

PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

August 21, 2026

Project# 32728

To: Gary Stockhoff, PE; Maya O'Neal; Anne Thwaites, Rick Crager

From: Amy Griffiths, PE, RSP₁; Susan Wright, PE

RE: Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

Subject: Public Meeting Summary (August 12)

Introduction

A public meeting was conducted on August 12 from 5PM-7PM at the Benton County Fairgrounds. The purpose of this meeting was to:

- Share context surrounding transit funding and regulations that Benton County is required to follow
- Provide a background on Benton Area Transit services
- Establish shared terminology for discussions around Benton Area Transit
- Encourage discussion among neighbors about transit services

Meeting slides from the presentation are included in Appendix A. An overview of feedback received is included below.



Figure 1. Benton County held a Public Meeting on August 12.

Feedback Received

The feedback received from the public during this meeting is summarized below. Copies of the response forms are included in Appendix B.

Overall, responses during the meeting highlight Benton Area Transit (BAT) as an essential, highly valued service that supports independence, health, employment, and community participation. Participants expressed strong appreciation for drivers, dispatchers, office staff, and volunteers. Areas for improvement identified include additional capacity, expanded weekend and evening service, broader geographic coverage, and improved access for riders with disabilities and those living outside city limits.

HOW DO RESPONDENTS USE BAT SERVICES?

Community members reported using BAT services for a wide range of essential and quality-of-life needs, including:

- **Medical and Health Care:** Doctor and medical appointments (including travel to medical providers in Philomath, Albany, and other locations), physical therapy and fitness classes, and trips to the pharmacy to pick up medications.
- **Grocery Shopping:** Trips to the grocery store (Fred Meyer, Walmart, Trader Joe's, Bi-Mart, Dollar Store) and trips to the farmers' market.
- **Employment:** Daily trips to and from work. Respondents also indicated that BAT reduces the burden on caregivers and family members who work during the day and would otherwise need to provide them rides during daytime hours.
- **Social, Community, and Recreational Activities:** Visiting friends and family, attending religious activities, going to community events and social outings, trips to the library, dining with friends, and other activities that help maintain community connections and reduce feelings of isolation.
- **Regional Travel:** Accessing the Amtrak station in Albany.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS RESPONDENTS RECEIVE FROM BAT SERVICES?

Many respondents highlighted that BAT has good customer service and provides transportation that supports their independence and quality of life. They value reliable access to medical appointments and other necessities, including the ability to stay connected to their community, the ability to access groceries and other necessities, and the ability to maintain employment.

Regarding existing services, respondents valued the friendly and helpful drivers, volunteer driver program, responsive dispatch staff, professional and caring office staff, and consistent, dependable service provided.

HOW DO RESPONDENTS THINK BAT SERVICES COULD BE IMPROVED?

Respondents had the following suggestions for how BAT services could be improved:

- **Increase Service Capacity:** Hire more drivers, purchase more vehicles, and gather more volunteer support to increase service capacity, particularly during peak demand periods.
- **Expand Service Hours:** Provide service on Sundays, extend service hours into the evening, and provide more options for social, recreational, and church-related trips outside standard operating hours.
- **Expand Geographic Coverage:** Provide better access to Albany and North Albany, connections to regional destinations and medical services, improved connections to other transit providers, and service to destinations outside existing service areas, including local attractions and rural destinations.
- **Improve Ride Scheduling:** Several respondents mentioned difficulty scheduling rides, long wait times for pick-up, a need for a tighter scheduling window, more flexibility in reservation timelines, and better accommodation of growing demand.
- **Improve Vehicle Fleet:** Evaluate the mix of buses and smaller vehicles, improve ADA service capacity, gather more feedback from riders before vehicle purchases, and ensure vehicles are appropriate for rider needs and trip types.
- **Improve Service Information and Technology:** Provide better real-time arrival information, support improved coordination with regional transit systems, and provide clear communication about service changes and program planning efforts.

WHAT OTHER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS DID RESPONDENTS HAVE?

Comments and questions respondents highlighted during the meeting are provided below.

- **Service Availability:** How can capacity be increased so riders are not denied service? How can BAT better serve riders outside city limits? Can weekend and evening service be expanded?
- **Access for Older Adults and People with Disabilities:** How will disabled riders living outside city limits access needed trips? How can elderly and disabled riders receive Saturday and Sunday service? How can medical trips outside city limits be accommodated?
- **Staffing and Organizational Changes:** Several participants expressed concern about replacing staff or reducing volunteer involvement. Many respondents emphasized that existing staff are performing well and should be retained.
- **Funding and Affordability:** Concern that future changes could introduce or increase fares. Desire to keep services affordable for older adults and people with disabilities. Requests for increased funding to expand service without reducing quality.
- **Future Service Direction:** Concern about making major changes to programs that are perceived to be working well. Preference for expanding existing successful services rather than replacing them with entirely new programs.

Next Steps

A second public meeting will be held on September 15. The purpose of this meeting will be to answer questions and concerns identified by the public during this first meeting, provide an overview of service delivery approaches, share the criteria that the Benton County Board of Commissioners will use to select an approach, and update the public on the timeline through implementation of either approach.

Appendix A. Public Meeting Presentation

Benton Area Transit Informational Public Meeting

August 12, 2026



At your service, *every day.*

Why Are We Here

1

Share context surrounding transit funding and regulations that Benton County is required to follow

2

Provide a background on Benton Area Transit services

3

Establish shared terminology for discussions around Benton Area Transit

4

Encourage discussions among neighbors about transit services



Benton Area Transit Staff

Maya O'Neal

Benton Area Transit Program Coordinator

Gary Stockhoff, PE

Benton County Public Works Director



BAT Vision and Goals

VISION STATEMENT

Provide public transit in Benton County that supports county goals of vibrant, livable communities for all, and creates transportation options for seniors and people with disabilities.

SERVICE GOALS

1. Fiscally sustainable
2. Customer and context appropriate
3. Operates effectively and efficiently
4. Maintains state and federal compliance



Goals and Objectives



Fiscally Sustainable

- Costs comparable to peer agencies
- Efficient use of state/federal funds
- Provide living wages
- Low annual cost variability
- Low financial risks
- Better understanding of cost for providing service



Customer Focused and Context Appropriate

- Align with BAT vision
- Balance productivity and coverage
- Integrate emerging service delivery options
- Easy to use
- Professional
- Scalable options aligned with long-range planning/ funding



Efficient and Effective Operations

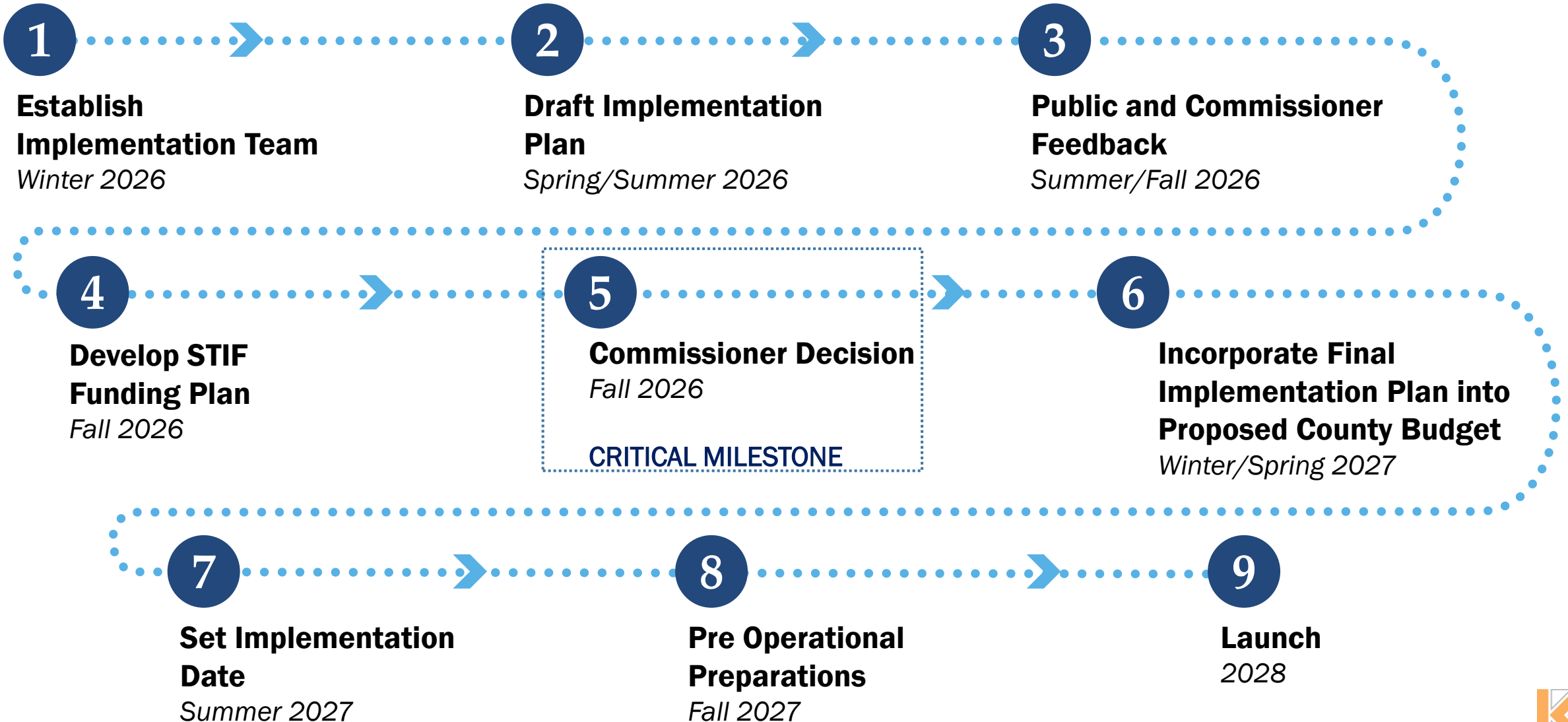
- Adequate administrative capacity for compliance, reporting, funding, and contracts
- Sufficient planning capacity for long-term service and fleet needs
- Strong coordination with regional agencies
- Timely and effective vehicle maintenance



State and Federal Compliance

- Deliver federally required services to maintain funding
- Proactively understand and resolve FTA noncompliance findings

Elements of Implementation



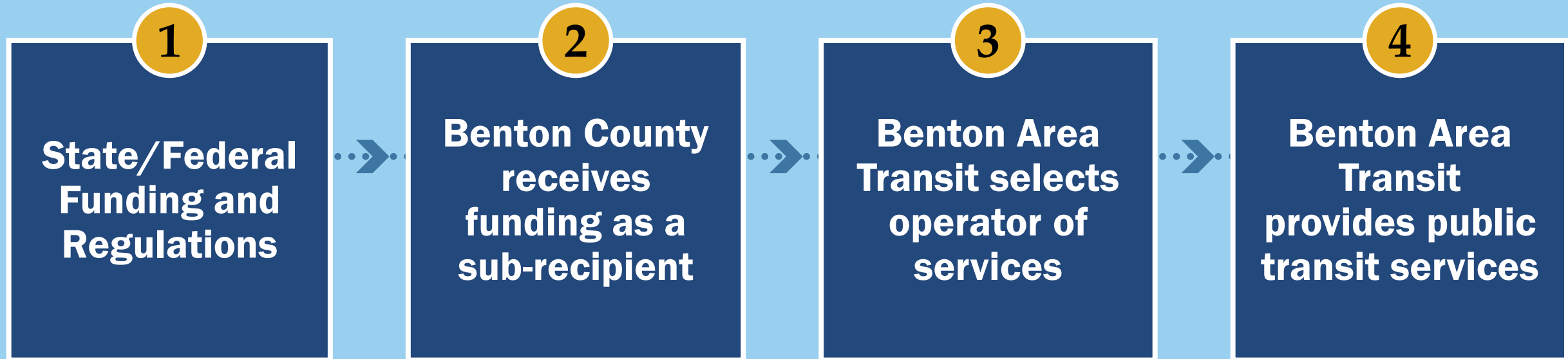
Meeting Objectives

Learn from customers
about their experience
using Benton Area Transit

Inform creation of the Draft
Implementation Plan being
developed by the County



How Services Are Delivered



State/Federal Funding and Regulations

1

- All but a small amount of funding for Benton Area Transit is provided via state and federal sources
 - Less than 1 percent of annual funding comes from fares on fixed route
- The State of Oregon aligns state transit dollars with federal requirements
- Federal requirements include regular documentation of services, three-year audits, and competitive purchasing, among others

Benton County As A Sub-recipient

2

- Benton County receives state and federal funds and is obligated to follow the identified requirements
- Transit agencies in Oregon are under increased compliance regulations from the State of Oregon as transit funding has increased through STIF
- These requirements dictate how Benton County must select transit operators

BAT Services

3

- Agencies are allowed to choose whether they operate the services or a contractor operates the services
- Corvallis Transit System hires contractors
- Lincoln County Transit operates their own services
- BAT hires a contractor

BAT Services

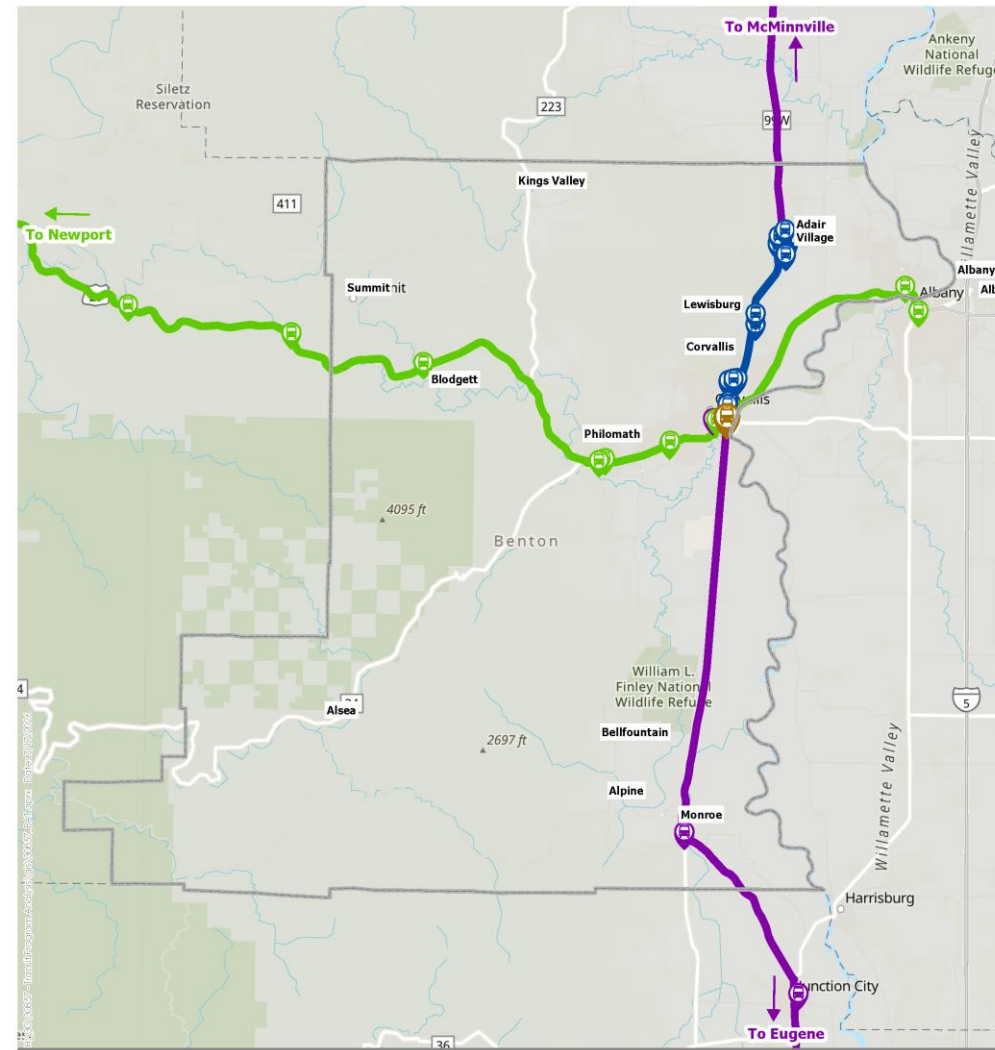
3

- Fixed-Route Intercity Services
 - Coast to Valley Express (7 days a week)
 - 99 Express (5 days a week)
 - 99 Vine (pilot service, 7 days a week)
 - Seeking grant funding to continue service
- 2024 Fixed-Route Ridership
 - Approximately 13,000 rides annually
 - 35-55 rides per day

BAT Services

3

Intercity Fixed Routes



Legend

- 99 Vine
- 99 Express and Coast to Valley Express
- 99 Express
- Coast to Valley Express

Benton County Boundary



0 10 Miles

BAT Services

3

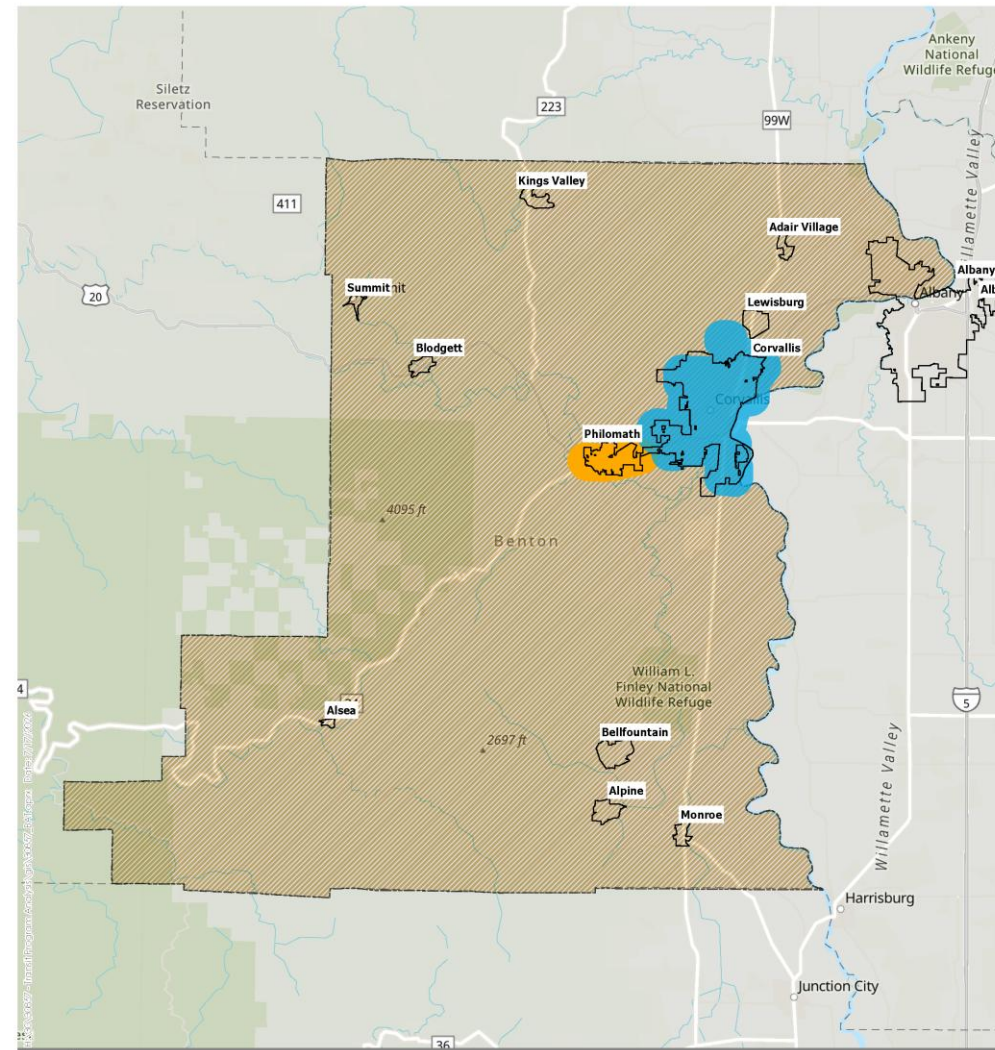
- Demand-Response Services
 - County
 - BAT Lift Countywide (6 days per week, service 8 AM – 7 PM)
 - County Contracted by Others
 - BAT Lift Paratransit (operates through contract from Corvallis Transit)
 - DD 53 (As needed for work and school trips through contract from Department of Human Services)
- 2024 Demand-Response Ridership
 - Approximately 23,000 rides annually
 - Approximately 75 rides per day



BAT Services

3

Demand Response Services



Service Delivery

4

- Aspects of providing transit service include Administration, Coordination, Service/Capital Planning, Fleet/Facilities, and Operations
- Operations includes selecting who will drive the buses and vans
- For hired contractors, contracts are typically 3-5 years long at which point agencies (e.g. Benton County) must re-advertise
- Operator selections do not impact the services provided

Shared Terminology

Self Perform

when a public agency chooses to operate transit as opposed to hiring a contractor

Contractor

a private business or organization that provides transit service to public agencies

Enhanced Contract

Operations contract that includes additional provisions for reporting and accountability to meet current and proposed Federal/State regulations

Compliance

Safety requirements for transit operations as well as required minimum reporting and drug/alcohol testing

Requests for Proposals

A process mandated by the State of Oregon used to select contractors for public services
The request for proposals must meet and include the requirements from the Federal Transit Administration

BAT Lift ADA Accommodations



BAT Lift

Transportation services available to County residents who are 65 or older.
Age based service, countywide, provided as funding allows



ADA Services

Transportation for County residents who need curb-to-curb transportation due to a medical or physical need that meets ADA criteria.

Need based service, federally required for Corvallis and Philomath services

Community Conversations



Small group
discussions
with fellow
neighbors



Three
questions, one
person taking
notes at each
table



Facilitators
walking around
the room during
discussion to help
answer questions
and listen to
themes



Report out at
end of
discussion

Community Conversations

1

How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

2

What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

3

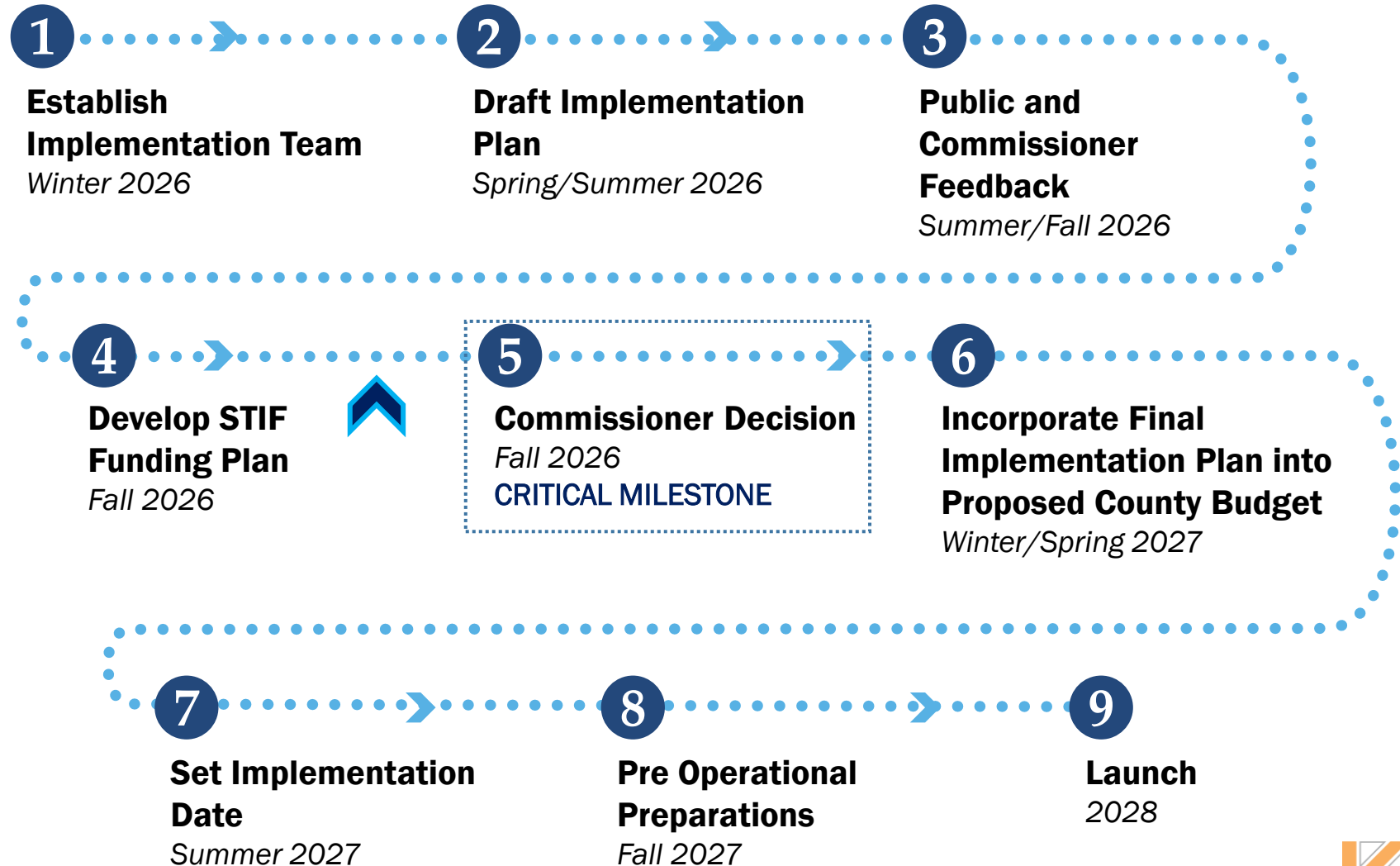
How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?



Decision Making Next Steps

Input from today will inform Benton County's plans that will be presented for decision making

Next Meeting September 15, shown on timeline with up arrow



Next Meeting

SEPTEMBER 15 AT 5 PM FAIRGROUNDS AUDITORIUM

- Highlights of the Draft Implementation Plan
- Self perform updates
- Enhanced contract changes
- Future funding update
- Purchasing/Procurement overview
- Update on new software for booking and scheduling rides
- Implementation timeline
- Q&A



Thank You



Appendix B. Comment Forms

Feedback from the virtual group is documented below.

Tom Hendrix (Board of Directors, Dial-a-Bus)

- Sought a better understanding of potential new federal requirements and what additional data reporting or data collection may be needed.
- Discussed service improvement opportunities and operational challenges.
- Noted that Dial-a-Bus does not charge fares because the local fixed-route system is fare-free. While beneficial for riders, this can make it easier for people to reserve trips and then cancel.
- Reported approximately 100 no-shows per month, which is roughly equivalent to the number of trip denials.
- Suggested that the lack of consequences for repeated no-shows may contribute to capacity constraints. Shared that some transit systems impose penalties after multiple no-shows within a month.
- Suggested exploring a shopping shuttle or similar service to consolidate shopping trips and improve overall capacity.
- Observed that the County's lack of a transit coordinator for an extended period made communication challenging and expressed optimism that the new coordinator position will improve coordination.
- Expressed hope that friction between Dial-a-Bus and Benton County can be resolved so that all parties can focus on providing the best possible service to the community.

Jim Noel (New Rider)

- Described challenges using the service as a new rider.
- For early morning medical appointments at the Samaritan complex, riders must call immediately when reservations open one week in advance to secure a ride.
- Reported frustration with having to accept a pickup window rather than a specific pickup time.
- Explained that appointment rescheduling can significantly affect transportation planning, particularly when specialty appointments may take months to reschedule.
- Often books rides substantially earlier than necessary to ensure transportation is available, even if it results in arriving early and waiting.
- Raised concerns about the contractor agreement and questioned whether it should require operational updates when federal regulations change.
- Asked about medical transportation and potential service expansion, but audio issues limited discussion. Indicated intent to follow up directly with Benton County.

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

Library, grocery stores (Fred Meyers, Walmart, Trader Joes, Dollar Store, Bi Mart, Philomath Corvalls Clinic, Even Lunch with a friends at her home

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

Meeting other people (drivers and passengers both) Trips to the Library, so I can get Large Print Books, grocery stores (so I don't starve) Trips to the Corvalls Clinic & Philomath Clinic, so I stay healthy

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

More drivers, so they could serve More people!

Be able to go to Hiatt Family Farms - (maybe as an outing) It's a small, locally owned business, and a beautiful drive!

Any other comments?

The drivers are all very friendly & helpful - Love them!
The Dispatchers are unflappable and friendly ♡

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

Dial-A-Bus

~~Bus~~ #

Sorry for my handwriting.

My hands are very arthritic and gnarly. I Am 71 - I use
To go to Dr. appts, grocery shopping, farmers
market in Corvallis, and to go to the AmTRAK
Station in Albany - - also take it to the pharmacy
and the library - Some day I will go to Newport
and the library. I have no other options for transportation.

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

Getting around. I don't have a car anymore.
My ~~sisterr~~ ^{sister} also uses it. She has a car, but
she also has cancer, is on chemo + radiation
and doesn't always feel up to driving
anymore, she is even older at 77 years old.
It is a basic necessity to get out of the
house. My mental health and physical
health depend on it.

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

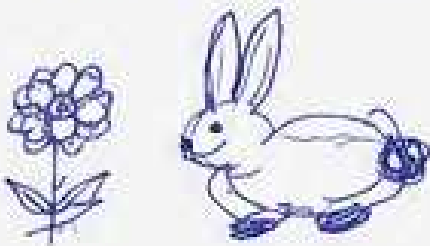
June 30, 2028
April 13, 2029 (Apophis
might hit earth. expires)

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

By not "fixing" what isn't BROKE!!!

Other than that, maybe a couple more drivers.

Do not FIRE - or Replace - anyone from
Dial- -bus.



Any other comments?

I'm afraid you're going to start charging us.
If you must, please keep it @ -/ < \$1.00

Do not get rid of Eileen, Caitlin, or Mejia
at Dial-A-Bus, they are excellent at
what they do; dispatch

You gave much better information this
time. Way more clear WHY this process
is even needed. I appreciate that.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Increase the number of, driveys + provide service on weekends along with back up support from the office, in case of a breakdown, flat tire or whatever else may happen.

Any other comments?

Flexibility in time restrictions for scheduling with the Dispatch staff (A wedding notice reduced to 2 or 3 days)

The Volunteers Are Very caring Staff too! Increase funding !!

Certainly, the potential is there to improve upon the current service, which is exceptional, as opposed to starting a completely new service. Thank you!

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number _____

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

I use Corvallis' Paratransit Service to go to work, medical appointments, the gym and ~~See~~ social appointments.

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

I receive reliable transportation to work, medical appointments + community activities.

I have greater independence since I cannot drive due to a disability.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Services could be improved by increasing availability, esp. during high traffic times; Also better real-time arrival information. Better connections with other local and regional transit services, esp. up to OHSU.

Any other comments?

The services are outstanding. I bet that Dial-a-bus could be awarded national awards and a model for the country. You could not find a better, well-run organization for paratransit transportation.

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number _____

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

USE FOR: DOCTOR & MEDICAL, FITNESS,
CHURCH, VISITING FAMILY, GROCERIES
VISITING FRIENDS, OUTINGS,
VIEETINGS, GET TO WORK,
SOCIALIZING.

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

1. ALLOWS: INDEPENDENCE
2. TO BE PART OF COMMUNITY
3. BENEFITS OTHERS WHO PROVIDE
SUPPORT TO NOT HAVE SUCH
A BURDEN REGARDING TRANSPORT.

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

- More Service on Sat or Sun. It is my experience that you cannot get rides on weekends.
- Buses vs smaller vehicles
More riders at same time make it very hard to make it to appointments
wait times and pick up times are very problematic.
- More input from riders about vehicles.
Some are very difficult.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

- to get to appointments and get downtown

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

- It provides flexibility in my limited daily experiences.
- The personnel and drivers are always helpful and friendly in addition to being alert to any difficulties I may have.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Bus route improvements

More funding to meet new requirements

Harder to schedule because there are fewer volunteer drivers after COVID

Have to allow 2-3 hours for a pickup. Need more drivers.

Want to go out after 7:00 pm for BAT Lift
(also evening service in general)

Any other comments?

Eliminating volunteers would be terrible

You can't tell the difference between paid and volunteer; they're both excellent!

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

1. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Service to Albany.

Weekend service

tighten up eligibility

ADA demand outstripping capacity

County patrons are being denied service

Consult with your contractor or to what vehicles
to purchase to best serve the client.

Any other comments?

County consistently does not consult clients
vs o/s vehicle purchases +
software purchases.

mayal support her to attend Oregon Public Transit
assoc meeting
+ support continuing education
through National Transit Institute

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number

3

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

CALL FOR RIDES FOR LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

INDEPENDENCE.

SELF DETERMINATION

AUTONOMY.

ABILITY TO GET WHERE HE NEEDS TO Go.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Need to be able to get to Albany, & North

Albany for medical appts, labs, etc - Linen Co.

Need smaller vehicles available. Not every rider needs a bus.

Buses ride too hard.

Need more drivers. Schedule becomes full.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

2. How could British Area Transit services be improved?

- More service on Sat or Sun. It is my experience that you cannot get rides on weekends.

- Buses vs. smaller vehicles
More riders at same time make it very hard to make it to appointments. wait times and pick up times are very problematic.

- More input from riders about vehicles. Some are very difficult.

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number

4

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

Betsy: call 1 week in advance, uses it 4-5 times a week.

Ron: walks, doctor, dentist, social time, sometimes up to 4 rides a day.

Betsy and Ron don't live within city limits so don't qualify for ADA rides.

Christine: primarily medical use, within city limits occasional use to North Albany.

Dave: used it following a colonscopy as they required someone to drive him home.

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

mental health, physical health, social health, grocery shopping, medical appointments.

Betsy
ability to meet nice people (knowing the town better than before. (volunteer driver perspective)
helps spread the word about BAT.

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Betsy: skeletal shift to handle need had weren't a week to week. from dentistry, ability

Ron: need to expand rides, better access to rides for M-F and Saturday, especially for people outside city limits, (including people above 65 and people with disabilities) Also applies to Sunday which is limited to ADA rides within city limits.

Better evening hours to allow for going out to dinner with a friend.

Volunteers could help increase capacity, + way for a contractor to provide more service without it costing more.

Any other comments?

Specific question: how is it possible to ensure disabled riders living outside the city limits aren't getting bumped from rides? Same question for disabled riders living inside city limits but riding to locations outside city limits (Example: to medical clinics in North Albany).

How can disabled + elderly riders outside the city limits be given access to Saturday and Sunday rides?

What about better coordinating to help multiple riders get to church services on Sundays?

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

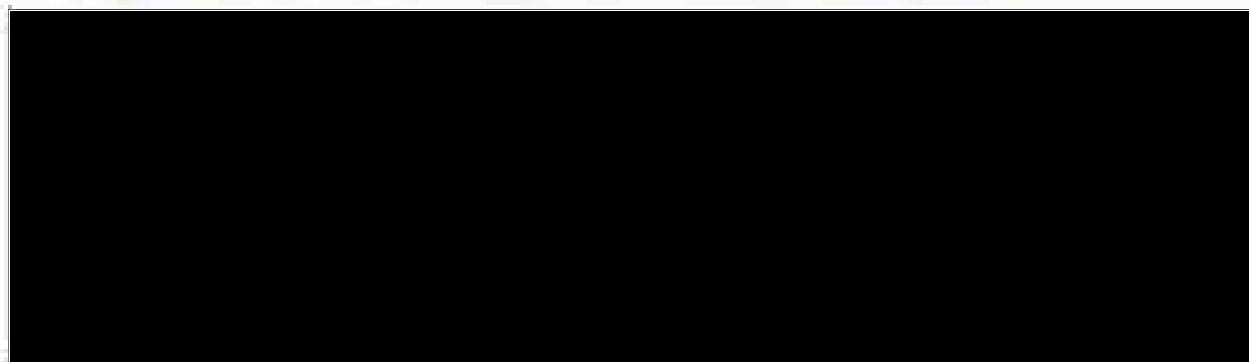
Table Number

19

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

- Family Farms is a delicious bakery but they can't go there bc can't fly too far.
- Peabody Haff
- Only open on weekends.
- Ramps for walken is so important.

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?



COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

I don't know - they
have been great to me.

—

Any other comments?

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number

17

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

I use Dial-a-bus 5 days a week
to get to my jobs,
to and from.

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

They are punctual and always
friendly and helpful.

The office staff is great
and helpful getting the
rides I want.

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

- more hours & drivers on Saturday
- Sunday rides
- tighter scheduling →
- smaller vehicles for those who are
(can some vehicles not be ADA accessible)
- availability - need more driver +
more vehicles.

Any other comments?

Benton Area Transit Program Analysis

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Table Number

13

1. How do you use Benton Area Transit today?

"4-5 x week" within Corvallis.

2-3 x week

1 x week

2. What are some benefits you receive from using Benton Area Transit?

- Medical support appointments.
- Life-extension appointments; e.g.,
"Fitness over 50", mobility classes;
- Physical therapy
- Enables my caretaker to work; i.e.,
my financial stability assured by Dial-a-Bus,
BAT.
- mental/emotional/spiritual health -
Grace Center, socialization, church.

3. How could Benton Area Transit services be improved?

Increased capacity.

We Love BAT, Dial-a-Bus.

"Don't fix what ain't broke"

Any other comments?

Keep it volunteer-supported.

This service is amazing, as is our Society that created — a high-trust society! Now, Fraudsters have led the fed to impose audit procedures for an untrustworthy/fraudulent society, which we are not. Let us know how to support you & thank you for your efforts. Also, NO one wants the city of Corvallis to stick its nose into operations.