



**CITY COUNCIL STUDY SESSION
DRAFT MINUTES**

Monday, March 4, 2019
Council Chambers, 1175 E. Main Street

Mayor Stromberg called the Study Session to order at 5:30 PM

I. Public Input (15 minutes, maximum)

David Young – Ashland – Spoke that he resigned from the Transportation Commission. He spoke that he was not respected. He spoke that he is not in support of the transit study.

II. Presentation by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival

Executive Director Paul Christy and General Manager Ted DeLong spoke to Council giving an update on the status of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival.

Mr. DeLong spoke regarding the environmental concerns and impact to the festival.

He spoke that the theaters opened last Friday and so far have had great attendance.

Mr. DeLong gave Council an overview of their suggested plans for 2019 (*see attached*).

Items discussed were:

- Theater performance dates.
- Alternative Venue due to air quality - Ashland High School Theater.
- Refund policies.
- Attendance records.
- Funding.
- Community outreach.

III. Transit Expansion Study Presentation

Deputy Public Works Director Scott Fleury and Jamey Dempster presented Council with a PowerPoint presentation (*see attached*).

Items discussed were:

- Project Overview.
- Existing conditions.
- Purpose of the project.
- Project Objectives.
- Flexible menu of public transportation strategies.
- Long-term actions.

- Partners.
- Cost.
- Project Schedule.
- Existing conditions.
- Population increase.
- Population density.
- Low income household commutes.
- Work travel daily commutes.
- Transit ridership.
- Demand response for transit trips.
- Disability transit availability.
- Mobility Trends.
- Funding trends.
- Multimodal opportunities.
- Future plans.
- Options for senior and handicap needs.
- Routes and costs.
- Action plans and long range funding.
- Bike and pedestrian infrastructure improvements, transportation demand management & electric buses.

Slattery spoke that he would like to hear more on this topic on steps moving forward and have a clear timeline.

The Study Session was adjourned at 7:03 PM

Respectfully submitted by:

City Recorder Melissa Huhtala

Attest:

Mayor Stromberg

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, if you need special assistance to participate in this meeting, please contact the City Administrator's office at (541) 488-6002 (TTY phone number 1-800-735-2900). Notification 72 hours prior to the meeting will enable the City to make reasonable arrangements to ensure accessibility to the meeting (28 CFR 35.102-35.104 ADA Title I).

Presentation to Ashland Mayor & City Council
Delivered March 4, 2019

Paul Christy, OSF Acting Executive Director
Ted DeLong, OSF General Manager



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Thank you for inviting us to address you today; we're here to tell you about the adaptations OSF is planning to be ready for any air quality issues which may come our way in 2019 as a result of wildfire smoke.

First, I want to make it very clear that we believe Ashland and OSF are intrinsically linked, and what our community has to offer is as a huge component of why visitors come to OSF, in addition to the experience of attending OSF and the Allen Elizabethan Theatre, and we are not abandoning either Ashland or the Elizabethan. OSF believes that its sustainability is intrinsically linked to the success and sustainability of the Ashland community in which it is based. For that reason, we are laser focused on this issue both in the immediate and long terms.

Here are some specifics of our plans:

- As you probably already know, the Angus Bowmer and Thomas theatres started previews this past Friday (March 1, 2019) and will open this coming weekend (March 7-9, 2019). We moved their opening date two weeks later in order to concentrate our audiences in the weeks when, based on past buying patterns, people are more likely to come to Ashland; and to ensure we have full houses, not half-empty ones. This has also had the good side effect of starting rehearsals two weeks after New Year's Day rather than a day or two after, which made the start of the season much easier for our staff.
- This year, the Elizabethan will start performances one week earlier, with previews beginning on May 28, the day after Memorial Day, and opening the weekend of June 7.
- We will operate the Elizabethan as normal through at least July 12 and if there is smoke before that date, we will probably have to cancel because we won't have an alternate venue available.
- From July 13 through July 29, we intend to make a daily decision – which we do based on air quality readings provided by the DEQ sensors at the downtown fire station and forecasts from the National Weather Service office in Medford, as well as the specific health requirements of the cast and crew on each production – about whether to relocate the Elizabethan performance to the Mountain Avenue Theatre at Ashland High School. In our experience, these weeks have a slightly lower likelihood of air quality issues than weeks later in the summer, so we will be selling the full capacity of the Elizabethan and intending to perform outside as much as possible.
- During the period from July 30 through August 25 we stay at the Elizabethan as long as we can, but if air quality issues arise, we will move to the Mountain Avenue Theatre and stay there on a sustained basis. We will also be selling only the capacity of the Mountain Avenue Theatre during this time, which is less than a month.

Now I know that this part may be concerning so I will offer some context.

First, some statistics which underlie the decision to sell fewer tickets during the July 30-Aug. 25 period. Attendance in the Elizabethan in late July and August has been dropping – attendance was down 10%

year over year in July from 2017 to 2018, and down as much as 25% year over year for August from 2017 to 2018. Also, it's very unlikely in general for us to sell out the entire venue, so the capacity drop seems more severe than it really is. The average per-performance paid attendance in the Elizabethan for all of 2018 was less than 800, or two-thirds of the venue's 1200-seat capacity, so we are only lowering our capacity by about half, to 400.

Our goal is to do the utmost to meet the expectations of every audience member who comes to Ashland to see a performance at the Elizabethan theatre. Over the past 6 years, the relationship between those audience members and OSF has been repeatedly strained, as air quality issues have forced performance cancellations, and capacity constraints in the various alternate venues have forced us to turn some patrons away from both locations in the same night. Our solution is to meet this challenge directly, informed by the patterns of air quality issues that have affected OSF's outdoor performances since 2013. For those predicted dates OSF will only be selling the specific number of seats in the Elizabethan that match the alternate venue's capacity.

The other reason why we are planning, during this time when air quality issues are most likely, to move to the Mountain Avenue Theatre and to stay there, is that the daily decision-making burden of whether to move our shows to another venue has been enormously strenuous for our entire staff. With a season that is already a very long, very intense marathon, this is a way we can relieve staff's uncertainty while reducing the amount of labor required to present our shows in an alternate venue.

To return to our timeline of the season:

- After August 27, we will resume making daily decisions and may return to the Elizabethan or go back and forth as conditions dictate, and
- After September 10 we will return to the Elizabethan theatre for good. Air quality issues that late in the summer are less likely, but if they arise, we would have to cancel performances, as the Mountain Avenue Theatre is not available to us due to use by the high school.

It's worth mentioning that the air quality issues related to wildfire smoke which can impact the outdoor performances typically do NOT impact any of the shows running in our indoor venues, and thanks to a generous grant from the State of Oregon, we are taking additional steps this year to ensure good air quality in our indoor venues.

We are making other changes next year to give our audience more chances to see our work and to visit Ashland, including adding as many performances as possible in the Thomas Theatre, adding a new set of performances in the Hay-Patton Rehearsal Center, and adding matinee performances of two of the three Elizabethan plays at the Mountain Avenue Theatre.

Finally, we want to say that we are working to be more engaged with all facets of the community this season so this is likely not the last time that you'll be hearing from us. One way which we're staying in touch is with a town hall meeting on March 15 with Paul; you should all have received an invitation to that. Finally, I want to give a huge thank you to Superintendent Kelly Raymond and the Ashland School District which have been hugely supportive and understanding and a tremendous help to us in planning for next season.



Ashland Transit Expansion Study

City Council March 4, 2018

Presented by:
Jamey Dempster

PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

- Project overview
- Existing conditions and needs
- Recommended opportunities
 - Near term
 - Long term



PROJECT SUMMARY

Purpose

Understand how public transportation can best support local mobility needs and advance the City's long-range goals.

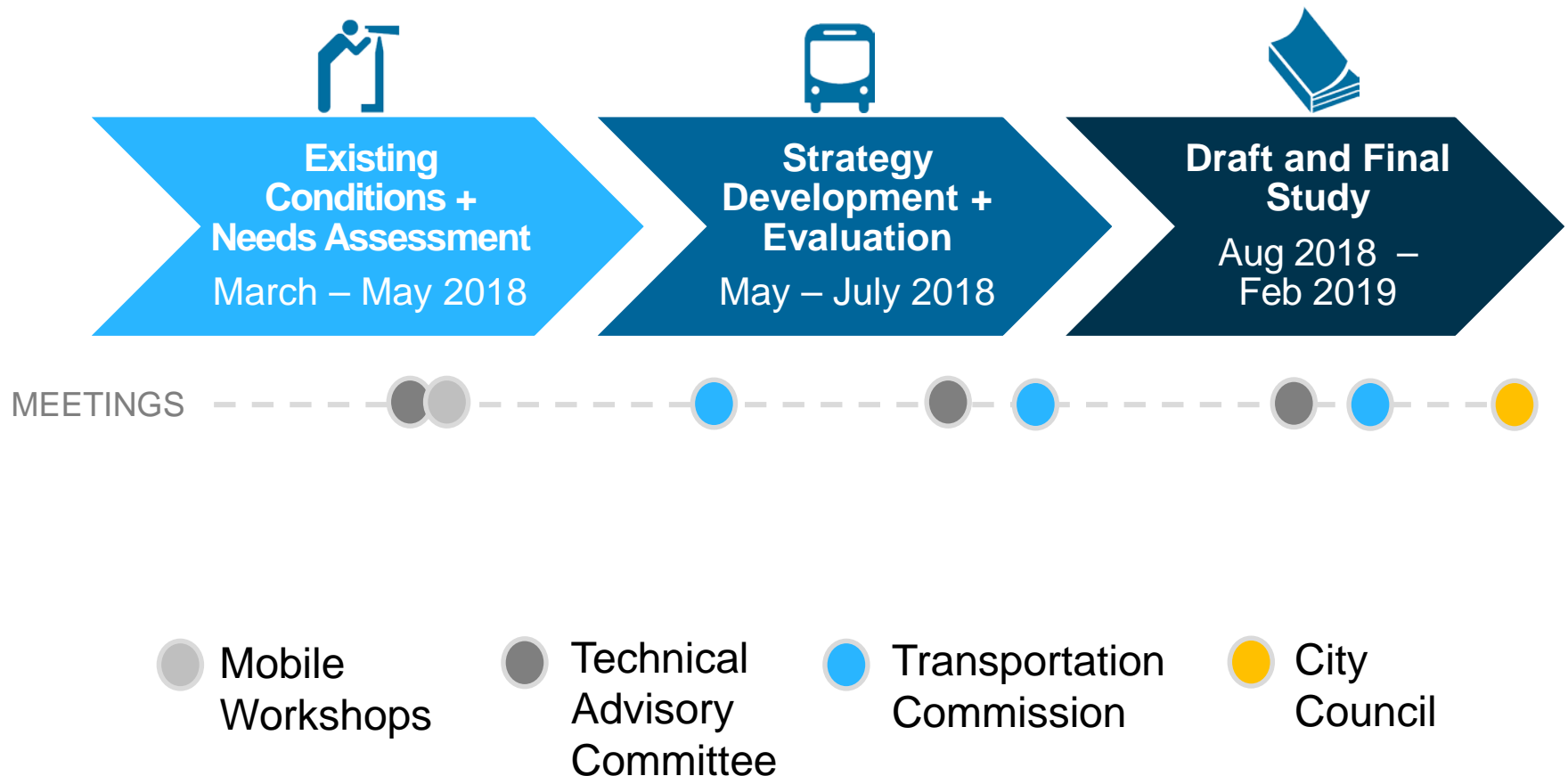


PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- Flexible “menu” of public transportation strategies
- Operational feasibility
- Quick wins and long-term actions
- Partners
- Estimated costs

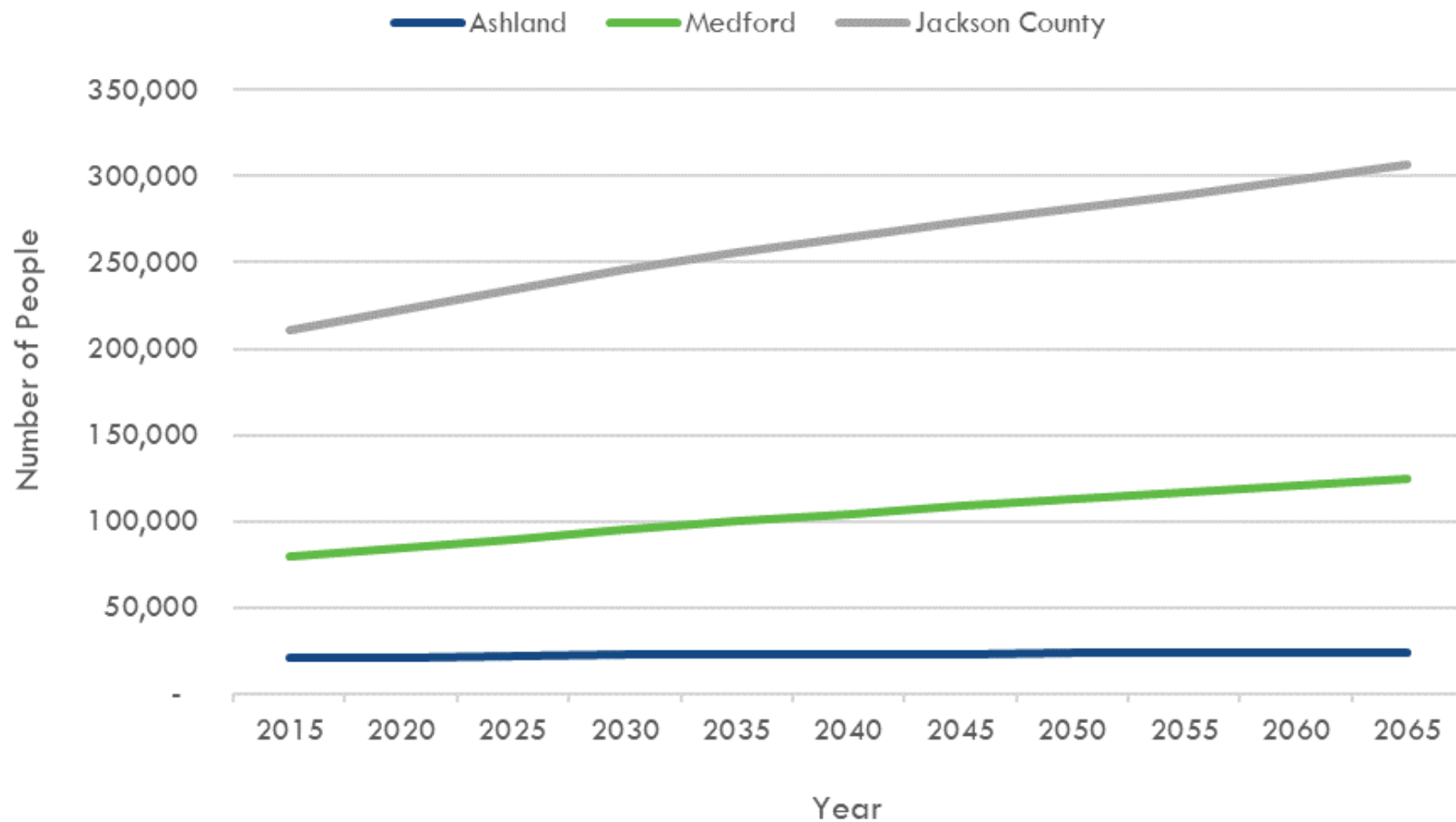


PROJECT SCHEDULE

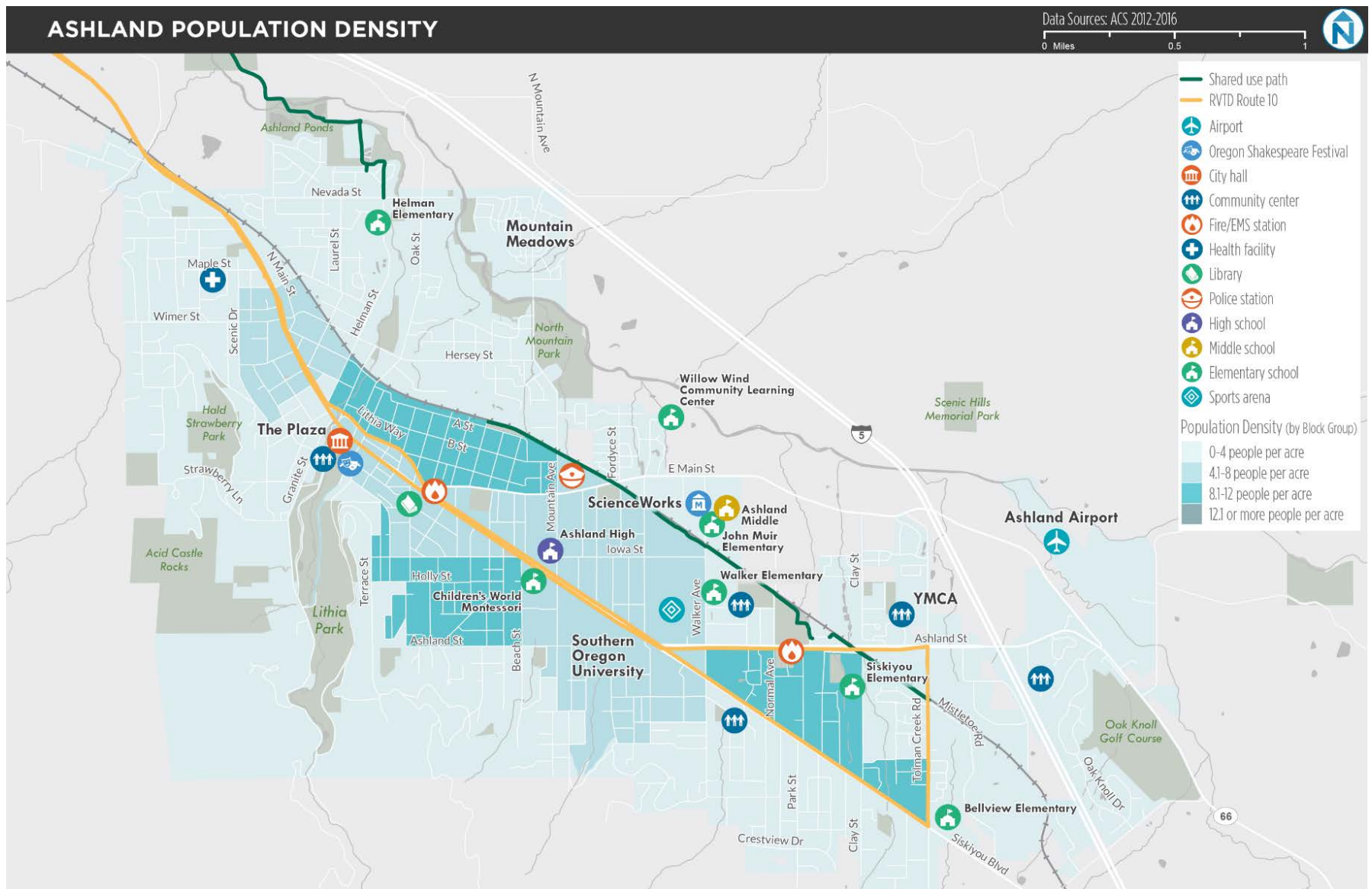


Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment

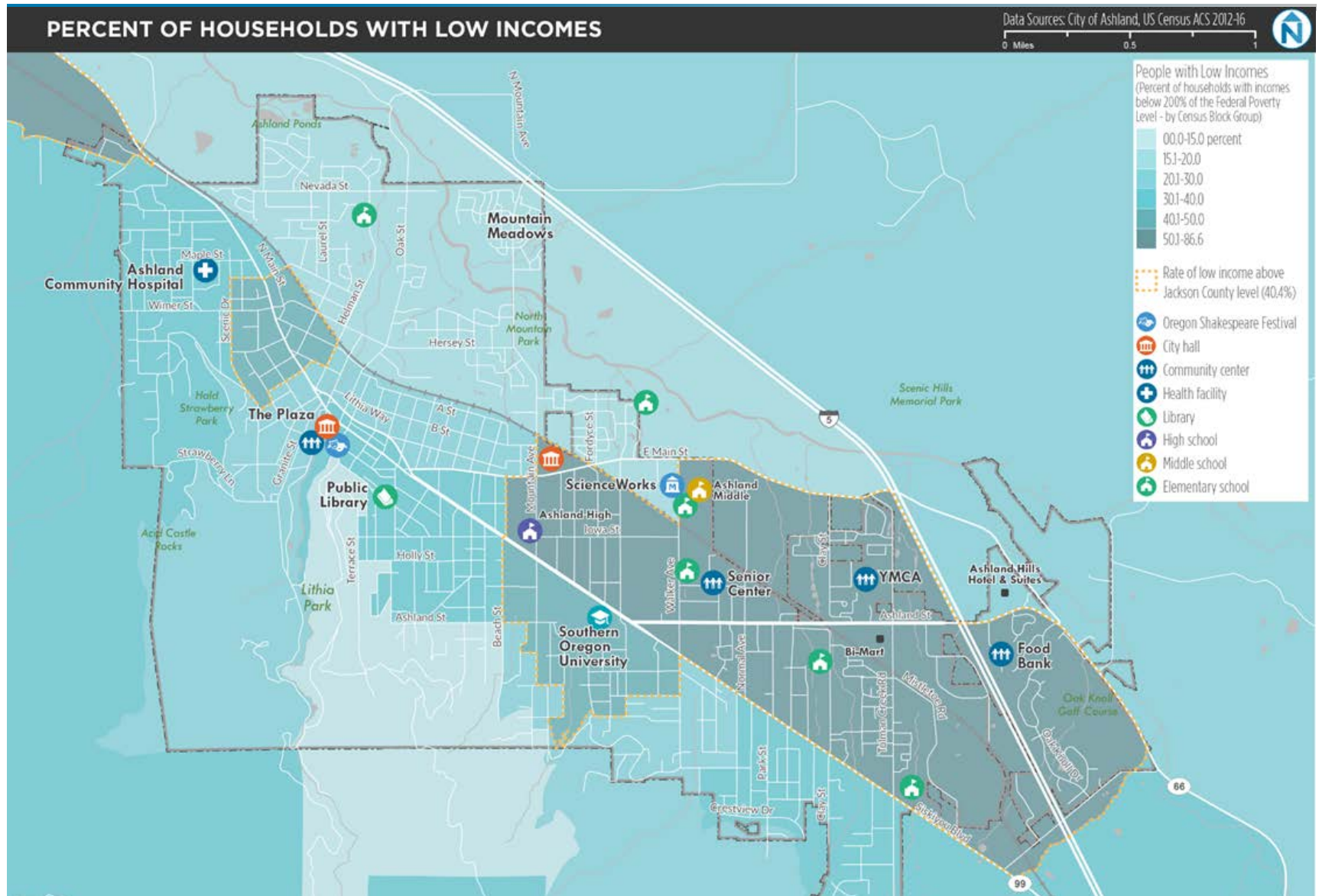
Population



Population



Low Income Households



Commuting

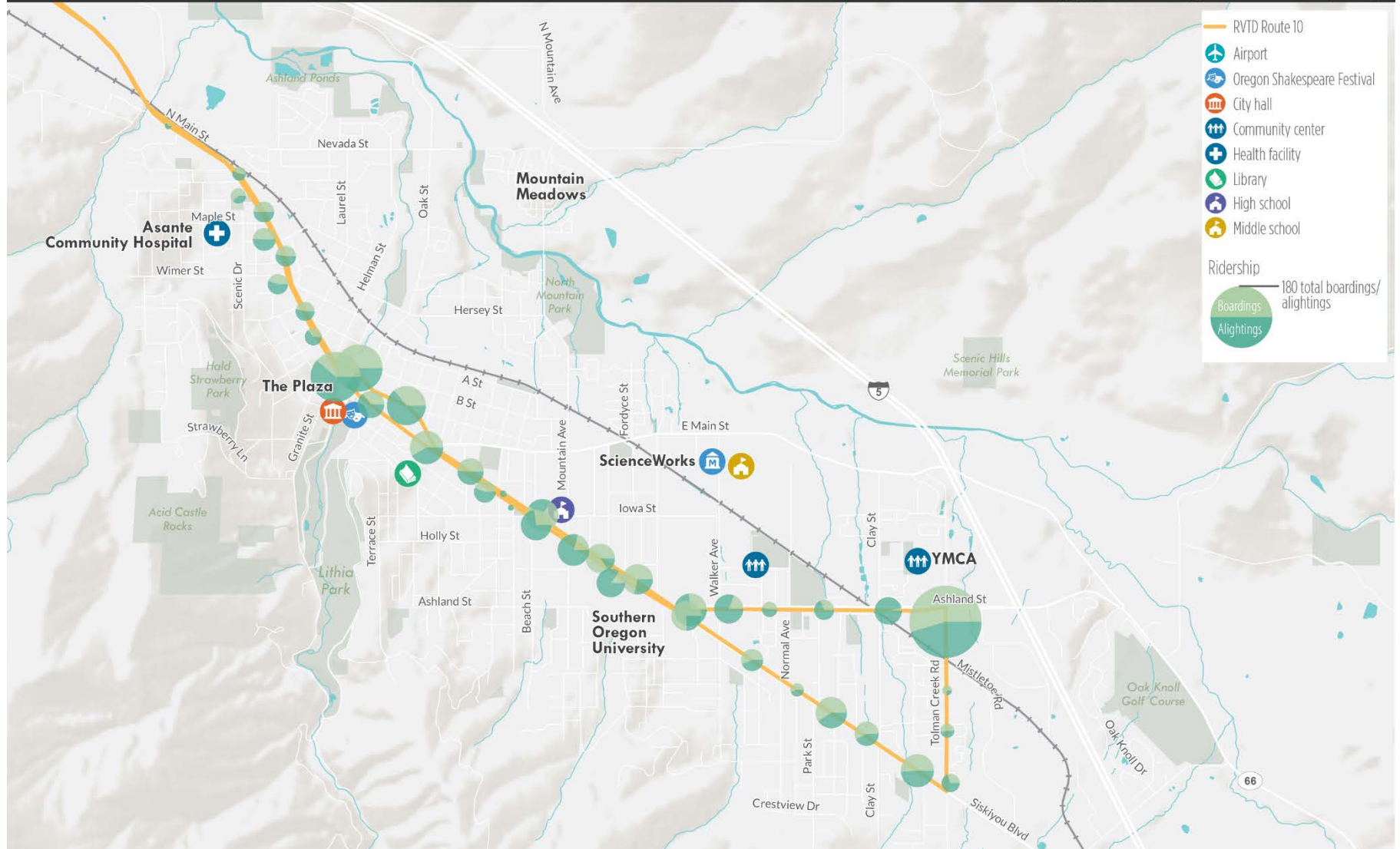


Transit Ridership

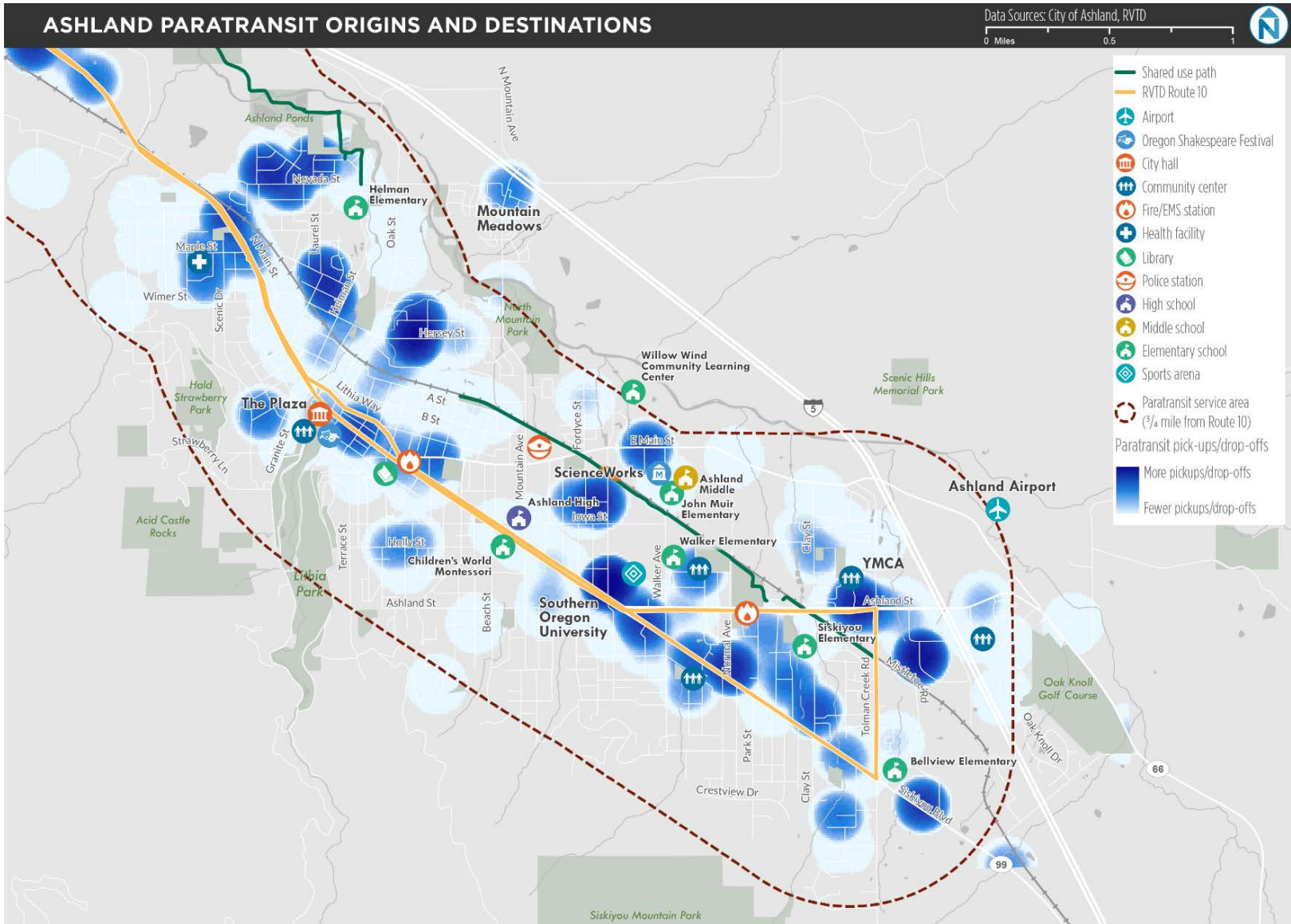
ACTIVITY BY STOP

Data Sources: City of Ashland, RVRTD, Jackson County

0 Miles 0.5 1



Demand Response (Paratransit) Rides



Mobility Trends

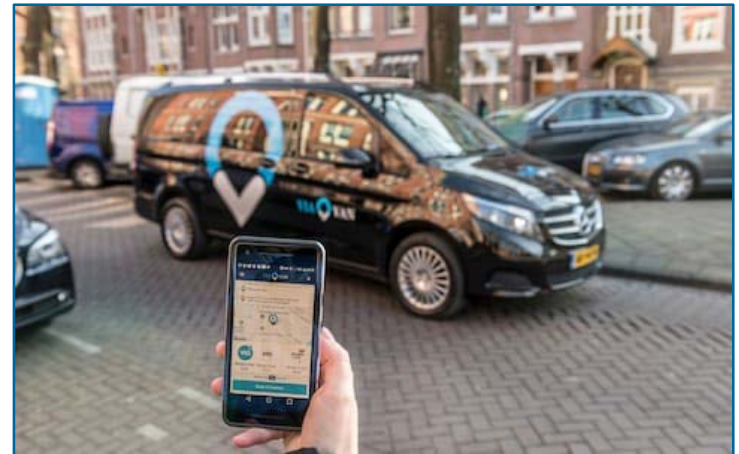
Technology and service models

Traveler / customer information

On demand scheduling

Electronic payment systems

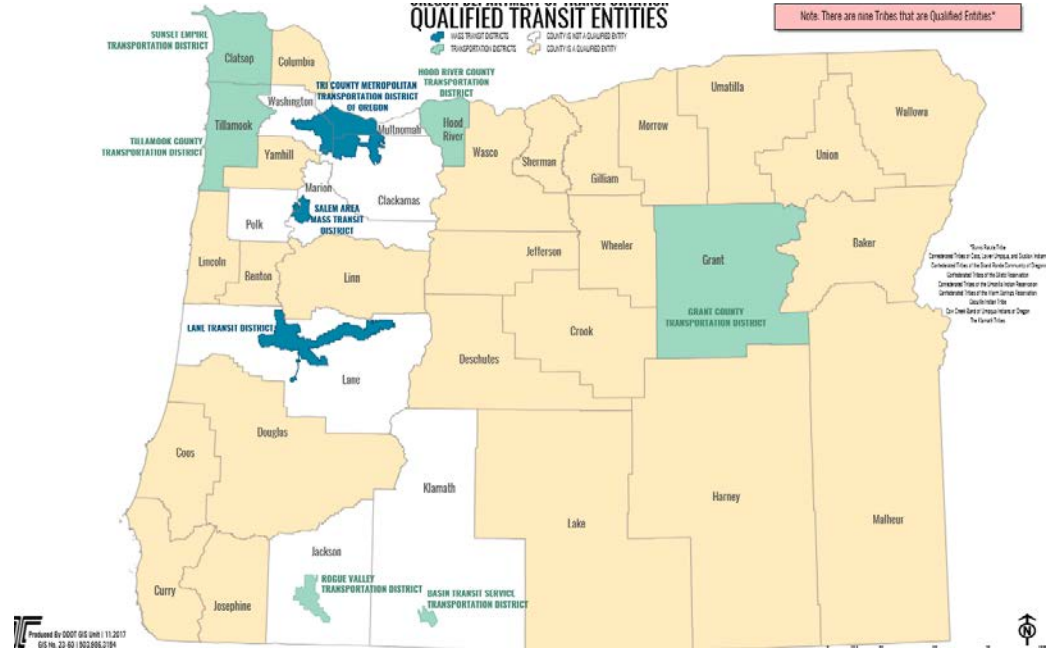
Purchased service and contracting



Funding Trends

Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (HB 2017)

Regional transit revenues



Needs and Opportunities

- Reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips
- Expand transit coverage
- Enhance multimodal transportation options
- Frequent, reliable, and affordable transportation services
- Expand hours for existing service
- Shorter travel times to Medford by bus
- Safe and comfortable transit access
- Easy-to-find information

Strategy Review

STRATEGIES

- General public demand response
- Fixed routes
 - Local coverage
 - Central corridor
 - Medford-Ashland Express
- Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements
- Transportation demand management
- Electric buses



GENERAL PUBLIC DEMAND RESPONSE

- Flexible service model
- Connect to regional routes
- Enhanced reservation system
- Operator flexibility
- \$100,000 - \$300,000 (limited - full day with 2 drivers)



GENERAL PUBLIC DEMAND RESPONSE

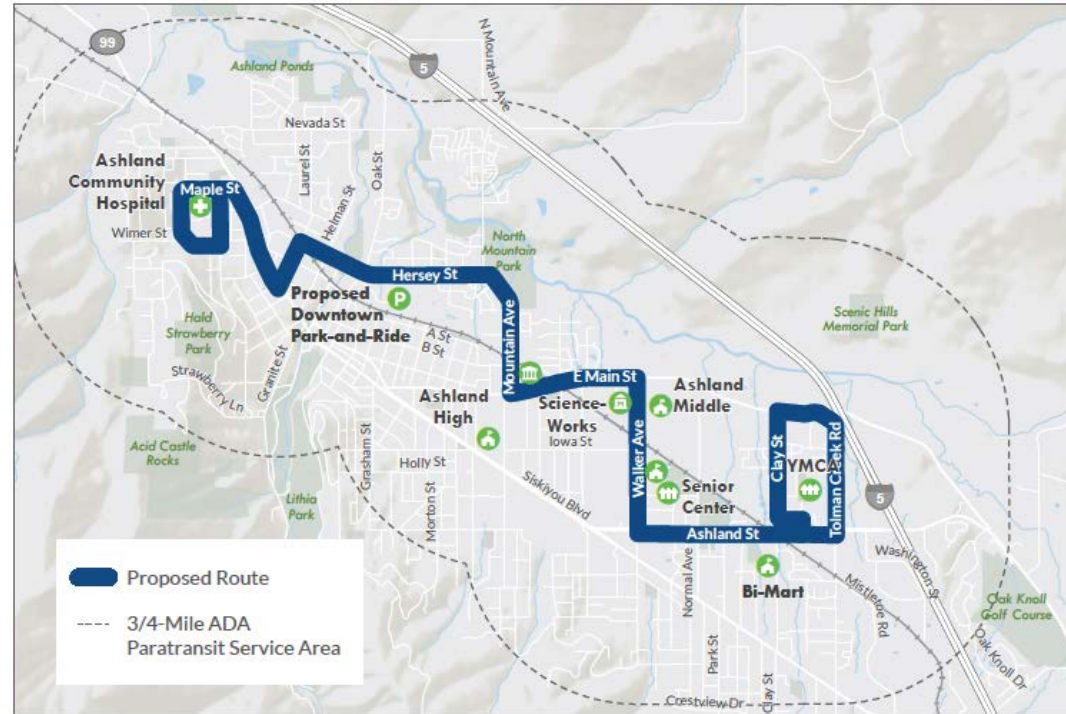
ACTIONS

- Service planning
 - Goals
 - Measuring performance
 - Supporting programs
 - Long-range funding
- Funding applications
- Implement, monitor, improve



LOCAL COVERAGE ROUTE

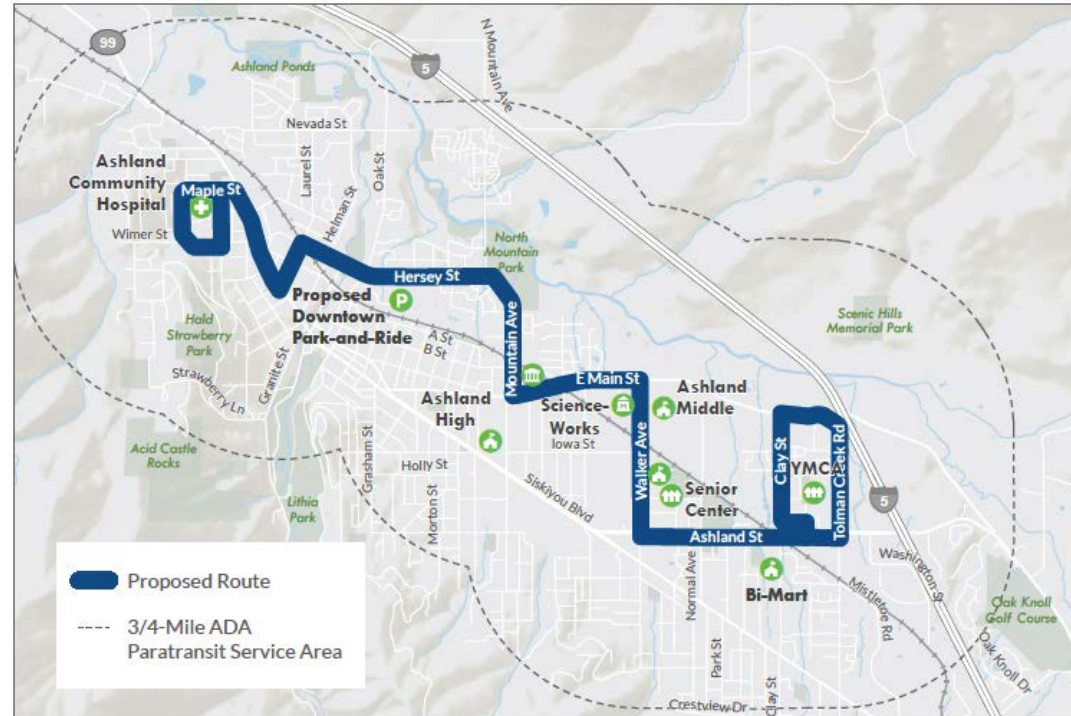
- Expand coverage to off central corridor
- Expand paratransit area to new areas
- Connect to regional routes
- Builds on past plans
- \$200,000 with 1 bus at 1-hour headway



LOCAL COVERAGE ROUTE

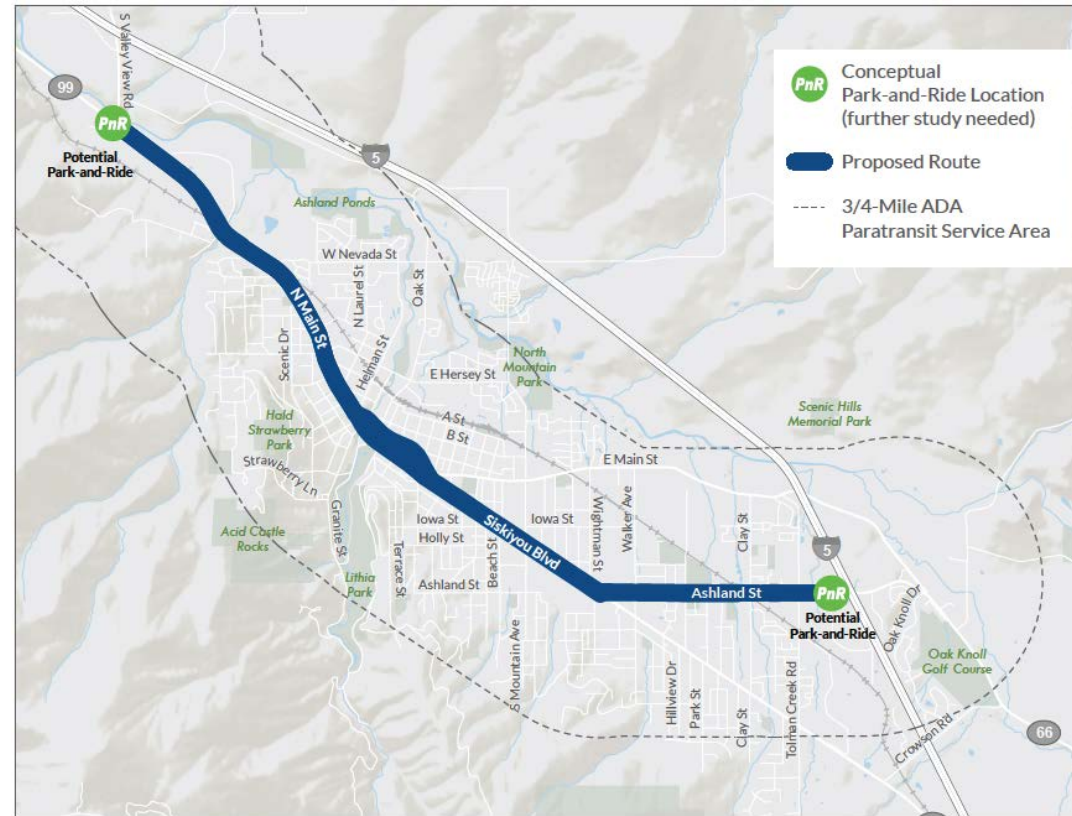
ACTIONS

- Operations and capital plan
- Sidewalk and crossing improvements
- Marketing and TDM
- Secure funding
- Implement, monitor and improve



CENTRAL CORRIDOR ROUTE

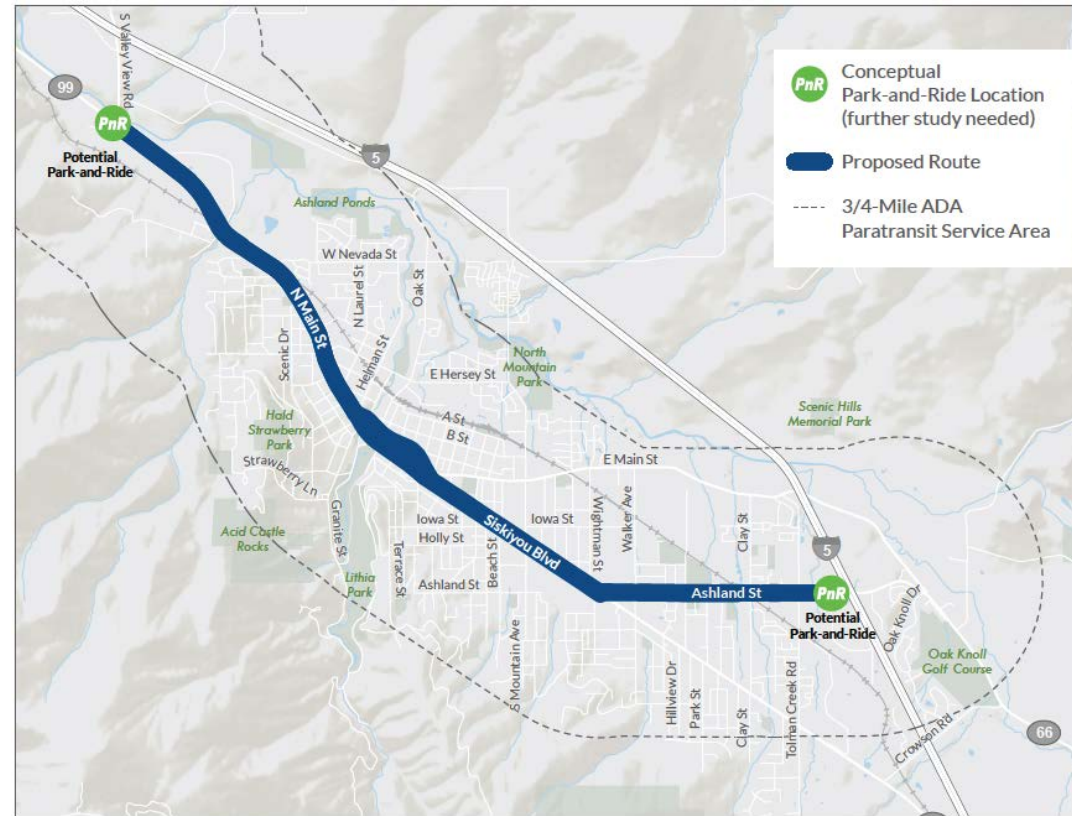
- Expand capacity on productive transit corridor
- Link to parking program to incentivize transit use
- Builds on transportation, climate plans
- \$400,000 and 2 buses at 90 minute headway



CENTRAL CORRIDOR ROUTE

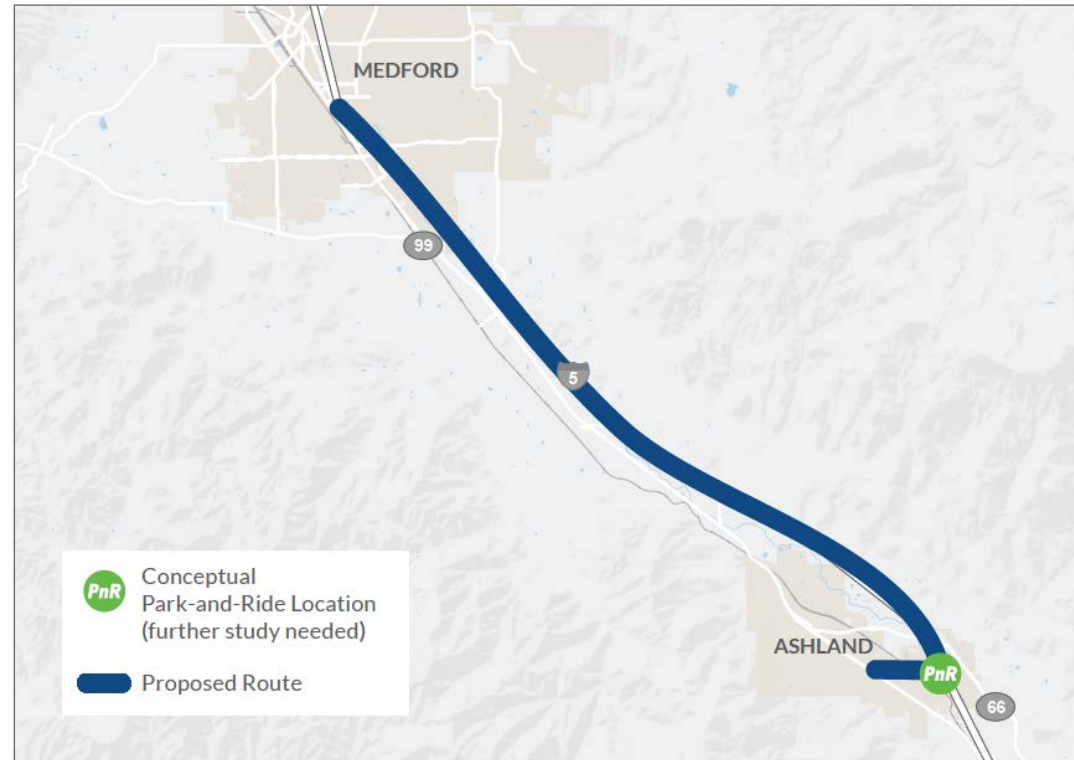
ACTIONS

- Operations + capital plan
- Managed parking
- Design, construct parking facilities
- Transit vehicle storage and fueling facility
- Bus stop and sidewalk improvements
- Implement and monitor transit service



MEDFORD-ASHLAND EXPRESS

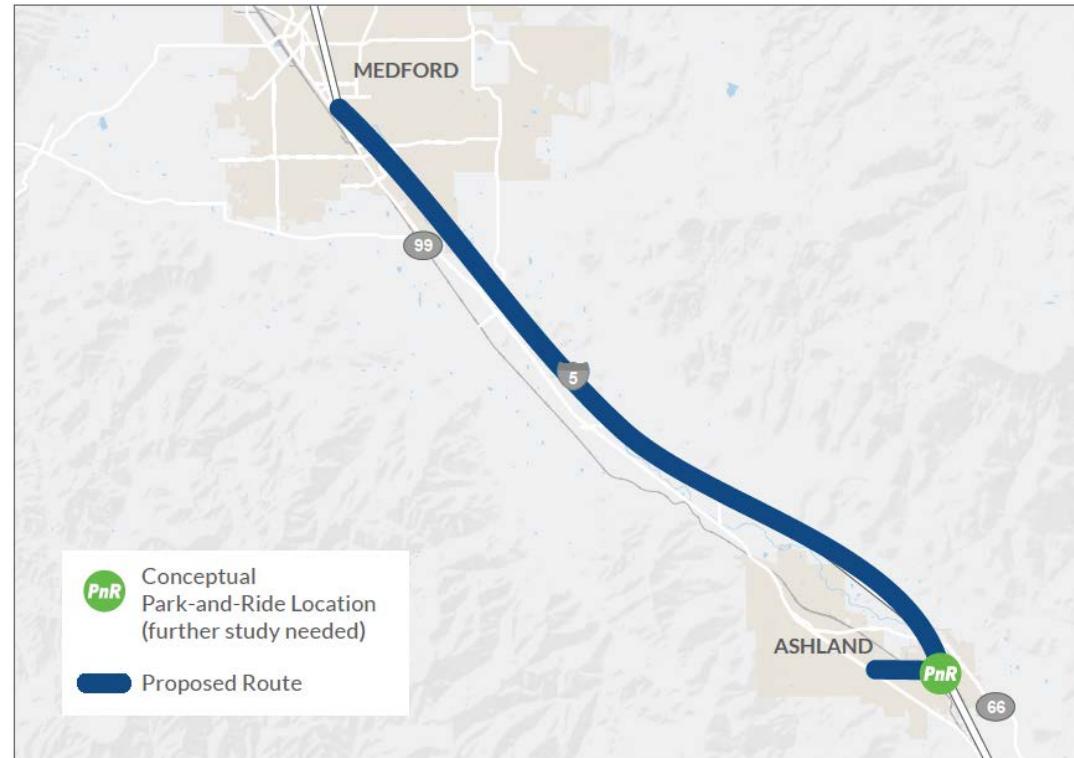
- Increase convenience and access for regional trips
- Augment Route 10 service on Highway 99
- Builds on past local and regional transit plans
- \$140,000 +1 vehicle at 90 minute headway



MEDFORD-ASHLAND EXPRESS

ACTIONS

- Operations and capital plan
- Support regional marketing and information
- Integrate with parking programs and policies
- Support bike-ped infrastructure
- Ongoing monitoring and improvements



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

- Common are large, 30-40 feet – smaller vehicles emerging
- Charge time and scheduling
- Wheelchair access, other compliance requirements
- Combine with local route or demand response
- \$50,000 - \$1,000,000



ELECTRIC VEHICLES

ACTIONS

- Match vehicle to service
- Request for information
- Vehicle storage and charging facility
- Vehicle specifications and procurement
- Monitor and improve



BICYCLE - PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Access improvements
 - comfort, convenience, safety
- Bus stop improvements
 - Amenities, maintenance, access
- \$5,000 to \$100,000+



BICYCLE - PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

ACTIONS

- Prioritize and implement active transportation projects
- Bike share expansion study
- Review / align land use code



TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- Actively promote public transportation information
- Support transportation options
- Support carpool program; explore vanpool options
- \$20,000 - \$80,000



TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

ACTIONS

- Create Ashland-specific marketing material
- Create a local transportation management association or program
- Provide staff support to RVTD and other partners



NEXT STEPS

Near term opportunities

- Active transportation improvements
- Information and marketing
- Demand response transit pilot project



NEXT STEPS

Statewide transportation Improvement Fund – Discretionary

- Every 2 years

Statewide transportation Improvement Fund – Formula

- RVTB solicitation process
- Plan every 2 years

Federal formula funding

- Existing services





Questions and comments

Thank You!

