

**To:** Scott Chancey, Josephine Community Transit (JCT)  
**From:** Daniel Costantino, Jarrett Walker + Associates (JWA)  
**Date:** 30 November 2017  
**Subject:** Josephine Community Transit Master Plan – Choices Survey Results

## 1. What was the purpose of this survey?

Josephine Community Transit (JCT) has hired Jarrett Walker + Associates (JWA) to prepare a short- and long-term Transit Master Plan. The first part of this effort, the *Existing Conditions and Choices Report*, was completed in May 2017. This report analyzed existing services, and outlined key choices for the future of transit service in Josephine County.

Concurrently with the release of the Choices Report, JWA and JCT publicized an online survey asking some of the key questions directly to members of the general public. The answers provided by the public to this survey are a key input into the final Transit Master Plan. JWA is now expecting direction from JCT on the direction of the short-, medium- and long-term networks based in part on these survey results.

## 2. Who answered the survey?

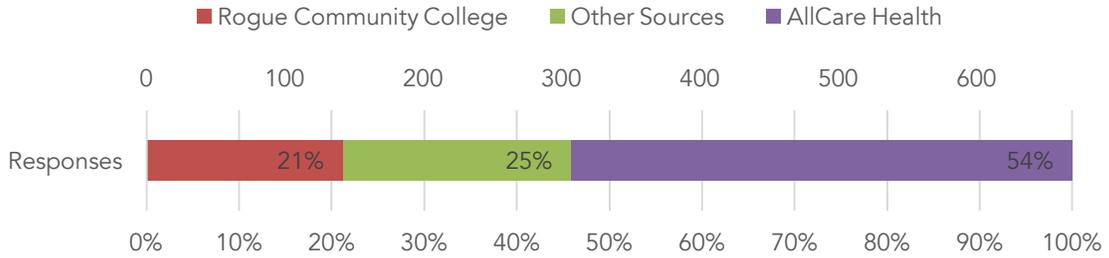
Both JWA and JCT supported distribution of the online survey to the public through promotion to key stakeholder groups.

### HOW RESPONDENTS HEARD ABOUT THE SURVEY

The survey was available from May 1 to October 31, and gathered 669 responses in that time. As shown in Figure 1, based on the dates responses were gathered:

- 142 responses are traceable to an e-mail sent to all students at Rogue Community College in May 2017.
- 165 responses were gathered in August 2017, from a variety of outreach efforts by JCT to bus riders, social service agencies, and medical providers.
- 362 responses are traceable to a letter mailed directly by AllCare Health to over 20,000 of its members in Josephine County in September 2017.

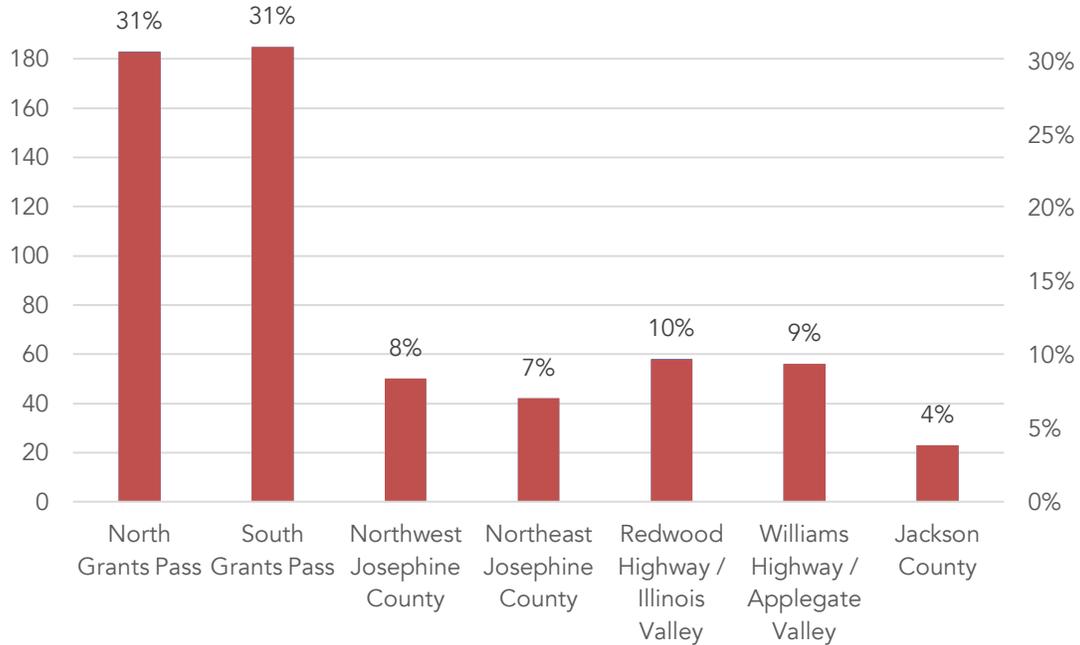
**Figure 1.** How Did Respondents Hear About the Survey?



**WHERE RESPONDENTS LIVE**

The survey received responses from all parts of Grants Pass and Josephine County. Among those who responded to the question on where they live, approximately 62% declared living in Grants Pass and 35% in other parts of Josephine County. There were also a small number of responses from residents of Jackson County.

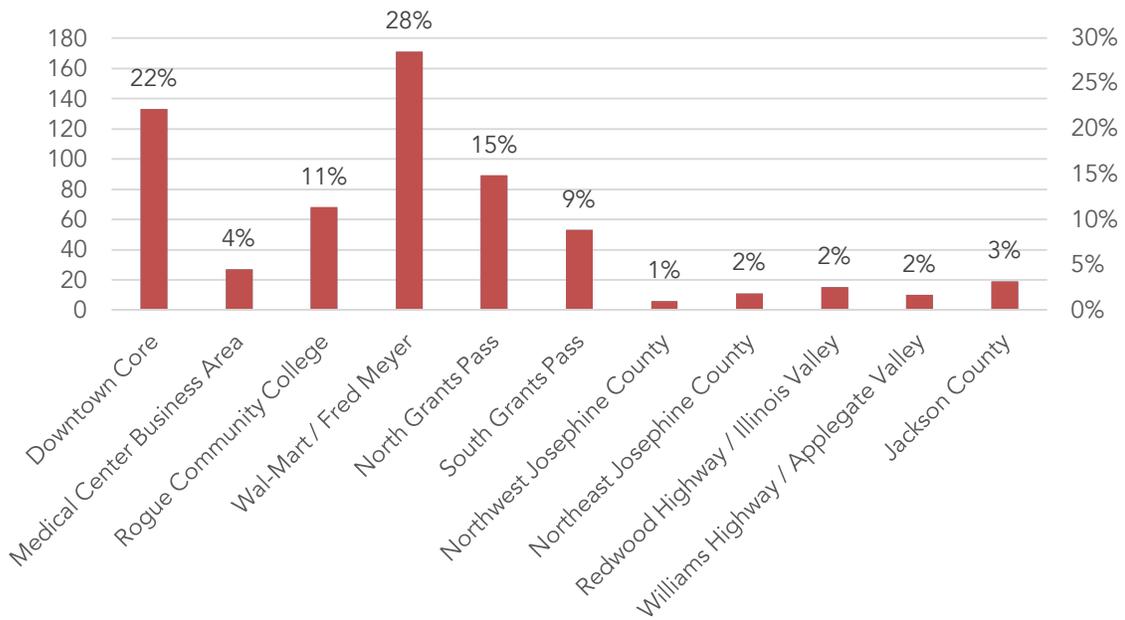
**Figure 2.** Survey Responses by Location of Residence



### WHERE RESPONDENTS GO

We asked respondents about their most frequent destination based on a list of possible areas in Grants Pass and Josephine County. The percentages reflect a general image of the most important destinations in the area; note, however, we would not use the percentages as an exact indication of the relative importance of each destination.

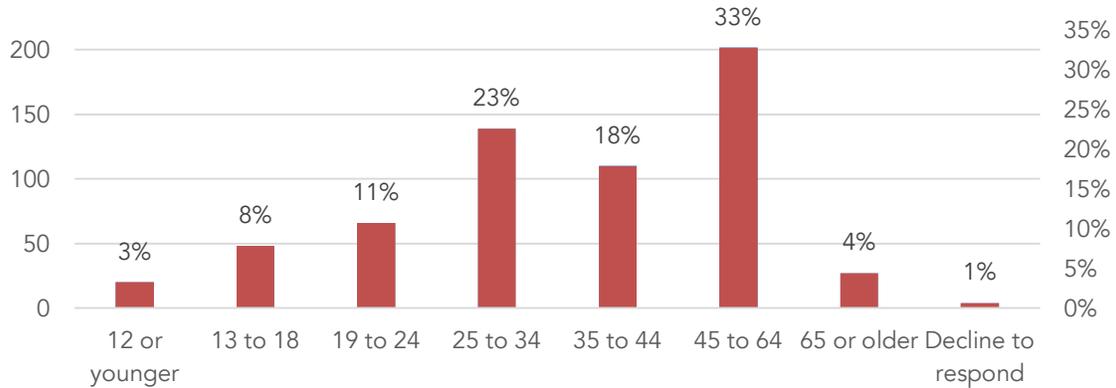
**Figure 3.** Survey Responses by Most Frequent Destination



### AGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS

The survey also received a significant number of responses from all age groups. However, there were relatively few responses from senior citizens: fewer than 5% of respondents declared they were 65 years or older (27 out of 612).

**Figure 4. Survey Responses by Age Group**



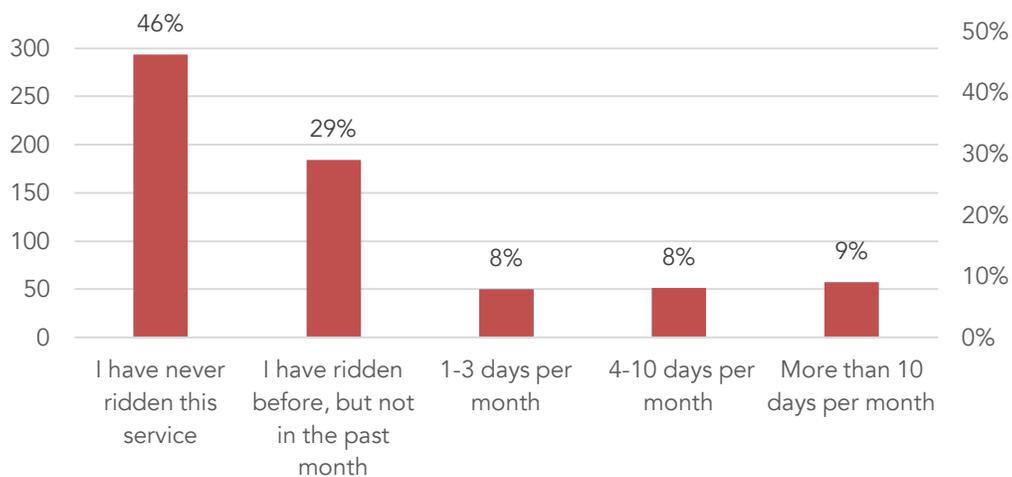
**HOW OFTEN RESPONDENTS USE TRANSIT**

We asked respondents whether they regularly use JCT in Grants Pass, as well as long-distance routes (Routes 50 and 80) and service to Jackson County and Medford.

We found that the vast majority of long-distance riders also use JCT’s local services at least occasionally. Therefore, we obtain the best summary of how often riders use JCT in general by examining how often people use local services.

Most respondents do not typically use JCT services. 46% of respondents had never ridden JCT local services, while another 29% had used them before, but not in the prior month. 25% used JCT local routes either occasionally or regularly.

**Figure 5. How Often Respondents use JCT Local Routes**



### **WHY THIS MEANS THE SURVEY RESULTS ARE VALID AND USEFUL**

The high number of total responses, and the broad distribution of age groups, residential locations, destinations, and propensity to ride transit among survey respondents are all good indications that the responses we received on transit service preferences reflect attitudes held by the public at large in Josephine County.

To verify this, we also segmented responses about transit services by age, residential location, most frequent destination, and how often respondents use transit. In most cases, we found no significant difference in the answers on transit service between these groups. Where we did find differences, these are highlighted below.

### **3. What are the respondents' transit service preferences?**

The survey asked members of the public to identify their transit service preferences in the context of clear trade-offs. This is important because, within a fixed budget, saying "JCT should do X" is almost always the same thing as saying "JCT should not do Y".

#### **THEME 1: WALKING VS. WAITING**

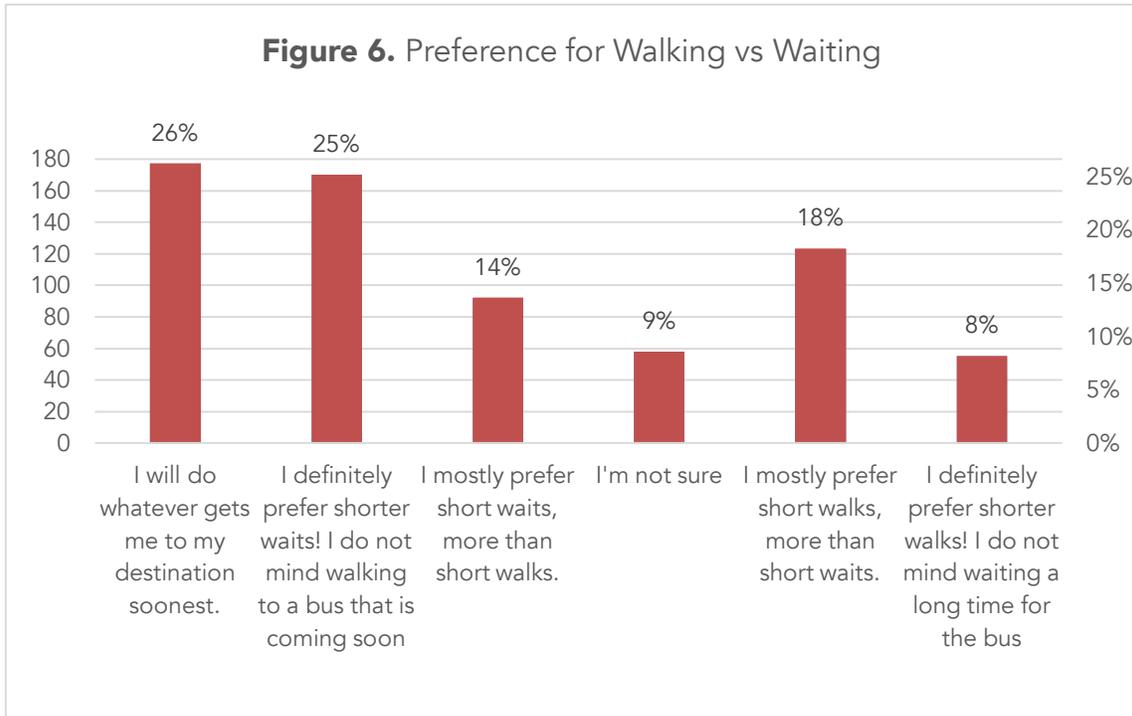
We asked respondents whether they were more interested in using a transit network with:

- routes that get very close to people (so that they have short walks to a bus stop);
- or*
- routes that run more frequently (so people don't have to wait long for the bus).

39% of respondents explicitly preferred longer walks to more frequent service. A further 26% stated that their preference was for the shortest travel time in all instances. Only 26% of respondents explicitly preferred short walks, while a further 9% weren't sure.

Because more frequent service with longer walks yields a shorter travel time in the vast majority of cases, we infer this to mean that a significant majority (65%) of respondents are more interested in longer walks and shorter waits than in having a bus stop as close as possible to their house.

We did not find that this pattern was significantly impacted by the age of respondents, although it is again worth noting again that we received very few respondents from senior citizens age 65 and older.



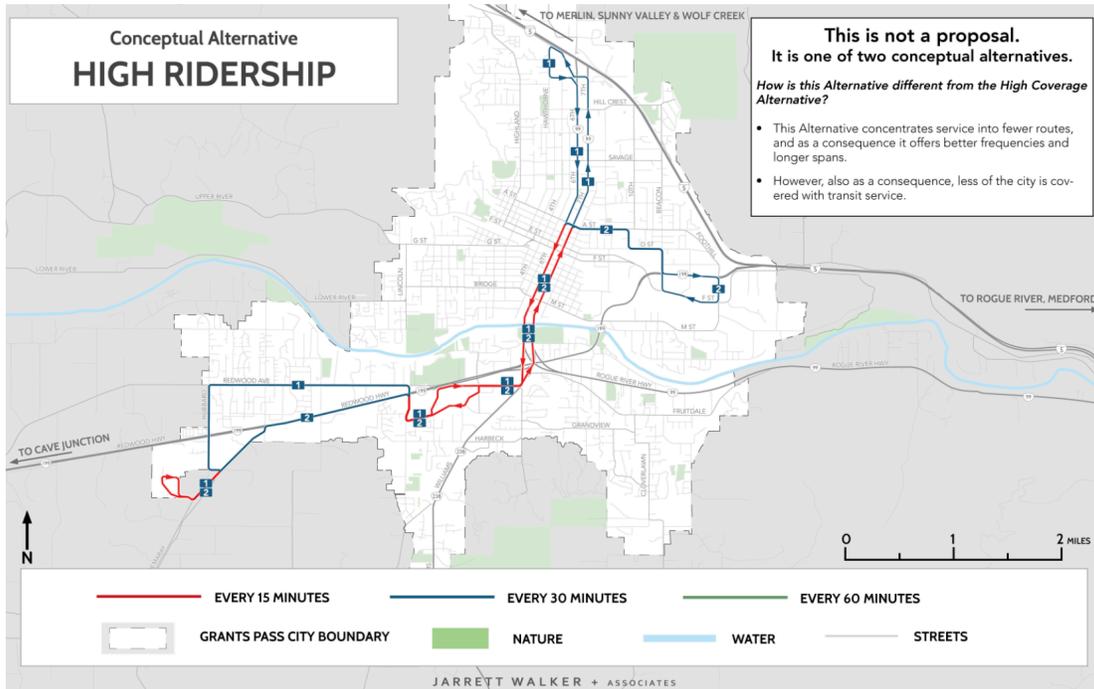
**THEME 2: RIDERSHIP VS. COVERAGE ALTERNATIVE**

We presented respondents with two different possible short-term futures for the local bus network in Grants Pass. These two futures, or alternatives, show how service could change within JCT’s existing operating budget.

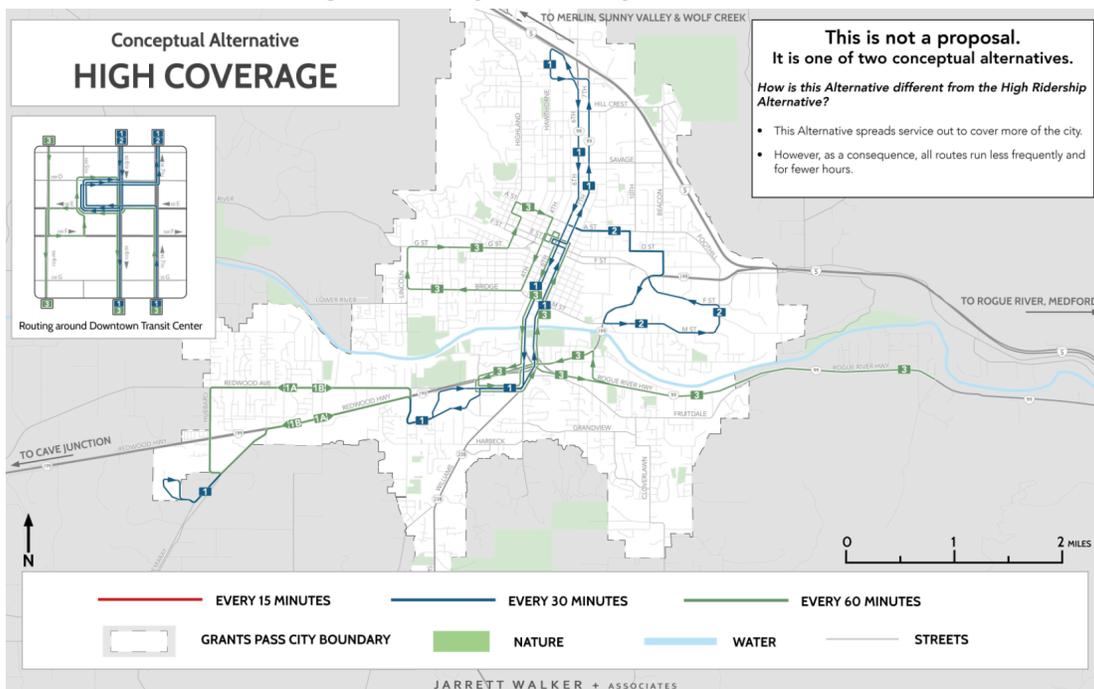
The “High Ridership Alternative”, would be a radical departure from the existing network; only two routes would remain, and the central parts of Grants Pass would get bus service every 15 minutes. In other words, service would become more frequent in those areas more likely to generate ridership, and would disappear in other places.

The “High Coverage Alternative”, would be a system more like the existing network, with adjustments to improve reliability and reduce the system’s reliance on two-way radio communication with drivers. These changes would modify individual routes, but the same neighborhoods receiving service now would continue to receive service.

**Figure 7. High Ridership Alternative**



**Figure 8. High Coverage Alternative**

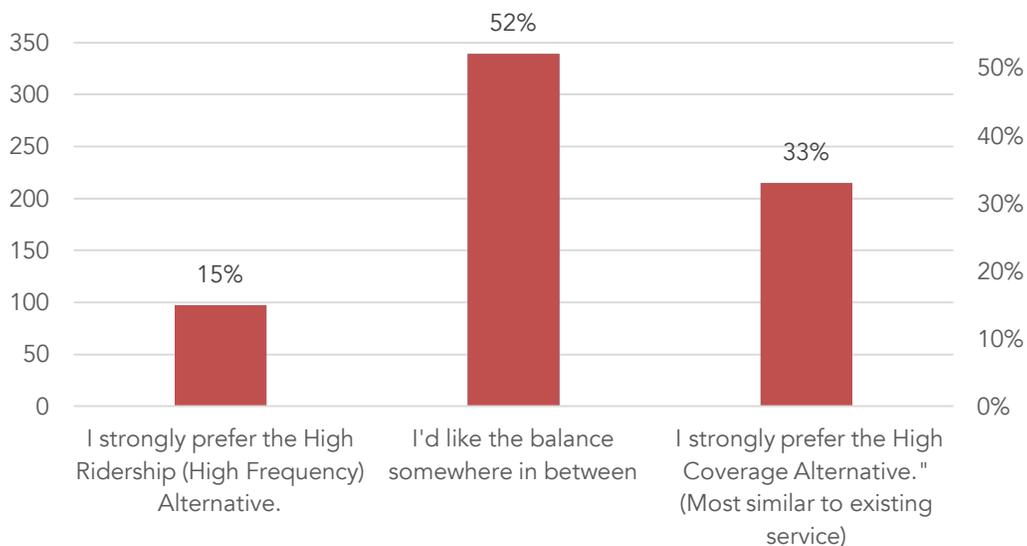


We asked respondents whether they would prefer the Ridership Alternative, the Coverage Alternative, or “something in between”. Most respondents (52%) preferred “something in between”.

Among those who preferred one of the two alternatives, more than twice as many respondents preferred the “High Coverage” alternative (33%) than preferred the “High Ridership” alternative.

The answer to this question did not vary significantly according to the age of respondents, their residential location, or whether or not they ride transit regularly.

**Figure 9.** Preference for Ridership vs Coverage Alternative



### **THEME 3: PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE INVESTMENT**

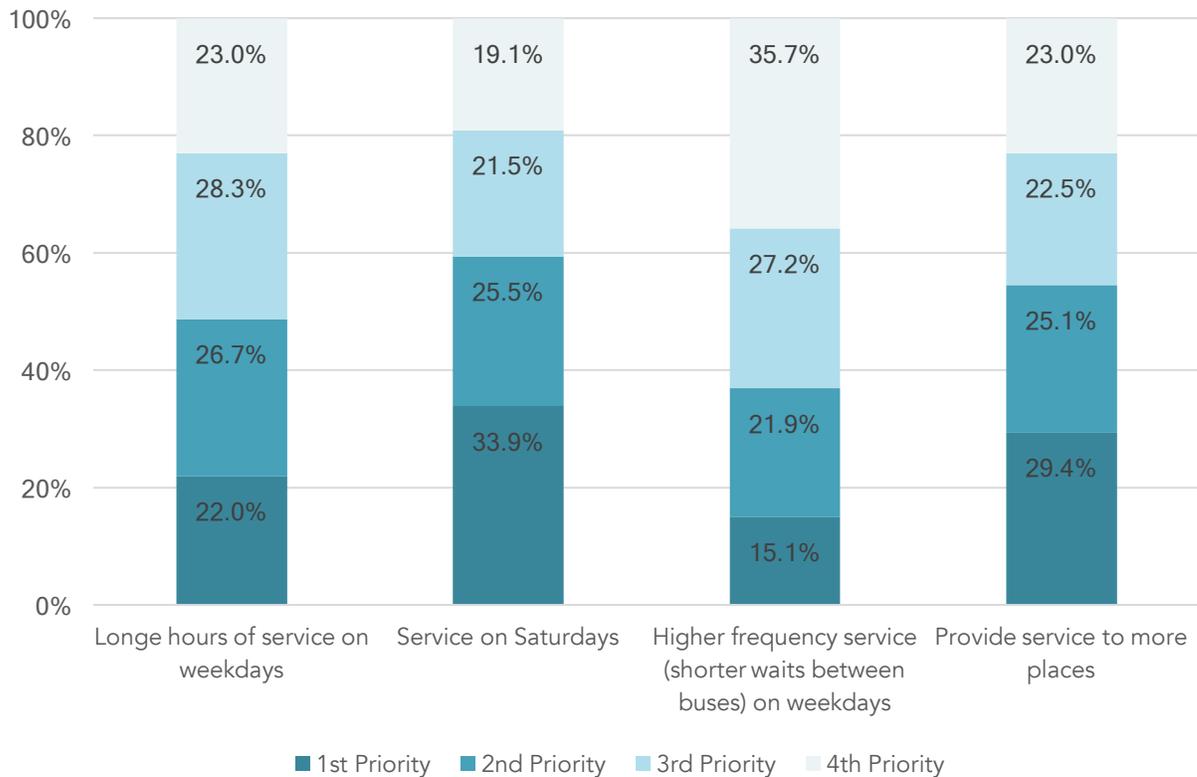
The question on alternatives was posed in the context of a fixed operating budget, where JCT can't add service in any one part of the network without removing service from somewhere else.

This next question, however, allowed respondents to express their priorities if JCT's operating budget were to increase. Specifically, it offered four possible choices to direct additional resources, and asked respondents to rank their priorities from 1 to 4 among these choices:

- Longer hours of service on weekdays.
- Higher frequency service on weekdays.
- Service on Saturdays.
- Provide service to more places.

The most common first or second choice was service on Saturdays (59%), followed by service to more places (55%). Fewer than half of respondents had longer hours of service in their first or second choice (49%), and far fewer respondents prioritized higher frequency service (37%).

**Figure 10.** Ranked Future Investment Priorities



In segmenting responses among different groups, we found some differences in whether specific types of people preferred service on Saturdays or service to more places.

Service on Saturdays was more popular than service to more places among respondents who:

- Use JCT at least once a month (69% vs. 45% first or second choice)<sup>1</sup>.
- Live in Grants Pass (64% vs. 51%).
- Are under 45 years of age (59% vs. 53%).

Service to more places was more popular than service on Saturdays among the following groups:

- Have never used JCT local services (62% vs. 51% first or second choice).
- Live in Josephine County, outside of Grants Pass (61% vs. 51%)<sup>2</sup>.

#### **THEME 4: OTHER STATED PRIORITIES**

In addition to direct questions about trade-offs, we provided respondents with space for free-form feedback on what they would do with additional funding, and for general comments regarding JCT services.

We noted the following recurring comments and requests. Note that none of these comment categories is expressed by more than 5% of total respondents:

- 31 requests for service coverage to new areas, including 8 requests from respondents living in the Williams Highway/Applegate Valley area, and 6 requests from respondents living in South Grants Pass. Note that 9 of these requests specifically ask for coverage along Williams Highway.

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<sup>1</sup> This is for local route users. Similar trends prevail among regular users of long-distance services and the Rogue Valley Commuter Line, but the number of responses is too low to provide a reliable percentage.

<sup>2</sup> Note that the area most exhibiting this trend is the “Williams Highway/Applegate Valley” corridor, and that respondents Northwest Josephine County actually had priorities more similar to those of Grants Pass (i.e. more interested in Saturday service than service to more places).

- 22 requests for improved bus stop infrastructure, including 9 requests from respondents living in North Grants Pass and 5 requests from respondents living in South Grants Pass.
- 18 requests for longer service hours, including 6 from respondents living in North Grants Pass and 8 from respondents living in South Grants Pass.
- 8 requests for improved or different vehicles, 7 of which came from respondents living in Grants Pass.

#### 4. Where do we go from here?

JWA now awaits JCT's direction to guide the development of the actual Transit Master Plan. Based on the results of the survey, we would suggest the following orientations:

- **Short-Term Network.** We suggest that we use the Coverage Alternative as the basis for short-term changes to the network to be implemented in 2018, making minor changes as necessary to reflect any new conditions on the ground since last winter. This is because:
  - Twice as many respondents preferred the High Coverage alternative as preferred the High Ridership Alternative.
  - The space for "something in between" inevitably still means cutting some coverage, and it's clear that this conflicts with respondents' medium-term preference of increasing coverage (service to more places).
- **Medium-Term Network.** Thanks to HB 2017, JCT will be eligible for an estimated \$1.2 million per year in additional operating funds from the State of Oregon, which would nearly double JCT's operating budget. We suggest taking this opportunity to cost out implementation of the priorities described above. Specifically, we suggest examining new future service in the following order:
  - Implement Saturday service on all existing routes.
  - Create at least one new route to new areas, including Williams Highway.
  - Consider plausible extensions to existing local and long-distance routes.
  - Consider extending service hours to start at 5 AM and end at 9 PM.
  - Consider adding more daily runs to long-distance routes.
  - Consider bringing all local service to a 30-minute frequency.

- **Long-Term Network.** The funding outlook in the long-term is less clear, and the options that should be included in it are less directly apparent based on the survey. We will therefore likely not achieve a fully costed set of long-term network options. However, the Transit Master Plan can still be the vehicle to ensure that JCT's aspirations are on the table for future discussion. This might include items such as:
  - Incorporation as a special district.
  - Lower-priority medium-term items that did not make it in due to cost.
  - Service on Sundays.
  - Conversion of fleet to electric and/or driverless technologies.
  - Others to be determined.