

Annual Operations Plan

FISCAL YEARS 2020 AND 2021

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Purpose and Goals

This Annual Operations Plan describes the scope of work to be undertaken by the Union County office of Northeast Oregon Public Transit, referred to in this document as Union County Public Transit/ UCPT, for the fiscal years of 2020 and 2021. Northeast Oregon Public Transit (NEOPT) is comprised of three counties, each with their own fleet, management team, and service delivery strategies. Because of this, each county maintains their own plan for operations. NEOPT is a program of the larger parent nonprofit, Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc., that administers and ultimately oversees the regional transportation operations.

This document captures the anticipated breadth of services and forecasts opportunities and challenges (that reasonably can be anticipated). The goal of this document is not only to provide a road map for the next biennium, but to guide the on-going discussion about how public transportation is planned, deployed, and managed in Union County.

This plan will be broken out in three sections as follows:

1. Existing Services to be delivered (and any potential changes taking place).
2. Known project opportunities within the community (historically delivered, and new options available).
3. Known opportunities or challenges that may occur in our method, means, or model of delivery.

These will be followed by appendixes of published support materials for all standard operating programs in Union County.

Living Document

This document is our best forecast for the coming biennium. It should not be construed as limiting our response to opportunities, or our options to resolve challenges. Moreover, it is intended to inform subsequent Annual Operations Plans, while creating a historical record for future development.

Definitions

While every effort has been made to keep this plan user friendly, it is sometimes necessary to use an industry term to demonstrate compliance with regulations. This subsection is intended to help guide the reader when the following terms appear:

ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (and the amended 2008 AADA) prohibiting discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas.

Curb-to-Curb: This term often applies to the Demand Response and Route Deviation modes of services. It means the passenger is responsible for getting themselves to and from the vehicle. This is our default service type for all modes of transportation, but customized service can be requested verbally or through writing.

Demand Response: Sometimes called Dial-a-Ride, Demand Response service is when a passenger makes a reservation in advance and a vehicle comes to their location to pick them up and deliver them to their requested location. This service often operates as Curb-to-Curb.

Deviated Route: Sometimes referred to as Route Deviations, this refers to a Fixed Route delivery strategy that allows the bus to temporarily leave the route to perform a Curb-to-Curb pick-up within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the regular line traveled. This service must also be scheduled a day in advance.

Dial-a-Ride: A passenger calls the transit center to schedule a ride at least a day in advance of their planned outing. See Demand Response for more information.

Door-to-Door: Door-to-Door indicates that passenger assistance is available from the door of origin to the first door of the planned destination. This service may be requested verbally or in writing, and tailored to the passenger's need. The ADA refers to this level of service as **Origin-to-Destination**.

Flag Stop: Sometimes called a Flex Stop, this term refers to a passenger's ability to access a Fixed Route bus at points between formal stops by waving to the driver to indicate he or she wishes to board.

Fixed Route: A Fixed Route system is a bus that follows a prescribed path on a published schedule. Passengers can access the bus formal stops, and the bus does not deviate from the indicated path unless traffic issues force it to.

Origin-to-Destination: This term, used in the ADA, is meant to remove barriers for passengers using Dial-a-Ride service. It purposefully does not define the location of the beginning and end of the trip to allow the terms of service to be designed by the passenger. The only limitations to this model imposed by UCPT are that our drivers will not enter the home of a passenger, and will not proceed beyond the main entryway of any destination.

Paratransit: Sometimes called ADA Paratransit or Complimentary Paratransit, this term refers to the obligatory service running alongside a Fixed Route bus line that provides equivalent service to those who are prevented from using the Fixed Route due to a disability. This service operates on a Dial-a-Ride model.

Title VI- The Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that receives Federal funds or other Federal financial assistance.

Holidays and Closures

The following Holidays and training days will be observed by Union County Public Transit during Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021. In most cases, services will be closed entirely.

- Independence Day.....July 4, 2019
- Labor Day.....September 2, 2019
- Fall/Winter Training Day.....October 17, 2019
- Veterans Day (deferred to the day after Thanksgiving).....November 29, 2019
- Thanksgiving.....November 28, 2019
- Christmas.....December 25, 2019
 - The agency reserves the right to schedule an additional day off for staff
- New Year's Day.....January 1, 2020
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day.....January 20, 2020
- Presidents' Day.....February 17, 2020
- Memorial Day.....May 25, 2020
- Spring/Summer Training Day.....June 11, 2020
- Independence Day.....July 4, 2020
- Labor Day.....September 7, 2020
- Fall/Winter Training Day.....October 15, 2020
- Veterans Day (deferred to the day after Thanksgiving).....November 27, 2020
- Thanksgiving.....November 26, 2020
- Christmas.....December 25, 2020
 - The agency reserves the right to schedule an additional day off for staff
- New Year's Day.....January 1, 2021
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day.....January 18, 2021
- Presidents' Day.....February 15, 2021
- Memorial Day.....May 31, 2021
- Spring/Winter Training Day.....June 10, 2021

Public Transit Advisory Council

The Union County Public Transit Advisory Council (TAC) was created through the Union County Title VI Policy (adopted October 2013). It is designed for diversity of age, ethnicity, gender, level of physical ability, socioeconomics, geography within the county, preferred mode of travel, and community stakeholder interest (including EOU, Medical Community, Commerce and Industry, etc.).

The council receives broad delegation under the Major Change Threshold of the Title Vi Policy to make decisions about the operations of Public Transit in Union County. It is the intent of the Board of Directors of Community Connection and of the Transit Advisory Council to make decisions that affect transit at the closest possible level to the passenger. At the time of this draft, the TAC is comprised of:

Voting Advisory Council Members		
Daniel Bullock Ex Officio Seat bullocd@eou.edu (541) 429-0539	Brenda Fiscus, Chairman People with Disabilities Seat Brenbafiscus@gmail.com (541) 910-0432	Patsy Lang Bedroom Communities Seat Patlang49@eoni.com 541-910-4833
Shannon Cleveland Medical Community Seat Sdc02@grh.org (541) 663-2340	Winnie Andrews, Vice Chariman Low Income Seat No email (541) 786-5557	David Council At Large Member Psd19@yahoo.com (541) 963-4291
Open Seat Fixed Route	Open Seat Minority Representative Seat	Open Seat Business Community Seat
Open Seat EOU Seat	Open Seat Bike/Pedestrian Seat	
Non Voting Agency Staff Members		
Angie Peters Transit Manager angie@ccno.org (541) 963-2877	Tricia Webster Transit Ops. Assistant patricia@ccno.org (541) 963-2877	

The Council meets six times a year, and are currently scheduled as follow (subject to change):

- August 21, 2019.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- October 23, 2019.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- January 15, 2020.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- March 18, 2020.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- May 20, 2020.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- June 17, 2020.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- August 19, 2020.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- October 21, 2020.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- January 20, 2021.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- March 17, 2021.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- May 19, 2021.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande
- June 16, 2021.....3:00 pm.....Public Transit Hub, La Grande

Section One: Existing Services

Fixed Route:

The Fixed Route, sometimes referred to as the Trolley Route, serves La Grande and Island City. It is split into two lines called the Yellow and Blue Lines. They each run on a 30-minute loop with the Yellow Line traveling from Safeway to Grande Ronde Hospital, and the Blue Line traveling between Walmart and the Adams & 4th Street. The service is available between 7:30 AM and 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday during Fiscal Year 2020, and is planned to expand service to 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM in fiscal year 2021. The Fixed Route operates as a Deviated Route on Saturdays between 10:00 AM and 6:00 PM. This route runs on one bus line traveling between Walmart and Eastern Oregon University in 60-minute loops. The hours of operation for Saturday service will remain the same between Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021.

ADA Paratransit:

Paratransit is an *origin-to-destination* service that complements the Trolley. Its schedule will be (at minimum) equivalent with our Fixed Route Service. By ADA requirements this mode of transportation is reserved **EXCLUSIVELY** for those who are **PREVENTED** from using a Fixed Route bus due to a disability.

We offer this service, in line with ADA requirements, within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile on either side of a Fixed Route line. The Area of Service map in Appendix A indicates the boundaries of our Paratransit Service in La Grande and Island City. In Fiscal Year 2020 ADA Paratransit will run 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday, with a planned increase to 7:00 AM through 7:00 PM in Fiscal Year 2021.

Demand Response:

General Public Demand Responses will be a new program to UCPT as of July 1, 2019. This differs from Paratransit in that there is no application process to determine eligibility, and unlike previous Demand Responses style programs delivered by UCPT in the past, there is no trip purpose criteria to be met, but all rides are subject to driver and vehicle availability. In Fiscal Year 2020, UCPT will operate Demand Response service under the title C.A.T. Link (Connecting All Towns) throughout all of Union County 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM three days a week. This is currently planned for Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, but is subject to change. This service has planned growth for Fiscal Year 2021 for 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday. This service does not supersede Paratransit service within La Grande, so any passenger within the Paratransit service area, that is not eligible for Paratransit, would have to ride the Fixed Route bus rather than using Demand Response transportation. It is anticipated that this service will be used primarily to bring bedroom community residents into La Grande. Please see page 14 for an example.

Medicaid Contract:

Delivery of Medicaid/Affordable Care Act Service is considered to be incidental to our existing operation. A Medicaid trip can be provided on any day, at any time, to any authorized destination, from any authorized pick-up address. The broker pays UCPT the fully allocated cost of the trip. There are no anticipated changes to this program through Fiscal Year 2021 at this time.

Rides to Wellness/ Veteran Rides to Wellness:

Rides to Wellness, first cited in the Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Operations Plan, was developed, deployed, and delivered in a manner similar to the Medicaid Contract trips. It has since grown to include a leg of the program, called Veteran Rides to Wellness, dedicated specifically to providing free transportation to medical locations to our service men and women. The Rides to Wellness program at large charges a fare to riders for trips within Union County as well as outside of Union County, so long as the destination is no further than 140 miles from La Grande. The continuation of this program and availability of rides is dependent upon funding levels. These programs will be discussed further in Section Three of this plan.

Greyhound:

It is Union County Public Transit's intention to continue acting as the Greyhound agent through Fiscal Year 2021 in an effort to maintain La Grande as a location on the route and provide access to this mode of intercity travel to Union County residents.

While Greyhound **is not open for all of the hours of operation of the UCPT lobby**, our lobby hours are:

- 7:30 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday through Friday
 - With a planned expansion for Fiscal Year 2021 to 7:00 AM through 7:00 PM

The hours of operation for the Greyhound Ticket Office are planned for:

- 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM and 3:45 PM to 5:45 PM, Monday through Friday

UCPT retains the right to seek a new agent, through public solicitation, should conditions warrant it.

Section Two: Known Opportunities

Event Driven Services:

La Grande Beer Festival (Date not yet set)

UCPT will consider offering Fixed Route and Paratransit support during the La Grande Beer Festival. The manner of delivery depends on projected volume and available resources. It could range from expanded hours on the existing system, to Park-n-Ride support or even a dedicated route similar to that used for Union County Fair.

Union Fireworks Event (7/4/19)

UCPT will consider offering Park-n-Ride support from La Grande to Union, and within Union, to the Firework event location on the 4th of July. The frequency of delivery will be dependent upon projected volume and available resources. This service will be open to the public through an accessible Fixed Route bus.

Elgin Stampede (7/10/19-7/13/19 and 7/8/20-7/11-20)

UCPT will consider offering Park-n-Ride support from La Grande to Elgin, and within Elgin, to the Stampede grounds during the days of the Rodeo. The frequency and availability of delivery will be dependent upon projected volume and available resources. This service will be open to the public through an accessible Fixed Route bus.

Timber Cruiser's Car Show (7/19/19-7/21/19 and 7/17/20-7/19/20)

UCPT will consider offering transportation from the display site for cars to an offsite event for Car Show participants as needed and outside of typical business hours. This service will be open to the public on both the Fixed Route and through Paratransit.

North Powder Huckleberry Festival

UCPT will consider offering Park-n-Ride support from La Grande to North Powder, and within North Powder, to the Festival location on the day of the event(s). The frequency and availability of delivery will be dependent upon projected volume and available resources. This service will be open to the public through an accessible Fixed Route bus.

Union County Fair (7/31/19-8/3/19 and 7/29/20-8/1/20)

UCPT will offer Fixed Route and ADA Paratransit support during the Union County Fair. We will run all of our services – including special routes – later into the evening. Please see Appendix C for an example of the anticipated route.

Grassroots Festival (8/10/19 and 8/8/20)

UCPT will consider offering Park-n-Ride support from La Grande to Union, and within Union, to the Festival location on the day of the event(s). The frequency and availability of delivery will be dependent upon projected volume and available resources. This service will be open to the public through an accessible Fixed Route bus.

Cove Cherry Fair (8/17/19 and 8/15/20)

UCPT will consider offering Park-n-Ride support from La Grande to Cove, and within Cove, to the Fair grounds on the day of the event(s). The frequency and availability of delivery will be dependent upon projected volume and available resources. This service will be open to the public through an accessible Fixed Route bus.

Eastern Oregon Film Festival (10/24/19-10/26/19 and 10/29/20-10/31/20)

UCPT will consider offering expanded hours of service, Park-n-Ride, ancillary and/or shuttle and paratransit support for the Film Festival in La Grande.

La Grande Mainstreet Annual Pub Crawl (3/17/20 and 3/17/21)

UCPT will consider offering Fixed Route and Paratransit support during the annual Pub Crawl event. The manner of delivery depends upon the projected volume and available resources. It could range from expanded hours on the existing system, to Park-n-Ride support or even a dedicated route similar to the Union County Fair.

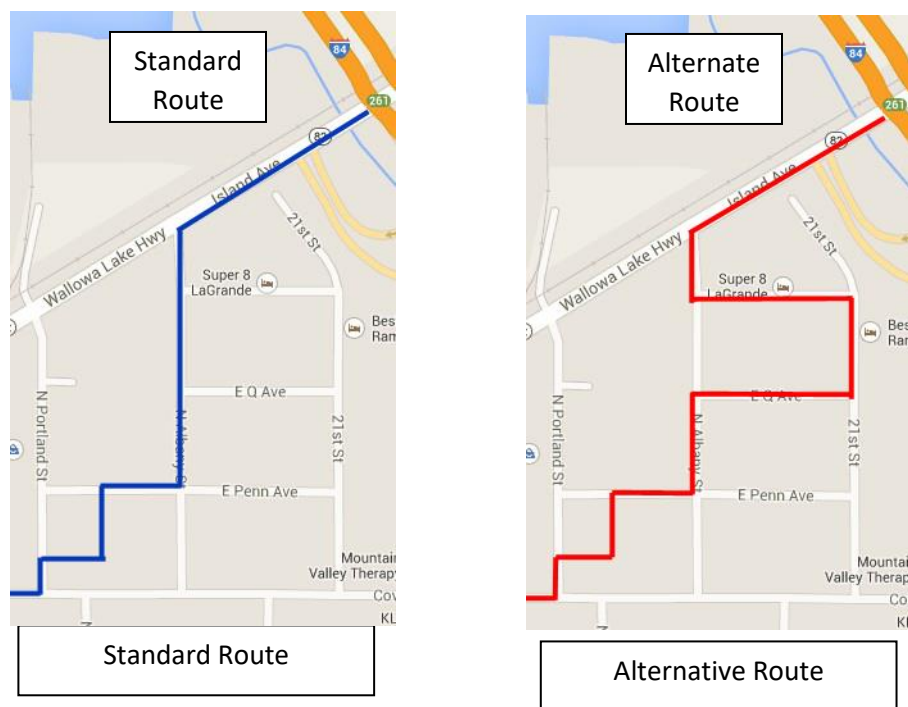
[Additional Service Opportunities:](#)

Charter and Contract Services:

On a case-by-case basis, UCPT will consider opportunities to provide charter services. UCPT will strictly comply with the provisions of 49 CFR 604 in each instance.

Incidental Deviation:

During high-demand annual events, or due to weather or construction interference, UCPT will implement temporary and incidental deviations to the regular Fixed Routes. Any deviation to the standard Fixed Routes will be made with the intent to keep the route as close to its original path as possible, and will be properly advertised to the public to enable their access to services. An example would be:



Need Driven Services:

UCPT will offer incidental services to persons with disabilities who have a need for transportation that is not met through existing programs such as Paratransit or Rides to Wellness. Much like the No Strand policy, this will serve to provide lifeline services for passengers with needs that run beyond the normal scope of day-to-day business.

No Strand Policy:

It is the policy of UCPT to avoid stranding passengers with needs that run beyond our published schedule. For example, a passenger accessing the Emergency Room in the late afternoon has no control over when they will be treated and subsequently released. In such cases, staff will take reasonable steps to accommodate a return trip for an otherwise stranded rider.

Within its available means, UCPT will respond to unforeseen passenger needs of other public transit providers operating in Union County. For example, if the InterCity bus between Baker and La Grande breaks down in route, we will respond to finish transporting passengers to the routes planned destination.

The No Strand policy will be considered for extension to allied mobility partners such as Greyhound and ARC cab on a fee-for-service and capacity available basis.

Emergency Services:

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

Section Three: Known Challenges and Opportunities

Opportunities:

House Bill 2017 (HB2017) Formula and Discretionary:

With expansion services launching on July 1, 2019 (funded by formula HB 2017) there will be an opportunity to overhaul the UCPT approach to reporting and simplification of archiving data for different modes of transportation. At the times of this draft, UCPT's discretionary HB2017 grant is still pending, but assuming approval it would fund fully outfitting the vehicle fleet with security cameras as well as putting real-time GPS units in our Fixed Route buses. This provides numerous opportunities through trip planning opportunities (through connected visibility on the iTransitNW system), phone app offerings (real-time GPS information provided in the moment for passengers in need), and teach and training drivers (cameras recording inside and outside of vehicles).

Digital Marketing Outreach:

UCPT will be transitioning to a new hosting site as a subpage (while maintaining the distinct www.neotransit.org web address) of the Community Connection of Northeast Oregon, Inc. website. This will streamline the page, update it to modern website expectations, and simplify the process for future edits to be made by the Transit Manager once the new page is launched. Research into the possibility for increasing technology capabilities through a phone app due to the connection with iTransitNW and any other potential hosting abilities presented by a potential scheduling software upgrade in the next biennium will begin.

Safety Management System (SMS):

With guidance from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for rural systems being altered, it is the intent of UCPT to continue drafting its first Risk Management Plan in lieu of the no longer mandated Safety and Security (sometimes called Safety Management Systems) Plan. Should the FTA reinstate the requirements for an SMS plan and/or a Safety and Security Officer, UCPT will respond accordingly.

Alternative Languages

In late Fiscal Year 2019, UCPT completed the drafting process of Marshallese translations of important documents. While these translations were not legally required based on Census data, ridership indicated they would be beneficial. These documents will be deployed alongside existing Spanish Translations in early Fiscal Year 2020. In preparation for the next impending Title VI plan update (late Fiscal Year 2021 or early Fiscal Year 2022) UCPT will begin research into the potential need for other translated materials.

Challenges:

High Mileage Fleet

The UCPT vehicle fleet is currently of sufficient size to meet demand, however the majority of the fleet is nearing end of useful life due to either age or mileage thus presenting an impending sustainability issue. Any funding opportunities that allow for vehicle purchases will be pursued over the next two biennia.

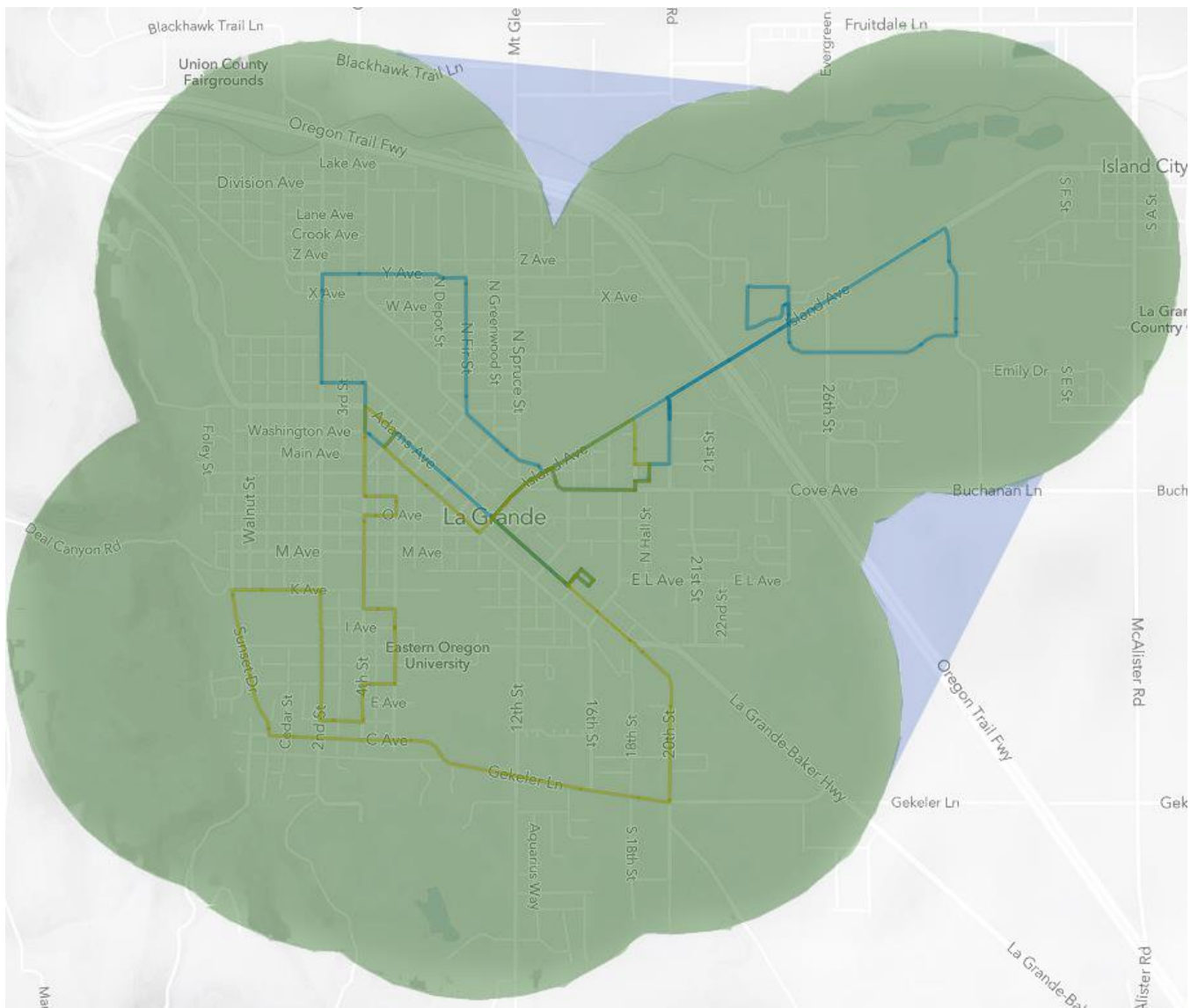
Greyhound Concerns

The Greyhound Ticket Office continues to lack solvency purely from recouped commissions. Currently the program has been able to secure supplemental funding from HB2017, but there is no guarantee of future formula funding cycles approving the same project. If supplemental funding to Greyhound were to be lost, UCPT should consider outsourcing the labor or discontinuing the connection as a Ticket Agent entirely.

Rides to Wellness and Veteran Rides to Wellness Concerns

As a non-emergent medical transportation program meant to serve those over the Medicaid/Affordable Care Act income cut offs, and unable to transport themselves, Rides to Wellness has become significantly difficult to fund. In Fiscal 2018 a fare system was introduced to attempt cost mitigation. When funding was further reduced a geographic limitation was imposed in Fiscal 2019. At the time of this draft, the budget process indicates that Rides to Wellness and Veteran Rides to Wellness are likely to end before Fiscal 2020 concludes due to low funding levels. UCPT will continue to exhaust all grant applications the program is eligible for, but may need to consider terminating the program at some point during the 20-21 biennium. It is the recommendation of UCPT staff that July 1, 2019 mark the beginning of further geographic restrictions on the programs to maintain solvency for those Union County residents most reliant on the program for life saving care.

ADA Paratransit



The **green** areas of the map indicate the obligatory ¾ mile radius around the Fixed Route bus where Paratransit must be delivered. The **blue** areas indicate areas that are precluded due to the circular nature of the service area design that may have underserved populations, and that UCPT will consider extending Paratransit service to.

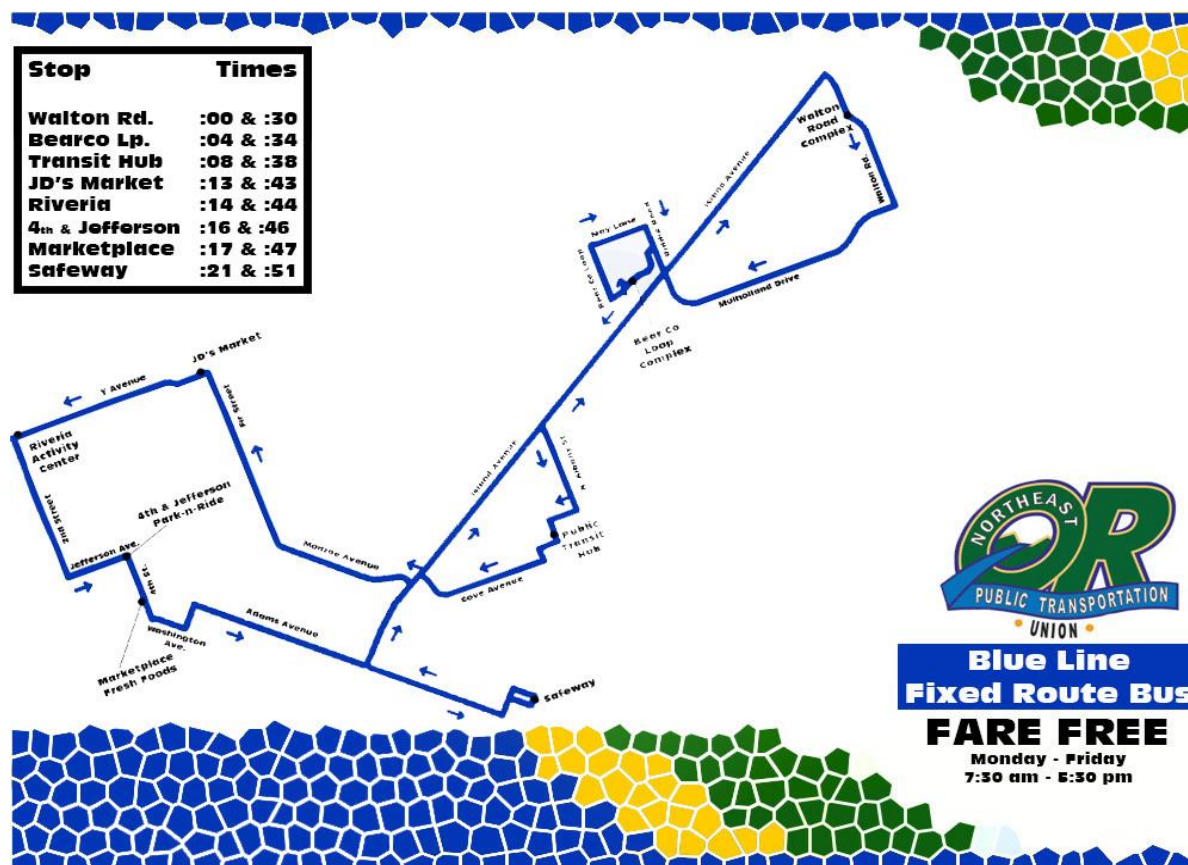
Demand Response (C.A.T. Link)



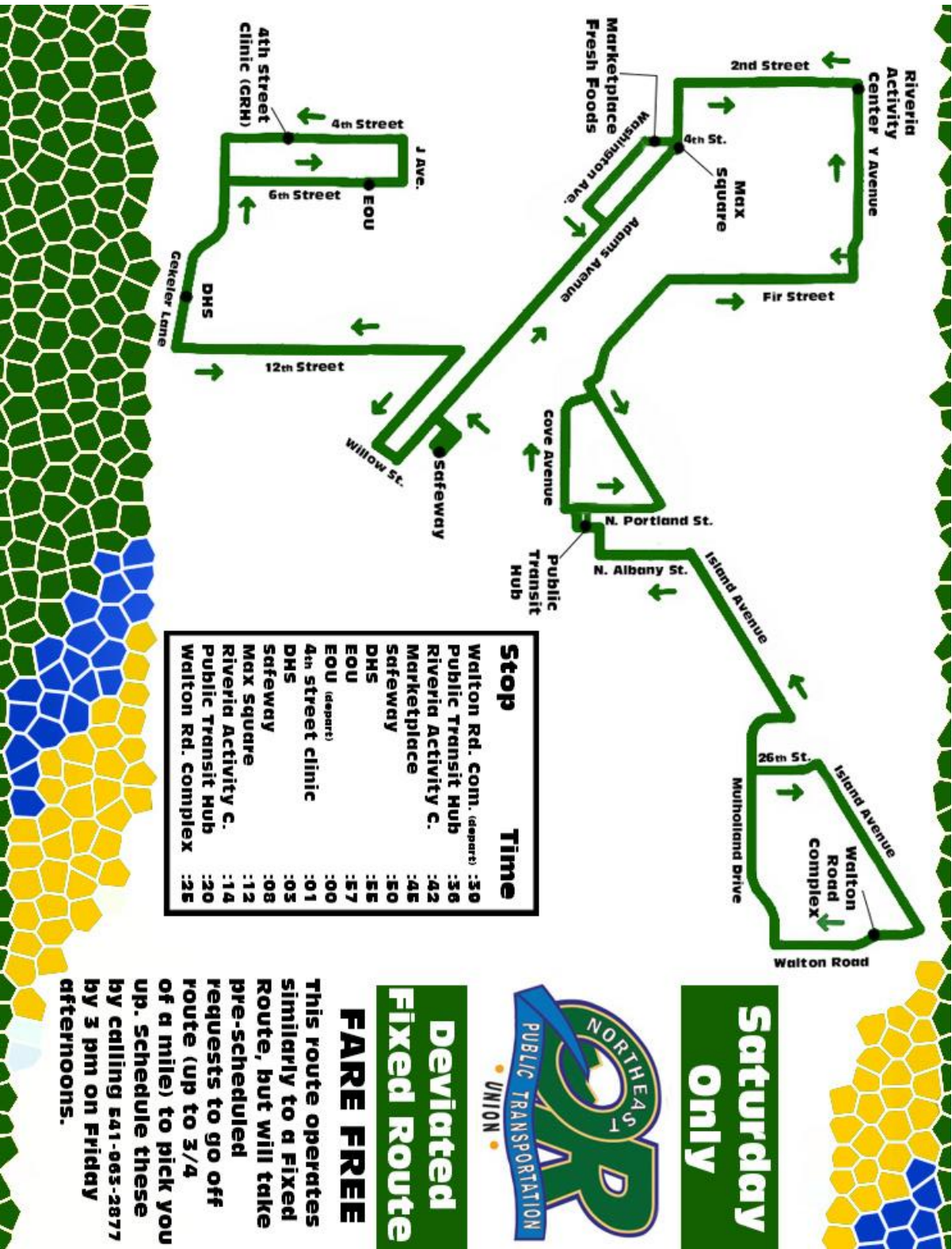
All of Union County is eligible to use the C.A.T. Link, however, if a person is within the Paratransit boundary shown above they would be expected to use that service (or the Fixed Route bus if they are not eligible for Paratransit) and would not be eligible to use the service.

An Example of how this would work would be: a passenger who has no disability or mobility challenges rides the C.A.T. Link from their home in Elgin to Walmart in Island City. They then would like to go to Safeway, so they would need to go out to the bus stop by Walmart, board the bus and ride to Safeway. They would have already scheduled their ride home from Safeway when they booked their trip with us, so we will pick them up at the schedule time and return them to their home in Elgin.

Appendix B: Published Schedules and Brochures



Deviated Route Map/Schedule (Saturday Only)



Hospitality Accommodation Support Routes:



County Fair Support Route:

