plan is prepared, submit applications, reporting and compliance for transit providers. 3. Maintain Advisory Committee members. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County	Short (0–2 years)	Medium	\$\$
Priority: High			

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No. 11– Organization			
Strategy		Description	
Maintain a Mobility Manager position		A Mobility Manager position that can assist with rides, scheduling and dispatch, trip planning, travel training, reporting and statistics, transportation options and daily operations. Coordinate with local assisted living facilities and other transit providers to reduce service redundancy and coordinate service needs.	
Benefits		Action Items	
The Mobility Manager position provides increased collaboration, marketing and information. Travel training is a key strategy for increasing transit ridership that a Mobility Manager can coordinate. Assisted living facility residents can benefit from daily and planned group trips.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain current mobility manager position to be available to serve riders 2. Introduce travel training 3. Maintain contact with local assisted living facilities and other transit providers for coordination of services. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County Transit Providers	Short (0-2 years)	Medium	\$\$\$
Priority: High			

No. 12– Organization			
Strategy		Description	
Maintain reduced fares and student passes		Fares were reduced with a new funding source for transit services. Low-income households are requesting fare-free rides. New funding source was received to provide free transportation for students grades 9-12.	
Benefits		Action Items	
Reduced fares for fixed-routes and demand response services. Stakeholders (56%) would like to see reduced fares or free-fares due to financial barrier of low-income households and students.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the reduced fare and student pass programs. 2. Market and awareness to residents and students. 3. Seek funding to offer fare-free programs. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Transit Providers	Short (0-2 years)	Medium	\$\$\$
Priority: High			

No. 13– Organization			
Strategy		Description	
Baker County to Study a Transit District Development and Implementation Plan.		Transit District Development and Implementation Plan would indicate the steps involved with forming a Transportation District in Baker County. The plans include the positive and negative benefits to forming a district.	
Benefits		Action Items	
A transit district is a public entity to provide services within a county or boundary area. An entity would have to complete the implantation steps and form the district.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding was identified as a STIF Project FY2021-2023. 2. County to hire a consultant firm to complete the study and plan. 3. County Commissioners would then adopt the completed plan and pursue the next steps. 	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County	Medium (3–5 years)	Low	\$\$\$
Priority: Medium			

Operation

No. 14– Operation			
Strategy		Description	
New technology or reporting systems		From time-to-time, new technologies arise with new start-up pricing that can increase efficiency within your transit programs.	
Benefits		Action Items	
Provide/adapt to new technologies for the benefit of increased efficiency.		Watch for any new technologies that may benefit your transit programs.	
Responsible Party	Timeframe	Level of Effort	Cost
Baker County Transit Providers	Medium (5+ years)	Low	\$\$\$
Priority: Medium			

6 BAKER COUNTY STATEWIDE IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS - STIP

State Transportation Improvement Projects (STIP) are projects not directly related to public transit, but projects nonetheless that may have a major impact on public transit. These projects are through Oregon Department of Transportation to build and repair trails, roads, highways and interstates. Figure 19 shows projects through the year 2024 and can be identified by number if the need should arise to gather information as to the project itself, estimated time-line or other information needed to adjust public transit routing.

Figure 18 Baker County STIP Projects – provided by ODOT Region 5

Key Number	STIP Project Name	STIP Year
22516	I-84: Baldock Slough - Huntington Pavement Seal	2021-2024 STIP
22447	Jordan Valley/Ontario/Huntington/Adrian curb ramps	2021-2024 STIP
22400	OR7/I-84/US30 curb ramps (Baker City)	2021-2024 STIP
22399	OR7/I-84/US30 curb ramps, phase 1 (Baker City)	2021-2024 STIP
22383	OR86: Guardrail Upgrades Final Phase	2021-2024 STIP
22377	Southern Imnaha Heavy Trails Restoration	2021-2024 STIP
22017	Holbrook Creek Road: Pine Creek bridge (Baker County)	2021-2024 STIP
21898	Baker & Union counties traffic signal safety improvements	2021-2024 STIP
21878	I-84: Baker Valley Variable Speed Limit upgrades	2021-2024 STIP
21873	OR86: Fish Creek	2021-2024 STIP
21838	I-84: Hilgard - Baker City culvert repair	2021-2024 STIP
21643	US30: (10th St) /Hughes- Cedar St upgrades (Baker)	2021-2024 STIP
20494	I-84: Upper Perry Interchange to Richland Interchange	2021-2024 STIP

Appendix A Stakeholder Surveys

STAKEHOLDER SURVEY RESULTS

Based on an analysis of the Stakeholder survey results indicates a variety of needs for public transportation. The needs directed the development of the Strategies.

- The elderly population that can no longer operate a vehicle and they rely on public transit for medical and daily needs. Along with medical rides, there is a need for stops at pharmacies to pick up prescriptions.
- For the elderly and low-income population, the cost of a vehicle, along with gas prices and high inflation is difficult to afford or maintain. These populations are depended on public transportation and maintaining public transportation is important.
- A fare free public transit system in Baker City would allow more people to afford to use the bus, particularly for smaller or shorter trips. Cost of fares can be a financial barrier for some households.
- The Baker County Workforce on Demand program is available to provide rides to and from work at a subsidized cost for low-income households and continues to grow in popularity with the continuing rise of living costs.
- Additional resources for Veterans transportation services and rides are needed.
- There was a low percentage of cultural barriers.
- Marketing and advertising would attract more riders. The marketing of regional opportunities for residents wanting to travel outside of the county to other locations. Marketing or public outreach to share transportation services that are available to agencies, organizations, and public. Increase awareness and knowledge of the services such as routes, fares cost, transit training, regional connections and transit providers.
- The weekly transports to outlying community and out of county is covered and the work transport/shopping route from Baker City to La Grande.
- Most agencies are open and available during the weekday hours, when public transit is provided.
- Increase attendance/participation for school students in grades 9-12 and in addition to what local public school provides, public transit is an opportunity for students to gain access to an education that provides a rewarding learning experience.

Public Meetings

All stakeholders were invited to attend public meetings to discuss the updates to the plan. The meetings were held at the Baker County Courthouse in-person and by attending virtually with Zoom. Baker County hosted the meetings.

PUBLIC MEETING #1

Stakeholder public meetings was held at the Baker County Courthouse on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 1:30 pm.

Presentations

Meeting participants were first introduced; the participants are outlined in Figure B-1. Power Point Presentation was provided on the screen for virtual attendees and paper copies distributed to each in-person participant:

- PowerPoint presentation – Summary of Changes from 2016 Plan

The consultant team described the purpose of the project is to prepare the Baker County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan. Insights are detailed below.

- This plan is for Baker County only.
- Updates include Demographics; Local, Regional, Client Transportation Services
- New sections – Public Transit Funding in Baker County Oregon and Greater Idaho Movement
- STIP Projects
- Stakeholder and User Involvement
- Transportation Needs and Strategies

PUBLIC MEETING #2

Stakeholder public meetings was held at the Baker County Courthouse on Thursday September 13, 2022 at 1:30 pm.

Presentations

Meeting participants were introduced; the participants are outlined in Figure B-1. A list of strategies was provided on the screen for virtual attendees and paper copies distributed to each in-person for discussion and updates. The following strategies were discussed:

- Maintain Transit Services
- Preventative Maintenance to vehicles and replacements
- Information and Marketing
- Coordinated Medical trips for NEMT and Rides to Wellness

- Provide service to employment clusters with the WOD program
- Intercity fixed routes service to outlying communities
- Expand weekend and evening service offerings
- Coordinate long distance trips for Veterans
- Maintain a Baker County Grant Administrator
- Maintain a Mobility Manager position
- Maintain reduced fares and student passes
- Transit District Development and Implementation – Baker County
- Capital Improvements -

Participants discussed a need for transportation in Baker County:

A need was discussed about Head Start programs do not provide transportation. Head Start had a contract with CCNO, but it was discontinued this year. Head Start conducted fundraisers to raise funds for the transportation. Parents call CCNO for transportation for their children to Head Start.

PUBLIC MEETING #3

Commissioner held a regularly scheduled public meeting at the Baker County Courthouse on Wednesday, September 21, 2022 at 9 am.

Presentations

The Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting. Grant Administrator Doni Bruland and Consultant Teresa Dutcher were present at the meeting and Consultant Staci Kunz was virtually available. The Commissioners were provided the list of Strategies for review and input. There was a discussion about each of the strategies and the final list of strategies was agreed upon.

PUBLIC MEETING #4

Commissioners held a Special Session public meeting at the Baker County Courthouse on Wednesday, November 9, 2022 at 9 am.

Presentations

The Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting. Grant Administrator Doni Bruland presented the Final Coordinated Human Service Transportation Plan. Consultants Teresa Dutcher and Staci Kunz were virtually available at the meeting. The Commissioners were provided the Final plan for review before the meeting. There was a discussion about population numbers with the U.S. Census

Bureau vs Portland State University-Population Research Center. With a minor change in the plan, it was adopted unanimously on this date, November 9, 2022.

Figure 19 Attendees of Public Meetings

Name	Organization	Role	
Tera Luebberke	CCNO – Baker County	Assistant Transit Manager	Mtg#1
Doni Bruland	Baker County	Grant Administrator	Mtg#1,2,3,4
Mark E. Bennett	Baker County	Commissioner	Mtg#3,4
Bill Harvey	Baker County	Commissioner	Mtg#3,4
Bruce Nicols	Baker County	Commissioner	Mtg#3,4
Chris Evans	State of Oregon DHS	Community Coordinator	Mtg#2
Buell Gonzalez	Baker School District	Transportation Director	Mtg#1
David Sanders	Elkhorn Taxi	Owner	Mtg#1
Stephanie Sanders	Elkhorn Taxi	Owner	Mtg#2
Staci Kunz	Transportation Partnership	Consultant	Mtg#1,2,3,4
Teresa Dutcher	Transportation Partnership	Consultant	Mtg#1,2,3,4