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1 What is the Transit Master Plan?
What is Josephine Community Transit?

Josephine Community Transit (JCT) is the public transportation agency serving Grants Pass, Josephine County and the greater Middle Rogue region.

JCT is part of the Josephine County Public Works Department.

JCT’s existing services are illustrated in Figure 1. They include:

- Four local bus routes within Grants Pass (Routes 10, 20, 35 and 40).
- On-demand and paratransit services, mostly within ¾-mile of these local bus routes, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Three long-distance bus routes connecting Grants Pass to:
  - Cave Junction (Route 50)
  - Sunny Valley, Merlin, and Wolf Creek (Route 80)
  - Medford via Rogue River and Gold Hill (Rogue Valley Commuter Line).

Figure 1: This map shows existing routes operated by Josephine Community Transit.

Colored lines indicate the frequency of each bus route.

- Routes 10 and 35 (in blue) operate every 30 minutes.
- Routes 20 and 40 (in green) operate every 60 minutes.
- Routes 50, 80 and the Rogue Valley Commuter Line (in dotted red) operate 3 to 5 times per day.

All services operate Monday to Friday, mostly in between 7 AM and 7 PM.
Shaping the future transit network

Planning for the Short and Long Term

The Transit Master Plan will design the future fixed-route transit network serving Grants Pass, Josephine County and the Middle Rogue Region. The plan will include:

• A redesigned bus network that JCT can begin operating in late 2017.

• Concepts to adapt transit service in the medium- and long-term, depending on available funding and growth in the Middle Rogue region.

The Transit Master Plan will follow the time frames set in the Regional Transportation Plan by the Middle Rogue Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

• Short term: Present - 2020

• Medium term: 2021 - 2030

• Long term: 2030 - 2040

The Middle Rogue MPO includes the City of Grants Pass and its vicinity, as well as Merlin/North Valley, and the cities of Rogue River and Gold Hill in Jackson County.

Trade-offs and Choices – A Public Conversation

The first step in this plan is to describe and evaluate JCT’s existing services, the existing conditions of the built environment, and the trade-offs that will arise in planning future transit service.

This Existing Conditions and Choices report is the foundation for a conversation among the public, stakeholders and elected officials about how to make those hard choices.

A key choice that arises in most communities is how to balance maximizing ridership and maximizing coverage.

• Ridership Goal: Focus on frequent service in places where more people will ride the bus. High ridership is fundamental to other transit outcomes like high farebox return and low subsidy per passenger.

• Coverage Goal: Send service to as many places as possible. Spreading service out means spreading it thin; more people are nearer service, but frequencies are low and few choose to ride. High coverage ties to outcomes like geographic and political equity.

How should JCT trade off these two basic but competing goals?

On a fixed budget, the more a transit agency spends focusing on high ridership, the less it can spend covering a wide geographic area, and vice versa.

Ridership and coverage goals can be balanced, but a move towards one always requires a move away from the other.

Understanding where that balance lies in your community is the key to developing a successful Transit Master Plan.
2 What is the purpose of transit?
Transit can serve many different purposes. But different people and communities value these purposes differently; it’s not usually possible to serve all of them well.

Understanding which purposes matter most in Josephine County and the Middle Rogue region is a key to developing the Transit Master Plan.

Possible purposes for transit include:

• **Economic**: transit can give businesses access to more workers, and workers access to more jobs. Transit can also help attract certain industries, new residents, tourists, or other economic contributors.

• **Environmental**: increased transit use can reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. Transit can also support more compact development and help conserve land.

• **Social**: transit can help meet the needs of people who are in various situations of disadvantage, providing lifeline access to services and jobs.

• **Health**: transit can be a tool to support physical activity by walking. This is partly because most riders walk to their bus stop, but also because transit riders will tend to walk more in between their transit trips.

• **Personal Liberty**: By providing people the ability to reach more places than they otherwise would, a transit system can be a tool for personal liberty, empowering people to make choices and fulfill their individual goals.

Some of these purposes are served only when transit has high ridership. For example, the environmental benefits of transit only arise from many people riding the bus rather than driving, taking a taxi, or otherwise getting a ride in a private vehicle.

Other purposes are served by the mere presence of transit. A bus route through a neighborhood provides residents insurance against isolation, even if the route is infrequent, not very useful, and few people ride it each day.
High ridership is not JCT’s only goal.

If Josephine Community Transit’s network were designed only for maximum ridership, it would focus only on services useful to many potential riders. JCT would then be thinking like a private business and targeting a market where its product is competitive.

Unlike public agencies, businesses are under no obligation to operate where they would spend a lot of money to reach few customers.

For example, McDonald’s is under no obligation to provide a restaurant within a half-mile of everyone in southern Oregon. If it were, thousands of homes would need their own McDonald’s at the end of the driveway. The company would quickly go bankrupt.

People understand that in a rural place they will drive many miles to reach a McDonald’s, because restaurants will be located only in cities with enough likely customers.

We wouldn’t describe this as McDonald’s being unfair to people in rural areas; McDonald’s is just acting like a business. It has no coverage obligation, only a goal of maximizing profit.

Transit agencies are often accused of failing to maximize ridership, as if that were their only goal. But as public agencies, they are intentionally providing coverage services that they know will not generate much ridership.

The elected officials who ultimately make public transit decisions hear their constituents say things like “We pay taxes too” and “If you cut this bus line, we will be stranded” and they decide that coverage, even in low-ridership places, is an important transit outcome.

Figure 2: Is an empty bus failing? That depends entirely on whether it is meant to attract high ridership, or provide coverage.
Ridership and Coverage goals are in conflict. Ridership and coverage goals conflict. On a fixed budget, if a transit agency wants to do more of one, it must do less of the other.

Consider the fictional town in Figure 3. The little dots indicate dwellings and commercial buildings and other land uses. The lines indicate roads. As in many towns, most activity is concentrated around a few roads.

A transit agency pursuing only ridership would run all its service on the main streets, since many people are nearby, and buses can run direct routes. This would result in a network like the one at bottom-left.

If the transit agency were pursuing only coverage, it would spread out so that every street had some service, as in the network at bottom-right. All routes would then be infrequent, even on the main roads.

These two scenarios require the same number of buses and cost the same amount to operate, but deliver very different outcomes. To run buses at higher frequency on the main roads, neighborhood streets will receive less coverage, and vice versa.

An agency can pursue ridership and provide coverage within the same budget, but not with the same dollar. The more it does of one, the less it does of the other.

Imagine you are the transit planner for this fictional town. The dots scattered around the map are people and jobs; the streets shown are ones on which transit can be operated. The buses are the resources available to run transit.

Before you can plan the transit routes, you must first decide what you want transit to do.

Figure 3: For basic geometric and geographic reasons, ridership and coverage must be traded off against each other.
Other ways to think about ridership vs. coverage

As illustrated in Figure 3, the most basic aspect of the ridership vs. coverage trade-off is between focusing on a few frequent routes, or running infrequent service over a large area.

However, there are other ways to think about trade-offs that are relevant in the context of service provided by Josephine Community Transit, and that relate back to questions of ridership and coverage.

**Frequent Daytime Service vs. Early and Late Service**

Is it more important to provide frequent service in the middle of the day, or to extend service to early mornings and late evenings?

- Extending service to earlier and later hours would improve certain people’s access to transit.
- Providing more frequent service in the middle of the day when most people are travelling would save many riders’ time.

On a fixed budget, these two objectives conflict.

- Extending service earlier and later means reducing frequencies in the middle of the day.
- Providing more frequent service in the middle of the day means starting service later and ending it earlier.

**Local vs. Long-Distance Service**

Is it more important to provide a higher level of service within Grants Pass, or to run more buses that connect to outlying communities?

Most transit trips are only a few miles long. Shorter trips are also less expensive to provide.

- When transit service is concentrated in an urban core, that usually means better service for the largest number of likely transit trips.

But many other trips require travelling long distances to access retail, government services, far-flung jobs, or even for family or social calls.

- Providing some bus service on long-distance routes can greatly extend how many people in smaller towns and rural areas can access the bus.
- This is a great boost in coverage; but long-distance services that run only a few times a day won’t generate high ridership on a per-mile basis.
What is the market and need for transit?
Development patterns impact ridership.

Attracting riders requires more than clean, courteous, comfortable or even frequent service. Many factors outside of JCT’s control – land use, development, urban design, street networks – strongly impact transit’s usefulness.

A good way to visualize how these factors impact ridership and costs is to ask: “How far does a bus need to go to serve 100 people or jobs?” The farther you have to go, the more expensive it is to provide service.

If a transit network is designed for high ridership, it will focus on places where ridership potential is high and cost is low, following the elements of what we call the Ridership Recipe:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Density</th>
<th>How many people, jobs, and activities are near each transit stop?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Walkability</td>
<td>Can people walk to and from the stop?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linearity</td>
<td>Can transit run in reasonably straight lines?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity</td>
<td>Does transit have to traverse long gaps?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Density**: How many people, jobs and activities are near each bus stop?
- **Walkability**: How many people can actually walk to the bus stop?
- **Linearity**: How far off a direct path does the bus travel to reach important destinations?
- **Proximity**: Does the bus traverse long, empty gaps to reach people and jobs?

In the short term, JCT could improve ridership by targeting service in areas where the Ridership Recipe is already in effect.

In the long term, significant ridership gains could come from collaboration with land-use and public works authorities to create a transit-friendly built environment.

**Figure 4: The Ridership Recipe:** for any given level of transit service, whether or not it achieves high ridership depends in large part on these four factors.
Market and Need for transit in Grants Pass

In this chapter, we show data that illuminates potential markets and needs for JCT’s local and long-distance transit services. We use these two terms – “market” and “need” – to describe the potential for meeting transit’s competing goals of ridership and coverage.

Market vs. Need

When we refer to a “market” or a “demand,” we are implicitly addressing a goal of high ridership.

- A strong transit market is a place where ridership is likely to be high relative to the costs of the transit service.
- A strong transit market is also sometimes described as having “high ridership potential” or “high unmet demand.”

When we refer to “need,” we are addressing a goal of high coverage, or coverage of certain important places, and the many social purposes it can serve.

- When designing transit to address needs, we often respond more to the severity of people’s needs for the service than to the number of people who might be served.

Measures of Market

The market for local transit service is closely related to residential and job density.

The more people live and work in an area, the more likely it is that a transit service to that area will achieve high ridership.

However, as described above, density alone is not enough to deliver the Ridership Recipe for transit.

Figures 5 and 6 illustrate demand for transit in Grants Pass, as a function of residential and job density.

Measures of Need

Certain higher need populations are more likely to benefit from any nearby transit service.

These include senior citizens, children under 18, persons without access to a car, persons with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities.

Not everyone in these categories is a potential transit user, but concentrations of these groups usually indicate areas with higher needs.

Figures 7, 8, 9 and 10 illustrate transit needs in Grants Pass, as a function of the density of persons in poverty, persons under 18 and over 65, minorities, and households with zero vehicles.
Residential Density

Figure 5: Residential and job density are the two most important indicators of demand for transit service. Residential density in Grants Pass is generally higher near downtown, and is highest near Grants Pass High School. South of the Rogue River, there are clusters of higher density near Redwood Ave to the west, and near the Rogue River Highway and Fruitdale Drive to the east.
Figure 6: Job density matters in understanding employment locations, but also where residents shop, go to school, and seek care or other services. Job densities are highest downtown and along Highway 99. However, there is also significant activity in the industrial and commercial areas east of Downtown, and south of the Rogue River near Three Rivers Community Hospital.
Density of Residents in Poverty

Figure 7: Demand for transit is highly correlated with income. As a result, the density of residents in poverty is an indicator of both the market and need for transit services. The highest densities of persons in poverty are near Grants Pass High School, and on the west side of downtown south of G street.
3 - WHAT IS THE MARKET AND NEED FOR TRANSIT?

Figure 8: Children under 18 and seniors over 65 are both groups with a higher need for transit services than the general population due to their more limited access to driving. These populations are spread throughout Grants Pass, although they are especially concentrated near Grants Pass High School.
Figure 9: Minority populations are also more likely to use transit, particularly for persons with lower incomes or limited English proficiency. Minority populations are generally very low in Grants Pass, although they are relatively higher near Grants Pass High School and in the Riverside area.
Figure 10: Households with limited or no vehicles often have a high need for transit. The greatest concentration of these households is in the vicinity of Grants Pass High School.
Market and Need for Long-Distance Services

**Long Distance is Different**

People are generally willing to travel farther and wait longer for transit when it is taking them a longer distance.

For example, few people will wait an hour for a bus to go across town, but many more people are willing to arrange their schedule to catch a bus to another state that only leaves twice a day.

Similarly, few people will walk, bike or get a ride half a mile to catch a bus that takes them just two miles, but many people will arrange transportation over several miles to reach an intercity bus or train station.

For these reasons, anyone’s standards of “close enough” and “frequent enough” for intercity travel will be different from their standards for travel within their own town.

**Measures**

This means that the market for long-distance services is less determined by the density of residents, jobs and activities in the immediate vicinity of bus stops than is the market for local transit services.

Rather, the overall size of the communities on the route and the amount of travel between them (for commute or other purposes) provide some information about long-distance ridership potential.

Reliable measures of transit need are harder to obtain in smaller communities, because high need populations are so small. However, the poverty rate is a relatively reliable and consistent indicator that can help us understand the likely level of transit need in most places.

In the following pages, Figure 11 shows the population and poverty levels of communities within and near JCT’s long-distance service area. Figure 12 shows the daily commute flows between Grants Pass and other communities.
Figure 11: Based on population levels, the largest market for long-distance transit originating from Grants Pass is clearly the connection to Medford. There is also a relatively high need for service between Grants Pass and Cave Junction. Except for Glendale, most other high-demand and high-need communities in the region are served by either RVTD or U-Trans.
Figure 12: Observed commute flows also show the strongest demand for long-distance transportation in between Grants Pass and Medford. There is also measurable demand from Grants Pass to suburban areas (Redwood, New Hope), as well as to the communities served by Routes 50 and 80 (Cave Junction, Merlin). However, travel to Douglas County and points north is very limited.
4 How is JCT’s existing service performing?
Josephine Community Transit’s bus network is built around multiple timed transfer points, where different routes meet at scheduled times each hour.

This allows passengers to transfer between routes (and to switch directions of travel) with a reliably short wait. Timed transfers are an essential feature of a low-frequency transit network; without them wait times can be very long when infrequent routes cross.

For example, if two hourly routes cross and a person must transfer, their transfer could take as long as 59 minutes! But, if the same two routes always arrive in the same place at the same time, then the transfer can reliably take just a minute or two.

Figure 13 is a simplified diagram illustrating the functioning of a timed transfer system.

Figure 13: In a timed transfer system, bus routes are coordinated so that they arrive at the same time at set locations. This makes it easy for passengers to switch from one bus to another with minimal delay, and greatly expands the range of places that a passenger can reach within an hour.
Local Routes and Frequencies
The Grants Pass local network includes the following four routes, as shown in Figure 14 (see page 26):

- Routes 10 operates every 30 minutes along 6th and 7th Streets north of the Rogue River. South of the River, Route 10 serves Rogue Community College, as well as areas along Redwood Avenue and Union Avenue.

- Route 20 operates every 60 minutes. It connects primarily residential areas near the Rogue River Highway and Fruitdale Drive to commercial and employment areas on Union Avenue, as well as east of Downtown.

- Route 35 operates every 30 minutes, and connects Downtown Grants Pass with commercial and employment areas in the eastern part of the city, primarily on E and F streets.

- Route 40 operates every 60 minutes. Route 40 connects primarily residential areas in the western part of the city to Downtown.

Timed Transfers
In a typical hour of transit service, the following timed transfers occur.

- Routes 10 (southbound), 20 (northbound) and 35 (westbound) arrive at the Ann Basker Auditorium a few minutes before each hour.

- At the top of the hour, Routes 10 (southbound), 20 (southbound) and 40 (westbound) depart from the Ann Basker Auditorium in Downtown Grants Pass.

- At 5 and 35 minutes past the hour, Route 10 (southbound) and Route 20 (southbound) meet again at the Ringuette senior meal site.

- At 8 minutes past the hour, Route 10 (northbound) and Route 20 (southbound) meet by the Walgreens on Union Ave.

- At 10 minutes past the hour, Route 40 (eastbound) returns to the Ann Basker Auditorium, and the same bus becomes Route 35 (eastbound).

- At 13 and 43 minutes past the hour, Route 10 (northbound) and Route 35 (eastbound) meet by the Safeway at the intersection 7th and G Streets.

- Just before 30 minutes past the hour, Route 10 (southbound) and Route 35 (eastbound) arrive at the Ann Basker Auditorium. Route 35 (westbound) departs 10 minutes later.

- At 38 minutes past the hour, Route 10 (northbound) and Route 20 (northbound) by the Walgreens on Union Avenue.

- At 49 minutes past the hour, Route 20 (northbound) meets Route 35 (westbound) at the Greyhound station at F Street and Agness Avenue.

Timed Transfers and Ridership
Prior to December 2012, JCT operated two routes, connecting in a single hourly timed transfer at the Ann Basker Auditorium. This system resulted in significant out-of-direction travel for passengers wishing to transfer from one route to the other.

The introduction of multiple transfer points has significantly reduced out-of-direction travel, saving passengers time. This has been a major factor in increasing ridership on local routes.
Figure 14: This map shows the typical frequencies for each route in the JCT bus network between 7 AM and 6 PM on weekdays. The network is centered around multiple timed transfers at various locations, including Ann Basker Auditorium (intersection of 6th and B Streets), the Ringuette senior meal site, Walgreens on Union Avenue, and the Safeway at 7th and G Streets.
4 - HOW IS JCT’S EXISTING SERVICE PERFORMING?

LONG DISTANCE ROUTES

JCT’s long-distance routes are designed to arrive and leave from Ann Basker Auditorium at times that coordinate with the local routes.

The connections between different services at Ann Basker Auditorium are depicted in Figure 15 (see page 28), which shows all departures from this location between 5 AM and 7 PM on a typical weekday.

Route 50 - Cave Junction

Route 50 operates 5 times a day between Grants Pass and Cave Junction.

- Four of Route 50’s runs depart from Ann Basker Auditorium at 35 minutes past the hour, allowing easy connections from Route 10 (southbound) and Route 35 (westbound).
- The same four runs arrive at Ann Basker auditorium at 25 minutes past the hour, allowing an easy connection to Route 10 (southbound).

Route 80 - North Valley

Route 80 operates 3 times a day between Grants Pass and the North Valley areas of Merlin, Sunny Valley and Wolf Creek.

- The morning run arrives at Ann Basker Auditorium at 7:30 AM, allowing an easy connection to Route 10 (southbound), and a ten-minute wait to Route 35 (westbound).
- The midday run arrives at Ann Basker Auditorium at 2 PM, allowing for easy connections to Routes 10 (southbound), 20 (southbound) and 40 (eastbound), and a ten-minute wait to Route 35 (westbound).
- The midday and afternoon runs leave Ann Basker Auditorium at 12:30 and 5:35 PM, allowing passengers arriving on Routes 10 (southbound) and 35 (westbound) to connect to the North Valley.

Rogue Valley Commuter Line

The Rogue Valley Commuter Line (RVCL) operates 5 times a day between Grants Pass, Rogue River, Gold Hill and Medford.

- RVCL’s two morning runs depart from Ann Basker Auditorium at 6:30 and 7:30 AM, allowing easy connections from Route 10 (southbound), and also Route 35 (westbound) at 7:30.
- RVCL’s midday run departs at 11:05 AM, allowing easy connections from Routes 10 (southbound), 35 (westbound) and 20 (northbound).
- RVCL’s two afternoon runs arrive in Grants Pass at 5:25 and 6:25 PM, allowing an easy connection to Route 10 (southbound).
**Daily Departures from Ann Basker Auditorium**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route Short Name</th>
<th>Route Long Name</th>
<th>Service Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants Pass / Medford Regional Route</td>
<td>Rogue Valley Commuter Line</td>
<td>Year Round Service (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>6th/7th St - RCC</td>
<td>Year round (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fruitdale Ave</td>
<td>Year round (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Walmart / GPHS</td>
<td>Year round (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Bridge Street</td>
<td>Year round (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Cave Junction</td>
<td>Year round (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>Merlin, Sunny Valley and Wolf Creek</td>
<td>Year round (Mon-Fri)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 15: This chart helps illustrate how the pulse system operates at the Ann Basker Auditorium. Each vertical line represents one bus trip departing from Ann Basker Auditorium. Routes 10, 20 and 40 depart at the same time every hour. Route 35 departs 10 minutes later, and reconnects with Route 10 a half-hour later. To the extent possible, most trips on Routes 50, 80 and the Rogue Valley Commuter line are scheduled to depart or arrive at the Auditorium at the same time as the local routes.
Most residences and jobs in Grants Pass are near transit.

**CURRENT LOCAL TRANSIT COVERAGE OF RESIDENTS AND JOBS IN GRANTS PASS**

- **Jobs within 1/2 mile of a bus stop**: 99.7%
- **Residents within 1/2 mile of a bus stop**: 83.8%

Data Sources: Population by Census Block Group, ACS 5-Year Summary File (2008-2013); Employment by Census Block, LEHD LODES 7.2 (2012)

**Figure 16**: Based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau, nearly all households and jobs in Grants Pass are within a half-mile of a bus stop.
Most transit trips lead to and from a few key locations.

Figure 17: Boardings and alightings occur throughout the system, but most trips lead to and from a few key destinations. These include key transfer points (Ann Basker Auditorium, Ringuette, Walgreens, Safeway), as well as Rogue Community College, and near Walmart and Greyhound on Northeast F Street.
JCT ridership has been increasing, but mostly on local routes.

JCT Boardings, 2012-2015

Boardings per Service Hour, 2012-2015

JCT Service Hours, 2012-2015

Figure 18: Total ridership has been increasing on local and long-distance fixed routes since 2012. This reflects a longer-term trend of increasing ridership associated with the introduction of timed transfers. However, the number of long-distance service hours has increased substantially, due to the introduction of the Rogue Valley Commuter Line. As a result, the productivity of long-distance services (boardings per hour of service) has declined even though total ridership has gone up. In the same time period, the productivity of on-demand services (mostly ADA paratransit) remained roughly constant.

Data Source: National Transit Database 2015
### JCT’s long-distance routes have relatively low ridership.

**Rogue Valley Commuter Line**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stop Name</th>
<th>Average Daily Boardings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grants Pass</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rogue River</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Hill</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medford</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Average Total Boardings**: 61  
**Average Boardings Per Trip**: 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route 50</th>
<th>Stop Name</th>
<th>Average Daily Boardings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Westbound</td>
<td>Ann Basker Auditorium</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rogue Community College</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wonder - Eastbound</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Selma - Post Office</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kerby - Kerby Market</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cave Junction - County Building</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cave Junction - Junction Inn</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eastbound | Cave Junction - Junction Inn       | 11                      |
|           | Cave Junction - IV Coalition       | 2                       |
|           | Kerby - Belt Building              | 2                       |
|           | Selma - Ray’s Market               | 3                       |
|           | Wonder - Westbound                 | 1                       |
|           | Rogue Community College            | 0                       |
|           | Ann Basker Auditorium              | 0                       |

**Average Total Boardings**: 50  
**Average Boardings Per Trip**: 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route 80</th>
<th>Stop Name</th>
<th>Average Daily Boardings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northbound</td>
<td>Ann Basker Auditorium</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merlin (Ray’s Market)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Merlin (Lil’-Pantry)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mt. View Market &amp; Deli</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red Mt. Market &amp; Cafe</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunny Valley Store</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolf Creek General Store</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Southbound| Wolf Creek General Store           | 2                       |
|           | Sunny Valley Store                 | 1                       |
|           | Red Mt. Market & Cafe              | 0                       |
|           | Mt. View Market & Deli             | 0                       |
|           | Merlin (Post Office)               | 1                       |
|           | Merlin (Ray’s Market)              | 0                       |
|           | Ann Basker Auditorium              | 0                       |

**Average Total Boardings**: 19  
**Average Boardings Per Trip**: 3

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*Figure 19: Based on a one-week count of boardings in November 2016, the average one-way long-distance bus trip carried only five riders. However, ridership also varied significantly by time of day. For example, outbound trips to Cave Junction at 5:30 PM usually carry more than 10 passengers.*
Costs are stable for local routes, increasing for other services.

Figure 20: Since 2012, local and paratransit service hours have declined slightly, but long-distance service hours have increased. At the same time, cost per service hour has remained relatively constant for fixed routes, but has increased significantly for paratransit. As a result, the annual operating costs for long-distance and paratransit services have both increased by over $200,000 since 2012, while the cost of providing local fixed-route service has not changed.

Data Source: National Transit Database 2015
Routes with higher frequencies have higher ridership.

Figure 21: The charts above show ridership on JCT routes as a function of frequency. Because frequencies are uniform through the day, more trips mean a higher frequency. Routes 10 and 35 operate every 30 minutes, Routes 20 and 40 operate hourly, and the long-distance routes operate only 3 to 5 times per day. There is a direct relationship between the frequency of a route and how many people ride. This is in large part because more frequent routes provide so much more freedom of movement to riders. As can be seen in the charts above, the relationship between ridership and frequency is exponential. This means that even the productivity of each route tends to increase with frequency.

Data Source: JCT 2014-2015 Annual Boardings Data
Cities that provide more service generate higher ridership.

Figure 22: Generally speaking, the more service an agency provides, the more people in its service area tend to ride. The charts above show that, overall, the amount of transit service provided in the Grants Pass area is low compared to similarly-sized cities and regions in the Northwest. As a result, total ridership is low: the average person in Grants Pass takes only three transit rides per year.

Data Source: National Transit Database 2015
5 How is JCT governed and funded?
Nearly all JCT’s funding comes from federal and state grants.

Josephine Community Transit operates as a division of the Josephine County Department of Public Works.

As a County agency, JCT is governed by the Board of County Commissioners, and uses the facilities of the Department of Public Works.

However, Josephine Community Transit receives no capital or operating funds through Josephine County. Rather, nearly 80% of the funds used to operate JCT’s services come from federal and state grants.

The remaining 20% of operating funds come from local sources. This includes contracts and agreements with Rogue Community College and several human services agencies, as well as nearly 10% from farebox recovery alone.

Figure 23: These charts show the relative size of the main sources of operating funds for Josephine Community Transit. Federal and state grants contribute 80% of JCT operating funds.
Josephine Community Transit actively pursues federal and state grants, taking advantage of both traditional transit funds and many temporary funding opportunities. This has allowed JCT to grow its service while also making continued improvements to vehicles and facilities.

Nevertheless, grant dependence carries real limitations and risks. For example:

- **Temporary grant funds don’t last.** The end of a grant may lead to service cuts. Two grants that fund existing service will expire soon:
  - Oregon’s Energy Incentives Program, which has provided JCT with $95,000 per year for general operations, but expires in 2017, with no obvious replacement.
  - The federal Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) program funds the Rogue Valley Commuter Line through 2018 only.

- **JCT leaves significant amounts of unused federal money “on the table” due to a lack of local matching funds.**
  - Every year JCT would be eligible to receive approximately $260,000 more in federal funding than it receives. Accessing these funds from the federal 5307 grant program requires a local match of approximately $200,000.
  - This funding would allow JCT to provide almost 30% more service than it does today.

- **Even stable federal and state grant funds can change in the long run.**
  - The FAST Act (passed by Congress in 2015) authorizes funding for federal transportation programs through 2020, at which time substantial changes to federal transit funding could be made by the then-seated Congress.
  - Transit funding from the State of Oregon is vulnerable to significant changes in each legislative session.

- **JCT currently depends on the federal 5307 program and the state Special Transportation Fund for nearly 50% of operating funds.** Without significant local investment in transit service, major changes to either program could be catastrophic for JCT.

Dependence on grant funding limits service and carries risks.
### Options for dedicated local transit funding

#### Special Levy or Tax

JCT and the Board of County Commissioners could ask voters to approve a temporary levy or permanent property tax to fund transit services.

This is an approach commonly used in Oregon to fund local services not covered under general government funds.

Temporary levies are sometimes easier to pass than permanent tax increases. The agency receiving the levy must prove that it makes effective use of the new funds within a relatively short amount of time, or risk losing voters’ support for the levy when it expires.

However, tax levies have a history of losing votes in Josephine County. In cases where levies have been successful (e.g. for Animal Control), levies have been designed so that tax revenues go directly to the funded department for a very specific purpose.

If a countywide levy is not viable, the City of Grants Pass could also be a vehicle for a special transit levy. In that case, levy funds would go to JCT for service only within City boundaries. It is normal for people living or working in cities – even small cities – to find transit more useful and relevant to their lives than do their rural neighbors, and to therefore be willing to fund higher levels of service.

However, the tax or levy option carries a significant pitfall: property taxes within the City of Grants Pass are currently at the constitutional maximum. This means any new tax for transit operations would result in compression (reduction) of other existing district assessments within the City of Grants Pass.

#### Utility Fee

The City of Grants Pass (or other cities in JCT’s service area) could raise funds for transit service by adding an extra fee to a local utility bill.

This model is used to provide local funds for transit service by the City of Corvallis. The fee raised by Corvallis increases local service and eliminates bus fares.

Like a special levy, this approach creates a dedicated funding stream for transit without creating new government entities or collection mechanisms.

In addition, because such a fee would be collected by a city, this approach is sensitive to the higher value that city residents may place on from transit.

However, city councilors must be convinced that their constituents would support the use of utility fees for transit service. This is not necessarily an easy case to make. The perception that wastewater fees were paying for transportation improvements significantly slowed a major traffic safety program in Portland in the early 2010s, and an effort to add a transportation fee to utility bills did not pass the Portland City Council in 2014.
**Special District**

JCT could ask voters to reincorporate JCT as a Special District, with permanent taxing authority separate from Josephine County or any city government.

This approach has been taken by many different Oregon transit agencies, including Salem-Keizer Transit, the Rogue Valley Transit District, Lincoln County Transit, the Tillamook County Transportation District, and the Sunset Empire Transportation District.

As a special district, JCT would have long-term certainty in funding. A transit district could be funded either by property or payroll taxes. If the special district were funded through a payroll tax, its funding would not be subject to compression, and it would not impact the viability of other public services in the area.

Appropriate geographic boundaries, a clear and transparent service plan, and credible governance and accountability mechanisms are all essential to convincing a skeptical public of the benefits of creating a new government entity with permanent taxing authority.

It can take several tries before a successful vote is achieved. Typically, referenda on new funding or special districts do best in presidential election years, when voter turnout is at its highest.

Further details on local transit funding options are provided in Appendix A.