

# Rogue Valley Transportation District Community Perceptions of Transit



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Prepared by:  
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UNIVERSITY OF OREGON



Community  
Planning  
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Final Report

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD or the District) is the public transportation provider for residents of southern Oregon's Rogue Valley. The RVTD partnered with the University of Oregon's Community Planning Workshop (CPW) to conduct an initial public engagement process centered on the potential for high capacity transit along the Highway 99 corridor from Central Point to Ashland.

This report presents the results of research and public engagement activities related to scoping community attitudes, opportunities and issues related to transit enhancements, including a potential bus rapid transit (BRT) in the Highway 99 corridor. It describes the project approach, outlines specific tasks, and provides some preliminary high-level findings learned from the community engagement process.

## Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this study was to gather the perceptions of regional stakeholders, such as students, municipalities, businesses, and residents about their perception of transit enhancements along the Highway 99 Corridor. Specifically, it sought to analyze and gather the opinions and ideas about options for transit enhancements between Central Point and Ashland. Ultimately this report is to be used as a guide to assist RVTD in the preparation for an intensive planning process to make decisions on whether to pursue High Capacity Transit improvements in the Rogue Valley.

This project included a significant data collection element that intends to inform local policy decisions. The data collection included an inventory of land use and transportation facilities in the corridor and a review of current adopted plans, surveys, focus groups, and public workshops.

The intent of the data collection and public process is to develop a better understanding of major opportunities or impediments to developing high capacity transit in the highway 99 corridor as well as public perceptions of high capacity transit.

The findings are based on three community engagement strategies: (1) key person interviews; (2) focus group meetings; and (3) surveys. Individuals that participated in the outreach are referred to as "participants" in this report.

## Findings

The findings are organized by major themes and provide a high level overview of more detailed material in the report.

## Limitations

It is important to recognize the limitations of the findings presented in this document. The information represents the perceptions of individuals that participated in the process and should not be generalized to represent the views of all Rogue Valley residents. Moreover, the findings do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) or the Community Planning Workshop (CPW) and should not be construed as such.

## Perceptions of RVTD

Perceptions of the RVTD influence the ability of the district to maneuver and create changes in the transit system. Opinions and perceptions of residents affect the ability of RVTD to implement transit enhancements within its service boundaries.

A range of perceptions about the district exists. In general individuals and groups that CPW interacted with consider **RVTD to be important for the region and to provide a service that is not only useful but also vital for the accessibility and mobility of large portions of the population.** Key findings include:

- The Business Community has a favorable perception of RVTD.
- Participants held a wide variety of positive, neutral, and negative perceptions of the transportation district
- High School and College Students believe that RVTD could better cater to their needs.

## Role of RVTD

Participants indicated that the role of RVTD was well connected with the mission of the district and suggests that the view of the district's role in the community is in line with the goals and objectives of RVTD. CPW found that the most apparent themes related to the role of RVTD in the region are to:

- Serve people who do not drive either by choice or need.
- Connect residents and workers with businesses and major destinations in the region (in particularly to hospitals and downtown cores).
- Promote and facilitate multi-modal transportation options.
- Assume an important environmental role using transit to reduce the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the Rogue Valley.
- Provide reliable and efficient transit services to the citizens of the Rogue Valley.
- Play a key role in long-range planning with decision makers in the region.

## The Perception of the Role of RVTD Compared with Mission

The mission of the district is “to provide quality public transportation, viewed by residents and visitors as a realistic and viable alternative to the personal automobile, and to thereby improve the quality of life in the Rogue Valley.”<sup>1</sup> RVTD’s four goal closely mesh with the perceived role of the district by participants. Overall, the mission of the district and the expectations of residents, businesses and agencies about the role of RVTD closely match. This suggests **that RVTD is addressing the needs and concerns of the Rogue Valley community and that there is not a large amount of disparity that exists between the expectations of the community and the mission of the district.**

Themes related to the role of RVTD compared with the mission of the district are:

- Schedule reliability and hours of transit operation are areas of concern for residents.
- Buses and bus stops were perceived as unsafe and did not create a sense of place or security.
- Residents, businesses, and organizations in the Rogue Valley perceive transit to have high value for the region.
- Although congestion may be a real issue for the region, it is not generally perceived as a major problem and many individuals and groups believe that buses contribute to congestion rather than alleviating traffic flow issues.
- Planners and the public perceived that the transit system could be better interconnected.

## Perceptions of Transit Enhancements

In general, the community perceives transit enhancements as a useful and pragmatic method of improving the functionality of the transit system. However a variety of opinions exist about the specific approach to improving the transportation system and how that can be achieved. Disparity existed about the correct path or planning horizon for a major transportation system such as a fully implemented Bus Rapid Transit line along the Highway 99 corridor. This was highlighted in meetings with the MPO Technical and Public advisory committees where individuals present suggested that the district follow a deliberate and phased approach.

- Technical experts suggested that a phased or incremental approach to improvements will be the most logical, starting with a determination about which improvements will be the most effective for increasing ridership, reducing delays and improving system reliability.

- A plurality of Rogue Valley MPO members suggested that any future plans for transit improvements must be properly integrated into regional and municipal TSPs for successful implementation.
- Disparity exists about the direction and type of transit improvement the district should pursue—some officials believed that a more thorough analysis of the transit improvements alternatives should be conducted.

## Communications

Communications are an integral component of a community engagement strategy; the approach that RVTD uses will be a fundamental building block for its planning processes.

Participants in surveys and focus groups indicated a greater need for the district to provide more communication and information about the district’s activities and services. While the Rogue Valley Metropolitan organizations are familiar with the activities and services of the district, other groups such as students from the high school and college level indicated a lack of understanding of riding the bus, locating schedules, and reading bus route maps.

RVTD would benefit from a robust communication strategy that utilizes a holistic approach for engaging the public. The strategy should include guiding principles of community engagement found in Chapter 3: Community Engagement Strategy. Following are key findings taken from the communications section of the chapter.

- Residents in the Rogue Valley prefer a variety of communication methods to receive information about the district and its services.
- A majority of business owners and managers prefer electronic communication.
- Residents and business owners and managers in the Rogue Valley are most interested in communications and materials about RVTD’s services and routes and programs, incentives, and discounts for using the bus.
- A large share of residents and business owner and managers have not received, seen, or heard any communications from the district.
- Continual engagement and discussion with the community about transit and the future plans of the district will nurture a stronger relationship between RVTD and the community.
- RVTD would benefit from identifying and developing a group of ‘champions’ and supporters of the district to build legitimacy in the region and provide assistance when unveiling plans for enhancements.
- A tailored public engagement message about transit and potential improvements within the district is an approach that many individuals and groups mentioned during the project process.

## Implementation and Planning

Findings indicate two key areas that the district should focus on when beginning to engage the public and other agencies about the potential for High Capacity Transit improvements. The first is the need for the district to build an internal business case for the need and perceived outcome of transit improvements along the Highway 99 corridor from Ashland to Central Point; the second is the imperative for interagency collaboration.

- Begin to build a case internally for transit enhancements using operational analysis and feasibility studies before bringing serious plans or considerations to the public.
- Inter-agency collaboration will be imperative for successful planning and implementation of major transit enhancements such as BRT.

## Recommendations / Community Engagement Strategy

The goals of an effective community engagement strategy are to produce better decisions, enhance democratic process, and to minimize the disparity between the planners and decision makers and the general public about the course of action required for choices that can greatly change and affect a community.

### Guiding Principles for Community Engagement

A sound community engagement strategy can provide legitimacy to RVTD and will seek to nurture the support of the community that the district serves. The following are recommended guiding principles that the district should employ when beginning a discussion with the community about the potential for high capacity transit improvements within the district:

- Allocate appropriate staff time, capital and effort to the plan.
- Avoid 'plan and leave mentality'.
- Become an integral component of decision-making structure.
- Clearly articulate vision, goals, and objectives.
- Command and nurture public support.
- Delineate the key roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and RVTD staff.
- Identify and act upon concerns of the public and decision makers.
- Recognize the spectrum of community engagement.
- Review relevant transportation public engagement case studies.

## **RVTD Framework for Community Engagement**

Following is a recommended framework for community engagement that the district can utilize when discussing high capacity transit improvements in the district.

- Objective 1—Abide by the Dialogue
- Objective 2—Conduct Internal Analysis and Evaluation Prior to Engagement with Public
- Objective 3—Develop a Range of Public Engagement and Educational Materials about Transit and High Capacity Transit Options
- Objective 4—Utilize a Comprehensive and Holistic Approach to Community Engagement
- Objective 5—Nurture and Maintain Inter-Agency Collaboration
- Objective 6—Inform the Public About High Capacity Transit and Bus Rapid Transit

# CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes community perceptions related to development of high-capacity transit services in the Highway 99 Corridor between Central Point and Ashland. The results are intended to inform the Rogue Valley Transportation District's strategies related to providing transit service in a growing region and public perceptions of options such as Bus Rapid Transit. CPW conducted key-person interviews, focus groups, and surveys as part of the research effort.

## Project Purpose and Implications

In early 2013, the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD or the District) submitted a project concept to the Sustainable City Year (SCY) to conduct a feasibility assessment of a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along the Highway 99 corridor. RVTD summarized the project as follows:

The purpose of this study is to gather the perceptions of regional stakeholders, such as students, municipalities, businesses, residents, and private groups in the region about their perception of transit enhancements along the Highway 99 Corridor. Specifically, it seeks to analyze and gather the opinions and ideas about options for transit enhancements between Central Point and Ashland.

The scoping for this project sets the stage for a long-range (10+ year) planning effort by RVTD with the intention to improve transit travel times, passenger comfort, and schedule reliability along the corridor.

The Rogue Valley region has experienced strong population growth; in 1990 the population of the county was approximately 146,389. As of July 1<sup>st</sup> 2013, the population of Jackson County increased by 41% to 206,310.<sup>2</sup> Population growth experienced over the past 20 years is expected to continue. As a result, the RVTD understands that transportation enhancements are critical to meet the needs of future growth.

RVTD identified the Highway 99 corridor as potential a High Capacity Transit (HCT) corridor for connecting the cities of Central Point, Medford, Phoenix, Talent and Ashland. Benefits of BRT systems include improved travel time and reliability, increased ridership, and better fuel efficiency over standard buses.<sup>3</sup> BRT systems

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<sup>2</sup> Portland State University. Certified Population Estimate for 1990 and 2013. <http://www.pdx.edu/prc/population-estimates-0>

<sup>3</sup> Bus Rapid Transit Case Studies, Prepared by Community Planning Workshop for Lane Transit District, September 2009. Viewed online on July 23, 2014 at [http://ppms.otrec.us/media/project\\_files/09264\\_Parker\\_BRT\\_CaseStudies-1.pdf](http://ppms.otrec.us/media/project_files/09264_Parker_BRT_CaseStudies-1.pdf). Note that not all of these benefits are experienced by all BRT systems and depend on implementation. That said, the Emerald Express run in Eugene-Springfield experienced these benefits within the first two years of operation.

also typically utilize 'real-time' arrival and departure monitors at bus stops that provide the rider with reliable wait times; this is frequently combined with off-board fare payment that decreases the amount of time spent when patrons board the bus.

Transit enhancements along the HWY 99 corridor (Central Point to Ashland) meet the required threshold for the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) New Starts program of serving 3,000 passengers per day. The New Starts program is part of the FTA's Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and is the federal government's primary financial resource for supporting locally planned, implemented, and operated major transit capital investments.

Given that RTVD is in the initial stages of evaluating HCT options, this report provides preliminary **scoping research** intended to help RVTD understand community attitudes of key stakeholder groups in the region prior to more intensive planning or conducting a full feasibility assessment. The project included two key components: (1) an inventory of relevant state and local plans that govern development in the Highway 99 corridor that is included as a separate technical memorandum document, and (2) a series of interviews, meetings, and surveys intended to gather public perceptions.

The purpose of this project is to develop a better understanding of the perceptions of the Rogue Valley Region's residents about the role of high capacity transit. Additionally, the project is intended to provide the district with information to use when engaging the public, decision makers, and the business community in Rogue Valley.

## Overview of Rogue Valley Transportation District

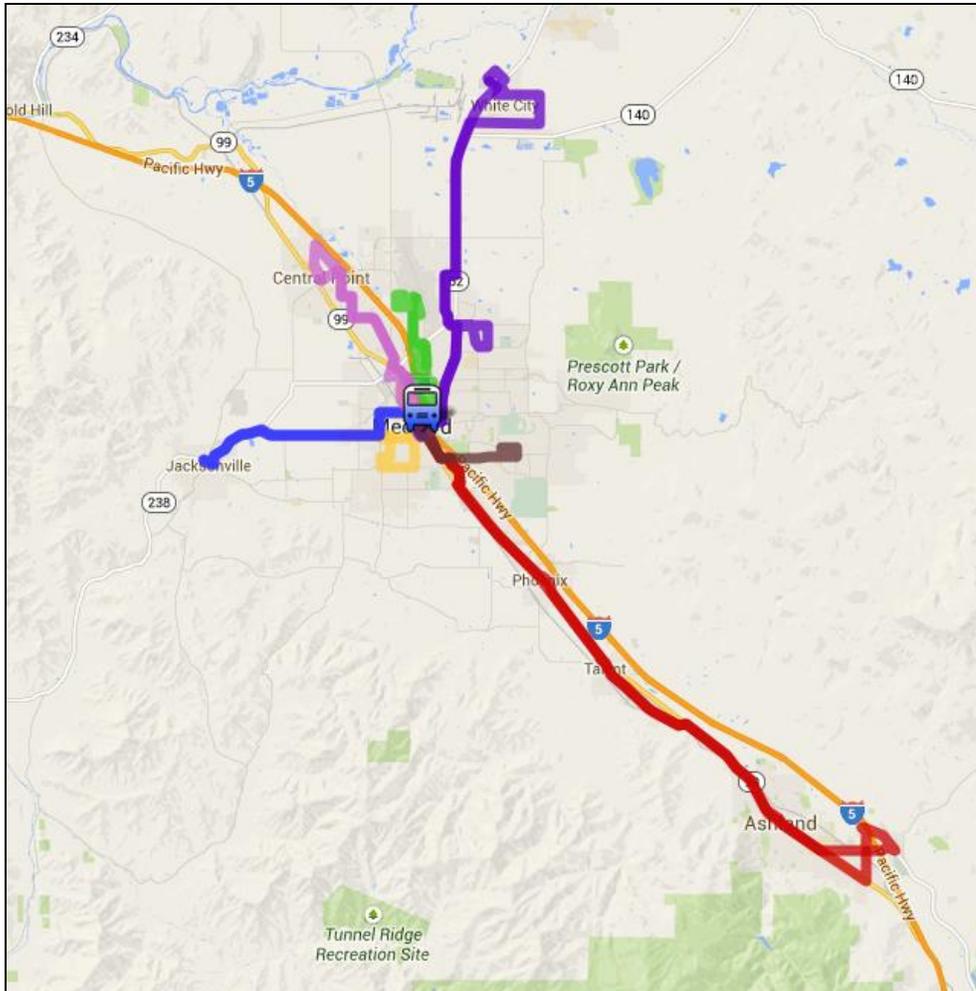
The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) serves the Rogue Valley, located in Southern Oregon's Jackson County. It is the County's regional public transit source.

Map 1-1 shows the RVTD bus route map that connects seven cities with its fixed-route bus services: Medford, White City, Central Point, Jacksonville, Phoenix, Talent, and Ashland. The RVTD service district spans 158.5 square miles and serves about 160,000 residents. RVTD sees more than 2.7 million passenger miles traveled annually through its services<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Rogue Valley Transportation District. RVTD Long Range Plan 2007-2017. <http://www.rvtd.org/images/subpages/file/RVTD%20Strategic%20Business%20and%20Operations%20Plan.pdf>

## Map I-I. RVTB Bus Routes, 2014



Source: RVTB Website.

## RVTB Services

All of RVTB's bus lines begin and end at the City of Medford's Front Street Station. One line connects Medford to Ashland (#10) through the cities of Phoenix and Talent along Highway 99. Three lines run north of Medford, connecting to Central Point (#40), White City (#60), and the Rogue Valley International-Medford Airport (#1). Two lines run west, one to commercial development in west Medford (#2), and the other to the City of Jacksonville (#30). One line runs southeast, connecting patrons to the Asante Rogue Regional Medical Center (#24).

In 2012, RVTB expanded its services to provide for patrons in need of evening and Saturday transit. RVTB's operating hours are 5:00am - 8:30pm Mondays through Fridays, and 8:00am - 4:30pm on Saturdays.

## RVTD Background and History

The region's transportation system began in 1891, with a single-track passenger rail line connecting Jacksonville and Medford. During World War II, Rogue Valley Transportation offered bus services for the soldiers and workers stationed at Camp White, a nearby army-training base now known as White City. Transit services for the area during the 1950s and 1960s were offered through private firms. The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) was established in 1975; however, the first buses did not begin servicing the valley until 1977.

Beyond its fixed-route bus operations, RVTD offers three additional programs for patrons with particular needs: Valley Lift, TransLink, and Way To Go! Valley Lift Paratransit is a shared ride, curb-to-curb, wheelchair accessible transportation for patrons whose disabilities prevent them from using RVTD's fixed-route buses. TransLink provides non-emergency medical transportation services to eligible Oregon Health Plan Plus clients that have no other means of transporting themselves to receive medical services. This service is provided year-round, all day long. Way To Go!, RVTD's third program, is the region's Transportation Demand Management program that provides information, planning support, and technical assistance to residents and employers interested in reducing automobile travel.

Currently a seven-member Board of Directors governs the RVTD. The district receives approximately 20% of its total revenues from rider fares and fills the other 80% with federal, state, and local funding.

## Methods

To understand resident's perceptions of transit and the potential for enhancements, CPW conducted key-person interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The project also included a scan of policies, regulations, and codes for a potential impact to potential transit enhancements. The policy scan is presented in a separate document and is intended to be a supplemental source of information.

## Effective Community Engagement

The goal of community engagement is to allow the residents of a community to take an active role in the development of a plan or strategy that affects the community one lives in. **Communication is more of a 'one-way street'** in which information and materials are disseminated to the residents and stakeholders of a community. **Engagement is a 'two-way street'** process in which the agency or organization performing the planning work actively listens, responds, and uses the concerns and advice of the community. Engagement lends more credence and support than simply an information dissemination process.

## Interviews

CPW conducted interviews with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and locations within the Rogue Valley. Interviews were conducted with 22 individuals from the following fields: technical experts, public officials, business members, and public / community services officials.

Interviews were conducted with a questionnaire template and were modified to fit each interviewee. Appendix A shows detailed findings from the interviews.

Questions focused on:

- The interviewee's role and collaboration of that individual and his or her agency or constituency with transit and RVTD
- The interviewee's perceptions of the role and importance of transit in the region
- Perception of the benefits and impediments of transit enhancements

## Focus Groups

CPW completed six focus groups with a variety of stakeholder groups and one mini-focus groups with (RVTD) core staff. RVTD was particularly interested in getting feedback from transit riders, business owners and operators, youth, and the elderly. The purpose of the meetings was to create a forum for open discussion about transit in the region. Each group discussed a variety of topics during the meetings, including current opinions of transit, how residents use transit, and their opinions on potential transit enhancements. At the meetings, large conceptual renderings were placed in front of the participants and used as a tool for discussing the 'look and feel' of enhanced bus stops and services. See Appendix B for detailed findings.

## Surveys

CPW used three survey instruments as part of the community engagement process—an intercept survey of bus patrons, an online business survey, and an online community survey. See Appendix C for detailed findings.

### Intercept Survey

The project team created a short questionnaire and conducted 125 intercept surveys from a variety of bus stop locations serviced by the RTVD. The purpose of the survey was to gather opinions about current services, ridership habits, and their perceptions of transit enhancement trade-offs with current service.

### Online Business Survey

CPW conducted an online survey of business owners and employers in The Rogue Valley Region; the instrument collected 87 responses. The survey contained questions about business owner and manager's perception of transit, RVTD, transit enhancements and the effects of transit services on businesses and regional economy as a whole. The survey was disseminated through local and regional chambers of commerce and an economic development group.

### Online Community Survey

An online community survey disseminated to the broader community was used to better understand some of the broader communities opinions of transit and

enhancements. 128 people responded to this survey. The survey was disseminated with the assistance of The Chambers of Commerce from Ashland, Medford, and The Hispanic Chamber and also through Southern Oregon University email lists and The Twin Creeks Retirement Community.

## Organization of This Report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

**Chapter II: Summary of Findings and Themes provides** a description of the findings and information that were learned as part of the public engagement process.

**Chapter III: Community Engagement Strategy** details the guiding principles of community engagement and planning and provides a framework for community engagement for RVTD to use when discussing transit and improvements with the Rogue Valley community.

**Appendix A: Key Person Interviews** provides detailed findings from the key person interviews.

**Appendix B: Focus Groups** provide detailed findings from the six focus groups facilitated by the CPW project team.

**Appendix C: Surveys** details the three surveys conducted, including the online community and business surveys and the bus patron intercept survey.

**Appendix D: Characteristics of High Capacity Transit** includes a factsheet describing the various forms of 'High Capacity Transit'.

# CHAPTER II: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This chapter describes key findings and themes that emerged in CPW’s public engagement efforts. The findings are organized by the following categories:

- Perceptions of RVT
- Perceptions of transit
- Need for transit enhancements
- Communications
- Implementation and planning

The findings are based on three community engagement strategies: (1) key person interviews; (2) focus group meetings; and (3) surveys. Individuals that participated in the outreach are referred to as “participants” in this report. A detailed description of the findings, data, and details from each step of the community engagement can be found in Appendix A, B, and C.

## Limitations

It is important to recognize the limitations of the findings presented in this document. The information represents the perceptions of individuals that participated in the process and should not be generalized to represent the views of all Rogue Valley residents. Moreover, the findings do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVT) or the District) or the Community Planning Workshop (CPW) and should not be construed as such.

## Perceptions of RVT

The perceptions of RVT by participants influence the ability of the district to maneuver and create changes in the transit system. The opinion and perceptions of residents in the Rogue Valley can also sway the ability of RVT to implement transit enhancements within its service boundaries. Throughout the process CPW asked participants about their perceptions of RVT—this is a foundational question that relates directly to planning for transit enhancements.

### **Participants held a wide variety of positive, neutral, and negative perceptions of the transportation district.**

A range of perceptions about the district is present within the community. In general individuals and groups that CPW interacted with believed that RVT was important for the region and provided a service that is not only useful but also vital for the accessibility and mobility of large portions of the population. Some groups and individuals do not believe spending money on the district is a useful use of tax

dollars, while others believe that RVTD is an integral component for the quality of life for residents in the region.

Although a diverse range of opinions about RVTD exists, a significant portion of participants held a favorable opinion of the district and the services it provides. Affirming this assumption is data from an online community survey disseminated at large to residents in the region. Approximately 75 respondents or (78%) believed that the services that RVTD provide are either 'valuable' or 'very valuable' to the region. Additionally, (77%) of respondents from the community survey indicated that they believed that RVTD did a 'fair' to 'good' job at providing transit services in the region.

A number of interviewees also held a favorable opinion of the district, suggesting that the organization was well managed and had 'turned over a new leaf' with its organizational structure. A majority of interviewees also believed that RVTD was working very well to provide transit services to the region despite budgetary constraints that limit the ability of the district to provide optimal services.

While a majority of participants held a favorable opinion of RVTD, there were several examples of negative opinions about the district. Some participants believed that the district was over reaching when attempting to provide additional services without the ability to provide and maintain the existing services within the district. Among interviewees, RVTD is seen as an organization that is under good management that does well with limited funding. However, one public official believed that the community does not have a good perception of RVTD and its services. This official believed that RVTD could change community perceptions by doing a better job of increasing public awareness about its services and by providing incentives for seniors, youth, and the disabled.

## **The business community has a favorable perception of RVTD.**

According to business community participants interviewed and surveyed, RVTD plays an important role in the regional economy. The business community has a generally favorable view of RVTD because it allows employees without automobiles or other forms of transportation to commute to work.

Results of an online business survey disseminated through the chambers of commerce in the region indicated that **53% of respondents approve of the way in which RVTD currently serves the region, rating RVTD's services as "good" or "very good." In contrast, 38% of respondents rated these services "poor" or "fair."** Lane Transit District managers (LTD), which recently implemented a new BRT system in Eugene-Springfield, emphasized the importance of creating champions with the business community early on in the public engagement process. Creating champions is crucial for driving projects forward as it communicates to the public that important groups, businesses, and leaders see HCT as beneficial for the wider area.

## High school and college students believe that RVTD could better cater to their needs.

High school student participants had a limited understanding and opinion of RVTD and were relatively neutral in their opinion of the district. Students, faculty, and staff from Southern Oregon University (SOU) had a mixture of perceptions about the district—many of these respondents suggested that the district was not doing enough to cater to the needs of students and staff at the university. SOU participants mentioned that the **operational hours of the bus services do not allow for individuals to travel to desirable destinations outside of Ashland** during evening hours and weekends. Other participants said that the bus service is crowded and unreliable during normal class times, which led many of them to use other forms of transportation to travel to and from classes.

The high school participants echoed these comments and suggested that they would use bus services more often if the district provided better information about the services that it provides. This included information about how to ride the bus—many of the participants had never used RVTD’s buses and said that the process of riding the bus was not very clear. The high school students also held a slightly negative perception of using the bus service in general—students suggested that the bus was often an option of ‘last resort.’ Some students also suggested that they perceived the bus to be a slow mode of transportation.

## Role of RVTD

From each element of community engagement, participants held a wide variety of perceptions about the role of the transportation district in the Rogue Valley region. Overall there was a generally positive opinion of the role of transportation district; however, it was clear that certain groups such as students and the business communities were concerned about schedule reliability and hours of operation.

Interviewees and focus group participants said that the role of RVTD was to: **connect residents and worker with businesses with an emphasis on providing connections to hospitals and downtown cores; serve people who do not drive either by choice or need; promote and facilitate multi-modal transportation options; play an environmental role by reducing Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT); and provide reliable and efficient transit services to the citizens of The Rogue Valley.** This perception is well aligned with the mission of the district and suggests that the view of the district’s role in the community is in line with the goals and objectives of RVTD.

Following are common themes from the community engagement process.

### **Connect residents and workers with businesses and major destinations in the region.**

Members of the public and the business community agreed that an important function of the district is to provide access for residents and workers to major destinations such as employment centers, hospitals, shopping, and recreation

areas, **69% of community survey respondents and 81% of business respondents indicated they agreed or strongly agreed this was a major role of RVTD.**

In a focus group conversation with businesses, participants suggested that the ability of their employees to reliably access their place of employment was vital for the productivity of the organization. In addition, they believed that the capability to use transit to reach businesses and other major destinations improved the overall of quality of life in the region and subsequently could help attract more talented employees to the Rogue Valley.

### **Serve people who do not drive either by choice or need.**

In general, participants overwhelmingly agreed that one of the primary functions of the transportation district is to provide access and mobility to members of the community who do not have cars or are physically unable to drive. **Ninety percent of community survey respondents and 96% of business surveys respondents indicated that it was a major function of RVTD's services for the Rogue Valley Community.** Additionally, interviewees and focus group participants suggested that a major responsibility of the district is to provide transportation accessibility and mobility for groups who are most dependents on the service—this is especially true for students, the elderly, disabled individuals, and individuals who do not have access or the ability to drive a personal automobile.

### **Promote and facilitate multi-modal transportation options.**

RVTD can promote multi-modal transportation by allowing users to utilize a variety of options to move from place to place. This was especially important for college and high school students who suggested that they walked or biked to bus stops and were strongly in favor of improved multi-modal transportation options that allowed them to easily access bus stops using bicycles.

Support for multi-modal transportation ease was also echoed in survey results: **87% of intercept survey respondents walked to bus stops and 7% rode bikes to access the bus.** Seventy-nine percent of community survey respondents also indicated that the accommodation of bicycle users on the bus was either 'important' or 'very important.'

### **Assume an important environmental role using transit to reduce the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) in the Rogue Valley.**

Historically, the Rogue Valley region struggled to maintain compliance with national air quality standards set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency. The region is now in 'attainment' for air pollution criteria. The reduction of personal automobile VMT is important to stay in compliance of air quality standards. Interviewees from **ODOT suggested that the district is doing a great deal to facilitate the reduction of air pollution—especially with the use of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses.**

The general community also supported this assumption. **Seventy-nine percent of community survey respondents believe that transit reduces environmental impacts such as vehicle emissions and air pollution.**

## **Provide reliable and efficient transit services to the citizens of the Rogue Valley.**

An opinion held across all groups was that RVTD, as the sole public transportation agency in the Rogue Valley, is responsible for providing the most reliable and efficient transportation service possible. It is believed that the district does not provide services that are reliable enough to depend upon for mobility needs. Additionally, residents at Twin Creeks Retirement Community mentioned that the existing service was too far away to be convenient and safe.

Community survey respondents held this sentiment as well, **where 84% of respondents indicated that it was ‘important’ or ‘very important’** for the district to provide reliable transit services to the residents of the Rogue Valley. Business employers and managers also believed that the provision of reliable and efficient transit services was ‘important’ or ‘very important’—**84% of business survey respondents held this opinion of the role of RVTD.**

## **The perception of the role of RVTD compared with its mission.**

The mission of the district is “to provide quality public transportation, viewed by residents and visitors as a realistic and viable alternative to the personal automobile, and to thereby improve the quality of life in the Rogue Valley.”<sup>5</sup> RVTD’s four planning goals closely mesh with the perceived role of the district by groups that CPW interacted with during the project. Overall, the mission of the district and the expectations of residents, businesses, and agencies about the role of RVTD closely match. This suggests **that the district is addressing the needs and concerns of the Rogue Valley community and that there is not a large disparity that exists between the expectations of the community and the mission of the district.** Table 2-1 lists the major goal categories with objectives and action items examples for each objective group.

**Table 2-1. RVTD Adopted Long Range Planning Goals**

<b>GOAL CATEGORY</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLE</b>
<b>SOCIAL</b>	SUPPORT EQUITABLE ACCESS TO TRANSPORTATION	To consult with transportation-disadvantaged community.
	IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE	Improve transit access design standards, including bus stop and other passenger amenities.
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL</b>	ENSURE THE EFFICIENT USE OF TRANSIT INVESTMENTS	Comply with Federal Transit Administration guidelines regarding vehicle replacement, rehabilitation and expansion.
	MAINTAIN OVERALL SERVICE QUALITY WHILE INCREASING SERVICE LEVELS	Expand service hours to include earlier mornings and later evenings on appropriate routes. Preferred 4AM to 10PM.
	IMPROVE COMMUNICATION WITH KEY PARTNERS	Identify 'key partners' and establish working group to meet at least once per year.
	IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS	Hold monthly staff meetings and Board Study Sessions.
	IMPROVE PUBLIC OUTREACH/ MARKETING	Install transit schedule and route information in all bus shelters.
<b>ECONOMIC</b>	SUPPORT ECONOMIC VITALITY	Collaborate with private sector to identify workforce transportation needs and transit solutions.
	ENHANCE RVTD'S FINANCIAL STABILITY	Secure a stable source of funding to continue current service levels and allow for expansion.
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL</b>	AIR POLLUTION / FUEL EFFICIENCY	Promote service improvements that will result in reduced reliance on the automobile.
	REDUCE SPRAWL	Adopt density standards for transit service extensions.
	REDUCE WATER AND OTHER POLLUTION	Continue the capture and recycling of contaminants from maintenance activities.

Source: Rogue Valley Transportation District. Adopted Long Range Planning Document 2007-2017. Executive Summary. Perceptions of Current Transit Services

A common theme about the perception of the district is that RVTD is operating at a high level of efficiency given the budget constraints placed on the district. This suggests that many individuals in the area perceive the current transit services favorably and understand the impediments placed upon RVTD to maintain reliable public transportation.

Businesses participants had an evenly distributed mixture of perceptions about the current transit system—**38% of respondents rated the current service as 'poor' or 'fair'; 53% rated the current service as 'good' or 'very good' and 9% are 'unsure' about the service.** Residents in the community also had an assortment of perceptions about the current services that RVTD provides. When prompted to state how well the district does at providing transit service in the region responses were relatively well distributed—**34% of respondents rated the current service as**

'poor' or 'fair'; 61% rated the current service as 'good' or 'very good' and 5% are 'unsure' about the service. A focus group with large regional business representatives suggested that the importance of reliable schedules and longer operating hours would prove beneficial to their operational capacity and organizational productivity.

## **Residents and businesses in the Rogue Valley have mixed feelings about the effectiveness, reliability, and safety of the current RVTD transit system.**

Common themes across stakeholder groups suggest that the current service is deficient in a variety of areas, including: schedule reliability, hours of operation, and buses and stops that are perceived as unsafe and uncomfortable.

### **Schedule reliability and hours of transit operation are areas of concern for residents in the Rogue Valley.**

The deficiency in schedule reliability was the most common operational issue discussed by respondents. **A majority of participants in each focus group suggested that the transportation provided by buses is not highly reliable.** RVTD is aware of schedule adherence issues and knows there is a need to improve the reliability of the bus schedules in the region—especially during peak hours and commute times. Reliability is major component of an effective BRT system and this is one of the primary reasons that RVTD is pursuing a potential BRT line along the Highway 99 corridor.

In the online community survey, respondents indicated a more favorable opinion of the schedule reliability. When prompted with the following statement—'Please describe your level of agreement that RVTD provides reliable, efficient, and dependable service, 25% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 11% of respondents did not know if the district provided reliable service. In the online business survey 83% of respondents indicated that it was important or very important for the district to provide reliable transportation service. Lastly, results from intercept surveys also indicated that transit stops and schedule reliability were a perceived issue of concern by regular bus patrons. The community survey also provided data that suggests the bus service's reliability is the most important aspect of the transit system—**93% of respondents have some support or strong support for a reliable bus service with only one respondent indicating no support.**

### **Buses and bus stops were perceived as unsafe and did not create a sense of place or security.**

Bus stop design is a common area of concern across different stakeholder groups. Interviews and focus groups echoed this opinion where many suggested that having 'BRT similar' transit stops would greatly increase the appeal and use of the current bus system. One respondent from the online community said:

"I work in the social services field and many of those I work with depend on the bus for transportation... Many of the women I work with

(vulnerable population) say that it doesn't feel safe. They receive inappropriate comments, are afraid of running into their perpetrators, and encounter those under the influence of drugs. Many will walk across town rather than ride (the bus)."

Many individuals and groups CPW spoke with said that they perceive the buses and bus stops as unsafe or intimidating. This can be a subjective experience among bus riders, but the district should recognize that a proportion of the regular ridership considers this to be an impediment to bus travel. A focus group participant from Southern Oregon University mentioned that she has a general feeling of uneasiness when using the bus and that she frequently saw people under the influence of alcohol or drugs on the bus. The online community survey respondents suggested that the perception of safety and comfort at RVTD bus stops was one of the largest areas of concerns—27% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that RVTD provided comfortable and safe bus stops, an additional 18% neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement.

A number of interviewees contended that many residents in the region perceive the bus as unsafe and used by individuals of questionable character. One interviewee suggested that the lack of perceived safety and comfort on buses and stops is a major detriment to the perception of the district and its services.

## Residents, businesses and organizations in the Rogue Valley perceive transit to have high value for the region.

CPW found that a large majority of the stakeholder groups, businesses, individuals, and organizations value transit and believe that it is an important component for the quality of life for residents. The value of transit is captured in the ability to increase the quality of life for a significant portion of the population as well as produce societal benefits such as dignity and mobility for residents who do not own a personal automobile. It was quite uncommon to hear from individuals or stakeholder groups that they perceived a low value of the bus system.

Technical experts, planners, the business community, and students said that transit was a valuable asset for the region and provided a service that many depend and rely upon for mobility. Eighty-seven percent of business survey respondents **said transit is "valuable" or "very valuable" to the region and 96% said it is important to cater to those who are transit dependent.** Residents from the community also believed that transit was valuable for the Rogue Valley, in the online community survey that was disseminated—**79% of respondents perceived transit as either 'valuable' or 'very valuable'.**

Interestingly, the older generations perceived a higher value of transit than students at Crater High School in Central Point. During a discussion with The Twin Creeks Retirement community in Central Point, residents spoke favorably towards transit use. Participants agreed that it would save money, cater to those no longer able to drive, and alleviate concerns over way finding to destinations while driving. Residents said they would be more likely to use transit to schedule and attend appointments or ride for leisure if they could rely upon a set schedule, depend on buses that arrive at consistent intervals, has easy access to bus stops and routes

that are close by to their residences, and have a clear understanding of key destinations located along bus routes.

**Although congestion may be a real issue for the region, it is not generally perceived as a major problem for the Rogue Valley and many individuals and groups believe that the bus contributes to congestion rather than alleviating traffic flow issues.**

Differing opinions exist about the level of congestion that exists in the region. Congestion is certainly present in the Rogue Valley; the most congested areas are in downtown and particularly along the stretch of Highway 99 through Medford and the perception among many participants is that buses can contribute to congestion and often are seen empty. However, during peak hours and on many routes buses are actually frequently overcrowded and have delayed headways. This lends to the importance of framing the problem and issue for the public and collaborative agencies about the need for providing improved services.

CPW also found that many people believe that traffic congestion is not enough to motivate people to want to use a form of transit as their primary means of mobility over personal automobiles. Additionally, a mixture of key interviewees and focus group participants mentioned that they did not perceive congestion as a major issue for the area. However, the community survey suggests a difference of opinions, when prompted with the question—**‘Do you think that faster and more reliable transit would help to reduce congestion in The Rogue Valley’, 72% of respondents indicated ‘yes,’ ‘12%’ indicated no, and 15% were unsure.**

A meeting with Lane Transit District (LTD) staff confirmed the assumption that using congestion for ‘selling’ enhancements to the community may not be the most effective method; rather, a more robust approach that highlights many community issues such as livability, land use, and economic vibrancy should also be used as discussion points. LTD staff suggested that any future branding and communication strategy used for public engagement about transit perceptions and enhancements must be a holistic approach—incorporating economic benefits, livability, and sound decision making to make a strong case for long term transit enhancements.

**Planners and the public perceived that the transit system could be better interconnected.**

Through conversations and focus groups with the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Technical and Public Advisory Committees, CPW found that considerable skepticism exists about the current system and the routes that serve the residents of the district. Some individuals were concerned about jurisdictions and areas that are not currently served by RVTD and also suggested that the interconnectivity in the existing system suffers from major ‘choke points’ such as the transfer location at Front Street Station in Medford. In addition, some technical experts were apprehensive about the district seeking to provide additional services when many of the existing routes are underserved and lack reliable schedules and hours of operation. RVTD’s recognizes this issues and the short range planning

goals of the district are intended to expand and improve on current services while BRT, or other HCT options, are gradually phased into the system.

Intercept survey respondents were also concerned with the functionality of the existing service and were not supportive of adding additional services if it did not include ‘upgrades’ to existing bus routes. When prompted with the following statement—‘Describe your level of support for bus service that is faster, more frequent, and reliable along Highway 99 but without new or increased service on local routes, **47% of respondents were either “supportive” or “very supportive.”** This question gathered the highest number of **“neither supportive nor unsupportive” responses of the three questions in this theme, 8% of respondents did not answer the question.**

## Perceptions of Transit Enhancements

In general, participants’ perceive transit enhancements as a useful and pragmatic method of improving the functionality of the transit system. However a variety of opinions are present among participants about the specific approach to improving the transportation system and how that can be achieved. Disparity existed about the correct path or planning horizon for a major transportation system such as a fully implemented Bus Rapid Transit line along the Highway 99 corridor. This was highlighted in meetings with the MPO Technical and Public advisory committees where individuals present suggested that the district follow a deliberate and phased approach.

Technical experts were generally in agreement that future transit enhancements should better appeal to potential choice riders and to use a variety of techniques to achieve higher ridership on RVTD’s routes. To achieve this a combination of more routes, buses, and additional weekend hours including later evening services, is seen as necessary. Additionally, a quicker and more reliable service with improved internal connectivity to other services is important for attracting choice riders. It was suggested that RVTD should increase fares and change their funding structure so that RVTD has a long-term funding source to support future transit enhancements in the corridor and elsewhere in the district.

**Technical experts suggested that a phased or incremental approach to improvements will be the most logical, starting with a determination about which improvements will be the most effective for increasing ridership, reducing delays, and improving system reliability.**

A variety of technical experts including traffic engineers, city planners, elected officials, and other individuals familiar the aspects of transit in the region suggested that any improvements that the district intends to pursue should be done incrementally. One Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) official described an approach where the district could pursue an express bus route from Ashland to Medford that could be used as the first phase of a more developed bus rapid transit system in the future. The official also mentioned that experimentation with

**an express route system would provide the district with an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness in terms of both cost and ridership.**

In terms of feasibility, the majority of technical experts interviewed saw BRT as a viable long-term option for the Highway 99 corridor. Technical experts see BRT Lite (a detailed description of high-capacity transit is in Appendix D) as better suited to meeting the immediate transit needs in the region, but did not rule out the feasibility of implementing a full BRT system with more designated lanes as the valley grows.

A number of public officials were supportive of a phased approach to BRT that develops incrementally from an express bus service to BRT Lite. Overall, concerns of implementing a BRT system include how well BRT would run in downtown areas, whether or not the right level and residential density exists to support BRT, and restricting the system to a north-south alignment. Finally, the associated costs of implementing BRT was seen as potentially holding back the business community from supporting BRT.

Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVMPO) committee members echoed this opinion and contended that the district, at the bare minimum, could begin experimenting with routes that utilized a type of express service. Some committee members believed that RVTD could pursue a 'BRT Lite' system in which a small number of the common BRT elements such as branding, fewer stops, off-board fare payment or improved bus stops with platforms and other features would be the first phase to pursue.

A collective opinion shared by a number of committee members, elected officials, and technical experts is that the phased approach would allow more opportunity to evaluate changes to the routes and the effectiveness of those changes. **Many individuals mentioned that the ability to evaluate the increase in ridership and the reduction in delays when compared to cost would be beneficial.** This could be a simple cost benefit analysis procedure that would allow the district to pursue transit improvement options without spending considerable capital and staff time with a more complicated Bus Rapid Transit system.

**A majority of Rogue Valley MPO members suggested that any future plans for transit improvements must be properly integrated into regional and municipal TSPs for successful implementation.**

According to technical experts and public officials, the first step for RVTD in attaining its goal of implementing HCT in the Rogue Valley is to work with the RVMPO and the other jurisdictions to incorporate any future HCT plans into the relevant regional and municipal transportation system plans. This was a recurring suggestion among a number of different RVMPO officials interviewed by CPW. Respondents repeatedly stated that one of the biggest challenges in developing a BRT system in the region is that RVTD will need to gather the support and affirmation from the different jurisdictions in the region. **Municipalities internalize their own agendas and plans about how future transit demand should be met and those may not necessarily be consistent with RVTD's vision for the system.**

Multiple RVMPO officials also stated their willingness to work with RVTD to build community support and to disseminate key information to key stakeholders and the general public. This however, was contingent on the district to provide data, ideas, and concrete plans about the new system, and what the MPO would need to do in order to facilitate the adoption of the plan into the regional transportation plan.

### **Disparity exists about the direction and type of transit improvement the district should pursue—some officials believed that a more thorough analysis of the transit improvements alternatives should be conducted.**

A frequent topic of conversation in Rogue Valley MPO committee focus group meetings was whether or not the district was evaluating the entire suite of potential transportation improvements rather than just focusing on Bus Rapid Transit. **A few committee members were adamant about the potential for using existing rail beds in the region as a potential for transit improvements; however, some members also suggested that an evaluation of rail in region has already been conducted and at this point it is ‘simply not a viable alternative.’** One interviewee described bus service as a ‘ball and chain that required federal dollars’ and suggested that privatization of transportation alternatives in the region makes more sense than pursuing a federally funded transit option.

Technical expert interviewees, especially those familiar with transportation engineering, suggested that the evaluation of alternatives is a sound idea, but a **focus on rail was described as a ‘pipe dream’ and was not a feasible means of providing transportation at a cost efficient level. These findings do suggest that RVTD will need to deliver a strong case for one transit improvement mode over another and if the district wants the support of the RVMPO it will have to clearly articulate the reasoning for choosing BRT over other options.**

### **Improving existing services first will likely bolster the image of RVTD within the Rogue Valley Community.**

Among the participants a recurring theme was that RVTD should improve their existing services before implementing any new services. This was mentioned in focus groups with Southern Oregon University, with key person interviewees, and the online business and community surveys. Additionally, members of the community do not want new services to be at the expense of existing services.

Findings from the project process suggested that current service improvements desired include: providing more information at **bus stops, including maps with routes, service times, and real-time arrival information; creation of mobile phone application with a trip planner and live arrival updates; increased services on the routes with the highest ridership during commute hours; increased service to more destinations**, notably Eagle Point, White City, Jacksonville, and Grants Pass; better bike facilities at stops; creation of Park and Ride facilities; and the implementation of elevated and sheltered platforms to increase visibility, comfort, safety, and sense of destination.

**Many stakeholder groups suggested that a strong business case is needed for transit enhancements, especially a large-scale project such as developing the services to the level of Bus Rapid Transit. This will need to be packaged in terms of a cost benefit analysis or with strong data based assumptions.**

Traffic professionals, engineers, and planners interviewed suggested that in order for the district to accomplish any potential transit improvements, it must first build the case internally. **This business case was described in a variety of ways including cost benefit analyses, operational feasibility studies, and potential bus patron ridership increases.**

In addition to these types of analysis, a number of individuals that CPW spoke with suggested that it would be important for RVTD to prove that any transit improvements and/or additions should have a dedicated and reliable funding stream that allows for consistency within the system. **One individual mentioned that the district should thoroughly evaluate the trade-offs between adding additional services and how that will impact the district's budget and operational capacity for the maintenance of existing services.** The business case and other strong data based assumptions are also a requirement as part of the New Starts program created by the Federal Transit Administration.

**Residents and students indicated improving the comfort, safety, and information at, as well as the number of, bus stops as the most desirable transit improvements over seating, speed of service, and frequency of the route.**

Bus stops were a major discussion topic in focus groups, key person interviews, and both online and community surveys—the **frequency of this topic should not be underscored; it was likely the most frequent topic of service improvement that CPW learned from the project process.** The online community survey confirms this conclusion; when asked to describe the level of support for a list of transit improvement 'Modern bus stops with shelters and 'real time information at stops' and 'More stops near shopping, dining and entertainment received the highest level of support. **Ninety percent of respondents had 'some support' or 'strong support' for modern bus stops with amenities and 87% of respondents indicated 'some support' or 'strong support' for stops located near desirable destinations.**

Businesses also had a strong level of support for modern bus stops with amenities with 72% in strong support of this improvement and 22% of respondents indicating some support for improved bus stops.

Conversations in focus groups with Crater High School and SOU students and Twin Creeks Retirement residents also echo these sentiments—each group expressed that they would like to have better access to desired destinations including: Ashland, Eagle Point, the mall, movies, restaurants, recreational trail systems, homes of friends, and work.

## **The business community and residents in the region do not strongly support bus-only lanes if it requires acquisition of private property.**

A finding related to a core element of BRT is that the majority of residents, business owners, and technical expert respondents were not in favor of buses that operated in designated lanes. However, CPW interprets this not as a definitive description of the opinion of ‘bus only lanes’ and would contend that if residents and business were given adequate information about the procedure and effects of private property acquisition that the results from surveys would likely improve the level of support. It is also likely that the utilization of designated lanes would be the last attribute of BRT that RVTD would likely pursue in the design and construction of an improved transit system—this reason is twofold: (1) this action would likely be politically unpopular; and (2) the acquisition of private property could potentially be prohibitively expensive.

Despite the caveats to the findings about designated lanes, the results from surveys are indicative of opinions and perceptions of residents and businesses surveyed. **Half of business owner and managers in the online survey indicated no support for ‘buses that required acquisition of private property for designated lanes, approximately 45% suggested they would have some support for this action.**

**Results from the community survey suggested that the acquisition of private property for ‘bus only lanes received the lowest level of support from a list of potential high capacity transit improvements.** Approximately half of respondents either indicate ‘no support’ or ‘some support’ for this type of transit improvement.

## **Communications**

Participants in surveys and focus groups indicated a greater need for the district to provide more communication and information about the district’s activities and services. While the Rogue Valley Metropolitan organizations are familiar with the activities and services of the district, students from the high school and college level indicated a lack of understanding of riding the bus, locating schedules, and reading bus route maps.

## **Residents in the Rogue Valley prefer a variety of communication methods to receive information about the district and its services.**

CPW learned that residents in the area prefer diverse forms of communication from the district. It is our interpretation that this is due in part to a growing change in the forms of communications that people use. As the population demographics change, younger generations are far more likely to prefer some form of electronic communication (Facebook, email, mobile apps); older generations also use newer technologies but were more apt to suggest that more traditional forms of communication. CPW’s online community survey as well as anecdotal information from focus groups affirms this assumption. CPW also interprets this as a growing

trend and the likelihood of people using newer forms of electronic communication will increase as time goes on.

**Respondents of the community survey indicated the highest preference for email and online communications, followed by social media such as Twitter and Facebook, and finally mailings and letters as the third most popular way to receive communications.**

## **A majority of business owners and managers prefer electronic communication from the district.**

According to the online business survey, **the majority of respondents indicated that they favor email communications from the district.** Newspaper articles were also ranked relatively high as a preference for receiving communications from the district. Approximately 17% of respondents indicate that they would prefer not to receive any communication or materials from RVTD.

Business owners and managers who participated in a focus group suggested they preferred direct communications, such as phone calls or mailings that describe any potential impacts (positive or negative) to their business. Impacts were described as changes in routes, hours of operation, or potential large-scale infrastructure changes that could alter the flow of traffic or ease of access to their respective businesses.

## **Residents and business owners and managers in the Rogue Valley are most interested in communications and materials about RVTD's services and routes and programs, incentives, and discounts for using the bus.**

Approximately 85% of business survey respondents and 81% of community survey respondents suggested that they would like to remain informed about the bus service routes and hours of operation. Roughly 78% of business survey respondents and 74% of community survey respondents were interested in receiving information about programs that incentivize or encourage people in the community to use the bus.

Respondents were also interested in a mobile application that shows the bus hours of operation and routes and any proposed changes to those routes. This was described in focus groups with Southern Oregon University as well with respondents from the online community survey where a survey participant indicated that, "User friendly app that has real-time bus information."

## **A large share of residents and business owner and managers have not received, seen, or heard any communications from the district.**

More than half of community survey respondents indicate that they have not received communications from RVTD in the past, a larger share of business owners and managers (67%) indicated that they have not received any communication or

had dialogue about the bus service with RVTB in the past. This suggests a potential area of improvement and that increasing the visibility of RVTB and its services is an area that could help to garner support from the region for current and future plans of transit improvement.

## **Continual engagement and discussion with the community about transit and the future plans of the district will nurture a stronger relationship between RVTB and its constituency.**

Stakeholder groups and survey respondents expressed their desire to be continually engaged and communicated with about future transit developments in the region. Continual outreach, particularly to the business community and the general public, is seen as essential for realizing RVTB's goals for transit improvements or a BRT system. Respondents said that RVTB's public outreach would benefit from the use of several mediums including newspapers, television, and web sites. Additionally, a number of interviewees noted that RVTB should tailor its message and communication efforts, including mediums used for each group they engage, as different groups require different information.

Additional recommendations included surveys while others recommended the creation of a project-specific website with educational materials, along with frequent project updates to avoid isolating the public. Key employers said they would be eager to disseminate RVTB materials and pass them to employees, as long as they do not have to pay for the materials. High school and SOU students and staff expressed a desire to see a more student-specific marketing campaign and presence on their campuses. Information about bus services, accessibility, and the benefits of bus-rapid transit must be better communicated and disseminated to the SOU community in an engaging fashion; participants believed that passive information sharing through websites and email would not be sufficient for future outreach efforts related to transit enhancements.

For reaching the wider community, **44% of community survey respondents prefer email communication, 40% expressed desire for communication through social media including Facebook and Twitter, 34% expressed desire for mail contact, and 25% expressed desire to receive an RVTB newsletter.** In terms of what exactly the community wants to be informed about, **81% of respondents wanted information about bus service routes and hours, 74% wanted information bus programs and discounts, and 60% wanted materials describing RVTB's services.**

## **RVTB would benefit from identifying and developing a group of 'champions' and supporters of the district to build legitimacy in the region and provide assistance when unveiling plans for enhancements.**

CPW learned through conversations with the Lane Transit District about their own experiences in developing BRT in the Eugene-Springfield area that identifying and developing a number of champions can be crucial to the success, the development of, and the perceptions of transit in a community. Champions—whether they are groups, businesses, or individuals—are important for informing the community of

the benefits of transit and can help RVTD to build a legitimate case for BRT in the region. A number of groups, such as SOU, could serve as a champion for RVTD and could generally work to promote awareness of benefits and services that could lead to an increase in ridership.

### **A tailored public engagement message about transit and potential improvements within the district is an approach that many individuals and groups mentioned during the project process.**

A key and important theme is that tailoring the message and its contents to each stakeholder group is very important. The CPW team consistently heard that the message should be tailored to the specific audience in terms of the language, intent, and purpose. Building support for high capacity transit improvements such as Bus Rapid Transit requires tactful and objective strategies for speaking with and communicating with the various groups in the region. For example, the business community will have a variety of different needs from RVTD's communications where as students at Rogue Community College or SOU will likely have a different set of needs from the district.

## **Implementation and Planning**

The findings suggest two key areas that the district should focus on when beginning to engage the public and other agencies about the potential for HCT/BRT improvements. The first is the need for the district to build an internal business case for the need and perceived outcome of transit improvements along the Highway 99 corridor from Ashland to Central Point; the second is the imperative for interagency collaboration.

### **Begin to build a case internally for transit enhancements using operational analysis and feasibility studies before bringing serious plans or considerations to the public.**

Technical experts and the RVMPO TAC and PAC committees stressed the importance of RVTD building a case internally for BRT based on operational analyses and data. The RVMPO PAC and TAC committee were fairly skeptical when talking about the need for BRT, particularly over other forms of transit, such as utilizing the existing rail infrastructure. In order to eliminate skepticism, it was recommended by technical experts and the business community that RVTD should build the argument for BRT by proving how BRT could bolster the economy in the region, help attain broader community goals, reduce travel times, move people more effectively, and increase connectivity and accessibility of workers and residents in the region to businesses and recreational opportunities. This was seen as crucial before plans for a BRT system could break ground.

## **Inter-agency collaboration will be imperative for successful planning and implementation of major transit enhancements such as BRT.**

RVTD already benefits from inter-agency collaboration when planning transit enhancements in the region. Those agencies, including ODOT, RVCOG, and the local Chambers of Commerce communicated their willingness to continue and increase the level of collaboration between their respective agencies for developing and implementing a major transit enhancement such as BRT. Additionally, it was noted by a number of interviewees that collaboration with all the different jurisdictions in the region is imperative to the development of a BRT system.

In terms of technical collaboration, ODOT staff expressed their willingness to work closely with RVTD. ODOT has a number of road treatments<sup>6</sup> planned along Highway 99 that will make close collaboration a necessity and indicated their willingness to possibly give a lane over to BRT for the use of designated bus lanes. As noted above, RVMPO have stated their desire to work with RVTD first by getting HCT into updated regional and local TSPs, and working to use policy to build community support for a HCT system.

In light of the plans for road treatments along portions of Highway 99, as described in the Oregon 99 Rogue Valley Corridor Plan, using designated lanes on Highway 99 is essentially a moving target. Working closely with ODOT moving forward will be important to the success of a BRT system. ODOT and city public works officials are concerned about dedicated lane and signal prioritization in downtowns and commercial areas along the corridor. In general, officials believed that these two elements were feasible between cities, but would lead to congestion at busy intersections, especially within Medford.

## **Meetings, focus groups, and other engagement techniques should include clear outcomes from the technique and a well-understood set of expectations for the participants.**

CPW learned that participants desire engagement techniques that clearly define the agenda and the expected outcomes. Technical expert interviewees hinted at the importance of providing clear directions, roles, and outcomes from community engagement so that the message and intent of community engagement techniques is clear and well understood.

Residents from Twin Creeks Retirement Center in Central Point suggested that the district would do well to maintain a clear and consistent message about the purpose and intent behind future focus groups or other engagement techniques with residents.

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6. Oregon Department of Transportation. OR 99 Rogue Valley Corridor Plan. May 2014.

## Conclusions from Findings

The findings in this chapter highlight some of the perceptions, opinions, and ideas of individuals, businesses, and professionals in the Rogue Valley region. CPW drew eight conclusions from the findings. Following are the eight conclusions. It is important to note that many of the negative remarks heard by the CPW team such as reliability, safety, bus stops improvements, and image would likely be resolved and improved from a HCT service. Below is a numbered list that highlights some of the major conclusions from the findings.

1. Residents, businesses, and professionals in the Rogue Valley have a generally favorable view of RVTD.
2. Deficiency in current service creates a challenge for RVTD.
3. Communication about the district's role and its services can be improved.
4. The improvement of existing services and infrastructure would likely improve the perception of the district.
5. Continual engagement from project start to finish is critical for maintaining interest in the project.
6. RVTD will need to develop an internal 'business case' for High Capacity Transit improvements that is backed with data based assumptions.
7. Community engagement necessitates a tailored approach to the audience.
8. Inter-agency and municipality cooperation is integral to effective transportation planning.

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# CHAPTER III: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

This chapter summarizes CPW's recommendations to the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD or the District) in moving forward with developing HCT or BRT in the region. Recommendations are based primarily on the findings from the community engagement process. The following recommendations are organized into categories and coupled with specific action items. The action items outlined provide RVTD with specific directions for further engaging stakeholders.

## Guiding Principles for Community Engagement

The goals of an effective community engagement strategy are to produce better decisions, enhance the process, and minimize the disparity between planners, decision makers, and the public about the course of action required for choices that can greatly change and affect a community. A sound community engagement strategy can provide legitimacy to RVTD and will seek to nurture the support of the community that the district serves. Following is a set of recommended guiding principles that district should employ when beginning a discussion with the community about the potential for high capacity transit improvements within the district.

- Allocate necessary staff time, capital and effort to the plan.
- Avoid 'plan and leave mentality.'
- Become an integral component of decision-making structure.
- Clearly articulate vision, goals and objectives.
- Command and nurture public support.
- Delineate the key roles and responsibilities of stakeholders.
- Identify and act upon concerns of the public and decision makers.
- Recognize the spectrum of community engagement.
- Review relevant transportation public engagement case studies.

## Allocate Necessary Staff Time, Capital, and Effort to the Plan

An effective planning process requires the appropriate level of staff effort and capital to ensure that the community engagement portion of the agency's work is adequately supported. The community engagement portion of the planning process would benefit from the addition of a public relations staff member with an allocation of funding and support from the district core staff. If a public relations

staff member is not feasible due to budgetary concerns, the district could seek to use interns or existing staff and dedicate portions of FTE for the explicit purpose of maintaining the community engagement work of the district.

## **Avoid ‘Plan and Leave Mentality’**

The ‘plan and leave mentality’ can be a major pitfall for an agency that believes that the organization has garnered an appropriate level of buy-in from the community. However, evidence from other transportation agencies in the state suggest that even though a plan may be adopted by a the local decision making bodies it is likely that if the planning and implementation process has a lengthy implementation timeline (5-30+ years), that the public and even the decision makers are no longer actively involved or aware of the plan. Avoiding the ‘plan and leave mentality’ can help to avoid community surprise once implementations of transportation improvements are initiated.

The Lane Transportation District (LTD) experienced heavy back-lash from the business community when beginning the construction of additional BRT lines in Western Eugene—a large part of this backlash was due to LTD’s perception that the appropriate amount of buy-in and plan adoption by local decision making bodies gave the district the ‘go-ahead’ for construction and implementation of the plan. This suggests that RVTD should avoid this pitfall to avoid backlash from the community and specific stakeholder groups in The Rogue Valley who could potentially be impacted on a larger level.

## **Become an Integral Component of the Decision Making Structure**

RVTD already maintains a visible role in the decision making structure of the Rogue Valley region by assuming an active involvement in regional problem solving, Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVMPO) committees on transportation, and Rogue Valley Area Commissions on Transportation. The district should continue to commit time and resources for maintaining involvement in the decision-making bodies in the valley. The nature of transit and the potential for HCT/BRT improvements requires that the district is actively collaborating with the other agencies, jurisdictions, municipalities, and groups that guide the direction of transportation decisions. A diligent effort by the district to continue its involvement with the regional decision making structures of the region will help to build and nurture the support of the district’s efforts to improve transportation in the region.

## **Clearly Articulate Vision, Goals, and Objectives**

This is a vital starting point for the district. RVTD core staff should actively develop a platform that begins with a final vision for transit improvements that incorporates goals that guide the vision, and objectives with measurable performance standards, and criteria for evaluation of the proposed plan.

## Vision

The vision requires clear articulation of how the final build out of a HCT system would act, look, and perform. This vision should include a description of each phase of the project, how it will be accomplished and what actions will need to be taken in order to complete the improvements. A clearly articulated vision is a fundamental building block of the planning process and will directly inform and guide the process in which the district builds its business case, operational feasibility, and methods in which to engage the community. The vision should be incorporated into the long range planning documents of RVTD so that it becomes a concrete starting point for discussing transit improvements with the public, agencies, and businesses in the region.

## Goals

Goals represent the general end toward which an organizational effort is directed. They identify how a community intends to achieve its mission and establish a vision for the future. Goals are broad statements that the district would like to accomplish. Goals for community engagement could potentially include items such as effective outreach that is accessible to everyone, increasing transparency about the planning process, or growing the visibility of the district's services.

## Objectives

Objectives are measurable statements, which identify specific steps needed to achieve the higher level goals stated as part of the high capacity improvement overall vision. Objectives are action items that can be measured with specific criteria to evaluate and monitor the progress of the district's planning and implementation of transit improvements. Specific objectives that inform the community engagement strategy portion of the planning process can include developing a stakeholder group of 'champions' to support the district in its efforts, including transit improvement plans in The Regional Transportation System Plan, and conducting a thorough stakeholder analysis of groups in the region to better understand the political and social climate behind transportation improvements.

## Build and Nurture Public Support

Oregon's statewide planning goals rely on a philosophy that values the affirmation and support of planning projects that will likely impact Oregonian's quality of life. When a community or region in the state begins a planning process, especially large-scale project such as transit improvements that could have wide-scale impacts, the agency should actively engage the public and collect public support for the project. **Statewide planning Goal 1 calls for each city and county in Oregon to "develop a citizen involvement program that insures the opportunity for citizens to be involved in all phases of the planning process."** Although a seemingly basic component of the planning process, without the support of the public in which the community planning processes are likely to stall, become delayed or stop all together, likely at the detriment of the community and to the agencies capital and time expenditures on the project.

Public support can come from the community at large, elected officials in the various jurisdictions in the valley, and from the business community. The more that the district can nurture the support from the various stakeholder groups and decision makers in the region the more fluid the planning and implementation process will proceed. However, after building the support from these groups, it will be important for RVTD to nurture that support by remaining transparent about the project process and maintaining open lines of communication between the district and the particular stakeholder group, citizen, or decision maker.

One method that could address and develop public support for HCT improvements and planning decisions is the creation of a steering committee. The committee could be comprised of a spectrum of residents, professionals, technical experts and elected officials and could be used as a sounding board and support group as RVTD moves forward with planning processes related to current and future transit service.

## **Delineate the Roles and Responsibilities of Stakeholders**

Eliminating any confusion about the roles and responsibilities of stakeholder groups helps to diffuse disparity between the planning agency and the public. A clear expectation setting procedure about what the district hopes for when interacting with stakeholders, individuals, and decision makers will reduce confusion about the process and allow for a more expedient and effective plan implementation.

Due to the complex nature of working with a variety of municipalities when planning and constructing transportation improvements, creating formal agreements or memoranda of understanding could be useful as part of the engagement process—these agreements should clearly delineate the stakeholder group’s role, tasks, and expectations about the project. Additionally, the district can provide information about how it will assist in completing the tasks or roles of the stakeholder group.

For example, RVTD could provide memoranda of understanding to ODOT about what it believes will be important expectations and tasks that will need to be completed with the assistance of the district. The district could provide operational analysis information that ODOT would then use to determine the feasibility about aspects of BRT such as the use of signal prioritization or the acquisition of right-of-way for bus operation.

## **Identify and Act upon Concerns of the Public and Decision Makers**

This can be described as **abiding by the dialogue of the community and the decision makers of the Rogue Valley**. Communication and engagement without action or serious consideration can appear as a placation of that stakeholder group and create feelings of animosity and disconnection between RVTD and the groups and individuals it interacts with. In short, if the district is going to seek public input, it needs to be serious about how it is considered and used in the planning and implementation process.

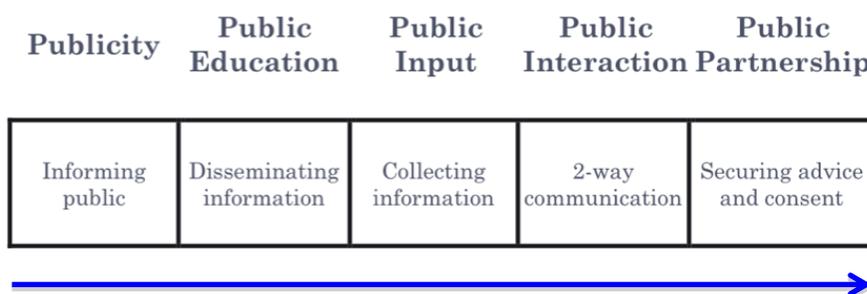
During the planning and implementation of potential transit enhancements along the Highway 99 Corridor and elsewhere within the district, RVTD should attempt to include public comment and technical expert advice wherever possible and appropriate. This is a fundamental tenet of regional planning and is also a required step included within the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Small Steps process. Identifying and acting upon concerns of community will also create a stronger connection and perception of trust between the district and its constituents. Residents of the region who see that their opinions are not only recognized but acted upon to create a better view of the planning agency and the services it provides.

## Recognize the Spectrum of Community Engagement

The spectrum of community engagement begins with publicity or informing a community about potential plans or actions that may impact that community. The most robust portion of the engagement spectrum ends with securing the advice and consent of the public when acting on planning decisions. Citizen engagement is a distinctly different process when compared with communication. The goal of community engagement is to allow the residents of a community to take an active role in the development of a plan or strategy that affects the community one lives in. **Communication is more of a ‘one-way street’** in which information and materials are disseminated to the residents and stakeholders of a community. **Engagement is a ‘two-way street’** process in which the agency or organization performing the planning work actively listens, responds, and uses the concerns and advice of the community. Engagement lends more credence and support than simply an information dissemination process.

Community engagement allows the opportunity to create consensus between impacted parties and the decision makers implementing a plan of action—in this instance a Bus Rapid Transit system in The Rogue Valley Region. Additionally, consensus allows for the reduction in surprise from apathetic or uninvolved individuals and stakeholders that were uninvolved in the process for whatever reason. Figure 3-1 shows a simple model of the spectrum of public engagement in the planning process.

**Figure 3-1. The Continuum of Public Engagement**



Source: Sherry R. Arnstein. ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’. JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224.

## Review Relevant Transportation Public Engagement Case Studies

The use of case studies and other examples of communities who have used public engagement as part of the process for building support for transit improvements is a useful way to avoid pitfalls and to capitalize on successes. In short, the district should use the best practices from other planning activities and avoid common pitfalls. The following documents, case studies, and individuals help to provide relevant background information that can be used in RVTD's process of public engagement.

### CPW Reports for Lane Transit District

CPW conducted a series of evaluations and reports for the Lane Transportation District about the 'EmX', LTD's version of a Bus Rapid Transit system in Eugene, Oregon. The analysis includes: a business perception report, an EmX framework evaluation, a stakeholder perceptions report, an EmX website evaluation, and BRT case studies report. The following links are for each report.

#### **Business Survey Report**

[https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10503/EMX\\_Business\\_Survey\\_Report.pdf?sequence=1](https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10503/EMX_Business_Survey_Report.pdf?sequence=1)

#### **Evaluation Framework Report**

[https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10501/EMX\\_Evaluation\\_Framework\\_Document.pdf?sequence=1](https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10501/EMX_Evaluation_Framework_Document.pdf?sequence=1)

#### **Stakeholder Perceptions Report**

[https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10502/EMX\\_Stakeholder\\_Perceptions\\_Report.pdf?sequence=1](https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10502/EMX_Stakeholder_Perceptions_Report.pdf?sequence=1)

#### **Website Evaluation Report**

[https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10505/EMX\\_Website\\_Evaluation.pdf?sequence=1](https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10505/EMX_Website_Evaluation.pdf?sequence=1)

#### **Bus Rapid Transit Case Studies Report**

[https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10504/LTD\\_Bus\\_Rapid\\_Transit\\_Case%20Studies.pdf?sequence=1](https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/10504/LTD_Bus_Rapid_Transit_Case%20Studies.pdf?sequence=1)

### Oregon Values and Beliefs Project

The 2013 Oregon Values and Beliefs Project survey polled Oregonians to define public attitudes on key issues facing the state. The key findings include: 3. Environmental quality and protection are important, 4. Public transportation instead of new roads (investing in public transit is considered more important than investing in roads for cars), and 5. Natural resource protections for future generations can help to inform the decision making process for RVTD.

<http://oregonvaluesproject.org/findings/top-findings/>

## The American Public Transit Association

The APTA provides information and reports about how to engage with a conservative population about the merits and value of public transportation and improvements.

[http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/conservatives\\_and\\_mass\\_transit.pdf](http://www.apta.com/resources/reportsandpublications/Documents/conservatives_and_mass_transit.pdf).

## Reconnecting America

Reconnecting America is a resource that provides reports on public engagement with conservative communities. The resources provided specifically discuss public process and decision making with public transportation.

<http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/books-and-reports/2009/conservatives-and-public-transportation/>.

## The Urban Land Institute Salt Lake City Case Study

Light rail in Salt Lake City is a relevant case study discussing how to increase support for transit in a conservative area.

<http://urbanland.uli.org/industry-sectors/utah-business-embrace-light-rail/>.

## Interview Jennifer Koozer, TriMet Community Affairs Representative

Jennifer Koozer is the public involvement liaison for the Milwaukie Light Rail project and likely has some insights into the Clackamas County voter backlash. The county recently passed a referendum that required that the county could spend no money on light rail unless the public voted for it.

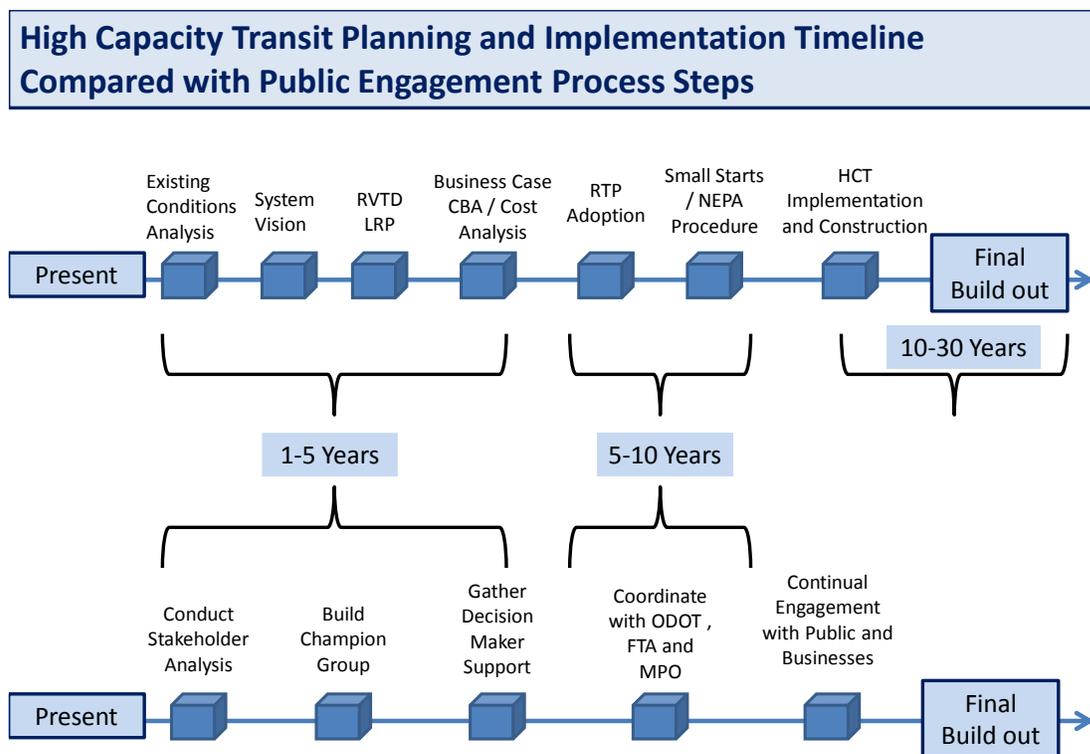
[http://www.oregonlive.com/oregon-city/index.ssf/2012/09/clackamas\\_county\\_anti-rail\\_mea.html](http://www.oregonlive.com/oregon-city/index.ssf/2012/09/clackamas_county_anti-rail_mea.html)).

## RVTD Framework for Community Engagement

This section describes specific recommendations for community engagement that the district can use when discussing high capacity transit or bus rapid transit improvements in the district. Each objective item contains specific action items that more directly inform the community engagement strategy. The bulleted list below provides an overview of each major objective.

- **Objective (1)**—Abide by the dialogue
- **Objective (2)**—Conduct internal analysis and evaluation prior to engagement with the public
- **Objective (3)**—Develop a Range of Public Engagement and Educational Materials about Transit and High Capacity Transit Options
- **Objective (4)**—Utilize a Comprehensive and Holistic Approach to Community Engagement
- **Objective (5)**—Nurture and Maintain Inter-Agency Collaboration
- **Objective (6)**—Inform the Public About High Capacity Transit and Bus Rapid Transit

**Figure 3-2. Process Diagram of Community Engagement**



Source: CPW.

## **Objective (1)—Abide by the Dialogue**

RVTD will want to respect and act upon what they learn from the community engagement process. For example, if a large segment of the population is concerned about buses using designated lanes in the Highway 99 corridor than RVTD should take steps to properly address concerns about that criteria of BRT.

Abiding by the dialogue can also take place when engaging other agencies, municipalities, and planning organizations—pursuing transportation enhancements that are perceived as highly politically unpopular is a difficult route for the district to pursue and may cause significant delays or other issues during the planning and implementation of high capacity transit improvements.

### **Action Item 1.1—Utilize public opinion and sentiments when developing vision, objectives, and goals of any proposed transit improvements in the district.**

An important tenet of any community engagement planning project is to include the public's sentiments about the project, this goes beyond simply listening to what individuals and stakeholder group's feedback about the project but actively attempts to include opinions and ideas into the planning process. For example, if the district learns that the majority of residents in the region favor a bus system that provides real-time information about bus routes and schedules, it should actively incorporate that feedback into the system's operational amenities. Conversely, if the business community expresses concern about how infrastructure improvements and construction may impact access and parking for businesses, RVTD should actively attempt to mitigate construction impacts to the greatest extent feasible.

### **Action Item 1.2—Avoid public engagement processes that do not honor the 'abide by the dialogue' objective to minimize disparity and surprise between the district's intentions and community desires.**

Abiding by the dialogue implies that the district will incorporate feedback from the community engagement process to lessen the discrepancy between the public's expectations of transit and RVTD's vision for a HCT system. This will reduce the potential for negative consequences that arise as a result of differing expectations between planners and the public.

## **Objective (2)—Conduct Internal Analysis and Evaluation Prior to Engagement with Public**

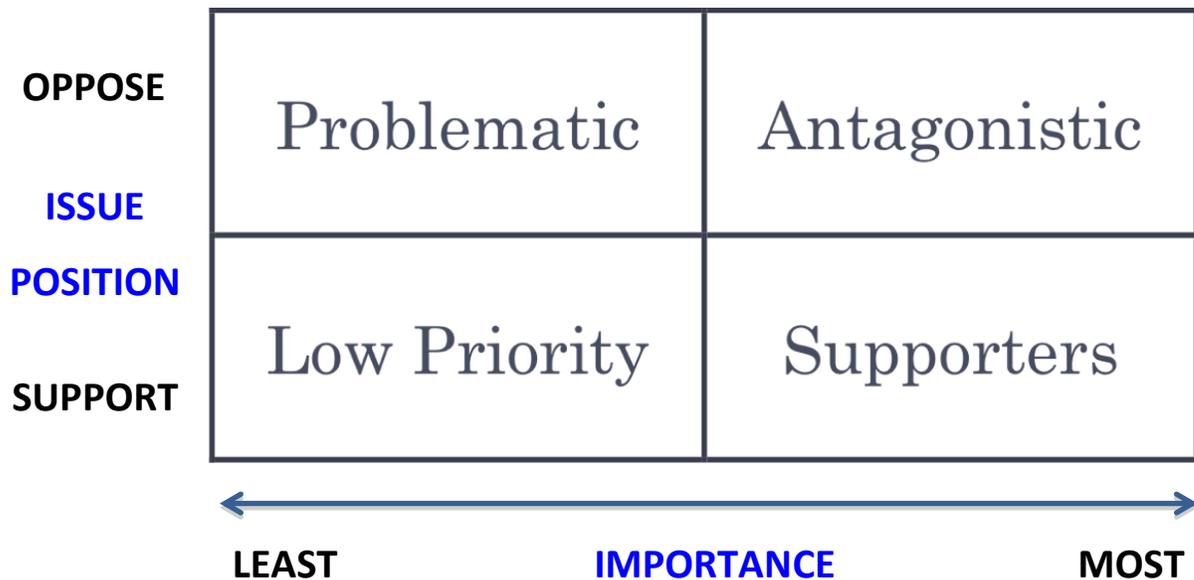
CPW worked with RVTD staff to begin to understand and evaluate stakeholders in the region. This process is integral to the early stages of the planning process; members of the staff and management of RVTD should work together to clearly assess stakeholder groups and their position on the spectrum of support and importance to the planning and implementation of high capacity transportation improvements.

### **Action Item 2.1—Perform stakeholder analysis and document the RVTD staff's perception of each stakeholder group, utilize stakeholder analysis matrix tool, and document information.**

A stakeholder analysis similar to the procedure conducted with RVTD core staff and CPW early in the project process will assist the district with identifying stakeholder groups that are critical to engage with. Stakeholder groups can generally be placed within four categories. Figure 3-3 displays a basic stakeholder analysis matrix tool that can be used to spatially understand each stakeholder group that RVTD decides to analyze or interact with. For example, the business community of downtown of Rogue Valley is a potential stakeholder group that RVTD staff and/or consultants could begin to describe and understand better using the matrix tool.

- Supporters - support project and are important
- Antagonistic - oppose project and are important
- Problematic - oppose project but are not important
- Low priority - supportive but are not important

**Figure 3-3. Stakeholder Analysis Matrix Tool**



Source: Resource Assistance For Rural Environments (RARE). Training Materials.

**Action Item 2.2—Develop a Business Case for HCT/BRT Improvements**

A common theme was that a strong business case is needed in order to begin discussion with the broader community. A business case should be informed by the vision of the project and should contain all of the necessary data, required process steps, and collaborative measures that the district will need in order to convince decision makers and the general public about the merits of HCT improvements to the current system. This includes:

- **Operational data** such as projected ridership increases, reduced delays, shorter headways, and improved scheduling supported by data that is conducted by an experienced traffic engineering consulting group with the assistance of the internal staff from RVTD.

- **Process steps** should clearly delineate and describe what actions need to occur when in order for the planning and implementation of HCT improvements to proceed with minimal delay.
- **Collaborative measures** between ODOT, the jurisdictions impacted by future plans, and regional government structures should also be clearly delineated so that each group understand their role in the project and what will be required of them in order to successfully implement BRT improvements.

### **Action Item 2.3—Create a Marketing Plan**

Ideally, a marketing and public relations campaign centered on transit improvements such as BRT should be in place before beginning to engage with the public. Information from the internal business case analysis combined with community engagement principles and strategies are important components of the marketing plan.

### **Action Item 2.4—Consider Hiring an Internal Public Relations Staff Member or Consultant to Assist in the Development of a Marketing Plan and to Maintain Engagement Processes**

A dedicated staff member or consultant who manages the daily operations of developing a marketing plan and performing community engagement will ensure that the work is completed in a timely manner and on a regular basis. A professional from the public relations field could provide expertise to the district about the process and methods required for effective outreach and communications with the public about transit and improving the system.

## **Objective (3)—Develop a Range of Public Engagement and Educational Materials about Transit and High Capacity Transit Options**

### **Action Item 3.1—Conduct a Website Evaluation and Consider Developing a Project Website**

RVTD’s website can be a crucial form of delivering information. As it currently stands, information is difficult to find on the website, which may alienate site users. The page for first time riders asks the users to email them rather than providing an easy to use guide on how to use the bus. Additionally, links to some videos on the website are broken. As the development and planning process unfold, many community members, key stakeholders, and patrons will want to access the RVTD website for various pieces of information. Additionally, RVTD should evaluate utilizing different forms of social media to inform the public about their services, projects, and plans.

The creation of a separate project website is a potentially useful procedure that could guide users who want to know more information about any plans or projects that are intended to improve the transit system. This website should be visually appealing and contain visually attractive materials and should be easily navigable.

The following project websites provide examples of what the RVTD project website could look and feel like.

- **Willshire BRT Line, Los Angeles, California—Project Website.**  
<http://www.metro.net/projects/wilshire/>
- **Ashland BRT Line, Chicago, Illinois—Project Website.**  
<http://www.transitchicago.com/ashlandbrt/>
- **Geary Corridor BRT Line, San Francisco, California.**  
<http://www.sfcta.org/delivering-transportation-projects/geary-corridor-bus-rapid-transit-home>

### **Action Item 3.2—Develop public engagement materials that clearly articulate what a HCT or BRT system is and how it will work**

Public engagement materials should be clear, concise, and describe visually how the envisioned transit improvements will look and work. These materials should include a variety of mediums including fliers, posters, presentations, renderings, and factsheets that are tailored to different audiences.

Consider using materials from the International Transportation Development (ITEP) organization. ITEP has developed a set of criteria that evaluates BRT systems on a scale similar to Leadership for Energy and Environmental Design standards. ITEP's evaluation system is simple to understand and provides levels of BRT infrastructure from bronze to gold.

### **Action Item 3.3—Develop a public relations campaign to increase ridership and appeal of RVTD's current services**

As noted above, many RVTD patrons, community members, and key stakeholders have little knowledge about various types of HCT. Developing public engagement materials is important for informing the public about any service alterations that are made and informing them about what choices are available for transit enhancements, if RVTD decides to pursue developing HCT or BRT in the future. Providing a wide breadth of options and discussing the benefits and costs associated with using each feature will enhance the transparency of the process and better inform the public about what transit options are available and appropriate for the region. Developing public engagement materials is essential to educating the public and creating a sense of trust.

Materials should be clear, well articulated, and attractive. The engagement materials should use images and brief descriptions wherever possible and avoid text heavy documents, confusing language, or planner and engineering jargon.

## **Objective (4)—Utilize a Comprehensive and Holistic Approach to Community Engagement**

Communication and engagement are fundamentally different processes where communication suggests less collaboration and interaction and engagement refers

to a process in which RVTD and the stakeholder groups it interact with work together towards the goals of improving the transit system in the Rogue Valley.

Engaging the public throughout the process is essential for effectively, appropriately, and efficiently developing BRT in the region. This section provides recommendations for effectively developing and executing a community outreach strategy and how to communicate to and incorporate feedback from different stakeholders.

#### **Action Item 4.1—Continually Engage With Public**

The purpose of an engagement process is to incorporate ideas originating outside a given organization, which then will lead to innovative ideas within transportation systems. Throughout the development and planning process, RVTD should continually engage and communicate with the community and key stakeholders, updating them about progress, obstacles, and concerns.

A robust community engagement process is important to persuade community members of the benefits of transit improvements and build trust. By working with stakeholders and community members, RVTD can establish legitimacy in its efforts to develop BRT in the region. In the broadest sense, RVTD can use citizen participation to obtain valuable insights and gather support from everyday riders and groups affected by transit. With citizen participation, formulated policies might be more realistically grounded in citizen preferences and the public might become more sympathetic evaluators with the tough decisions that government administrators have to make. Also, the level of support can improve from the public because their feedback will provide valid basis for decisions to create a less divisive and combative populace to govern and regulate. RVTD administrators can learn which policies are unpopular, and as a result will learn how to avoid such policy failures. This can be done through the regular contact with citizens who might otherwise not be engaged.

#### **Action Item 4.2—Tailor information and message about HCT/BRT appropriately to the individual, group, or agency**

Building support for BRT for most stakeholders throughout Rouge Valley revolves around framing the argument for BRT around efficiency, congestion, and economic impact. Most stakeholders are not concerned with the equity arguments for making transit enhancements; however, many patrons are concerned about particular bus and bus stop features that increase accessibility. Given the concern around the economic impacts, congestion impacts, and transit system efficiency RVTD should gather data in all these areas and create educational material to outreach to the public about the impacts of BRT.

A possible way to engage the public and public administrators about making transit improvements should include comparing the economic, social, traffic, and environmental impacts of developing HCT against developing more lanes of traffic and doing nothing.

When developing and tailoring messages for various stakeholder groups, RVTD should emphasize different aspects, impacts, and needs for developing HCT in the

region. A large presentation about how HCT will work to a large selection of various stakeholders, especially if there are council members that are not up to speed on transportation. RVTD's arguments should include the importance of having the jurisdictions and the chambers of commerce on board. When communicating the issues with jurisdiction and the benefits of HCT, the matter is not necessarily all about the money to make it work. The project should be based on what RVTD can provide to the community and explain what the level of RVTD service does for the region:

- Increase economic benefits (local and regional)
- Improve quality of life
- Benefit businesses financially
- Improve environmental outcomes (air quality)
- Improve bus service
- Increase connectivity and access
- Decrease traffic congestion

**Action Item 4.3—Adjust Public Engagement Approach When Tailored Approach Suggest that Retooling of Message or Strategy is Appropriate**

Developing and implementing effective and appropriate transit relies on understanding community attitudes and needs. It is essential for RVTD to reach out and establish credibility with key stakeholders, community members, and public officials. To better understand these groups' perceptions of transit, need, and tastes RVTD should build an outreach strategy tailored for each stakeholder group. Strategies could include:

- Tailor future survey or focus group questions for ease of community member or participant understanding.
- Address ethical and moral commitment of staff to ensure that the community's concerns and ideas matter.
- Keep participants informed and acknowledge concerns and aspirations to provide feedback on how public input influenced their decision.
- Consult and collaborate with professionals/residents in formulating solutions and incorporate their advice or recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.

**Action Item 4.4—Avoid Jargon and use Simple Language**

Overall, many RVTD patrons, community members, and key stakeholders have little knowledge about various types of HCT. When developing a communication strategy, running future focus groups, or informing the public about different elements of HCT in the region, planners and other RVTD officials should avoid using jargon and acronyms, and use simple language instead.

Throughout the entire planning and development process, CPW recommends RVTD carefully consider the language it uses when communicating to the public about

HCT and when framing key aspects of the project. During these public sessions the use of acronyms need to be minimized to the greatest extent possible because HCT can be a damaging term when someone does not understand it. CPW believes it is very important that everyone involved needs to understand the process that will be followed, before techniques are selected and activities planned. Thus, easy to understand language must be used when communicating the process, techniques, or activities are carried out.

#### **Action Item 4.5—Maintain a Consistent Message**

In order to avoid confusion about RVTD’s intentions for the current transit system and any potential improvements, the district should strive to maintain a clear and consistent message. The more often the district alters the methods and materials that it uses for community engagement the larger the likelihood of creating misinterpretations about the vision and mission of the district.

#### **Action Item 4.6—Define Planning Process Clearly to Public and Decision Makers**

Stakeholders cannot and should not all be engaged in the same way. RVTD needs to build specific outreach strategies for businesses, current transit patrons, city administrators, specific population segments, and opposition groups. This entails developing different educational materials, collecting appropriate data that mollifies stakeholder concerns, and finding appropriate ways to share information with stakeholders.

Different stakeholders have different concerns and lenses they view transit through. For example, many public administrators and council members, along with large parts of the community, are concerned with the capital and operational cost of developing HCT/BRT. Auto users are concerned with the expected impacts on congestion. Business are interested in the financial impact on their stores during and after construction. RVTD patrons are concerned about rate increases and where services may be extended to with transit alterations.

#### **Action Item 4.7—Maintain Transparency Throughout Process From Start-to-Finish**

Transparency in planning processes is a critical component of developing trust with the Rogue Valley community. This can be achieved by ensuring that the public has a variety of opportunities to provide input and to ask questions about the project process and implementation procedures. Once RVTD develops a relationship with a participant, they gain trust and eventually have connection with people, which will take time. Knowing just a little bit about the targeted population and in the conditions in which they live helps with asking better questions and building trust. A loss of trust can occur if the public is involved after options are established or predetermined options have been already selected.

#### **Action Item 4.8—Value Different Stakeholder Perspectives**

Each stakeholder’s perspective is valuable in defining a shared understanding and alignment of expectation for RVTD regarding transit enhancements. Quality public participation follows a logical and transparent decision process that involved the public throughout. Chances are that someone has experience with the issues like City boards and commissions, which can be great resources. There are also

organizations that can provide guidance to particular issues and target populations to discuss suitable strategies and overlapping expectations.

#### **Action Item 4.9—Build a Coalition of Political Support**

Building political support is essential for moving any transit project forward in the Rogue Valley. Most of our interviewees believed it was important to have the following entities supporting RVTD with any transit alteration they plan to develop: Jackson County and other city Chambers of Commerce, Medford City Council, Ashland City Council, large regional employers and local businesses, and the Oregon Department of Transportation. Building a coalition of support is necessary to avoid resistance for the project and ensure that it is politically feasible.

The coalition of political support should also include influential members of the community who have been identified internally by RVTD through stakeholder analysis methodology or who arise organically as the district begins to engage the public in a discussion about transit improvements in the region.

### **Objective (5)—Nurture and Maintain Inter-Agency Collaboration**

#### **Action Item 5.1—Work Closely with Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization to Incorporate RVTD’s Vision and Long Range Planning Efforts for HCT / BRT**

Collaboration between the Rogue Valley Transportation District and the various jurisdictions, agencies, groups and stakeholders in the region will be important to achieving effective community engagement platform. CPW suggests that the district ensure that an open and constant line of communication between all of the local governments in the district as well as agencies such as the Oregon Department of Transportation, Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Committees, and the Federal Transit Administration.

Establishing a dialogue between different stakeholder groups would be beneficial because varying opinions on the issue could lead to more effective and appropriate means to altering RVTD services and developing HCT/BRT in the region. Good ideas emerge from networks by bringing more ideas into the mix. This approach allows ideas to be refined by others and engage a broader group of stakeholders.

#### **Action Item 5.2—Collaborate with Local Jurisdictions in the Region to Ensure Cooperation and System Compatibility**

Similar to the cooperative efforts that will be necessary with the Rogue Valley MPO and ODOT, the district should strive to remain actively involved with the various municipalities in the region and other areas that are not necessarily located within the district’s boundaries or proposed BRT transit line. The importance of engagement with the other jurisdictions is that the district could potentially expand its services to these areas and including and incorporating the suggestions and opinions of officials from cities outside the district assists in the maintenance of transparency and shows that the district is acting in good faith with all of the jurisdictions in the Rogue Valley.

## **Objective (6)—Inform the Public About High Capacity Transit and Bus Rapid Transit**

### **Action Item 6.1—Identify Possible External Conditions that Could Damage Outcomes, such as people concerned HCT could Create Congestion or Parking Issues**

Future road infrastructure alterations and public transportation changes will ultimately impact the communities overall perception of transportation. Some participants expressed concerns over road treatments and congestion impacts associated with implementing road diets. Future transportation and road infrastructure alterations should be weighed into any decision moving forward with developing HCT in the region.

### **Action Item 6.2—Consider Future Transportation and Road Changes that will Alter Perceptions by Stakeholders**

RVTD patrons, key community stakeholders, and business owners do not have enough background knowledge on the range of HCT options that could be implemented in the Rogue Valley. Additionally, some stakeholders may have incorrect information or unrealistic perceptions of what different types of HCT do and what their impact may be on the community's economic vitality, traffic patterns, and land use development.

### **Action Item 6.3—Use Educational Materials from ITEP and The FTA to Assist in Discussing BRT with the Community**

Wherever appropriate the district should use pre-existing educational and informative materials about BRT rather than creating documents internally. An extensive amount of information exists in the realm of transportation planning that can be used, crafted, and modified for the district's purposes.

CPW has provided two detailed sources of BRT information that describe a variety of aspects about BRT from the attributes of the system, evaluation criteria, process steps, communication materials and other useful visual representations of BRT systems and buses.

- (ITEP) Criteria Evaluation Scorecard for BRT Systems in the United States.  
<https://go.itdp.org/display/live/The+BRT+Standard>
- (FTA) Detailed Document on BRT.  
<http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/CBRT.pdf>

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# APPENDIX A: KEY PERSON INTERVIEWS

This appendix describes the methodology and findings from the key person interviews conducted to gather their perceptions and opinions about the potential to build a bus rapid transit line in the Rogue Valley.

## Methodology

RVTD identified a total of 22 key stakeholders for CPW to interview. Stakeholders interviewed fell under one of four categories: **Technical Experts, Public Officials, Business Members, or Public/Community Services**. Interviews were conducted over the phone and lasted between 30-60 minutes. Interview questions were based on the following categories of questions:

- Perceptions of RVTD
- Policy Perceptions
- Economic Impacts
- Societal and Livability Impacts
- Traffic Operational Impacts
- Future Communication Efforts
- Inter-Agency Collaboration
- Opportunities and Constraints

## Findings

Key findings from the interviews are organized into the following themes: perceptions of RVTD; transit and enhancements; high capacity transit; communication; and opportunities for collaboration. In total CPW noted 25 key themes.

### Perceptions of RVTD

Within this topic, there was a broad consensus on a number of different topics that CPW discussed with interviewees. Key findings within this theme relate to overall perceptions of RVTD, current services, and what the role of RVTD is and should be.

#### **Key Finding #1 – RVTD is viewed as being an efficient organization that operates with limited funding and within geographical constraints**

Across the board, interviewees said that RVTD does a decent job of providing an effective transit service that addresses the region's needs and makes necessary

improvements to the system considering the revenue and geographic limitations. Additionally, CPW learned that RVTD is perceived as a progressive organization under good leadership that markets itself well with advertisements that appeal to intermodal travelers.

Services highlighted for their effectiveness include service within the Medford core and along routes 10 and 40 along Highway 99. However, outside of these areas, RVTD's services are seen as mediocre with many interviewees lamenting a lack of service to Jacksonville, White City, and Eagle Point.

## **Key Finding #2 – RVTD is not doing enough to attract more riders**

A common theme found among many of the interviewees was that RVTD is not doing enough to attract choice riders and that the majority of RVTD's patrons do not have an alternative to taking the bus. Interviewees were in agreement that future transit enhancements should better appeal to potential choice riders. In order to achieve this, a combination of more routes, buses, and additional weekend hours including later evening services is seen as necessary. Additionally, a quicker and more reliable service with improved internal connectivity to other services was viewed as important for attracting choice riders.

## **Key Finding #3 – A more comprehensive transit system is needed in the Rogue Valley to meet future transit demand and increase ridership**

Different stakeholder groups have a strong desire for a more comprehensive transit system. An efficient and comprehensive transit system that serves the entire Rogue Valley is believed by interviewees to be important for meeting future transit demand and increasing ridership, particularly of choice riders.

## **Key Finding #4 – RVTD is seen as having an important and diverse role in the Rogue Valley**

Arising from the interviews, there were a number of varied roles that RVTD is believed to have, or should have in the region. Interviewees communicated to CPW that the role of RVTD is to: connect residents and workers with businesses, with an emphasis on providing connections to hospitals and downtown cores; serve people who do not drive either by choice or need; promote and facilitate multi-modal transportation options; play an environmental role by reducing VMT; and play a key role in long-range planning with decision makers in the region.

## **Transit and Enhancements**

Many of the key stakeholders shared similar opinions about the topics and questions discussed with CPW that related to transit enhancements. Key findings within this theme relate to current transit needs, favored short-term transit enhancements, Highway 99, and transit-oriented developments.

## **Key Finding #5 – There is a strong desire to improve existing services**

Among the different stakeholders CPW interviewed, a recurring theme was that RVTD should improve their existing services before implementing any new services. Additionally, new services should not result in the loss of existing services. Improvements sought include: expanding hours of operation, including later services and more weekend services; increasing the frequency of services on the routes with the highest ridership; increasing reliability; and increasing services to more destinations, notably Eagle Point, White City, Jacksonville, and Grants Pass. Additionally, students and faculty at SOU also see improving existing bus stops as important for increasing visibility, safety, and fostering place making principles. They commented further that unmarked bus stops create concern for student riders because they are unable to identify place or find their way.

## **Key Finding #6 – An express bus service is favored for initial transit enhancements along Highway 99**

An express bus service that runs along Highway 99 with amenities including Wi-Fi, and nicer bus stops and buses is seen as the best short-term option in the Rogue Valley by a number of key stakeholders. An express bus service alongside improvements to the existing bus service is viewed as being able to solve a number of the connectivity and mobility problems that residents currently experience. An express service is also seen as possible precursor to any HCT development such as BRT Lite, if it is successful.

## **Key Finding #7 – Highway 99 is seen as ideal for connecting the main cities in the Rogue Valley more effectively with a new transit system**

Stakeholders were in agreement that Highway 99 is an ideal location for a new transit system that would better connect the largest population centers and workforce in the Rogue Valley. However, it was seen as important to understand how the community and businesses will be impacted by transit enhancement along Highway 99 before going forward.

## **Key Finding #8 – RVTD would benefit from establishing a sustainable long-term funding source**

A recurring theme from the stakeholder interviews was that RVTD lacks financial sustainability as it is without a long-term funding source. It was acknowledged by public officials that the limited funding RVTD has for transit enhancements is likely to be met by animosity from the public who are likely to argue for allocation of funds for fixing roads or other forms of development. One suggestion was that RVTD should consider increasing fares and changing their funding structure to establish a more reliable long-term funding source.

## **Key Finding #9 – Existing transit-oriented districts need better transit connections to job centers**

It was communicated to CPW that some existing transit-oriented districts in the Rogue Valley need better transit to connect people to job centers. Transit-oriented development is still seen by some to be a good way to encourage growth in the ‘right’ areas. However, one public official identified transit-oriented developments as contentious subject among public officials and advised caution when selling BRT using TOD.

## **Bus Rapid Transit**

Discussions held on the various topics, elements, and impacts of BRT brought the largest differences in opinion between the interviewees. In particular, there was least consensus between interviewees on BRT running in designated lanes and utilizing signal prioritization. These elements of BRT are often the most controversial elements of a BRT system. Key findings within this theme relate to the feasibility of BRT, the benefits and impacts of BRT, perceptions of designated lanes and signal prioritization, and traffic congestion. Key findings are detailed below.

## **Key Finding #10 – BRT is seen as being a largely feasible option along Highway 99**

In terms of feasibility, the majority of interviewees see BRT as a viable option for the Highway 99 corridor. Technical experts and other stakeholder groups see BRT Lite as better suited to meeting the immediate transit needs in the region, but did not rule out the technical feasibility of implementing a fuller BRT system with more designated lanes as the Rogue Valley grows. A number of public officials were supportive of a phased approach to BRT that develops incrementally from an express bus service to BRT Lite.

At least one official recognized the value in creating a better multi-modal system, especially during the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. Another said BRT had the potential to improve the region’s downtown areas by creating space for those travelling to downtown, as opposed to through; this official was supportive of the elements that establish a sense of destination created by BRT stations.

Support from the business community is seen as important for making BRT political viable option. Support from the business community hinges on the financial burden and support for developing it in the region. Overall, concerns of implementing a BRT system include how well BRT would run in downtown areas, whether or not the right level and residential density exists to support BRT, and restricting the system to being purely a north-south system. Finally, the associated costs of implementing BRT was seen as potentially holding back the business community from supporting BRT.

## **Key Finding #11 – BRT is believed to support economic development in the Rogue Valley**

This was a belief held by both business and technical expert interviewees. HCT is seen to support economic development by reducing driving times, making it easier for employers to retain employees who do not drive, and increasing connectivity and accessibility of workers and businesses in the region. Technical experts saw this last point as being crucial for promoting economic development in the region. Finally, there was conflicting opinions held by a few interviews over whether integrating HCT stops with employment and shopping would benefit and spur on new commercial development.

## **Key Finding #12 – Gaining the support of the Chambers of Commerce and businesses in the Rogue Valley is seen as key for the success of any future transit project**

A number of stakeholders communicated to CPW that this could be done by conducting a cost benefit analysis that compares the economic costs, benefits, and impacts of implementing and operating a HCT system. Communicating the results of a cost benefit analysis could be the first step to gaining the support of businesses in the region.

## **Key Finding #13 – BRT is believed to have positive impacts that would improve the quality of life in the Rogue Valley**

Implementing BRT along the Highway 99 corridor is seen by a number of different stakeholders as potentially having a positive effect on the quality of life in the region. The increased capacity and connectivity brought to the community by BRT is seen as a way to better connect people to social services, make it easier for employees to commute to work instead of driving, reduce the number of cars on the road improving air quality, and improving the mobility of groups such as students and the elderly who may not be able to own a car for any number of reasons.

## **Key Finding #14 – Differing opinions exist about the feasibility and impacts of BRT operating in designated lanes along Highway 99**

The utilization of designated lanes is arguably the most controversial element discussed in regard to BRT. CPW learned of differing opinions about the feasibility of implementing designated lanes and the potential affects they will have on congestion and safety.

The majority of concern relates to how feasible designated lanes are in downtown areas. Many different stakeholders expressed concern that designated lanes will not work in downtown areas with one stakeholder believing that designated lanes would increase congestion. According to a technical expert from CSA Planning, a private planning consultation company, dedicated lanes do not make sense in the

region at this time. Conversely, a technical expert from Jackson County Public Works stated that it is more feasible, as well as reasonable to take a lane from automobiles and that studies and road diets have shown that this would not negatively affect automobiles. Despite the lack of agreement, there was consensus that designated lanes are believed to be feasible outside of downtown area.

CPW also learned that in light of the Oregon 99 Rogue Valley Corridor Plan published this year by ODOT that is considering a road diet along portions of Highway 99, the situation along Highway 99 having designated lanes is essentially a moving target. ODOT officials further communicated that additional road diets are being considered along Highway 99. One ODOT official stated that designated lanes are feasible and that three-lane sections need to be evaluated, as there is plenty of pavement for it to work. ODOT has communicated to CPW that their ROW is to the edge of the pavement. ODOT stated that gaining additional ROW would be costly and that safety must be addressed properly when considering the use of middle lanes in a BRT system. ODOT also said that they could possibly give a dedicated lane to RVTD. Working closely with ODOT moving forward is a necessity to the success of a potential BRT system.

### **Key Finding #15 – Differing opinions exist about the feasibility and impacts of signal prioritization for BRT along Highway 99**

Similar to designated lanes, concern was expressed by a number of different stakeholders about how well signal prioritization would work particularly in downtown areas. In general, technical experts and public officials believe that signal prioritization will work well in rural areas in the corridor, but less well in downtown areas, which according to public officials, could possibly lead to congestion at busy intersections. In these areas, the technical expert believes that downtown areas may need their own study to investigate the feasibility of signal prioritization and designated lanes.

### **Key Finding #16 – Current traffic congestion is not enough of a motivating factor to influence people to use HCT**

There was consensus among the different stakeholders interviewed that using the current traffic congestion levels along Highway 99 alone would not motivate people to choose HCT over automobiles. There are differing opinions about how bad congestion is actually deemed to be. The worst areas for congestion are believed to be downtown areas but one technical expert commented that BRT had the potential to improve the region's downtown areas by creating space for those travelling to downtown, as opposed to through.

## **Communication**

Encouragingly, interviewees share similar beliefs about how RVTD would benefit from a measured and tailored approach to each group within the community. Key findings within this theme relate to how to package BRT in order to increase support, and how to communicate with the community moving forwards.

## **Key Finding #17 – RVTD should be transparent about the costs and benefits of HCT in order to increase support for HCT**

CPW learned that a number of different stakeholders believe that for RVTD to increase support for HCT they need to sell HCT by providing information to the public pertaining to overall costs, including who pays for what, benefits, and economic impacts of implementing a HCT system in the Rogue Valley. One way of doing this was said to be by providing businesses, the Chambers of Commerce, and large organizations such as SOU, with hard data on the positive and negative financial impacts of developing a HCT system by conducting a cost-benefit analysis.

## **Key Finding #18 – RVTD needs to effectively communicate the problem and demonstrate the benefits of the project**

All interviewee groups emphasized the need to effectively identify, package, and communicate the problem and the desired options clearly to the public and business community in the Rogue Valley. Public officials expressed that RVTD should communicate not just the ability of HCT to move people to and from destinations in an effective, efficient, and reliable manner, but stressed that RVTD should communicate to the public how HCT can help attain broader community goals to increase support. In other words, BRT is an investment in commonly held values. One public official believed that air quality impacts would be important to the public. Additionally, as many of the general public is not familiar with HCT options, RVTD would benefit from implementing an informational program that would explain in detail about HCT with examples from other cities and why RVTD has chosen it as its preferred form of HCT for the Rogue Valley.

## **Key Finding #19 – There is a strong desire for continual engagement**

Consensus was reached between all stakeholder groups about the desire for continual engagement going forward with the project. Continual outreach, particularly to the business community and the general public is seen as essential for realizing RVTD's goals for a HCT system. RVTD's public outreach would benefit from the use of several mediums including newspapers, television, and web sites.

Additionally, several interviewees said that RVTD should tailor its message and communication efforts, including mediums used to each group they engage, as different groups require different information. For example, developers and planners will need to have technical information about design standards and any land use changes along Highway 99, whereas the business community will need to have more economic data.

## **Key Finding #20 – RVTD would benefit from identifying ‘champions’ to drive the process forward**

RVTD would benefit from identifying ‘champions’ to drive the process forward. In particular, there are significant opportunities for collaboration with SOU to increase ridership by supporting SOU in campaigns to inform students about transit options and benefits. According to SOU, efforts to increase ridership through marketing have been minimal.

## **Opportunities for Collaboration**

Among the stakeholders interviewed, CPW learned that structures are already in place to effectively collaborate with RVTD moving forward. RVTD already works with a number of committees and organizations to promote and improve transit in the region. However, there is scope for increased collaboration between RVTD and important organizations in relation to the planning and gaining support for a HCT system. The key finding within this theme relates to how RVTD could cooperate with organizations to advance their HCT agenda. Key findings are detailed below.

## **Key Finding #21 – RVTD would benefit from working with the RVMPO to incorporate HCT into a Regional Transportation Plan update**

Multiple RVMPO officials stated that RVTD should work closely with the RVMPO on this project, namely through updating the Regional Transportation Plan to incorporate HCT, using policy to build community support, and using RVMPO to disseminate information to key stakeholders and the general public.

## **Key Finding #22 – RVTD should work with ODOT when deciding on the technical details of a BRT system**

CPW was made aware that no ODOT facilities exist along Highway 99 that would cause potential issues for transit enhancements. ODOT believes that transit enhancements will be more difficult to make within the various municipalities that Highway 99 passes through. Locations of proposed transit enhancements along Highway 99 are important to know to understand how the community and businesses will be impacted, as well as the potential affects on medical access in the Medford and Phoenix areas.

Finally, ODOT is considering a number of road diets along Highway 99. RVTD should work with ODOT to understand what this means for developing BRT and should review the Oregon 99 Rogue Valley Corridor Plan and any other new ODOT plans.

## **Key Finding #23 – RVTD is set to be continued to be supported by key groups within the Rogue Valley**

Interviewees and the organizations they represent, communicated that their organizations would continue to assist RVTD in the areas they do already. That includes working with RVTD to gain funding from various organizations, and

providing planning and technical support. New opportunities for collaboration according to ODOT, include working with RVTD to get BRT proposals in to their Oregon 99 Rogue Valley Corridor Plan, writing letters of support from high level ODOT officials including the Director and the Area Manager, and working together to on lane dedication and implementation of signal prioritization.

### **Key Finding #24 – RVTD will need to collaborate effectively with all jurisdictions and include them throughout the entire process**

Interviewees highlighted regional and jurisdiction coordination as being one of the biggest challenges RVTD will face in developing a HCT system along Highway 99. The interviewees felt it would be extremely difficult to coordinate across all the jurisdictions along Highway 99 because many of the individual cities veer towards jurisdictional independence rather than metro area collaboration. Cities in the region contain a culture of independence and may reject the idea of one big metro area.

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# APPENDIX B: FOCUS GROUPS

## Overview

The following section details key takeaways from six focus group activities with pre-identified stakeholder groups. Following the “Key Findings” section are more detailed summaries of the focus group activities, including a meeting with RVTD staff that helped inform CPW’s engagement process.

## Description of Six Major Focus Groups

Participants of focus groups included members from:

- Crater High School
- Key Employers: Harry and David, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Jackson County Human Services
- Southern Oregon University
- Twin Creeks Retirement Community
- Rogue Valley MPO Public Advisory Council (PAC)
- Rogue Valley MPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

In each focus group activity, participants were given an introduction to the exercise and its purpose, as well as a description of the project. Focus group activities contained several categories of questions:

- Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services
- Transit enhancements needed
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Opportunities and constraints
- Future communication efforts

## Key Findings

Key findings of stakeholder groups, engaged through the focus groups, are provided herein. Crater High School, Key Employers, Southern Oregon University, and Twin Creeks Retirement Community are grouped under “General Community,” while the RVMPO PAC and TAC findings are presented under “RVMPO Committees.”

## Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services

### General Community

Across the focus groups, participants had little experience with RVTD services, often due to shortages in coverage area, inconvenient service hours, safety concerns, and/or unfamiliarity with the system. To this point, many people said the system appears to be confusing and difficult to navigate. There was a general consensus that the system is not currently a viable alternative to the automobile, but that more riders would undoubtedly use it if it made the improvements listed in the following section.

### RVMPO Committees

The PAC characterized the Rogue Valley as the “typical American community,” interested in making transit enhancements but unwilling to shoulder the associated expenses. RVTD is believed to operate in a primarily automobile-centered community, serving predominantly low-income riders, and catering to a diverse demographic. The TAC did not directly discuss perceptions of RVTD services.

## Transit Enhancements Needed

### General Community

As mentioned above, immediate improvements that provide information that make it easy to ride the bus, and improve the comfort of riders. Almost unanimously, participants wanted to see the following:

- More information at bus stops, including maps with routes, service times, and real-time arrival information.
- Creation of a mobile phone application with a trip planner and live arrival updates.
- Elevated and sheltered platforms to increase visibility, comfort, and sense of destination.
- Increased coverage area, especially in southeast Medford.
- More frequent arrivals during commute hours.
- Better bike facilities at and surrounding stops.
- Creation of Park and Ride lots on commuter routes.

### RVMPO Committees

Most participants believed that the current system needs better connectivity between cities and a more regional approach to transit. Participants recommended future transit enhancements extend into areas not currently incorporated into RVTD’s service district through a “hub-and-spoke system,” rather than simply enhancing transit along Highway 99.

A number of MPO PAC members noted that any future transit enhancements should create a complete transit system that incorporates multi-modal infrastructure, making use of circulators and bike routes, followed with a HCT system implemented along the Highway 99 corridor. PAC members also recommended increased service hours.

## **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)**

### **General Community**

Participants from the focus groups were relatively supportive of BRT, especially when it came to the station enhancements. As mentioned above, many thought the place making influence of the station design would make the system easier to navigate and more attractive. Convenience-related improvements, like off-board fare payment, live arrival information, and increased frequency were almost unanimously supported, with some disagreement over the frequency needed to make the system a viable alternative to the automobile.

Designated lanes and traffic signals received support from most participants, although some had questions about the impacts on traffic—especially at intersections—and emergency vehicle access.

### **RVMPO Committees**

There was a range of opinions on the need for BRT and HCT in the region, with the PAC and TAC being more skeptical than the other focus groups. Some of those who did see a need for HCT spoke about the attractiveness of rail, in spite of being reminded about studies that showed the region's density levels did not merit the investment. Those who were cautiously supportive recommended a phased approach, beginning with express bus services for commuters.

The majority of the participants did not see a need for BRT in the near future and viewed it as an impractical option, lamenting the lack of connectivity in the current system. Many brought up the importance of maintaining and improving the system as a whole before looking to HCT enhancements.

## **Opportunities and Constraints**

### **General Community**

Members of the community seemed to believe there are good selling points for BRT, primarily because it is a more attractive service that will be far easier to use. People seemed to think the region would generally embrace a system that relieves congestion, improves air quality, and, as one employer put it, moves the region "into the 21<sup>st</sup> century."

A number of people, however, believed it would be difficult to sway people to support the project with a tax measure. There was a common misperception that transit systems should be supported solely by rider fares. Although participants

were generally supportive of dedicated lanes, they did not seem to believe the general public would be easily persuaded.

## **RVMPO Committees**

Many of the participants saw great opportunity in tying future transit enhancements to TODs and more efficient land use patterns. To this point, participants emphasized making strategic investments and partnerships with developers around future transit enhancements in order to allow for both TODs and Park and Ride lots. In making any transit enhancements, participants noted that it is extremely important to consider the capital costs of developing any enhancement, the financial sustainability and operating costs of running any new transit options, and making strategic investments to effectively sustain operations.

As was the case in a number of interviews with technical experts, members from both committees seemed to think dedicated lanes were more of an issue in downtown areas, especially in Medford and Ashland. Some members were hesitant to support BRT without knowing the impacts on business access and freight along the corridor.

## **Future Communication Efforts**

### **General Community**

Most participants wanted to be included in future outreach efforts in some manner, with many expressing preference for a survey. Some recommended the creation of a project-specific website with educational materials, along with frequent project updates to avoid isolating the public.

Key employers said they would be eager to disseminate RVTD materials and passes to employees, as long as it does not cost them. High school and SOU students and staff expressed a desire to see a more student-specific marketing campaign and presence on their campuses.

### **RVMPO Committees**

Members of both committees recommended using case studies from cities with a similar cultural and sociopolitical environment in future outreach efforts, along with a comprehensive HCT education process. Public-private partnerships—presumably with businesses along the corridor and developers—were stressed as crucial in working towards transit enhancements.

It was recommended that RVTD pursue updates to the Regional and local TSPs that support HCT enhancements. Some suggested finding a way to ensure that road redesigns in the near future support HCT enhancements.

PAC members wanted HCT enhancement updates as an annual or semi-annual agenda item. Participants discussed the importance of having information about the capital costs, expected operating deficits, and case study information shared with them throughout the development process.

# Focus Group Summaries

This section summarizes the key findings from each of the six focus groups.

## Crater High School

### Description

Crater High School is located in Central Point, along the Highway 99 corridor. The focus group consisted of roughly 12 students and two teachers. Students' grade levels ranged from sophomore to senior.

### Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services

The group consisted of a mix of bus riders, non-riders, and car owners. The majority of participants did not ride the bus (four students were unaware a bus route services the area). Participants that ride the bus stated they do so because it is an alternative to driving and carpooling when those options are unavailable. Non-bus riders pointed to the lack of stops near their homes and in the City of Gold Hill, as well as the perceived difficulty using the system as reasons for not choosing the bus.

### Transit Enhancements Needed

Participants indicated faster, more frequent schedules, real time displays, and increased bus schedule and service information would affect their choice to ride the bus. Ten participants indicated they would like to live in a city with better transit; one student indicated he would stay in the area because of family and work, but noted he would appreciate if the city had better transportation. Participants noted that key destinations they would want to frequent include Ashland, Eagle Point, the mall, movies, restaurants, recreational trail systems, residential areas, and work.

When asked what would make transportation better, participants indicated better information about routes, schedules, and times, directions on how to use the bus, improved signage, and efficient travel times as key points. Other amenities, such as a phone application to display schedules, off-board fare payment, free Wi-Fi, and classes teaching students how to use the bus were also discussed. When considering how participants could gain the same amount of freedom in riding the bus as they do in a car, they noted it allows for students extra time to do homework, study, and socialize. It also allows them to avoid the frustrations of driving, particularly if there is traffic.

### Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Participants noted a BRT system with traffic prioritization could result in higher travel speeds and less travel time. They also said that elevated platforms created safety and visibility, addressing the lack of signage mentioned earlier. Participants stated that a BRT system would reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

There was uncertainty surrounding whether or not fewer bus stops would be beneficial or not, with those opposed arguing it could be inconvenient.

## Opportunities and Constraints

One participant asked whether or not emergency vehicles would be allowed to use designated lanes if such lanes were put in place; otherwise, there were no concerns about the traffic impacts of bus-only lanes.

## Future Communication Efforts

In terms of communication strategy, participants noted that email and mail sent directly to high school students would be effective as it makes them feel valued. They also suggested that RVTD create more advertisements or commercials to create a presence in the area and increase knowledge of the bus system.

## Key Employers

### Description

This focus group included managerial staff from Jackson County's Department of Human Services, which serves 6,000 job seekers per year, the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and Harry and David. Harry and David and the Department of Human Services spoke of the importance of transit due to a high volume of employees and visitors who do not own automobiles.

## Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services

With the exception of the Department of Human Services, which uses regular business hours, participants expressed disappointment in the limited service hours, which do not currently cater to employees with shifts in the early morning or late at night. Harry and David staff noted a perceived shortage in coverage area, saying that a high number of its seasonal employees, in particular, travel from north Phoenix and east Medford—areas with limited RVTD service. Participants said they also expect more reliable service from RVTD during inclement weather, when people around the region are less inclined to drive.

## Transit Enhancements Needed

In addition to expressing a desire to see increased coverage area and service hours, as noted above, participants recommended upgrades to bus stops out of concerns for safety, comfort, and visibility. There was a sentiment that the system is not user-friendly and would benefit from more information at bus stops, along with more frequent buses during commute hours.

- The group made some more specific recommendations, including a need to allow periphery communities to connect using Park and Ride—especially in the case of Applegate and Grants Pass—and bike—especially in Talent. In order to appeal to more professionals and “choice” riders, participants

believed that an engaging marketing campaign and cleaner buses would be a good start.

## Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

As mentioned above, participants stressed the importance of connections to the Highway 99 corridor via bus routes (with schedule alignment for transfers), bicycle facilities, or Park and Ride lots. There was also reaffirmation of the need for better display information regarding running times, destinations, payment methods, safety, and parking.

Participants were excited by the station design and its place making impacts; with one saying that it would make the region look more modern and likely help draw professional talent. The stations were said to look much more approachable and likely to attract choice riders; participants guessed that they would be willing to walk up to five minutes to or from stations in order to use such a system. Place making aside, it was believed that gas prices and service frequency would be the strongest factors in attracting new riders.

## Opportunities and Constraints

- There was some concern about the feasibility of bus-only lanes in Ashland; otherwise, participants were optimistic about the potential of the system. One key site mentioned for a potential station is Ashland's future convention center.

## Future Communication Efforts

Employers were enthusiastic to distribute discounted employee passes and informational material, as long as it did not cost them. They expressed a desire to see more information about scheduling, routes, key destinations, parking, safety, and convenience.

Multiple participants recommended RVTD create a project-specific website with information—especially relating to land use and traffic impacts—about any future transit enhancements. All expressed preference for future communication efforts via email.

## Southern Oregon University (SOU)

### Description

Southern Oregon University is located in Ashland, directly on Highway 99/Siskiyou Blvd south of downtown. The focus group consisted of roughly 16 participants, who were then split into two separate groups of 7-8. An equal number of student and staff/faculty members were placed in each group to maximize the range of opinions and experiences coming from students, staff, and faculty.

## Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services

A few participants indicated they take the bus regularly for their commute. The remaining participants had limited experience with RVTD services, and were apprehensive due to a perceived shortage of information about services. The groups voiced concerns about being stranded due to irregular arrivals or limited service hours, safety issues at bus stops, and navigation or way finding difficulties. Participants indicated they are more likely to continue to drive than use the bus due to long wait times at stops and slow bus travel.

## Transit Enhancements Needed

Extension and improvements of current services were considered more important than adding a new transit line. Participants expressed a desire for RVTD to extend its weeknight and weekend service hours, improve current bus amenities, and build its relationship with the community. Moreover, the need for a multi-modal transportation network was emphasized; many said that they would feel more inclined to use an enhanced system if they were able to connect via bike or park-and-ride.

There was general agreement that a better system would enhance the social and economic quality of life in the area. Increased mobility between the region's cities was stressed by students and staff, with important destinations being the airport, hospital, grocery stores, Greyhound station, major retail centers, and downtown Medford's SOU satellite campus. Students expressed their support for a system that fits course schedules and connects school campuses and student housing throughout the Rogue Valley.

## Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Despite the fact that only a few participants currently commute regularly using public transportation, there was a general sense of support for certain elements of BRT. Participants noted a lack of signage, service schedule, and real time data at bus stops as factors contributing to uncertainty about RVTD services. To alleviate these two issues, participants widely supported the installation of real time displays and prominent signage at bus stops, along with some sort of mobile phone application. Elevated platforms were said to enhance place making and likely attract community attention. Participants said they would be more likely to use RVTD buses if service frequency increased to 10-20 minute intervals.

## Opportunities and Constraints

The group noted several challenges that may arise with the implementation of BRT, with the biggest being bus-only lanes along Siskiyou Boulevard. Due to current congestion issues, many seemed to think the community would be wary of any changes that take a lane from automobiles. Participants were also hesitant to endorse the location shown in the rendering of the SOU Station, which is in front of a historic building.

## Future Communication Efforts

Participants agreed that reaching out to the entire SOU population is a big challenge and suggested marketing efforts that target SOU students. Creative marketing strategies providing simple instructions and benefits of bus services would be useful, along with bus scheduling that fits with school course schedules. Few students and staff seemed to know about the RVTD passes available through the university, something that should be improved upon to incentivize increased bus travel by students and staff.

Information about bus services, accessibility, and the benefits of bus-rapid transit must be better communicated and disseminated to the SOU community in an engaging fashion; participants believed that passive information sharing through websites and email would not be sufficient for future outreach efforts related to transit enhancements.

## Twin Creeks Retirement Transit Oriented District (TOD)

### Description

Twin Creeks Retirement Community is located within a larger TOD in Central Point. Participants included a small handful of current residents, who indicated that most residents still own cars and use them weekly.

The retirement community provides a shuttle to Central Point and Downtown Medford that some of the participants utilize, although not on a daily basis. The community is not currently served by RVTD, despite being recognized as a TOD.

### Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services

All participants expressed a desire to use transit on a frequent basis if future enhancements better served their community, agreeing that they would likely give up automobiles if they had a reliable alternative. The group spoke favorably towards transit use, agreeing that it would save money, cater to those no longer able to drive, and alleviate concerns about getting lost while driving.

### Transit Enhancements Needed

Residents said they would be more likely to use transit to schedule and attend appointments or ride for leisure if they could rely upon a set schedule with consistent arrival intervals and clear way finding information. Participants also stressed the importance of access, safety, and comfort in locating and designing bus stops.

### Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

When CPW shared Pivot Architecture's renderings of a potential BRT system, participants said they liked many of the design elements, but continued to express concerns with access issues. They did not share any major concerns with traffic

impacts of bus-only lanes. Although they spoke favorably about regular and frequent arrivals, the group thought 30-minute cycles would be sufficient.

All participants were in agreement that a better system would increase quality of life in the region. There was general agreement that transit enhancements would take more automobiles off the road, reduce pollution, increase ridership, boost the local retail economy, and enhance recreational opportunities.

## Opportunities and Constraints

The group expressed reservations about whether enhancements could be funded by an increase in taxes due to the political nature of the region. There were also some reservations about whether the area's population density could support a BRT system.

## Future Communication Efforts

The participants indicated that they want to be kept informed as the project progresses and would be happy to take a written survey. They acknowledged that the best way to contact them would be using a combination of methods including emails, resident bulletin boards, and local newspapers. RVMPO Public Advisory Council (PAC)

## Description

The Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Public Advisory Council (PAC) consists of appointed citizens from nine citizen involvement areas and six interest categories. The PAC makes recommendations to the MPO from the public's perspective on proposed long-range transportation plans, project plans, priorities for state and federal funding, and other transportation issues. The focus group involved a discussion on the future of transit in the Rogue Valley, potential community perceptions of BRT, and how to better communicate and involve the PAC in future decisions on transit enhancements in the Rogue Valley. The following section details the key themes that arose in the discussion.

## Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services

The PAC characterized the Rogue Valley as the "typical American community," interested in making transit enhancements but unwilling to shoulder the associated expenses. RVTD is believed to operate in a primarily automobile-centered community, serving predominantly low-income riders and catering to a diverse demographic.

## Transit Enhancements Needed

Despite the differing opinions about the forms of transit that are most suitable for the Rogue Valley, all participants believed that there needs to be better connectivity between municipalities and a more regional approach to transit. Participants recommended that future transit enhancements should extend into areas not currently in RVTD's service district, such as Grants Pass and the Foothill

area. This echoes one participant's comments that a "hub-and-spokes system" is needed to better suit the geographic layout of the Rogue Valley, rather than simply enhancing transit through a HCT corridor along Highway 99. Additionally, many participants noted that any future transit enhancements should create a complete transit system that incorporates multi-modal infrastructure, making use of circulators and bike routes, followed with a HCT system implemented along the Highway 99 corridor.

On the topic of what forms of transit enhancements are viable in the Rogue Valley, a number of differing forms of transit were heard. Participants wanted to see transit ranging from a commuter service utilizing the existing rail infrastructure, a BRT system combined with road redesigns, to an express bus service that was deemed to be an easily implemented and short term solution to transit needs in the Rogue Valley.

## Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

After viewing a presentation on HCT, the participants were specifically asked about the feasibility of implementing a BRT system along the Highway 99 corridor. Overall, there were differing opinions about how feasible a BRT system would be. Participants in favor of BRT noted the future need of a BRT system due to rising fuel costs and a growing demographic that is interested in driving less. However, most participants did not see the need for a BRT Lite system in the near future. If there was forward movement toward implementing a BRT system, supporters expressed the desire to partner with other cities with a similar cultural and socio-political environment. The majority of the participants did not see a need for BRT in the near future and viewed it as an impractical option, lamenting the lack of connectivity in the current system. One participant noted that BRT and other bus-oriented enhancements are myopic because they do not address larger impending population growth and environmental issues.

## Opportunities and Constraints

When initially discussing the potential 10 to 20-year planning timeline for making transit enhancements, a number of participants expressed concern about the perceived shortsightedness of the timeline. Many participants felt basing any transit enhancements off a 10 to-20 year perspective will inappropriately address all the future transit concerns in the region. Instead, they suggested that any future transit enhancements should be based on at least a 50-year time horizon, where other modes of transit such as commuter rail and light rail are more technically feasible options for the region. A 50-year timeline would potentially work to integrate existing services with new transit options such as commuter rail, light rail, and active transportation, which would better serve the transit needs of the region.

Consensus was reached by participants around the opportunities for tying future transit enhancements to more efficient land use and development. Participants emphasized making strategic investments around future transit enhancements. Specifically, the potential for implementing more TODs was noted as a way to better tie transportation and land use in the Highway 99 corridor supported by park and rides to improve inter-modal connectivity. They felt these enhancements

could allow for citizens to have more expendable income that could be put into the local economy and build a new market for transit ridership.

In making any transit enhancements, participants noted that it is extremely important to consider the capital costs of developing any enhancement, the financial sustainability and operating costs of running any new transit options, and making strategic investments to effectively sustain operations. Although expensive to implement and operate, participants noted the potential for HCT to cater to choice riders and increase overall ridership.

The participants suggested a number of steps that should be taken when moving forward with transit enhancements. First, any transit enhancements and transit funding should be incorporated into the relevant local and county Transportation System Plans. Second, public transit systems need to be incorporated into the planning and design of roads. Third, any transit enhancements should be incrementally phased into the existing system and steps should be preemptively taken to acquire right of way. Fourth, any additional services should not take away from existing routes and new services should efficiently integrate other multimodal transit options, particularly existing and planned bikeways. However, one participant articulated that the best way to illustrate the positive impact, need, and value of HCT would be through building a comprehensive system without incremental phasing.

## Opportunities for Collaboration and Future Communication Efforts

In communicating the benefits of transit to the community, participants emphasized the importance of illustrating how transit enhancements can provide value beyond dollars and assist in achieving broader community goals. In regards to the business community, if RVTD believes that BRT is a viable option, RVTD needs to sell the economic benefits and positive impacts associated with implementing BRT along Highway 99. Additionally, participants stressed that RVTD needs to illustrate how employers and employees in business along the route would benefit, such as time saved in commuting to work, increased customer base that can access these businesses, and increased ability of the region to attract new businesses and employers.

As noted above, participants believe there is not a great need for HCT in the Rogue Valley. This may be a result of community members and participants not being familiar with HCT and even with how to ride the bus. It was suggested that a comprehensive HCT education program could be useful in attracting choice riders and clearly communicate the benefits of implementing a HCT system. This communication effort should emphasize the key elements of what constitutes a HCT or BRT system, the broad social and economic costs and benefits of implementing these types of transit enhancements, and how it would impact personal rider experience.

To effectively incorporate the PAC into future transit developments, the PAC participants said that they would like to be incorporated into the planning effort by having HCT transit enhancements as annual or semi-annual agenda items, where RVTD provides briefings on the development of any such enhancements. Next,

participants discussed having information about the capital costs, expected operating deficits, and other case study information shared with them throughout the development process.

## **Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)**

### **Description**

The TAC is composed of technical planning experts from a number of agencies, departments, and organizations including ODOT, Rogue Valley Council of Governments, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Department of Land Conservation and Development, and the region's jurisdictions. The TAC was divided into two groups and discussed issues relating to livability, transportation, and traffic impacts.

### **Experiences with and perceptions of RVTD Services**

Unlike other focus groups, the MPO TAC was not asked to discuss perceptions of RVTD services.

### **Opportunities and Constraints**

#### Opportunities

- Potential to use rail bed
- Rail bed surrounding area and improvements, 'Rail to trail'
- Reducing travel time and congestion during peak periods
- Ability to establish a BRT system using a phased approach
- Progressive businesses will likely benefit from the installation of a system that conforms with progressive business values
- Reduce congestion and increase ease for customers and patrons to visit commercial establishments
- Increase reliability for employers who depend on workers who utilize transit to commute to and from work
- May reduce driving because of increased transit appeal among users who do not currently use transit
- Possibility to expand labor pool beyond current geographical areas
- Increase tourism in the area
- Possibility to lessen downtown parking impacts
- Benefit to workers
- Attract creative class of people
- Attractive to businesses looking to locate or expand in region
- Could foster more economic activity in the region

- Should improve livability, less cars on the road
- Creates more options for residents in the area for commuting and traveling
- Reaffirm planning goals of Transit Oriented Development in the region
- Possibility for family automobile downsizing—Move from two to one cars per household
- Improves transit commuter appeal
- Corresponds with established planning goals for communities in the region
- Possibility to reduce sprawl and increase density
- Bolster affordable housing by placing routes near areas with large amounts of affordable housing
- Reduce the automobile lifestyle
- Opportunity for multi-modal uses on Highway 99
- Increase transit options
- Reduce Vehicle Miles Travelled
- More attractive
- More reliable scheduling for transit patrons
- Lower expenses for frequent travel users

#### Constraints

- Dealing with peak periods
- Longer lanes for Q-Jumping (left, right)
- Tight Space in Downtown
- Right-of-way issues
- Freight rail line vs. commuter rail line
- Jurisdictional authority and conflict between agencies and local TSPs
- Enforcement of HCT bus lanes from other users
- Rigidity of the respective public works departments and their facilities; limited ability to change in the face of code and regulations
- Signal location relative to capacity is important
- Traffic capacity is an issue in Medford
- Additional delay from dedicated lanes for BRT especially from Medford to Central Point
- Available Rights-of-Way
- Increase the usage of the bus by Southern Oregon University students, faculty and staff

- Curb-cut restriction and limited or decreased access during construction of the new HCT or BRT facilities to businesses
- Important to ‘get ahead of the process’ when discussing impacts to businesses that could create animosity in community for BRT
- Many short-term impediments on existing facilities and operational capacity
- Downtown areas with historic districts and priority of land and building use may be extremely difficult to adapt for BRT or HCT
- Existing land use patterns create some challenges
- Impacts on freight delivery on both train and heavy truck
- Impacts to access management
- Small town character impacts
- Multiple users in limited facility space
- Land use patterns not in-sync with transportation system
- Cost of infrastructure upgrades

## Opportunities for Collaboration and Future Communication Efforts

- Cost per household?
- How will Transit Oriented Development and land use effect this type of transit?
- What will be the short, medium, and long-term impacts?
- Will this benefit low-income housing?
- Community values and differences—how will they be incorporated and reconciled?
- Local businesses should be asked about interest in a new system: Rogue Valley Mall, Brammo, Inc., Harry & David, Southern Oregon University
- Conduct a ‘pilot study’ to better understand operational aspects of HCT in the region
- Important to educate public on how BRT systems work and how it will impact traffic flow and rules
- A definition of the Highway 99 Corridor will be useful for discussing this topic
- Bus amenities could be important for rider appeal
- Explore a suite of options: Regular bus, express bussing, light rail, BRT
- Explore Highway 99 road diet and its impacts on transit

## **Mini-Focus Group RVTD Core Group**

The Community Planning Workshop project team delivered a presentation that discussed three major topic areas:

- The Community Engagement Strategy
- Conceptual Drawings of Bus Stops by PIVOT Architecture
- Presentation and Discussion of High Capacity Transit

## **Community Engagement Strategy**

The Community Planning Workshop provided a description and overview of the community engagement strategy. The team mentioned that we would conduct a variety of focus groups, key person interviews, surveys, and a policy analysis.

The members present at the meeting provided input and direction about possibly engaging the small business and development community in focus groups. It was agreed that the business survey would be provided to Ron Fox at Southern Oregon Regional Economic Development Inc. (SOREDI) to distribute to their traded sector business list.

## **Conceptual Drawings of Bus Stops (RVTD)**

Paige Townsend, Senior Planner at RVTD provided an overview to RVTD staff and the CPW project team about the new renderings that were created by PIVOT Architecture. The staff agreed that the renderings were useful at depicting how bus stops at varying locations along the highway corridor could potentially be developed.

The group agreed that some of the details such as the platform height and the effect on land use are critical as well as sensitive areas of the renderings. Sensitive areas include potential locations where buses would have an impact of land use, traffic flow, environmentally sensitive locations and high-density residential development.

## **Presentation and Discussion on High Capacity Transit**

The remainder of the presentation was devoted to a presentation and discussion of High Capacity Transit.

- CPW led a discussion about Bus Rapid Transit and the spectrum of design and operational aspects that define BRT.
- RVTD staff discussed key BRT elements including: platform stops with outbound and inbound lanes, signal prioritization, designated lanes, and specially designed vehicles.
- Scott Chapman, Planning Engineer from Nelson\Nygaard, explained that BRT 'lite' is anything that is not a completely designed BRT system. He

further delineated what could make a system defined as BRT 'lite', such as a system that operates only with signal prioritization and articulated buses rather than the inclusion of all the necessary components to be described as full BRT.

- The group discussed the various aspects that would need to be incorporated to ensure an effective and useful BRT system along the Highway 99 Corridor—in general there was an agreement between all parties that certain characteristics of a BRT in the corridor would be critical to the success of the new line.
- The group said it was important to consider various scaling and phasing options for any future transit enhancements in order to not disrupt existing transit services.

## Exercise: Key Stakeholder Groups

The Community Planning Workshop team engaged the RVTD staff in a 'Key Stakeholder Group Activity.' The activity involved a perception gathering exercise from RVTD staff about various stakeholder groups in the region. The participants were asked to place an 'X' on a matrix and designate the stakeholder group on a level of importance to the project and their relative level of support for HCT enhancements in the region. The following bulleted list describes the findings from each stakeholder group. (See Activity Book for a visual representation of the findings).

- Small Businesses
  - Perceived Concerns: Taxation, less of a benefit for small businesses unless located in a dense area, liability, costs, access, especially problematic at the Chamber level (small businesses are not an issue on an individual level, but could become more antagonistic once organized through the Chamber of Commerce), property owners have negative stigma towards bus stops.
  - Strategies: Use a goals-based approach (cost of driving, quality of life, walkability, vision, multi-modal system, etc.), engage via Chamber of Commerce, Heart of Medford, etc. (education, value of HCT), and utilize supporters at city/county level.
- Registered Voters
  - No Lane: Support quality of life improvements, mostly oppose taxation.
  - Lane: Will probably oppose removal of right-of-way.
- Elected Officials
  - Tend to want RVTD to follow their lead.
  - Will have to become more supportive of transit; DLCDC has told Medford, in particular, that they need to use land more efficiently.

- Ashland
  - Supportive of RVTD, not opposed to taxation.
  - Removal of lane could potentially be problematic in congested downtown, but city will likely be flexible to meet needs; might accommodate BRT on adjacent roadway.
- Central Point
  - Has room in right-of-way. Likely to be supportive.
- ODOT
  - Could support intersection enhancements, would likely want to sell to jurisdictions to “shed as much right-of-way as possible”; Talent and Phoenix recently told to purchase portions for enhancements.
  - Would oppose areas in which project goes against ODOT strategic plans.
- Jackson County Department of Public Works
  - Not as important; little land, if any
- Jackson County Elected Officials
  - May shy away from supporting a tax measure.
- Elected Bodies of Importance (Top 3 in order of importance)
  - Medford: want to be the region’s leader; will want to participate in development of project.
  - Ashland: should be supportive
  - Central Point: should be supportive
- Developers
  - Large-scale: supportive because of strength in TOD market.
    - Will be key to diffusing antagonistic parties. Politicians generally side with developers.
  - Small-scale: more likely to be unsupportive.
- Current Riders
  - Large portion is “captive”; must take transit.
  - Small portion is by choice.
    - LTD new ridership after EmX? Larger portion of “choice” riders?
  - Assure them that service won’t be removed, it will be expanded upon.
- Low-Income / Minorities
  - Outreach via social service providers?

# APPENDIX C: SURVEYS

## Online Community Survey

CPW created a 38 question online survey for non-business community members of the Rogue Valley.

Surveys were distributed electronically through various community organizations, schools, residential living areas and through RVTD’s website and Facebook page.

Surveys contained questions according to the following categories:

- Community Perceptions of RVTD
- Value of Transit
- High Capacity Transit
- Communication Efforts
- Demographics

## Analysis and Findings

The following tables represent the raw data and figures collected through the online community survey.

1. How often do you use public transportation?			
Answer		Response	%
Daily		16	14%
2-3 Times a Week		16	14%
Once a Week		1	1%
2-3 Times a Month		8	7%
Once a Month		7	6%
Less Than Once a Month		6	5%
Rarely		31	27%
Never		28	25%
Total		113	100%

**2. Please rate your overall experience riding the RVTD bus service.**

Answer	Response	%
Very Dissatisfied	7	9%
Dissatisfied	7	9%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	17	21%
Satisfied	40	49%
Very Satisfied	10	12%
Total	81	100%

**3. How important is it for you to ride public transportation?**

Answer	Response	%
Very Unimportant	11	14%
Unimportant	3	4%
Neither Important nor Unimportant	14	17%
Important	23	28%
Very Important	27	33%
Unsure / Don't Know	3	4%
Total	81	100%

**4. Why do you take public transportation? (Mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Work	36	44%
Social	37	46%
Medical	22	27%
School	22	27%
Shopping	40	49%
I don't take public transportation	7	9%
Prefer not to answer	3	4%
Other:	16	20%

<b>Other:</b>
friends house
Emergency
Out of necessity-- when my car is in the shop.
Used to take it consistently to work, but my work location changed.
Used it when my car is in the shop.
When I can, to avoid using my own car and save the environment
I live in Josephine County, work in Jackson - there aren't mass transit options that meet my needs. I wish there were.
Inclement weather - I rode the bus several days during that snow/ice we had last December
when my vehicle breaks down and i need to get somewhere or for special fieldtrips with my kids
I've ridden RVTD previously as my sole transportation in the valley for 3 to 4 years. Now ride it to work occasionally.
When the need presents itself
CHEAP.... TAXPAYERS PICK UP THE BILL HA HA HA

**5. What are the primary reasons that you do not take public transportation?  
(Mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Costly	16	21%
Takes too long	35	45%
Inconvenient	28	36%
Long wait time at stops	27	35%
Faster with other forms of transportation	29	38%
No bus stops near me	19	25%
No need for public transportation	8	10%
Other:	15	19%

<b>Other:</b>
No need for it at the time
No service between Central Point and Grants Pass
Would make sense if I didn't need transfer
1. Traveling with someone else, who prefers driving. 2. Planning on acquiring too much stuff to take on the bus.
Bike commuting
RVTD sucks
Not Enough Seats
No busses on Sundays.
Disabled and cannot walk far and closest stop is almost a mile a way
i have a new baby
I do.
Bus system stops running too early leaving me stranded in Medford.
Stops are near my home, use for social engagements; No routes near my semiOrural workplace...
I have a car which I pay for

**6. Describe your level of satisfaction with how RVTD currently serves your home, school, shopping or place of work.**

Answer	Response	%
Very Dissatisfied	10	13%
Dissatisfied	10	13%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	21	27%
Satisfied	28	35%
Very Satisfied	9	11%
Unsure / Don't Know	1	1%
Total	79	100%

**7. Please describe the level of value you believe transit provides to the Rogue Valley Region.**

Answer	Response	%
No Value	3	3%
Limited Value	14	13%
Valuable	21	20%
Very Valuable	63	59%
Unsure / Don't Know	5	5%
Total	106	100%

**8. Please describe your perception of how well the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) does at providing transit service in the region.**

Answer	Response	%
Poor	8	8%
Fair	27	26%
Good	54	52%
Very Good	9	9%
Unsure / Don't Know	5	5%
Total	103	100%

**9. How important do you believe it is for (RVTD) to provide reliable transit services to residents of the Rogue Valley Region?**

Answer	Response	%
Very Unimportant	10	10%
Unimportant	1	1%
Important	19	18%
Very Important	68	66%
Unsure / Don't Know	3	3%
Neither Important nor Unimportant	2	2%
Total	103	100%

**10. Please describe your level of agreement that RVTD provides the following aspects of accessibility and mobility.**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / Don't Know	Total
Connects pedestrians to amenities such as hospitals, shopping, and recreational opportunities	4	7	12	43	29	7	102
Accommodates people with disabilities	2	3	9	43	30	11	98
Provides for transit rider safety with visible and covered bus stops	6	20	17	31	18	6	98
Provides access for residents to visit local businesses, post office, library, or doctor's office	4	7	9	41	27	10	98
Provides reliable, efficient and dependable transit service	4	7	13	39	23	11	97
Provides fast transit service (quick transfer times, short wait times at bus stops, and faster bus speeds)	9	18	15	30	12	14	98

**11. Do you believe that it is important for a transit system to provide better access and mobility to transit dependent people in the Rogue Valley? (People who do not own cars or are not physically able to drive).**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	90	90%
No	2	2%
Neither Yes nor No	5	5%
Unsure / Don't Know	3	3%
Total	100	100%

**12. How much do you believe the bus service enhances the quality of life for residents of the Rogue Valley Region?**

Answer	Response	%
Not at all	4	4%
Very Little	7	7%
Somewhat	24	24%
Unsure / Don't Know	5	5%
Very Much	60	60%

**13. Even if you do not use transit, please describe the level of importance to you for the following aspects of transit.**

Question	V. Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	V. Important	Unsure / Don't Know	Total
Provides a timely scheduled transit service and expanded hours of operation	4	3	2	15	69	6	99
Accommodates bicycles on buses	4	2	11	31	43	4	95
Creates connections to shopping, dining, recreation other entertainment amenities in my community	4	1	2	28	57	4	96
Reduces environmental impacts such as: reduced vehicle emissions, less air pollution	3	2	3	26	56	5	95
Creates better access to employment, education and other major centers	3	0	2	20	65	5	95
Allows for more affordable commuting for residents on the bus	3	1	4	22	60	5	95
Provides increased seating on the bus	3	2	12	32	39	7	95
Allows employees to commute to work by bus	4	0	1	23	62	6	96

**14. Please describe your opinion of the importance for improving the current Rogue Valley transit system.**

Answer	Response	%
Very Unimportant	12	12%
Unimportant	3	3%
Neither Important nor Unimportant	3	3%
Important	26	26%
Very Important	49	49%
Unsure / Don't Know	7	7%
Total	100	100%

**15. Please describe the overall need for transit improvements in the Highway 99 Corridor for the following time frames.**

Question	Not Needed	Low need	Moderate Need	High Need	Unsure / Don't Know	Total Responses
Now	4	12	29	39	15	99
5 Years	3	2	22	45	21	93
10 Years	2	3	15	43	30	93
20 Years +	2	2	11	44	33	92

**16. Which public transit element improvement would persuade you to choose public transit for your transportation needs? (Check all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Faster	40	41%
On Time	30	31%
More Reliable	23	23%
Cheaper	29	30%
More Convenient	43	44%
Safer	19	19%
More Seating	22	22%
I would not take public transportation	6	6%
Other:	20	20%

<b>Other:</b>
I have other responsibilities, getting kids to school, need to be available if someone gets sick to pick them up, etc.
Goes to the town i live in.
cleaner
On Time and Safer. Won't let me check both
Shuttle bus service through Ashland
Faster / More convenient / Route between GP and Central Point / Medford
Routing that doesn't require me to transfer. Due to timing of transfer, I can walk faster to work than ride the bus
I could only check one response - so I would check "faster", "cheaper"
Increased hours of service
Bicycle accommodation, more than just 3
Sunday service in Ashland
We should be able to purchase an all day bus pass like they do in Eugene. It is very inconvenient to get transfers and not make it on time due to errands and having to pay a whole mother 2\$. Especially if we're not traveling that far or just going one way we shouldn't have to pay full price for one-way trips.
I honestly think that the system is well run.
The bus needs to be at stops at the scheduled times, not blow throw them early or get there late, and get you there on time.
Nicer
More stops
Later hours of operation. Currently the bus system stops running out of Medford at 8:30pm leaving me stranded to return from work or from community activities.
Late night service from Downtown Medford to other city centers to decrease drunk driving

**17. For what purposes would you choose to take public transportation? (Mark all that apply)**

Answer	Response	%
Work	65	67%
Social / Leisure	54	56%
Medical	37	38%
School	40	41%
Shopping	50	52%
I would not take public transportation	9	9%
Other:	4	4%

<b>Other:</b>
Church
I strictly say this due to owning my own transportation.
I would use fir many things if rogue river was added
Everything if it were reliable and went where I needed to be, especially if it worked on the "last-mile problem"

**18. Please describe your level of support for the following hypothetical transit improvements.**

Question	No Support	Some Support	Strong Support	Unsure / Don't Know	Total Responses
Transit with designated lanes in high traffic areas	7	31	52	7	97
Providing bus only lanes even if it requires acquiring private property	17	29	34	13	93
Using traffic light prioritization for buses	9	24	50	9	92
Modern bus stops, with shelters and 'real time' information displayed at stops	3	19	64	6	92
More stops near shopping, dining and entertainment	4	21	60	8	93
A bus service that provides reliable and dependable schedules	1	8	78	5	92
Bus service with 10 minute schedule frequency	4	30	50	7	91
Increased seating on bus	8	33	37	14	92
Buses that allow for easier and faster boarding for riders	9	30	44	10	93
Bus service with 20 minute schedule frequency	3	32	49	8	92

**19. What types of transit have you heard of, or are familiar with? (Please mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Express Bus	55	61%
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	53	59%
Light Rail	64	71%
Commuter Rail	57	63%

**20. If a new and enhanced transit system were developed in the region that uses designated bus lanes and traffic light prioritization for buses, what do you perceive the impacts would be in The Rogue Valley Area?**

Answer	Response	%
Very Negative	3	3%
Negative	5	5%
Neither Negative nor Positive	10	10%
Positive	37	38%
Very Positive	29	30%
Unsure / Don't Know	14	14%
Total	98	100%

**21. Do you think, faster more reliable transit would help reduce traffic congestion in The Rogue Valley?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	70	72%
No	12	12%
Unsure / Don't Know	15	15%
Total	97	100%

**22. Have you or your household received communications from RVTD in the past?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	47	47%
No	53	53%
Total	100	100%

**23. How has RVTD communicated with you previously? (Please mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Email / Online Communications	13	28%
Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook	16	35%
Newspaper Articles	16	35%
Phone Call	3	7%
Mail	21	46%
No Communication	6	13%
Other	2	4%
RVTD 'Dispatch' Newsletter	16	35%

**Other**

Transportation forum on SOU campus

Personal contact with staff in staffing volunteer commissions and through advocacy events

**24. How would you prefer to receive communications about transit from RVTD?**

Answer	Response	%
Email / Online Communications	42	44%
Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook	38	40%
Newspaper Articles	22	23%
Phone Call	7	7%
Mail	32	34%
Don't Want Communications from RVTD	13	14%
Other	3	3%
RVTD "Dispatch" Newsletter	24	25%

**Other**

Web site

Television

User friendly app that has real time bus information

**25. What types of information are important for you to receive in communications from RVTD? (Please mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Information about bus programs and discounts	67	74%
Bus service routes and hours	74	81%
Incentives for employers for supporting employees using transit	40	44%
Provide information about special projects in the region	38	42%
Maps, diagrams or materials describing RVTD's services	55	60%
Other:	3	3%

**Other:**

Opportunities to gather public support for increased transit funding for enhanced services.

**26. What ethnicity(s) do you self-identify with? (Mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
White	83	86%
Black or African American	1	1%
Asian	2	2%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0%
Native American, American Indian, or Alaska Native	4	4%
Hispanic or Latino/a	8	8%
Prefer not to answer	4	4%
Other (Please Specify):	2	2%

**28. What gender do you identify with?**

Answer	Response	%
Male	32	35%
Female	60	65%
Total	92	100%

**29. Where do you reside in the Rogue Valley Region?**

Answer	Response	%
Ashland	15	16%
Central Point	19	20%
North Medford	19	20%
South Medford	18	19%
Phoenix	1	1%
Talent	5	5%
White City	3	3%
Other:	16	17%
Total	96	100%

Other:
Grants Pass
Gold Hill
Gold hill
Jacksonville
Eagle Point
Grants Pass; work in Central Point
Williams
Ruch
Rogue River
West Medford
Jacksonville
Ashland, central point, and Medford
Rogue river
Eagle Point
Grants Pass

**30. What best describes your employment status during the last month? (Mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Employed Full Time	41	43%
Employed Part Time	24	25%
Seasonal / Temporarily Employed	6	6%
Unemployed	11	11%
Student	25	26%
Armed Services (Active)	0	0%
Veteran	0	0%
Retired	4	4%
Other:	3	3%

Other:
Disabled
ssi disability
Disabled

**31. What are your primary modes of transportation? (Mark all that apply).**

Answer		Response	%
Walk		53	56%
Drive		60	63%
Bike		19	20%
Bus		36	38%
Carpool		13	14%
Other:		3	3%

**Other:**

Ride w/friend

Friends give rides

Friends

**32. Are you affiliated with Southern Oregon University / Rogue Community College? (Student / Faculty / Staff).**

Answer		Response	%
Yes		25	26%
No		73	74%
Total		98	100%

**33. Generally how far do you travel to get to the SOU (Ashland / Medford) or RCC (Medford) campus?**

Answer		Response	%
Less than 1 Mile		6	25%
1--2 Miles		2	8%
3--5 Miles		5	21%
6--10 Miles		3	13%
10 Miles or more		8	33%
Total		24	100%

**34. How do you get to campus? (Mark all that apply).**

Answer		Response	%
Walk		12	48%
Drive		7	28%
Bike		6	24%
Bus		14	56%
Carpool		2	8%
Other:		0	0%

**35. Please indicate if you would like to receive communications and information from (RVTD).**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	40	42%
No	56	58%
Total	96	100%

**36. Please share any additional comments or questions in the space below.**

**Text Response**

I feel like the transit system is a good idea but it just got such a bad reputation because of the people who use it.

We need to make sure transit connects with critical locations such as food banks. We also need to take money designated for automobile improvements (ie the bypass from Crater Lake Avenue that is contemplated) and put the money into transit. Finally, we need to develop fun and free shuttle service within Ashland that will support both tourists and residents and minimize the need for more automobile amenities -- ie parking and road improvements.

Currently, the bus stops are not indicated by a marker at many locations. These stops are "secret" and only long time riders know where some of these stops are. There are not enough shelters at the bus stops which is important in our extreme weather environment.

When I bought a place I chose one on the same bus line as work. Unfortunately work moved two miles off that bus line onto another. So my problem is that once rt 60 gets to the transfer station, I must wait typically a half hour for rt 1 as peak times make rt60 come in late. I guess one way to deal with that would be more frequency and that maybe be more appealing. But I would like to see bus routed within communities rather than only downtown. What I mean is a possible loop that stays within an area. When I drive I choose nearby destinations within the north east quadrant of Medford. Chris angel chris@bext.net

Rogue Valley needs an express bus to Grants Pass, like a bi-directional commuter. Something that makes 4 or 5 runs in the morning, 1 or 2 in the midday, then 4 or 5 runs in the evening. I'm planning at taking a job in Grants Pass and know several friends in Grants Pass who commute I-5 every day to Medford. For them and I it'd be a big benefit. You guys should work with JCT to get this going, it's needed very badly! Also, the rural regions (Applegate/hwy 238) need a daily commuter of some sort. Maybe one or two inbound to Medford in the morning, and the same number outbound at night. My dad would make a big use of this one, as would a lot of his friends out there! Maybe have it stop at Jacksonville, J-ville hill (Cady road), couple stops in Ruch, China Gulch road, Quail Run Rd, Humbug Creek Rd, Applegate Elementary, and Applegate Store (park and ride here!).

I love the service RVTD provides. I commute fairly regularly from Ashland to Medford, and being from a larger city, I miss express bus and commuter rail options.

I would like to see the category of "Trans" in the gender choices. I work with low-income and homeless clients who utilize RTVD, and I appreciate the option of the bus for those clients. I wish it could be cheaper for them. I also see a need for bus service to Eagle Point and Shady Cove.

RVTD needs to expand their services to the West side of Medford and to Talent, Phoenix area.

I work in the Social Services field and many of those I work with depend on the bus for transportation. They often find the cost prohibitive unless they qualify for a bus pass through an agency they receive services through i.e. DHS etc. I have also had many of the women I work with (vulnerable population) say that it doesn't feel safe. They receive inappropriate comments, are afraid of running into their perpetrators, and encounter those under the influence of drugs. Many will walk across town rather than ride.

Planning for the future (ten to thirty years out) needs to include the realization that, to ameliorate climate change disasters, people will be using automobiles for personal transportation less and less.

Buses could use 21st-century technologies to create "flex-routes," which would better accommodate the needs of those who wish to ride. A tablet app, for example, that shows bus locations and takes input from prospective riders as they leave their homes could result in routes that respond to demand, to supplement the traditional "set" routes.

I think news to be enhancements on Crater Lake Ave at the bus stops. I find it dangerous waiting on the sidewalks at these locations.

I have been riding RVTB every day for two years now. I recently came across a new driver on the Route 10 bus (this driver is driving the bus when it shows up at Rays at ~3:40 on weekdays). She is not only rude, she smokes during a break and comes back on the bus smelling like cigarettes which makes my ride to work every day very uncomfortable and unenjoyable. In addition, she keeps the bus very cold to the point where I put on a sweat shirt when it's 90 degrees outside! This is unacceptable. I want to see this stop. Thank you for your help, -Evan

I like riding the bus

We need bus on Sunday.

I love you RVTB

Please please please, more space for bikes. Side mount or maybe roof mounts? A lever system that pulls down from the roof so you can attach a bike, the release, and it pulls the bike to the roof. Might be spendy, but a worthwhile investment.

More buses.

I would be really nice to have more covered stops & busses ran more often. Sunday would be better than Saturday so people could get to church. More seating too, getting tired of having to stand when I have heart problems and other issues.

As I stated earlier about the bus fees. We should have an all day bus pass option. A reduced one way fee and a standard round trip as you already have. Please and thank you. It would be very helpful and less frustrating to those of us who live on empty pockets.

Thank you for getting my daughter to Medford and back safely over the years. Knowing she's been safe has given me peace of mind.

I only take the bus now and then. Maybe 6-10 times a year, but its always a good experience with RVTB

I feel that The Drivers of RVTB are very professional and that they care deeply. They are professional and take all precautions to assure that I have the safest, most efficient, satisfying experience, each time I board my buss. My daily driver "Gus" is very polite, and inspires me daily with kind words and a professional attitude. RVTB has won me over.

RVTB should offer a discount to all students, high school or college, because most students re either unemployed or are working part time and are often unable to buy a bus pass due to not enough money.

I would use the bus if one was available consistently.

Bus service to Eagle Point is a must. Our Veterans deserve it and our children and seniors would use it.

Bus stops connecting from Medford, Gold Hill, Rouge River, and Grants Pass would be convenient. Public transportation would be used more.

As a pregnant woman i think that there should stops near more medical facilities because its hard to walk a few miles in the sun.

Without later evening service I will not use RVTB service more to get to Medford. It is absolutely essential that people travelling on RVTB to Medford have a way of making it back on Route 10 safely; otherwise we're stranded. There are both work, community, civic and recreational activities that make it impossible to rely on RVTB when the bus system stops running south at 8:30 p.m.

I like getting off on valley view

In Oregon the law is that a driver must stop if a person is standing on the corner. Therefore, it is a

neusance to have bus stops on corners. It disrupts the flow of traffic unnecessarily when cars stop for people standing on the corner waiting for a bus. Also, buses should never stop in a bike lane. Also, buses should never stop at a stoplight blocking traffic at a green light. Buses should never block traffic, they should always pull safely off the road. Also bus drivers should obey the traffic laws.

RVTD lacks vision in what they do and who they provide services to. Medford is greatly under-served community and the lax bus service is unreliable and doesn't serve the transit needs of the Rogue Valley. It needs to connect centers where people live, work and play in a reliable way, but it surely doesn't with the limited routes and late service. The board doesn't look past their own noses, serving their own needs and beyond the budget for the upcoming year of dismal transit service. If the Rogue Valley is to grow economically and serve the needs of the community, RVTD must address the growing demand for transit and running the service like a business, not a broke government agency. See GVB in Amsterdam for privately-operated service that works.

Mass transit should be user funded.... non-riders should not be forced to subsidize those who ride

**Initial Report**

**Last Modified: 06/03/2014**

**1. How often do you use public transportation?**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Daily	16	14%
2	2-3 Times a Week	16	14%
3	Once a Week	1	1%
4	2-3 Times a Month	8	7%
5	Once a Month	7	6%
6	Less Than Once a Month	6	5%
7	Rarely	31	27%
8	Never	28	25%
	Total	113	100%

**2. Please rate your overall experience riding the RVTD bus service.**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Very Dissatisfied	7	9%
2	Dissatisfied	7	9%
3	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	17	21%
4	Satisfied	40	49%
5	Very Satisfied	10	12%
	Total	81	100%

**3. How important is it for you to ride public transportation?**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Very Unimportant	11	14%
2	Unimportant	3	4%
3	Neither Important nor Unimportant	14	17%
4	Important	23	28%
5	Very Important	27	33%
6	Unsure / Don't Know	3	4%
	Total	81	100%

**4. Why do you take public transportation? (Mark all that apply).**

#	Answer	Response	%
1	Work	36	44%
2	Social	37	46%
3	Medical	22	27%
4	School	22	27%
5	Shopping	40	49%
6	I don't take public transportation	7	9%
7	Prefer not to answer	3	4%
8	Other:	16	20%

# Online Business Survey

## Description

CPW created an 18 question online survey for the business community in the Rogue Valley.

Surveys were distributed electronically with the help of SOREDI , The Ashland Chamber of Commerce, Medford / Jackson County Chamber of Commerce and the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

Surveys contained questions according to the following categories:

- Perceptions of RVTD
- Value of Transit to Businesses
- High Capacity Transit
- Communication Efforts
- Business Characteristics

## Analysis and Findings

The following tables represent the raw data and figures collected through the online business survey.

### 1. Please describe the level of value you believe transit provides to the Rogue Valley Region.

Answer	Response	%
No Value	1	2%
Limited Value	3	6%
Valuable	13	24%
Very Valuable	34	63%
Unsure / Don't Know	3	6%
Total	54	100%

### 2. Please describe your perception of how well the Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) does at providing transit in the region.

Answer	Response	%
Poor	3	6%
Fair	17	32%
Good	19	36%
Very Good	9	17%
Unsure / Don't Know	5	9%
Total	53	100%

**3. How important or unimportant do you believe it is for (RVTD) to provide reliable transit services to residents of the Rogue Valley Region that includes the following elements?**

Question	V. Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	V. Important	Unsure / Don't Know	Total
Connects transit users to amenities such as hospitals, shopping, and recreational opportunities	5	2	1	10	34	2	54
Accommodates people with disabilities	6	0	1	10	33	3	53
Provides for safety by using visible bus stops, covered bus stops and safer bus vehicles	5	3	0	20	25	1	54
Provides an option for residents who are dependent on transit for daily needs	6	1	0	7	37	2	53
Provides reliable, efficient and dependable transit service	5	1	1	7	37	2	53
Provides fast transit service (quick transfer times, short wait times at bus stops, and faster bus speeds)	6	1	0	20	23	3	53

**4. Is your business on an existing transit route?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	30	58%
No	16	31%
Unsure / Don't Know	6	12%
Total	52	100%

**5. Does your business have frontage on Highway 99?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	11	21%
No	42	79%
Total	53	100%

**6. If your business is not located on Highway 99--Approximately how far is your business from the highway?**

Answer	Response	%
1/4 Mile -- 1/2 Mile (5-10 minute walk)	24	63%
1/2 Mile -- 1 Mile (10-30 minute walk)	8	21%
1 mile or more (30+ minute walk)	6	16%
Total	38	100%

**7. Please describe you level of satisfaction with how RVTD currently serves your business?**

Answer	Response	%
Very Dissatisfied	1	2%
Dissatisfied	3	6%
Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	16	33%
Satisfied	15	31%
Very Satisfied	5	10%
My business is not on or close to an existing bus line	2	4%
Unsure / Don't Know	7	14%
Total	49	100%

**8. Do you believe it is important to provide public transportation for people who are transit dependent in the Rogue Valley?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	48	96%
No	1	2%
Unsure / Don't Know	1	2%
Total	50	100%

**9. Please indicate your opinion of the level of importance of transit for the following:**

Question	V. Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	V. Important	Total Responses
Your Business	4	8	19	8	9	48
All Businesses	1	1	4	27	15	48
Regional Economy Overall	1	0	2	25	20	48

**10. Please describe the level of importance for the following aspects of transit to your business.**

Question	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very Important	Unsure / Don't Know	Total
A bus stop in front of my business	6	10	22	4	2	2	46
A bus stop within a 1/4 mile of my business	5	3	10	20	9	1	48
Timely schedule for employees and customers	3	5	5	12	21	2	48
A fast service that delivers employees and customers quickly	3	1	8	20	15	1	48
Affordable passenger fare	3	1	6	20	18	0	48
Covered bus stops	3	3	10	21	10	0	47
Increased seating on the bus	4	4	20	12	1	7	48
Allows employees to commute to work by bus	3	1	7	16	21	0	48

**11. Please describe the level of importance for the following aspects of transit to all businesses in the region.**

Question	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important nor Unimportant	Important	Very Important	Unsure / Don't Know	Total
Schedule reliability for employees and customers	1	0	0	14	32	0	47
A fast service that delivers employees and customers quickly	1	0	1	24	21	0	47
Affordable passenger fare	1	0	1	18	27	0	47
Covered bus stops	1	2	3	28	12	1	47
Increased seating on the bus	1	3	18	14	5	6	47
Allows employees to commute to work by bus	1	0	0	17	29	0	47

**12. What effect do you believe that transit enhancements could potentially have on property values?**

Answer	Response	%
Very Negative	0	0%
Negative	1	2%
Neither Negative nor Positive	10	21%
Positive	18	38%
Very Positive	11	23%
Unsure / Don't Know	8	17%
Total	48	100%

**13. Do you believe that transit can decrease the demand for parking in downtown areas?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	29	59%
No	9	18%
Maybe	11	22%
Total	49	100%

**14. Please indicate your opinion regarding the need for transit improvements in the RVTD transit system for the following time frames.**

Question	Not Needed	Low need	Moderate Need	High Need	Unsure / Don't Know	Total Responses
Now	0	2	22	19	4	47
5 Years	0	1	12	21	10	44
10 Years	0	0	6	27	12	45
20 Years +	0	0	3	28	14	45

**15. Please indicate your opinion regarding the need for transit improvements in the Highway 99 Corridor for the following time frames.**

Question	Not Needed	Low need	Moderate Need	High Need	Unsure / Don't Know	Total Responses
Now	0	3	15	19	10	47
5 Years	0	0	12	19	14	45
10 Years	0	0	7	23	15	45
20 Years +	0	0	5	22	18	45

**16. Please describe your level of support for the following hypothetical transit improvements.**

Question	No Support	Some Support	Strong Support	Unsure / Don't Know	Total Responses
Transit with designated lanes in high traffic areas	10	18	15	2	45
Providing bus only lanes even if it requires acquiring private property	22	17	1	6	46
Using traffic light prioritization for buses	9	20	11	6	46
Modern bus stops, with shelters and 'real time' information displayed at stops	1	10	33	2	46

**17. Please describe your level of agreement that transit improvements can produce the following effects.**

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Unsure / Don't Know	Total
Increases transit ridership	0	1	5	22	16	1	45
Reduces automobile use	0	2	7	21	14	1	45
Lessens congestion and traffic	0	2	5	25	13	1	46
Creates better access to employment, education, and major shopping areas	0	0	2	21	22	1	46
Reduces environmental impacts such as reduced vehicle emissions and less air pollution	0	0	6	17	22	1	46
Allows for more affordable commuting for residents in the region	0	0	5	20	20	1	46
Reduces the use of diesel fuels by buses that incorporate natural gas and hybrid engines	0	1	2	18	21	4	46

**18. What types of transit have you heard of, or are familiar with? (Please mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Express Bus	31	72%
Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	28	65%
Light Rail	39	91%
Commuter Rail	35	81%

**19. If a new and enhanced transit system were developed along the Highway 99 corridor that uses designated bus lanes and traffic light prioritization for buses, what do you perceive the impacts would be on your business?**

Answer	Response	%
Very Negative	0	0%
Negative	2	4%
Neither Negative nor Positive	24	52%
Positive	12	26%
Very Positive	3	7%
Unsure / Don't Know	5	11%
Total	46	100%

**20. Have you or your business had dialogue or communications with RVTD in the past?**

Answer	Response	%
Yes	10	22%
No	31	67%
Unsure / Don't Know	5	11%
Total	46	100%

**21. How has RVTD communicated with you previously? (Please mark all that apply).**

Answer	Response	%
Email / Online Communications	7	70%
Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook	2	20%
Newspaper Articles	4	40%
Phone Call	5	50%
Personal Visit	2	20%
Mail	5	50%
No Communication	1	10%
Other	2	20%

**Other**

during presentation  
Fairs or public events

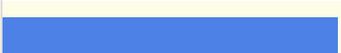
## 22. How would you prefer to receive communications about transit from RVTD?

Answer		Response	%
Email / Online Communications		28	60%
Social Media such as Twitter and Facebook		4	9%
Newspaper Articles		14	30%
Phone Call		1	2%
Personal Visit		1	2%
Mail		6	13%
Don't Want Communications from RVTD		8	17%
Other		2	4%

### Other

I would like them to actually work on transportation to outlying areas rather than waste money on trying to promote poor service schedule and information flyers available throughout city

## 23. What types of information are important for you and your business to receive in communications from RVTD? (Please mark all that apply).

Answer		Response	%
Information about bus programs and discounts		32	78%
Bus service routes and hours		35	85%
Incentives for employees using transit		27	66%
Potential impacts to the access of businesses		11	27%
Maps, diagrams or materials describing RVTD's services		29	71%
Transit planning projects		18	44%
Construction activities related to transit		14	34%
Other:		2	5%

### Other:

We operate a B & B. Public transit has real importance to our guests.  
none

## 24. Which of the following categories best describes your business?

Answer	Response	%
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	6	13%
Finance and Insurance	3	7%
Information	3	7%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	0	0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	3	7%
Public Administration	1	2%
Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	1	2%
Retail Trade	5	11%
Service / Hospitality Industry	12	26%
Social Services (Education, Healthcare or Social Assistance)	8	17%
Wholesale Trade	1	2%
Other:	3	7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Other:**  
 non-profit economic development organization  
 Hospital

## 25. Approximately how many employees do you have?

Answer	Response	%
1-5 employees	26	58%
6-10 Employees	2	4%
11-20 Employees	3	7%
21-50 Employees	7	16%
51-100 Employees	2	4%
100+ Employees	5	11%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 26. Do your employees use public transit to access your business?

Answer	Response	%
Yes	14	30%
No	28	61%
Unsure / Don't Know	4	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100%</b>

**27. How long has your business been established? Please enter the number of years in the box.**

Text Response			
100 years	30	15	5
55	29	15	5
50	29	14	2
50	28	12	2 months
43	25	12	2
41	20	11 years	2
40	18	11	100+
35	17	6	20+
33	16 years	6	40+
32	15	6	four
32	15	6	100+

**28. Do you have any other thoughts or comments you would like to share?**

Text Response
Plan for slow but steady economic growth in the Valley. Link with other providers when possible Eg; Airport, train, etc. Special runs for large events.
Julie Brown has done a remarkable job in managing RVTD!!!
So grateful for public tranist in the Rogue Valley.
I started the survey without realizing it was only for people in business. I stopped answering questions for that reason.
When I lived in Portland I used the bus system all the time, it was convenient reliable and cost effective (compared to driving and parking), but here the advantages are outweighed by the limited coverage, if you are not close to 99 it is not good.
RVTD needs to expand the areas that they provide ridership to. Way too many customers and employees cannot use RVTD because it does not provide service anywhere near their residence. In Ashland we need more areas serviced like North Mountain and Hersey streets. The price within Ashland needs to be more reasonable also. Lower price increases ridership.
my employees carpool from Medford to Ashland
The biggest issue for our business is that we are a hospital that is located off of HWY 99. People who ride the bus, must walk up a steep hill to access our services. This creates an issue for patients who have mobility issues, difficulty breathing, etc. It can be dangerous especially in the winter.
I
No
Need an express bus between a Medford location and an Ashland location. Living in Ashland is unaffordable for most working people. A faster public transit route to get to/from work in Ashland would be beneficial.
Would love it if you could expand service to include full Sunday service for employees who WANT to be scheduled to work on Sunday but can't because the buss does not run on Sundays and they have no other means of transportation. Thank you!
Transit is important especially for those that cannot drive. RVTD needs to improve the image of riding the bus.
I would like to see a reduced fare in downtown Ashland to increase ridership. Also an increased frequency of buses.

No

Current and expanded bus service is very important to me.

frequency of service, Service in evening and sundays, express buses are all important to increase rideability and effectiveness

I would like to use public transportation and bicycling. More available information about routes and schedules A field trip demonstration of how to use the bus system Volunteer guides to help potential riders learn the bus system

Smaller busses, more frequent trips. I and my customers do not use the bus. I would if it went the other way on 3rd street in CP. My daughter and other family and friends do use. The problem is that you have to leave the house 2 hours before an appointed time of arrival at anywhere, who knows when you'll get home...time for your customers is the most important thing for you to consider in your planning of routes and frequency. Thanks.

We use public transportation when we travel because it is frequent and conveniently located throughout the city we are visiting.. Neither of these conditions apply to RVTD. My employees don't use RVTD because it there is no service in their neighborhood nor does it operate on the weekends.

I was happy when RVTD returned to Saturday service ans evenings.

thanks for asking our opinions...

## Characteristics of Respondents

Respondents represented thirteen industries, with the largest portions coming from the following: Service and Hospitality (26%), Social Services (17%), Arts, Entertainment and Recreation (13%), and Retail Trade (11%). Most of the respondents came from fairly small businesses; only 15% of the respondents' workplaces had more than 50 employees. 58% were located along an existing transit route, likely contributing to the 30% who said they had employees or coworkers who used transit to get to work. 21% had frontage on Highway 99, with an additional 63% located within one-quarter to one-half mile.

## Perceptions of RVTD

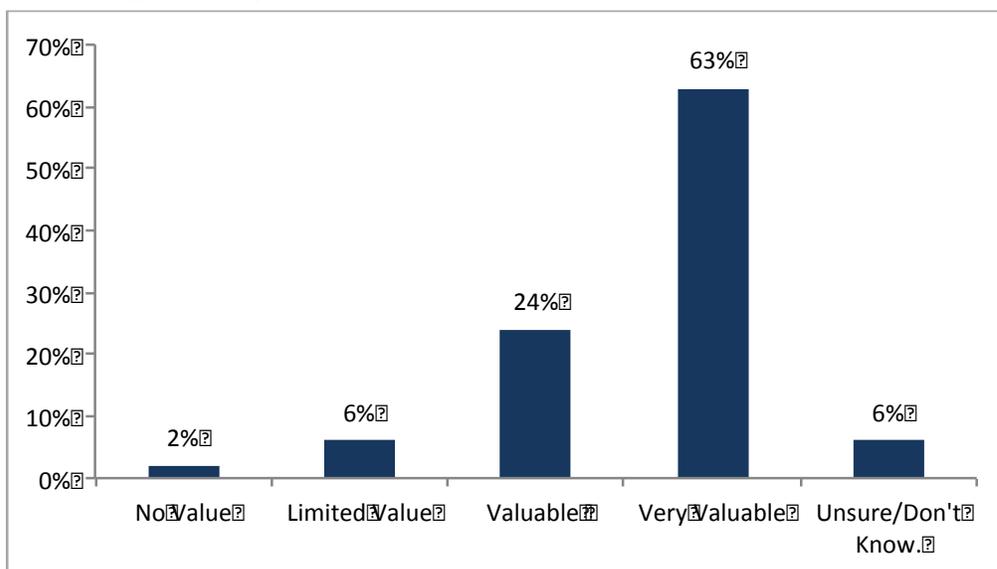
53% of respondents approve of the way in which RVTD currently serves the region, rating RVTD's services as "good" or "very good." Thirty eight percent rated these services "poor" or "fair" and 41% said they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the way RVTD currently serves their businesses. About 8% expressed some form of dissatisfaction (many were neutral or unsure).

## Beliefs About Transit

The majority of the respondents were supportive of transit and its role in the region. Eighty seven percent said transit is "valuable" or "very valuable" to the region. Ninety-six percent said it is important to cater to those who are transit dependent.

Figure C-1 shows the level of support of RVTD's transit role in the region from business survey respondents'.

**Figure C-1. Business respondents' support and perceived role of transit in the Rogue Valley, 2014**



Source: Online Business Survey, 2014.

59% believe transit can decrease parking demand in downtown areas and 22% believe it has the potential to do so, suggesting some respondents see potential for transit to replace automobile trips.

## Ranking the Level of Importance of Transit Services Provided to the Region

The survey asked respondents to describe the level of importance of a number of features of transit services to the region as a whole. All items were considered very important; the following list ranks the order of importance:

- 1) Provides an option for residents who are dependent on transit for daily needs
- 2) Provides reliable, efficient, and dependable transit service
- 3) Connects transit users to amenities such as hospitals, shopping, and recreational opportunities
- 4) Accommodates people with disabilities
- 5) Provides for safety by using visible bus stops, covered bus stops, and safer bus vehicles
- 6) Provides fast transit service (quick transfer times, short wait times at bus stops, and faster bus speeds)

## Ranking the Level of Importance of Different Aspects of Transit for Businesses

Respondents were asked to describe the level of importance for a number of aspects of transit for their businesses and all businesses in the region as a whole. Items are ranked in order of importance, with the majority response italicized.

### Region

- 1) Schedule reliability for employees and customers – Very important
- 2) Allows employees to commute by bus – Very important
- 3) Affordable passenger fare – Very important
- 4) Fast service that delivers employees and customers quickly – Important
- 5) Covered bus stops - Important
- 6) Increased seating on buses – Neither important nor unimportant

### Respondents' Businesses

- 1) Allows employees to commute to work by bus – Very important
- 2) Timely schedule for employees and customers – Very important
- 3) Affordable passenger fare – Important
- 4) Fast service that delivers employees and customers quickly – Important
- 5) Covered bus stops – Important
- 6) A bus stop within ¼ mile of my business – Important
- 7) Increased seating on buses – Neither important nor unimportant
- 8) A bus stop in front of my business – Neither important nor unimportant

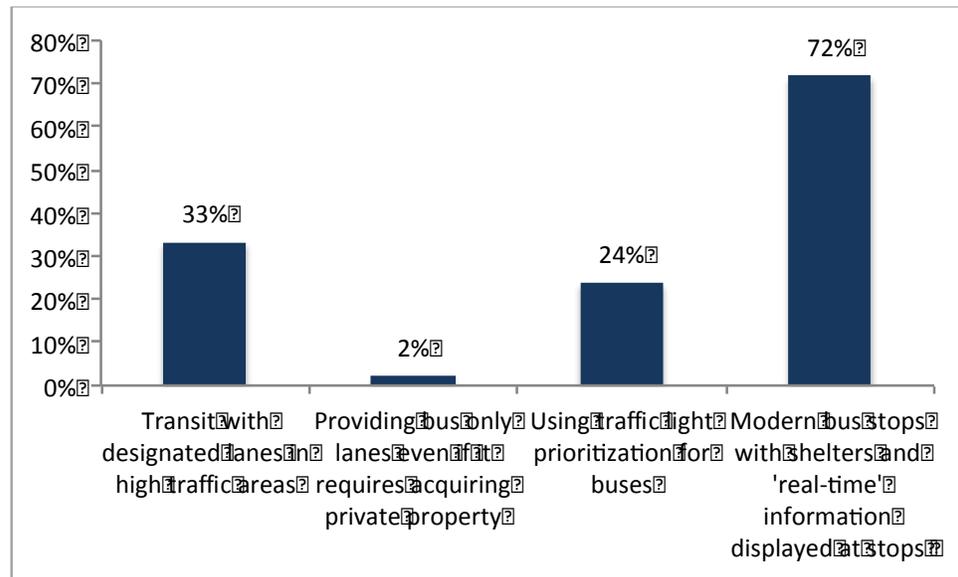
None of the aspects listed above were particularly contentious or divisive; the only item considered unimportant by 10 or more people was the presence of a bus stop in front of the respondent's business. Interestingly, respondents perceived transit as being much more important for other businesses and the regional economy as a whole than their own. Only 17% said transit was "important" or "very important" for their businesses, while 88% and 94% said transit was important to all businesses and the regional economy, respectively.

## Transit Enhancements

Respondents were asked to give opinion about the time frame for improvements in the RVTD system and along the Highway 99 corridor. Expectedly, uncertainty about improvements increased with time. Respondents believe RVTD should make more immediate improvements to the system and Highway 99 over the next five years. Both have a "high need" for improvements beyond 10 years as well, but also show a high level of uncertainty for that time frame.

When asked specifically about improvements that are associated with BRT, strong support was shown for modern bus stops with shelters and real-time information displays only, as shown in Figure C-2. Traffic light prioritization and designated lanes in high traffic areas received moderate support, and bus lanes requiring the acquisition of private property had little support.

**Figure C-2. Business respondents' support for BRT amenities, Rogue Valley, 2014**

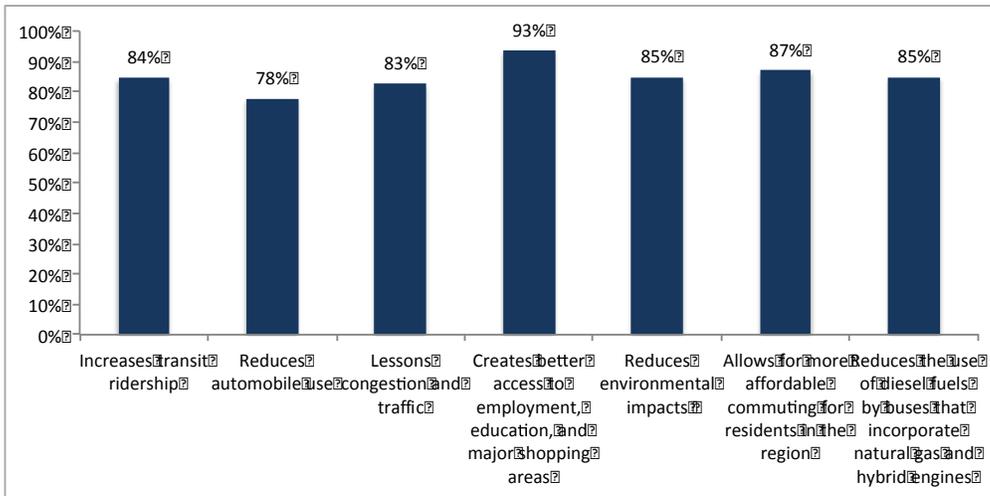


Source: Online Business Survey, 2014.

The use of designated lanes and traffic light prioritization would have little impact on business, according to 52% who said effects would be “neither negative nor positive.” 33% believed the changes would have a positive impact on their businesses, compared to only 4% who said consequences would be negative.

Figure C-3 shows respondents level of agreement that transit improvements would lead to various effects. There was strong agreement with all of the effects listed. People most strongly believed enhancements would create better access to amenities (shopping, employment, educational, etc.), reduce pollution, and create more affordable commuting options. There was also agreement that changes would increase ridership, reduce automobile use, and thus reduce congestion and traffic.

**Figure C-3. Business respondents' level of agreement that transit improvement would result in certain effects, Rogue Valley, 2014**



Source: Online Business Survey, 2014.

## Communication

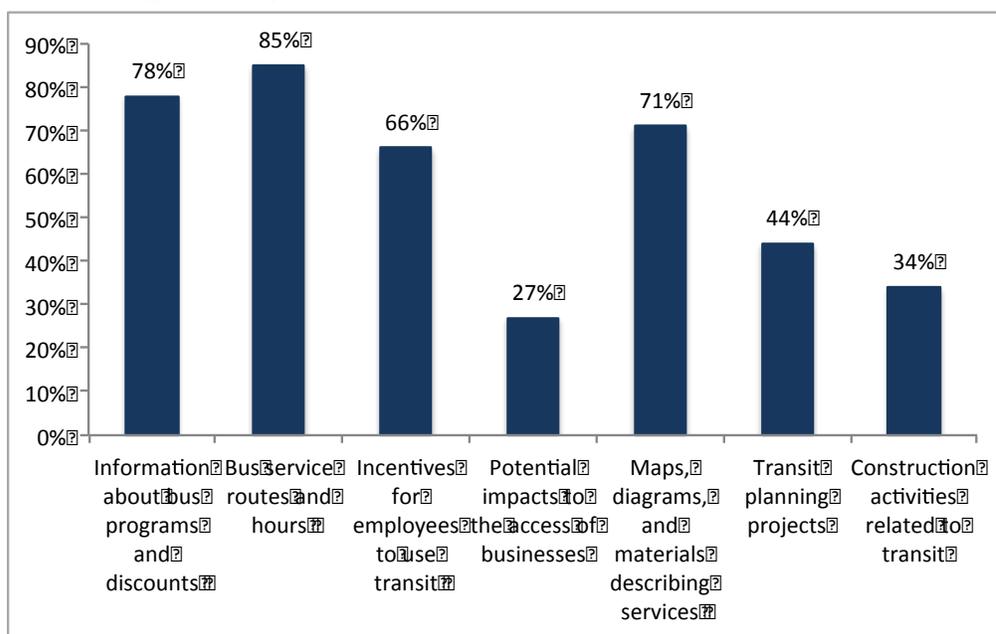
Sixty-seven percent of respondents said they had no prior communication with RVTD, as shown in Figure C-4. About 60% expressed a preference for future communications via email, and another 30% via newspaper. Respondents were most interested in receiving the following information from RVTD (note more than one answer could be given):

- Bus service routes and hours (85%)
- Information about bus programs and discounts (78%)
- Maps, diagrams, and materials describing services (71%)
- Incentives for employees to use transit (66%)

Surprisingly, only 27% wanted to see communication about potential impacts future projects would have on the access of businesses.

The following graph illustrates business survey respondents' highest interest in receiving the following information from RVTD:

**Figure C-4. Business respondents' interest in receiving information from RVT, Rogue Valley, 2014**



Source: Online Business Survey, 2014.

## Intercept Survey

CPW conducted three rounds of intercept surveys on March 7, April 4, and May 2, 2014.

To reach a diverse range of bus riders, intercept surveys were conducted at RVT bus stops located in Ashland, Medford, and Central Point. The bus stops surveyed were identified by RVT as containing higher volumes of ridership throughout the region. RVT and CPW coordinated to decide upon which stops were heavily used, and represented a diverse spatial area.

Each round of intercept surveying lasted roughly between 60-90 minutes long. CPW project members or survey participants filled out the survey according to participant comfort. Intercept surveys were completed in the following locations:

Medford:

- Front Street Station
- Rogue Valley Mall
- Walgreens
- Walmart

Ashland

- Southern Oregon University
- Ashland Plaza

## Central Point

- 2<sup>nd</sup> and Manzanita
- Freeman and Oak

The intercept survey contains eight questions based on the following themes:

- Transit Access: “How far did you travel to get on the bus today?” “How did you get to the bus today?”
- Importance of transit elements: “Please indicate the level of importance for each aspect of bus travel to you: Bus travel time is very fast, Bus is on time to my stop, Bus is on time to my destination, Bus service is frequent, The actual next bus arrival times are displayed at major stops, Bus stops are sheltered, comfortable, and safe, Buses have plenty of room for passengers.”
- Level of support for service expansion: “Please indicate your level of support for the following: 1. Service that has faster travel times but requires passengers to walk longer distances to catch the bus, 2. Service that is faster, more frequent, and reliable along Highway but without new or increased service on local routes, 3. Service that is faster and more reliable but requires RVTD to spend money on additional road infrastructure”
- Final Destination: “Where is your destination?”
- Knowledge of HCT: “Please indicate if you are familiar with any of the following types of transit”
- Transit Ridership Purposes: “What is the purpose of your trip today?” “Why do you take the bus?”

## Analysis and Findings

A total of 115 intercept surveys were completed, surpassing the 100 minimum described in the scope of work.

### Transit Access

Eighty seven percent of respondents walked to the bus stops, 5% drove or carpoled, and 5% biked. Another 1% indicated they used other means of transportation to access the bus stop.

Thirty seven percent of respondents indicated their travel times to access the bus took 5 minutes or less, 23% took between 5-10 minutes, 14% took between 10-15 minutes, 12% took between 15-30 minutes, and 13% took 30 minutes or more.

## Importance of transit elements

Survey respondents overall indicated all features of bus travel to be important or very important on the whole. The following shows responses ranked by level of importance:

- Bus is on time to my destination (87%)
- Bus service is frequent; Actual next bus arrival time displayed at major stops; Bus stops are sheltered, comfortable and safe (86%)
- Bus is on time to my stop (85%)
- Buses have plenty of room for passengers (84%)
- Bus travel time is very fast (70%)

A low percentage of respondents (28%) indicated fast bus travel time as “very important,” while the majority of respondents indicated on time bus service to and from destinations as “Very Important,” 52% and 51%, respectively.

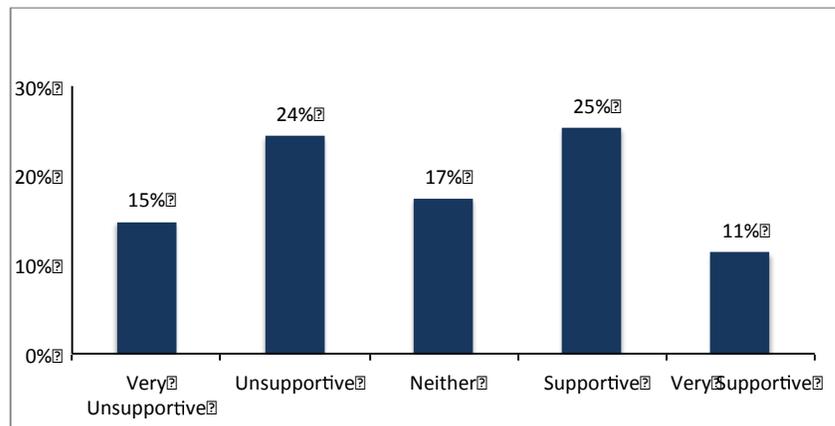
## Level of support for service expansion

Overall, respondents are generally ‘supportive’ of the three statements provided in the survey. Not many indicated high levels of opposition or support of any of the three statements.

### **Service that has faster travel times but requires passengers to walk longer distance to catch the bus:**

This question gathered the most polarizing responses, with respondents choosing either to support or oppose the statement, and a smaller number indicating neutrality- neither supportive nor unsupportive. It is important to note that each answer option obtained a significant and comparable number of respondents: 39% of respondents were “unsupportive” or “very unsupportive” of the trade-off between fewer stops and faster, reliable travel. 36% of respondents were “supportive” or “very supportive” of the trade-off, as shown in Figure C-5.

**Figure C-5. Intercept survey respondents interest in faster travel times with longer walk to catch bus, Rogue Valley, 2014**



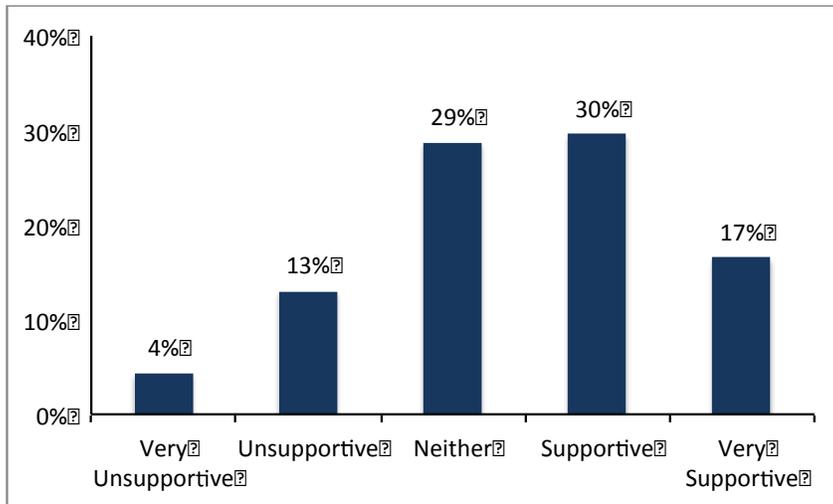
Source: Patron Intercept Survey, 2014.

In comparison to the other two service expansion questions, respondents of this question indicated higher rates of opposition. Respondents indicated concerns of accessibility and mobility in response to the idea of ‘fewer stops.’

**Service that is faster, more frequent, and reliable along Highway 99 but without new or increased service on local routes:**

Overall, 47% of respondents were either “supportive” or “very supportive” as shown in Figure C-6. This question gathered the highest number of “neither supportive nor unsupportive” responses of the three questions in this theme (29%). Eight percent of respondents did not answer the question. The high rates of neutrality provided in this question speaks to the confusing phrasing of the question – a number of patrons requested clarification or more explanation prior to providing a response.

**Figure C-6. Intercept survey respondents support of faster, more frequent service along Highway 99 only, Rogue Valley, 2014**

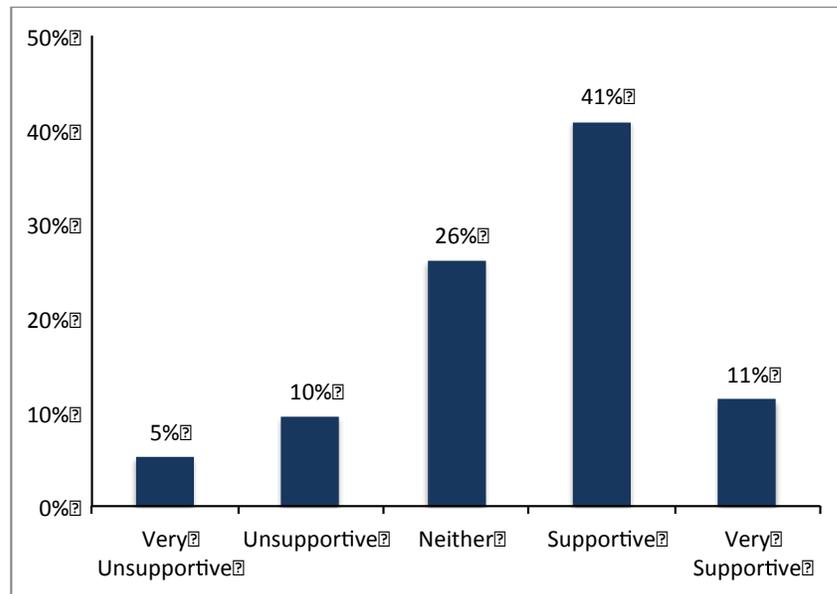


Source: Patron Intercept Survey, 2014.

**Service that is faster and more reliable but requires RVTD to spend money on additional road infrastructure:**

Figure C-7 shows, at 52%, this question obtained the highest number of “supportive” or “very supportive” responses compared to the other two service expansion questions. This question gathered the lowest percentage of “unsupportive” or “very unsupportive” responses (15%). It also gathered a significant number of neutral respondents in which they indicated they were ‘neither supportive nor unsupportive.’

**Figure C-7. Intercept survey respondents support of spending additional money to get faster and more reliable service, Rogue Valley, 2014**



Source: Patron Intercept Survey, 2014.

## Final Destination

Forty one percent of respondents indicated Medford as their final destination, making the City the most popular destination of the six listed in the survey.

Ashland is the second most popular destination for respondents (30%). Twelve percent of riders indicated Phoenix as their destination, 13% indicated Talent as their destination, and 3% indicated White City was their final destination.

## Knowledge of HCT

Forty four percent of respondents were not familiar with any of the HCT terms: Shared bus, Express bus, BRT, Exclusive bus, and Commuter bus. Fifty six percent of respondents indicated they were familiar with one or more of the terms: 30% were familiar with Commuter bus, 27% Express bus, 20% Shared bus, 20% BRT, 17% Exclusive bus, and 10% Other, with respondents indicating they were familiar with light rail.

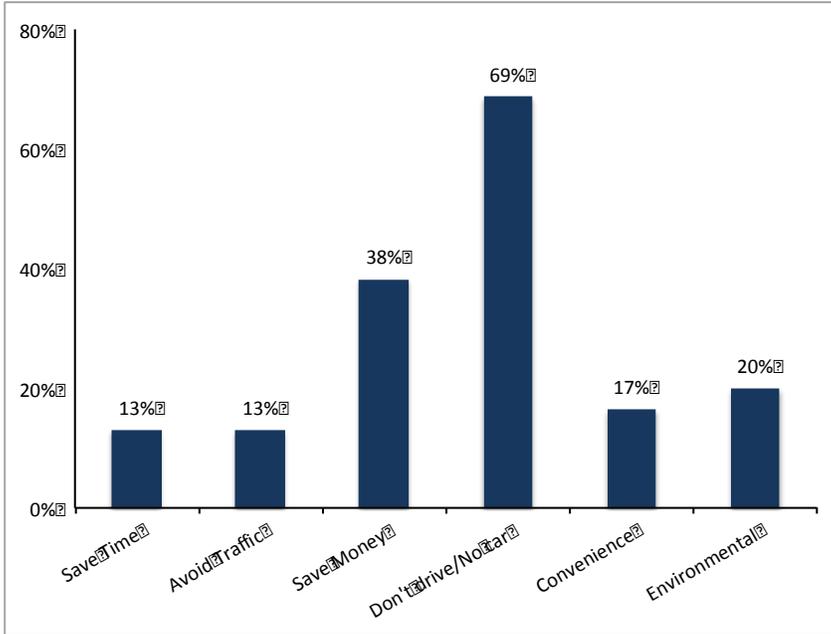
## Transit Ridership Purposes

When asked why they take the bus, 69% of respondents indicated they rode the bus because they either did not drive or did not own a car, as shown in Figure C-8. Thirty eight percent of respondents indicated they rode the bus to save money. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated these two reasons for taking the bus, supporting the assumption that the majority of RVTD’s riders are “captive riders” – people who take the bus because they lack other transportation options.

“Saves time” and “avoids traffic” – two reasons RVTD would like to use to communicate to attract “choice riders” (riders who choose to take the bus despite having other transportation options), contain the lowest number of responses –

both at 13%. This finding shows that travel times and traffic avoidance are least important for riders when considering transportation options.

**Figure C-8. Intercept survey respondents reasons for taking the bus, Rogue Valley, 2014**



Source: Patron Intercept Survey, 2014.

Another question asked patrons to indicate the purpose of their trip for the day. Thirty seven percent of respondents indicated work to be the primary purpose for their trip. 28% indicated they were taking the bus for social purposes, 18% for school, 16% for shopping, 14% for medical, and 10% for other purposes such as errands or leisure.

**RVTD Customer Questionnaire on Transit Opinions**



Community  
Planning  
Workshop

*The Rogue Valley Transportation District and the Community Planning Workshop from The University of Oregon are conducting a transit rider study to better understand the opinions of RVTD customers.*

**1. How far did you travel to get on the bus today?**

- 1—5 Minutes
- 5—10 Minutes
- 10—15 Minutes
- 15—30 Minutes
- 30 Minutes or more

**2. How did you get to the bus today?**

- Automobile
- Bicycle
- Carpool
- Walk
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Please indicate the level of importance for each aspect of bus travel to you:**

	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Neither Important or Unimportant	Important	Very Important
Bus travel time is very fast	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus is on time to my stop	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus is on time to my destination	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus service is frequent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The actual next bus arrival times are displayed at major stops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bus stops are sheltered, comfortable and safe	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Buses have plenty of room for passengers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## RVTD Customer Questionnaire on Transit Opinions



Community  
Planning  
Workshop

4. Please indicate your **level of support** for the following:

	Very Unsupportive	Unsupportive	Neither Supportive Nor Unsupportive	Supportive	Very Supportive
Service that has faster travel times but requires passengers to walk longer distance to catch the bus.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service that is faster, more frequent, and reliable along Highway 99 but without new or increased service on local routes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service that is faster and more reliable but requires RVTD to spend money on additional road infrastructure.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What is the purpose of your trip today?  
(Check all that apply)

- Work
- Social
- Medical
- School
- Shopping
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Where is your destination?

- North Ashland
- South Ashland
- Central Point
- North Medford
- South Medford
- Phoenix
- Talent
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Please indicate if you are familiar with any of the following types of transit. (Check all that apply)

- Shared Bus Lanes
- Express Bus Routes
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Exclusive Bus Lanes
- Commuter Bus Service
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why do you take the bus? (Check all that apply)

- Save time
- Avoid traffic
- Save money
- Don't drive/no car
- More convenient than car
- Environmental concerns
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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# APPENDIX D: CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT

## TYPES OF HIGH-CAPACITY TRANSIT

The following table provides approximations of services provided by different forms of high-capacity transit (HCT). Service levels vary heavily by locality; population and job density needed to support HCT varies by capital costs. According to a study by the University of California Transportation Center, successful mass transit requires “unwavering local commitment” to raise population and employment densities along the transit corridor.<sup>1</sup>



TYPE	DESCRIPTION & AMENITIES	SPEED (Including Stops)	FREQUENCY OF STOPS	FREQUENCY OF SERVICE (Peak-Off Peak)	SEATING CAPACITY (per car)	DENSITY NEEDED <sup>1</sup> (Jobs & Pop.)
 COMMUTER RAIL	Typically used to connect commuters in suburbs to a central city.	30-50 MPH	1-10+ miles	30-60 minutes	70-80 (per car)	76/acre at \$75m in Capital Cost/Mile
 LIGHT RAIL	Typically used to connect suburbs and a central city with capability to turn into a streetcar for local service in urban settings.	20-30 MPH	.25-2+ miles	10-30 minutes	60-70 (per car)	56/acre at \$50m in Capital Cost/Mile
 BUS RAPID TRANSIT (BRT)	Typically used to travel along corridors with high ridership potential within and between cities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operates in designated lane for buses and emergency vehicles.</li> <li>Fewer stops; larger, sheltered stations with elevated platforms.</li> <li>Coordination with traffic signals to improve efficiency.</li> </ul>	20-30 MPH	.5-1+ miles	10-20 minutes	40-60	17/acre at \$10m in Capital Cost/Mile
 BRT LITE	Similar to BRT, but with more frequent stops and more operation in mixed traffic. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May have some elements of BRT, but not as comprehensive (may not include enhanced stations or coordination with traffic signals, for example).</li> </ul>	12-18 MPH (in urban setting)	.25-1+ miles	10-30 minutes	40-60	2/acre at \$5m in Capital Cost/Mile
 EXPRESS BUS	Typically used to connect commuters between cities via highway or freeway, with minimal stops in between. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can operate in High Occupancy Vehicle/“Carpool” lane on freeways/highways (operates in mixed traffic, otherwise)</li> <li>Avoids detours and local stops between key destinations</li> <li>Increased service and circulation in peak commute hours</li> </ul>	Varies depending on traffic	.5-10+ miles	30-60 minutes	40-60	N/A
 EXISTING SERVICE	Provides service to users with wide range of trip purposes and destinations, both within and between cities.	16 (Route 10) -22 MPH (Route 40)	.25-.5 miles	20-30 minutes	30	N/A

Images, top to bottom: CalTrain (<http://babyops.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/img-104534143-caltrain-926-in-mountain-view-m.jpg>), TriMet MAX ([http://www.rtdands.com/media/k2/items/cache/19752c69564179b00e386c4f19c54\\_XL.jpg](http://www.rtdands.com/media/k2/items/cache/19752c69564179b00e386c4f19c54_XL.jpg)), Lane Transit District EmX (<http://ti.org/EugeneBRTReal400.jpg>), Nashville BRT Lite ([http://wkrn.images.worldnow.com/images/21466566\\_BG1.jpg](http://wkrn.images.worldnow.com/images/21466566_BG1.jpg)), Golden Gate Transit ([http://farm9.staticflickr.com/8435/7870912162\\_b6c2c861a\\_m.jpg](http://farm9.staticflickr.com/8435/7870912162_b6c2c861a_m.jpg)), Rogue Valley Transportation District (<http://www.kdrcv.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/RVTD.jpg>).

<sup>1</sup>Guerra, Erick and Robert Cervero. “Cost of a Ride: The Effects of Densities on Fixed-Guideway Transit Ridership and Capital Costs.” University of California Transportation Center. August 2010. <http://www.uctc.net/research/papers/UCTC-FR-2010-32.pdf>