



**County Administrator**

Office: (541) 766-6800

Fax: (541) 766-6893

4500 SW Research Way  
Corvallis, Oregon 97333

[bentoncountyor.gov](http://bentoncountyor.gov)

**Date:** February 16, 2026

**To:** Benton County Board of Commissioners

**From:** Rachel McEneny, County Administrator  
Rick Crager, Assistant County Administrator

**RE:** Benton Area Transit Self-Perform Analysis – Clarification

On January 12, 2026, at the request of the Dial-A-Bus (DAB) Board Chair, we met with DAB Board Members and Executive Director. The purpose of the meeting was for the DAB Board to express concerns regarding the December 2, 2025, presentation to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) entitled Benton Area Transit Self-Perform Analysis Discussion (Item 7.1).

The presentation given on December 2nd was to conclude the work by our third-party contractor to determine if it was feasible for Benton County to consider shifting the direct services for the Benton Area Transit (BAT) Program from a contracted service model to a model performed directly by county staff. Upon receiving the presentation, the BOC directed County Staff to proceed in developing a service and implementation plan for self-performing the BAT Program which would be considered as part of the 2027-29 Benton County Proposed Budget.

The DAB Board and Executive Director have expressed concerns that the presentation delivered to the BOC lacked clarity and/or critical information that came across as misleading. More specifically, these concerns were related to the following:

- The feeling that DAB was described as a 100% volunteer-based organization.
- There was a lack of representation of the current cost for DAB to provide the BAT services.
- There was no consideration of customer opinions on the current quality and level of services provided by DAB.
- Impression was given that DAB is being blamed for lack of compliance.

During our meeting, we discussed these concerns in more detail and agreed that we would share clarification on each of these areas and submit it to the BOC as part of the record.

In our effort to ensure clarity and establish Benton County's response to each of these concerns, we start with the County recognizes that DAB is not a 100% volunteer-based organization and they do in fact have paid positions on staff, along with volunteers, that provide BAT Services through a contract with the County. The contract in place for Fiscal Year 2026 is \$987,675 for the direct service delivery component of annual BAT Services. This amount does not include county costs associated with program administration, fuel, and fleet maintenance for the program. As stated in the consultant's report on September 16, 2025, "the non-profit contractor's service cost is below market value" which is partially driven by their use of volunteer positions.

In relation to concern about there being no consideration of customer opinion on current BAT services in the report, we explained this was not work associated with this initial feasibility study. However, as we move forward into the next phase of creating the self-performing service and implementation plan, this will absolutely be part of that process. We will need to seek public engagement and opinion about the model of service that is developed so this information can be provided in a budget proposal to the Budget Committee and Board of Commissioners. Additionally, we are required to ensure there are opportunities for public to comment on the proposed plan during the budget hearing. Ultimately, it will be the Budget Committee's decision to recommend or not recommend this proposed plan to the Board of Commissioners who will in turn have the final decision on approving or not.

Lastly, in terms of impression that DAB is being blamed for lack of compliance, we clarified this is not our intent but rather have pointed out our concern that the program has had compliance issues in past reviews, and it's on the shoulders of Benton County to ensure overall compliance to the state and federal government. These issues are the County's responsibilities, and we must take whatever corrective action we feel is best to ensure ongoing compliance with current rules and regulations, as well as be prepared for what will likely be more complex rules and regulations in the future. We feel based on the feasibility study, the county would be best positioned to ensure ongoing compliance through a self-performing model, as opposed to a contract model. That is not meant to be any negative against DAB – only a business decision that we feel would be in the best interest of program and mitigating risk of reduced or lost resources.

In our meeting, we reiterated with the DAB Board that we are just now moving into the next phase of this work, which requires us to develop a more detailed service, operations, and implementation plan. That will take place over the next 6-9 months, which will include a public engagement component, and result in a proposal that will need to be reviewed and considered by the BOC.

If you have further need for clarification, please let us know.