

Transit Ridership Increases in Other Areas and Relevance to the Treasure Valley

The following information has been pulled from various studies and resources with intent of:

- Providing information on experiences from other areas highlighting any potential applicability to the Treasure Valley, and
- To provide broad information on other areas with the understanding that additional detail can be developed for areas that are of particular interest to the Coalition.

Experience From Other Areas	Local Applicability/Things to Consider
<p>Service Expansion</p> <p>The most common reasons cited for large increases in transit ridership are a result of the expansion of available service. This service expansion is being made possible by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An increase in funding, and • Increased coordination and collaboration with other types of transit services, school (public and university), human service, etc. 	<p>Latent Demand: Experience from other areas shows that when more service is made available, ridership has increased substantially. This is positive in that it has been established that it is common to have a latent demand for transit.</p> <p>Efficiency: In a study of transit ridership increases from 2000-2002 it was found that in more cases than not, service expansion as a result of increased funding also resulted in an efficiency increase as well. Passengers per mile and/or passengers per hour increased.</p> <p>Coordination/Collaboration: Valley Regional Transit (VRT), in response to requirements in SAFETEA-LU*, has begun a comprehensive Transportation Service Coordination Plan. This effort should result in more efficient service and cost-avoidance. In one study on service increases, half of the respondents indicated that service provided in collaboration with the local university was the major reason for an increase in ridership.</p>
<p>Detailed Service Reporting</p> <p>In 3 studies^{1,2,3} on increases in transit ridership, it was shown that common among transit agencies that experienced an increase in ridership, was the practice of conducting ongoing, detailed service reporting. Aggregated, service-wide statistical reporting has been found to be of little use in planning for service improvements and expansion.</p>	<p>Valley Regional Transit, partly in response to the direction of the Communities in Motion and Blueprint for Good Growth efforts and as a part of its own ongoing planning activities and improvements, is in the process of developing extremely detailed service reporting processes.</p> <p>This reporting will enable VRT to fine tune service changes, to report system performance and to gauge the effectiveness of changes in land use. Experience from other areas shows that most service increases result from targeting specific markets. VRT's improved reporting will improve service planning capabilities.</p>

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Experience From Other Areas	Local Applicability/Things to Consider
<p>Combination of Activities</p> <p>Generally, strategies to improve and expand transit ridership falls into five broad categories, service adjustments, fare and pricing adaptations, marketing and information initiatives, shifts in planning orientation, new efforts in service coordination, collaboration & partnering.</p> <p>The previously mentioned studies have shown that regions that have shown rapid increases in transit ridership do not rely on just one strategy but instead employ a combination of planning activities.</p>	<p>VRT has active planning activities or initiatives in the following categories:</p> <p>Service Adjustments Planning Orientation Fare and Pricing Adaptations Marketing and Information Initiatives Service Coordination: VRT has initiated work on the Transportation Service Coordination Plan. See information above under, "Coordination/Collaboration"</p>
<p>The Future Favors "New Paradigm" Agencies</p> <p>A recent study asserts that transit agencies must adapt and respond to dramatic new expectations by way of emulating "new paradigm" business practices.</p> <p>Businesses or agencies that are interested primarily in protecting the status-quo will find it difficult to remain relevant. In a society where change and instant communications have become the norm, businesses cannot afford to shy away from fundamentally refocusing and reorganizing their organizations and traditional business practices to be more responsive and adaptable.</p>	<p>VRT was highlighted in the "Emerging New Paradigms Study" as an agency that embodies this new method of doing business. The VRT mission statement itself indicates the level of internalization of this new model, "...to move people throughout the Valley by coordinating and providing convenient public transportation services."</p> <p>VRT has adopted a businesslike approach to providing transit; they see themselves more as "mobility managers". As such, their primary concern is to serve the needs of the customer. Their job is to find the most efficient way to improve mobility be it through service contracted with a private bus operator, a taxi company, management of volunteers or their own drivers and vehicles.</p>
<p>External Forces</p> <p>It is common for factors outside the control of transit professionals to have more of an effect than any overt efforts; population growth is the most often cited factor.</p>	<p>It is well established that population in the Treasure Valley is expected to grow rapidly in the near future. Experience from other areas shows that if transit service is allowed to expand concurrently with population, ridership, and often efficiency, increases.</p>

* "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" – The Federal surface transportation funding program for the period 2005-2009.

1. Transit Cooperative Research Program-Research Results Digest 69 - 2005, "Evaluation of Recent Ridership Increases"

2. Transit Cooperative Research Program-Research Results February 1995—Number 4, "Transit Ridership Initiative"

3. Transit Cooperative Research Program-Research Results August 1998—Number 29, "Continuing Examination of Successful Transit Ridership Initiatives"

Summary Description of Ridership Increases

Area	Service Area Population <i>Square Miles</i>	Percentage Ridership Increase	Factors Related to Service Increase
Salt Lake City, UT	<p>2000 1,744,417 <i>1,412 sq. miles</i></p> <p>1990 1,513,000 <i>1,612 sq. miles</i></p>	<p>13.9% 2000-2002</p> <p>5.9% 1994-1996</p> <p>11.1% 1990-1993</p>	<p>2000-2002 New sales tax-service expansion, introduction of light-rail</p> <p>Reorganized adopted mobility management strategy 1994-1996 Population growth, introduction of intercity service, employer pass programs 1991-1993 Comprehensive service monitoring, Medicaid/school coordination, aggressive marketing</p>
Denver, CO	<p>2000 2,545,000 <i>2,326 sq. miles</i></p> <p>1990 2,400,000 <i>2,406 sq. miles</i></p>	<p>12.2% 2000-2002</p> <p>9.0% 1994-1996</p>	<p>2000-2002 Expanded light rail service, expanded vanpool program, adopted management strategy, contract providers, etc. 1994-1996 Initiated light-rail service (bus ridership rose as well) 1991-1993 Sales tax increase passed</p>
Phoenix, AZ	<p>2000 2,700,000 <i>741 sq. miles</i></p> <p>1990 2,006,239 <i>741 sq miles</i></p>	<p>26.5% 2000-2002</p>	<p>2000-2002 Service expansion funded by new tax, increase in contracted service, community planning activities, commuter "Rapid Bus" service initiated, light-rail planned</p>
Riverside CA	<p>2000 1,498,433 <i>2,725 sq. miles</i></p> <p>1999 1,143,163 <i>2,500 sq miles</i></p>	<p>1994-1996 15.7%</p> <p>44% 1991-1993</p>	<p>1994-1996 Service "matured," latent demand exposed by service expansion fully realized, collaboration with business and schools, aggressive marketing, community-based planning activities 1991-1993 Rapid expansion fueled by new sales tax & concurrent expansion of population Pre-1991 Half-cent sales tax passed in 1988 (renewed in 2002)</p>
Metro RTA Akron, OH	<p>2000 542,899 <i>420 sq. miles</i></p> <p>1999 514,990 <i>420 sq. miles</i></p>	<p>4.7% 1994-1996</p> <p>21.9% 1991-1993</p>	<p>1994-1996 Still reflecting maturation of svc expansion from sales tax increase, collaboration with university/business pass program 1991-1993 Service expansion fueled by ¼-cent sales tax, ridership increased during fare hike, community based planning initiatives</p>