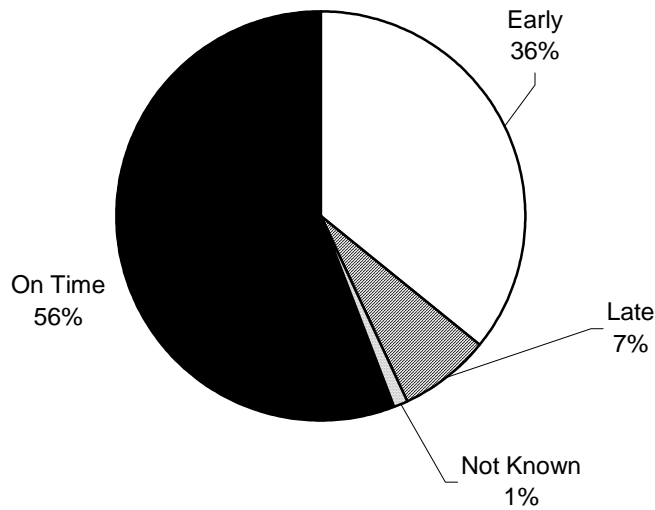


Figure 8 Scheduled Pickup On Time Performance



Almost half (45%) of all tardy pick-ups occur during the traditional morning rush hour of 8:00 – 10:00 AM, yet only 25% of all pick-ups occur during this period. More than one in ten pick-ups in the morning rush hour is late. See the following table for a complete breakdown of scheduled arrivals by hour.

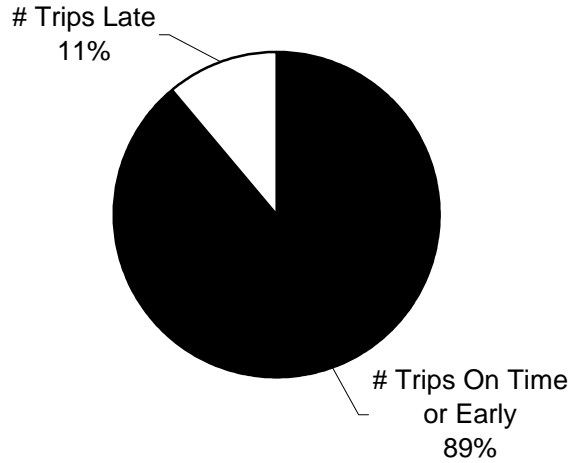
Figure 9 Scheduled Pickup On Time Performance By Hour

Hour	On Time	Early	Late	Not Known	Total Trips	On Time	Early	Late
6:00 AM	13	4	0	0	17	76%	24%	0%
7:00 AM	38	38	2	3	81	47%	47%	2%
8:00 AM	71	35	11	4	121	59%	29%	9%
9:00 AM	58	25	18	3	104	56%	24%	17%
10:00 AM	38	29	0	0	67	57%	43%	0%
11:00 AM	32	29	3	0	64	50%	45%	5%
12:00 PM	43	24	2	0	69	62%	35%	3%
1:00 PM	39	25	1	0	65	60%	38%	2%
2:00 PM	45	47	7	0	99	45%	47%	7%
3:00 PM	78	37	6	1	122	64%	30%	5%
4:00 PM	26	14	5	0	45	58%	31%	11%
5:00 PM	11	7	6	0	24	46%	29%	25%
6:00 PM	2	5	3	0	10	20%	50%	30%
7:00 PM	2	0	0	0	2	100%	0%	0%
TOTAL	496	319	64	11	890	56%	36%	7%

Out of a total of 735 destination **arrival** trips, 89% arrived either on-time or earlier than the scheduled arrival time.¹ This is a reasonable percentage given the uncertainty of traffic conditions. However, if a high percentage of on-time arrival is accomplished through a significant number of early pick-ups, this could present a problem for riders that needs to be addressed. See Figure 10 below for on-time arrival information.

¹ The difference between the total number of pickup trips (890) compared to the total number of destination arrival trips (735) is due to the number of scheduled pickups that were made but were 'no-shows.'

Figure 10 Scheduled Arrival On Time Performance



In our analysis, rush hour also appears to have had an effect on arrival times. The greatest number of late arrivals occurred during the hour between 9:00 and 10:00 AM. See Figure 11 below for a breakdown of arrival times by hour.

Figure 11 Scheduled Arrival On Time Performance By Hour

Hour	# Trips On time	# Trips Early	# Trips On Time or Early	# Trips Late	Total # Trips	On Time or Early	Late
6:00 AM	0	12	12	0	24	50%	0%
7:00 AM	0	36	36	0	72	50%	0%
8:00 AM	1	83	84	2	170	49%	1%
9:00 AM	11	59	70	27	167	42%	16%
10:00 AM	3	32	35	7	77	45%	9%
11:00 AM	0	34	34	1	69	49%	1%
12:00 PM	0	20	20	0	40	50%	0%
1:00 PM	0	27	27	2	56	48%	4%
2:00 PM	0	17	17	0	34	50%	0%
3:00 PM	0	7	7	0	14	50%	0%
4:00 PM	0	2	2	3	7	29%	43%
5:00 PM	0	2	2	0	4	50%	0%
6:00 PM	0	0	0	0	0	---	---
7:00 PM	0	0	0	1	1	0%	100%
TOTAL	15	331	346	43	735	47%	6%

In evaluating Access' on-time performance, it must be taken into account that drivers manually enter their pickup and arrival times. Although all drivers diligently filled out all entries in the sample manifests, it is noted that some drivers are inclined to be more accurate in their entries than others (e.g., entering 9:02 AM instead of 9:00 AM). The manual schedule entry and the tendency of certain drivers to round off to the nearest quarter hour have the effect of skewing the on-time performance outcomes. See Figure 12 below for on-time performance broken down by driver.

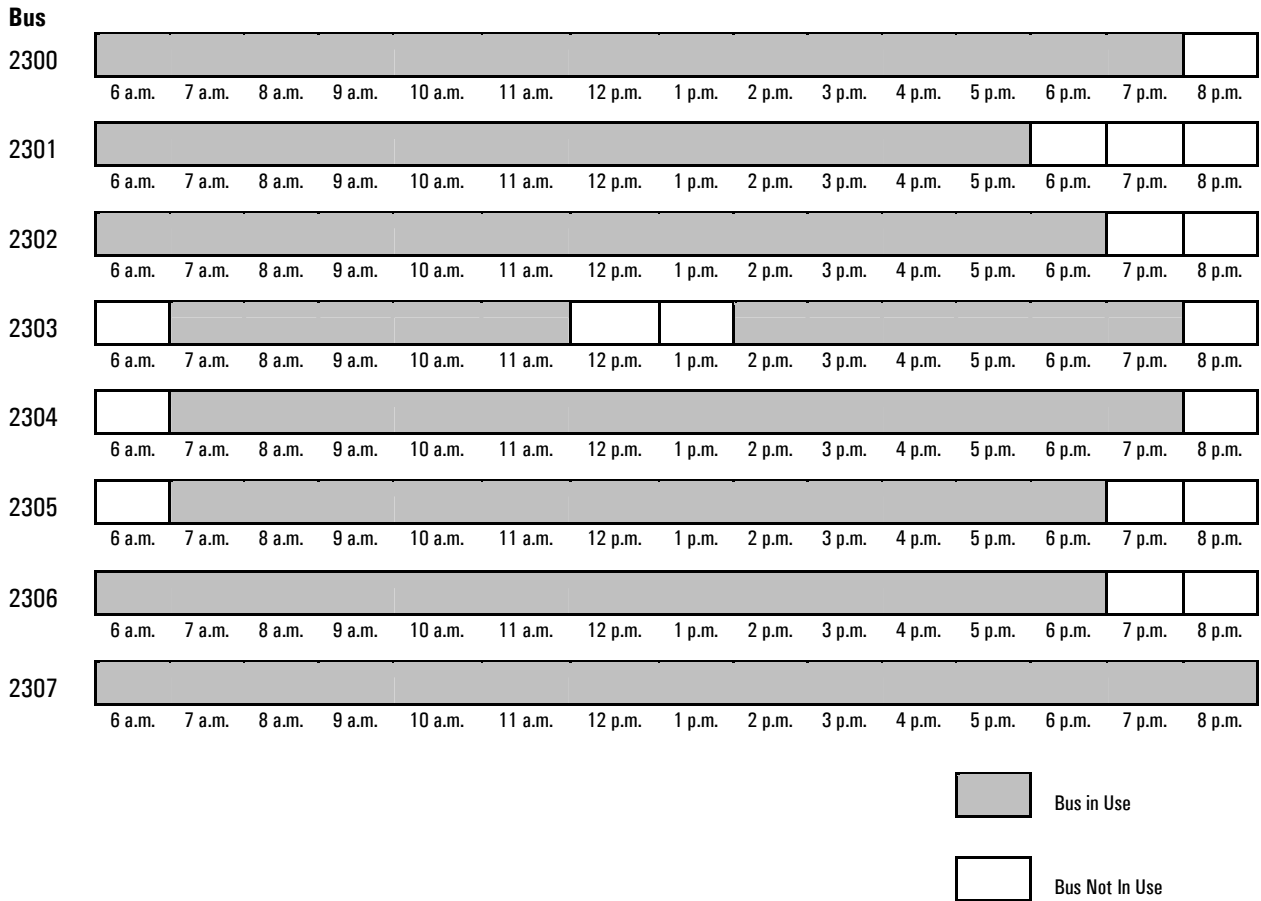
Figure 12 Scheduled Pickup On Time Performance By Driver

Driver	On Time	Early	Late	Not Known	Total Trips	On Time	Early	Late
1	5	6	0	0	11	45%	55%	0%
2	83	39	28	11	161	52%	24%	17%
3	74	38	14	0	126	59%	30%	11%
4	43	70	3	0	116	37%	60%	3%
5	43	65	4	0	112	38%	58%	4%
6	129	4	2	0	135	96%	3%	1%
7	55	52	7	0	114	48%	46%	6%
8	64	45	6	0	115	56%	39%	5%
TOTAL	468	319	92	11	890	53%	36%	10%

Bus Use Efficiency

Access uses a total of eight buses. Except for bus #2303, which typically has a two- to three-hour hiatus in the middle of the day, each bus is used continuously throughout the day. While this would suggest that there is not much potential for transporting additional riders on the existing fleet, productivity numbers indicate that the fleet could possibly handle an additional ten percent increase in ridership if reasonable productivity improvements are achieved. However, given recent ridership trends, even if productivity does improve, the vehicle fleet will need to be expanded by one vehicle within the coming fiscal year.

Figure 13 Access Bus Use by Hour



Evaluation of Access Service Policies and Procedures

Door-to-Door Service

While the law only requires curb-to-curb service rather than door-to-door, many systems have found that rider pick-ups can actually take longer for those individuals who need assistance to or from the door. A compromise policy that may be adopted, or that is practiced without formal adoption, is to provide curb-to-curb, with door-to-door upon request.

No-Show Policy

An effective no-show policy can be a useful tool in terms of promoting scheduling efficiencies, while ensuring that the most egregious no-show offenders are encouraged to change their behavior. The current policy needs to be re-examined. On the one hand the policy is extremely stringent – allowing three no-shows for a full year period is very limiting by industry standards (where a similar number in a six or three month period is

more typical). On the other hand, those who have no-showed are given the option of paying their fare and “cleaning” their record. Since the fare recovers only a small portion of the total cost, this defeats the purpose of trying to minimize this practice as offenders can continue to no-show while paying their \$2 “penalty,” and the program must continue to incur the costs of traveling to the pick-up points.

Medical Will Calls

Many paratransit programs schedule just the first leg of a medical trip, and expect the customer to call when s/he has finished their appointment to request the return trip. This policy, known as a “will-call”, is intended to address the uncertainties surrounding medical appointments and minimize the amount of time a vehicle has to wait or the need to return as a “go-back.” Access does not provide medical will-call service. As demand for service increases – and if the national trend of significant growth in dialysis trips occurs – Access may wish to consider implementing this policy.

Negotiated Trip Times

The dispatcher currently accepts weekday trip requests without time negotiations (weekend trip times are negotiated due to the small number of available drivers). Negotiations are allowed under the ADA, although certainly not required, as they generally have a negative impact on the riders’ experience of service quality. However, in the context of tight fiscal constraints, the issue of negotiating trip times should be further examined.

Travel Training

While a former marketing staff person provided assistance to individuals who were interested in learning to use the bus, this service has not been offered since her departure. A more comprehensive travel training approach should be considered as part of the revamping of the eligibility screening process. Some local agencies serving people with cognitive and visual disabilities may be willing to provide these training opportunities, which could be part of a cost sharing discussion regarding paratransit service to their clients.

Fixed-Route Discounted Fares

ValleyRide currently provides discounted fixed-route fares for seniors and people with disabilities during the peak hours of service (when it is not required under federal law). This policy should be continued as a means of shifting some paratransit riders to fixed-route. Changes to this policy would be counter-productive to efforts to encourage those who are conditionally eligible to choose fixed-route service when ever possible.

Summary of Service Gaps and Areas for Program Improvement

Following are the key service gaps that have been identified in this report. These include both existing gaps/service issues that need to be resolved, and those that are anticipated due to population growth in the area.

Service Policies/Procedures that need to be addressed

- Certain Access service policies have a negative impact on productivity, such as the no-show policy, the door-to-door policy, and the lack of trip time negotiations on weekdays.
- The current eligibility-screening model is probably enabling individuals to use paratransit service for trips that they could otherwise take on fixed-route.
- The current job responsibilities of the Coordinator position are too broad for one individual – an additional half time position is needed in this office.
- The lack of shared responsibility for trip provision with social service agencies could result in significant cost increases as the population expands – this is particularly true for dialysis clinics.

Service gaps based on future development and fixed-route bus recommendations

- Proposed higher frequency fixed-route service does not necessarily correspond with areas of projected high concentrations of people with disabilities
- High densities of people with disabilities in Meridian and the Five Mile/Ustick area will remain unserved in the short-term, until service expands in the Six Year Plan.
- The significant development of new senior housing in Eagle and Meridian will increase pressure for paratransit to these two areas.
- Service to Saint Luke's Hospital in Meridian is needed by many paratransit users in the Boise area.
- Service is very limited in the smaller communities of Canyon County.
- Current ridership increases on the TVT system will soon outstrip the program's ability to meet demand.
- Service between the two counties will need to be coordinated as land use developments lead to a merging of the urbanized centers in each county.

Recommended Service Strategy & Implementation Action Plan

The recommended service strategy is divided according to overall policy and administration recommendations, and operational procedures. Short-Term recommendations pertain to the next two years of service, while the long-term recommendations refer to those that should occur in the 2007 – 2012 timeframe. The recommendations are summarized in the matrix below, which is followed by a discussion of each of the strategies. Projected capital and operating costs may be found in the Appendix.

Summary of Recommended Service Strategies

Short-Term Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand Paratransit Staff• Overhaul the Eligibility Screening Process• Actively Negotiate Pick-up and Drop-off Times• Establish an “open booking list”• Implement a “will-call” trip request policy for return medical trips• Begin the process of procuring a computer-assist scheduling software package• Establish productivity improvement objectives• Create a travel training program
Long-Term Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consolidate paratransit administration under the rubric of ValleyRide• Establish a Transfer Point in Meridian• Implement Feeder Service• Assess Impacts of Fixed-Route Expansion• Explore Cost-sharing or operations sharing arrangements with other agencies• Establish a paratransit taxi contract to complement the ADA paratransit program

Short-Term Strategies

Administrative Recommendations

Expand Paratransit Staff: At least one-half full time employee should be hired within the current fiscal year to provide support to the Coordinator. This individual should be trained to perform all the same functions as the Coordinator in the event that she is absent from the office. Based on the Coordinator's considerable experience in the office, she should maintain the function of scheduling and dispatching trips, while the new staff person should primarily be responsible for trip reservations and data entry. As demand increases, this position should become full-time.

Operational Procedure Recommendations

Overhaul the Eligibility Screening Process: It is critical that the eligibility screening process be evaluated and revised as a demand management measure that is clearly sanctioned by the ADA. Since ValleyRide and TVT appear to be at the beginning of a potentially significant growth curve, it is imperative that the screening process that allows new individuals to enter the system be as accurate as possible. The new process should discourage those who are able to ride the bus for all of their trips from applying for ADA certification. If operationally feasible during the short-term (two-year) period, ValleyRide should explore the possibility of combining the eligibility process for both Ada and Canyon Counties.

Actively Negotiate Pick-up and Drop-off Times: If demand increases to the point where the system is becoming capacity constrained, the 60-minute parameters for trip negotiation allowed by the ADA should be adopted. This approach will increase service productivity, but should be adopted cautiously due to the potential impact on rider convenience.

- Where space is not available at the requested time, the Coordinator could negotiate an alternate pick up or drop off time within 60 minutes of the requested pick up or drop off time – resulting in higher vehicle utilization and more productive use of the 20-minute pick up window. This may also allow more grouping of trips between Ada and Canyon Counties as service expands. As a first step, the Coordinator should begin negotiating trip times during the peak periods, paying careful attention to the desired drop-off times in order to avoid late arrivals at appointments.

Establish an “open booking list” for trips that cannot be assigned through negotiation at the time the request is made. This practice can increase cost efficiency, service productivity and farebox revenue recovery.

- This model requires overbooking the system in a manner similar to the airline industry. The volume of requests “overbooked” is based on the Coordinator's knowledge of trip cancellation trends (volume and general times). Experienced

dispatchers can establish ceilings for the number of trips that can be placed on an open booking list by time of day or day of week.

- The Coordinator will assign open booking list trips on the day of service as cancellations become apparent.
- Open booking list trips that cannot eventually be assigned to an established route could be assigned to a floater or a supplemental taxi contractor. Service has to be provided once a commitment has been made in advance to the customer.

Implement a “will-call” trip request policy for return medical trips. A will-call trip request policy is a common paratransit practice to reduce no-shows and the need to send a bus back when the customer is not ready following a medical appointment. A “will-call” trip request policy can improve service efficiency and productivity.

- Under this policy, customers pre-book their trip to a medical appointment and leave their return trip time open. They would call and request a pick-up when their appointment is complete or when they know they will be ready. A common will-call practice is to pick up the person within 60 minutes or less of their call.
- Coordinators know how many open return trips they have to accommodate and have a rough estimate of when the return trip requests will be made. Buses can be laid over at clinics and medical facilities during gaps in their schedules to be available for “will-calls”.
- A floater or supplemental taxi contractor can also be used to handle will-calls.

Begin the process of procuring a computer-assist scheduling software package: As demand continues to grow, ValleyRide should begin exploring this option. Appendices B and C provide specifications for a range of scheduling packages. The hiring of a new employee would provide the Coordinator with time to participate in the research of software packages. An appropriate application should be in place by 2007 when service expansion is expected.

Establish productivity improvement objectives: Current weekday productivity is approximately 2.2 passengers/revenue hour. A 10% annual improvement in weekday productivity is a reasonable improvement benchmark, and feasible within the first year of this Six Year Plan, provided suggested procedural changes are implemented. Subsequent annual improvements of 5% should be included as a Plan goal.

Create a travel training program: ValleyRide should develop a travel training program that proactively recruits trainees in senior centers and in high schools that target students with disabilities. Resources are available in the community to provide this training – the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation has been cited as one potential source of trainers. While the initial investment in training may appear significant, the payoff in terms of diversion of riders from paratransit to fixed-route is considerable.

Long-Term Strategies

Administrative Recommendations

Consolidate paratransit administration under the rubric of ValleyRide: ADA paratransit should be provided as a regional system, consistent with the regional nature of the fixed-route system. ValleyRide should continue responsibility for the overall administration of the programs, but may contract out specific functions of Canyon County service and evaluate the costs and benefits of contracting Access services in Ada County.

- ValleyRide should continue to contract management, dispatching and vehicle operations functions as part of the broader contract covering fixed route services in Canyon County.
- ValleyRide should also explore the costs and benefits of contracting out versus maintaining in-house paratransit operations in Ada County. This will be included in a broader organizational evaluation being conducted as part of the ROCIP.

Operational Recommendations

Establish a Transfer Point in Meridian: Given the regional nature of the paratransit system, the proposed Meridian Transit Center should also serve as a transfer point for intercounty paratransit trips. Non-stop trips between Boise and urbanized areas in Canyon County would be very costly and result in significant deadheading of vehicles after passengers have been dropped off. While the requirement for transfers will be less convenient for riders than a direct trip, this approach remains consistent with the ADA regulations.

Implement Feeder Service: The revised ADA eligibility process should incorporate a mechanism for identifying persons who could transfer from paratransit to a fixed-route system, as an additional means of minimizing the impacts of very long paratransit trips.

Address Impacts of Fixed-Route Expansion: While some of the proposed expansion of fixed-route service is essential to meet latent demand, all new fixed-routes carry with them the obligation for paratransit service. The proposed fixed-route service on Highway 44 should be considered in light of the financial impacts of providing complementary paratransit in that corridor. Another potentially significant impact on paratransit service is the expansion of the service area to include St. Luke's in Meridian. This strong attractor may require a focused grouping of paratransit trips to the extent possible within the regulations.

Explore Cost-sharing or operations sharing arrangements with other agencies: If demand does increase as projected, ValleyRide should initiate discussions with large users of the paratransit program to determine if there are opportunities for sharing the responsibility of providing service, either through cost-sharing or through the direct provision of service. A prime candidate would be the ARC Inc., which is the greatest beneficiary of Access service, and has prior experience with transportation service provision. However, other potential