

# Technical Memorandum

September 27, 2022

Project# 27269

To: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

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Project: Harney County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan

Subject: Final Tech Memo #3: Human Services Transportation Needs

## INTRODUCTION

This memorandum describes Harney County's human services transportation needs in the areas of services, facilities, vehicle fleet, information and technology, operations, and coordination with other transportation providers. These needs were developed from analyses of existing transportation services and Harney County's demographic profile, input received from the Technical Advisory Committee and community stakeholder interviews, and public feedback provided during community outreach (summarized in Tech Memo #2). These needs also include those identified in Harney County's 2016 Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) that are still considered relevant today. As the county's primary public transportation provider and service coordinator, Harney Hub Transit's needs are the core of the needs summarized in the following sections. Gaps with other service providers are also described.

## HARNEY HUB TRANSIT NEEDS

This section summarizes Harney Hub Transit's needs. The section is organized by the following categories:

- Services
- Facilities
- Vehicle Fleet
- Information & Technology
- Operations
- Coordination

Upcoming analyses, to be described in Tech Memo #4, will develop strategies to address these needs.

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## Services

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Harney County as a whole shows a general need for transportation services, based on densities of populations who may be transportation disadvantaged (as presented in Tech Memo #1). However, the proportion of various transportation-disadvantaged populations varies by region of the county:

- **Southwest Burns/North Hines:** highest percentage of people younger than age 18
- **Southern county:** highest percentage of people older than age 64
- **Northwest county (including Burns Paiute Tribal Reservation):** highest percentage of households without a vehicle
- **Northeast county:** highest percentage of individuals with income below poverty
- **Southeast Burns/East Hines:** highest percentage of adults with disabilities

Since the adoption of the 2016 Coordinated Plan, Harney County introduced two deviated fixed-route services to expand upon its existing demand response service. For this reason, the transit service needs summarized in this section are specific to each service but illustrate an overall theme of needing reliable, safe, affordable, and wheelchair accessible public transit.

## Demand Response

As presented in Tech Memo #1, Harney Hub Transit's demand-response service operates county-wide from Monday to Friday (7 AM to 5:30 PM) and on Sunday (8 AM to 3 PM) for fares ranging from \$1 to over \$20 (one-way), depending on trip distance (preschoolers and those aged 13-19 can currently travel for free). The following needs have been identified for this service:

- Affordable/accessible service for communities outside of Burns/Hines area (e.g., Princeton, Fields)
- Free or reduced fares for riders on fixed and very low income and those aged K-12
- Extended service hours on Sundays (beyond 3PM)
- Maintained reservations requested by riders on a schedule
- Special trips to Medford/White City and/or Portland (with emphasis on VA facilities and for medical services)

## Burns/Hines Deviated Fixed-Route

As presented in Tech Memo #1, Harney Hub Transit's Burns/Hines area deviated fixed-route service was introduced in 2019 and operates Monday to Friday (7 AM to 7 PM) and on Saturday (8 AM to 12 PM and 1 PM to 5 PM). There is no fare to travel between designated stops, but a \$2 fare is charged for deviations, which can be made by appointment. Deviations are allowed to locations within ¼ mile of the fixed route. The following needs have been identified for this service:

- Expanded coverage to west Hines/east Burns for service to very low-income riders
- Continued affordable/free service (emphasis on families with children under age 13/preschoolers)
- "Free service" coverage beyond Airport Lane
- Additional buses to serve more bus stops and/or reduce headways (specific need for a second bus to operate during school times/8 AM to 5 PM for non-school related trips)
- New stops at the Library, Erickson's (westbound), and Apple Peddler/Dollar Tree (eastbound)
- Eliminate stops with low/no usage
- Extended service hours Monday-Thursday (to 9 PM)
- Extended service hours on Friday/Saturday (to 10 PM)
- Sunday service

## Bend/Redmond Deviated Fixed-Route

As presented in Tech Memo #1, Harney Hub Transit's Bend/Redmond deviated fixed-route service was also introduced in 2019 and operates once a week, alternating between Tuesdays and Thursdays, departing Burns at 6:30 AM and returning at 5:40 PM). Service is free through the current fiscal year (2022/23). Riders may also pay \$8 for a driver to run an errand for them while they stay behind and don't ride along. The following needs have been identified for this service:

- Continued free/affordable service (emphasis on commuters and very low-income riders)
- Weekend service (if no longer covered by Eastern POINT)
- Coordinated scheduling between medical trips (specifically kidney dialysis patients) and other riders

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## Facilities

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Harney Hub Transit's primary transit facilities, besides its main building where operations take place, are its bus barn and the bus stops along the Burns/Hines deviated fixed route. The following needs have been identified for these facilities:

- Bus Barn
  - Expanded facility for growing vehicle fleet and future service needs
- Burns/Hines Deviated Fixed-Route Bus Stops
  - Benches at all stops
  - Shelters at key bus stops

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## Vehicle Fleet

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As presented in Tech Memo #1, Harney Hub Transit has 10 vehicles of varying size in its fleet. With a growing need to expand transit services, and considering how each of Harney Hub's transit services vary in nature, the following needs have been identified for the vehicle fleet:

- Expanded fleet of right-sized vehicles
- Bus maintenance
- Fuel efficient and/or alternative fuel source buses
- Bike racks on all vehicles

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## Information & Technology

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As presented in Tech Memo #1, Harney Hub Transit uses two software packages for everyday operations and vehicle fleet maintenance: Easy Rides and Fleetio. Both provide Harney Hub with efficient tools for collecting ridership data and scheduling rides on behalf of the rider (Easy Rides) and tracking the useful life and maintenance needs of its vehicle fleet (Fleetio). Beyond these, Harney Hub Transit currently lacks other information and technology tools that could enhance operations and the rider experience, such as real-time bus information and trip planning tools for riders. The following information and technology needs have been identified for services and operations:

- Increased/up-to-date advertisement/marketing about available services across all sources
- Increased information about all amenities (e.g., well-behaved pets are allowed to ride along)
- Information on connections to other providers/available services
- Minimized last-minute reservations/secured subscriptions for routine rides/riders (helps reduce call volume, particularly during high demand time periods)
- Ongoing integration of existing technology

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## Operations

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As presented in Tech Memo #1, Harney Hub Transit is funded primarily by a number of federal and state grants (i.e., 5310, 5311, 5311(f), STIF formula, STIF discretionary fund, Rural Veterans Healthcare Transportation Program). Increased levels of funding are likely needed to fund existing operations, including

maintaining existing free services, and support service and vehicle fleet expansion, including hiring additional staff and qualified drivers.

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## Coordination

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Today, Harney Hub is the primary coordinator of transportation services in the county, especially within the Burns/Hines area. The following needs for enhanced coordination with other providers and services have been identified:

- Burns Paiute Tribal Transit
  - Harney Hub Transit riders don't typically know that Tribal Transit service is available to the public (not just Tribal members) and can be used if they miss the bus.
  - The Tribe provides 7 weekday round trips in the morning and early afternoon between the reservation and Burns, while Harney Hub extends 2 late-afternoon deviated fixed-route trips to the reservation to fill a weekday service gap. This extended service is not provided during Saturday operations.
- Grant County People Mover
  - People Mover provides 2-3 round trips per month on Thursdays between Grant County and Burns/Hines.
  - Coordination with People Mover to identify possible service gaps and discuss how services might be better coordinated.
- Veterans Clinic
  - Coordination on VA trips to Boise
- Eastern POINT
  - Coordination on whether weekend service will return and, if not, whether the gap should be filled
- Greater Oregon Behavioral Health, Inc. (GOBHI)
  - Continued coordination for providing non-emergency medical transportation (NEMT) rides
- Coordination with businesses that have employees who use services
- Coordination with transit providers that connect in Bend and Redmond (Cascades East Transit, Eastern POINT, Central Oregon Breeze)

## NEXT STEPS

The human services transportation needs summarized in this memo will be refined based on PMT and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) input, will guide development of the Human Services Strategies and Implementation Plan, and will be incorporated into the updated Coordinated Plan.