



Five Year Strategic Plan for 2016-2020

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Mountain Rides provides and supports a full range of transportation alternatives for Blaine County and adjacent communities that are safe, user oriented, environmentally friendly, economically sustainable, and supportive of a strong local economy.



Courtesy Mountain Rides

Section I. Executive Summary

Mountain Rides' core belief is that a safe, reliable, customer focused, and sustainable public transportation system makes the community stronger, healthier, and more interesting place. This belief guides all of Mountain Rides' work and has been the foundation for many successes since Mountain Rides was formed in October 2007 as a regional, multimodal transportation entity.

Our success over the past eight years has included increasing ridership by 60%, diversifying and growing funding by 40%, building and leveraging new partnerships, increasing service levels by 40% with more consistent peak and year-round service, and developing a cohesive brand that has all public transportation modes within one organization. This success has been the result of thoughtful consideration, careful planning, and dedicated implementation by the Mountain Rides board and staff. And this success reflects the quality and strength of our biggest asset, our employees.

In 2008, Mountain Rides adopted a strategic plan that defined our path and gave us a blueprint for success. (For a copy of this plan, see Appendix A.) This plan was successfully executed, with most major goals and objectives accomplished in five years instead of the originally envisioned three. For several years now, Mountain Rides has continued to do annual strategic planning, consisting of an annual strategy workshop resulting in an implementation plan. These year-to-year plans have ensured that Mountain Rides continued to accomplish much in the past few years, but these plans haven't looked far enough ahead. Mountain Rides needs a five-year Strategic Plan that can provide a proactive roadmap for 2016-2020 and beyond for Mountain Rides.

This five year Strategic Plan will be an invaluable tool for articulating where Mountain Rides is heading – from how to improve the bus system to attract more riders, to how to make it easier to bike and walk, to how to incorporate public transportation in land use decisions. The five year Strategic Plan will serve as a

comprehensive, regional public transportation plan to be referenced by:

- Mountain Rides' staff, to plan annual progress towards long-term goals
- Joint Powers Agreement partners and other business community funding partners, to see what resources and collaboration are needed to keep improving public transportation

- The general public, to recognize public transportation needs within our area and understand how specific services will be improved, changed, or developed

The majority of service, program, and financial detail for the five year plan can be found in Section IV, where goals and objectives are described in detail. The five goals and associated objectives of this plan are as follows

Goal 1:
Build upon successful services by increasing service on core routes and simplifying the overall system

Objectives

- 1.1 Move to a system that has only two seasons, peak and off-peak, and increase the summer peak season
- 1.2 Improve year-round baseline service to 30 minute standard frequency to maximize convenience
- 1.3 Make incremental investments to increase successful routes, especially at night, on weekends, and at midday, and provide a base level of service on less successful routes
- 1.4 Eliminate midday gaps in service
- 1.5 Simplify the overall system by consolidating routes and by making routes linear
- 1.6 Retain a necessary level of vanpool service

Goal 2:
Develop new transportation services that complement current services to meet community needs

Objectives

- 2.1 Evaluate, plan, and implement express route directly to Friedman Memorial Airport
- 2.2 Plan and implement fixed route connection to Twin Falls
- 2.3 Develop a third party funded pilot service to connect Ketchum and Sun Valley with the Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Galena Lodge
- 2.4 Respond to new service demands as they arise

Goal 3:
Support and coordinate the development of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities, including infrastructure

Objectives

- 3.1 Coordinate and help implement the Blaine Co. Regional Bike-Pedestrian Master Plan
- 3.2 Increase awareness of and active participation in Safe Routes to School biking and walking programs
- 3.3 Partner with cities on plans to improve downtown core areas to make them more pedestrian and bike friendly
- 3.4 Continue to create opportunities to get more people biking and walking through programs like bikeshare

Goal 4:
Develop and support incentives that inspire more people to take public transportation

Objectives

- 4.1 Dedicate more resources to advertising and marketing
- 4.2 Build more business support to encourage ridership
- 4.3 Strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones
- 4.4 Implement additional technology-based customer information sources
- 4.5 Work with local cities and the county on land use and other policies to encourage more use of public transportation

Goal 5:
Build the financial, structural, and organizational resources to fulfill goals 1 through 4

Objectives

- 5.1 Project the funding needs for the next five years so that all funding partners can plan ahead
- 5.2 Work with local governments to increase local funding and dedicate an increased, fixed percentage of local option tax (LOT) to public transportation; work at the state level on dedicated funding for public transportation
- 5.3 Continue to develop capital equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and technology projects through the five year Capital Improvement Plan
- 5.4 Staff organization appropriately to meet plan goals

If Mountain Rides is successful in executing all of the goals, objectives, and ideas outlined in the following pages of this plan, we can expect to see:

- Ridership increase to 750,000 annually by 2020
- Service improvements such as:
 - 30 minute frequency year-round and 10-20 minute peak frequency on higher volume routes
 - Fewer seasonal variations to service
 - Easier to understand routes and schedules
- Capital investments of over \$7MM between now and the end of 2020 that include:
 - At least two battery electric buses in operation with plans for a full electric fleet by 2030
 - Upgrades to bus stops and bus signage system-wide
 - Customer information technology to make the user experience seamless
 - A downtown Ketchum transportation center facility
- Implementation of a significant number of pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure projects as outlined in the Regional Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan

- Greater public awareness of how to use Mountain Rides' services and how they benefit the community
- Safer and more convenient integration of biking, walking, and transit

The plan ends with a section on performance measures and success factors. Appendix A includes the original strategic plan for Mountain Rides from 2008.

It should be noted that the following plan does not provide precise, year-by-year details for achieving the above goals and objectives; as mentioned earlier, a strategic implementation plan will be developed annually to describe specific initiatives and strategies for that year. Annual implementation planning will also be incorporated into the annual service plan, the annual budget development process, the annual capital improvement plan update, and the annual strategic goal-setting meeting.

As this plan contains many references to terms that may not be familiar to a reader new to the world of public transportation or to the Sun Valley area, a glossary is included at the end of this document in Appendix B.

Our family has been coming to Sun Valley for over 20 years, and we love the fantastic free bus system. Everyone in our family of four looks forward to that one week a year when we don't need a car. Each person can keep to their own schedule and there are no parking hassles. We use the bus to and from skiing, skating, shopping, coffee, and dinners and drinks. Plus the drivers go out of their way to be friendly and helpful whenever we need directions. So thank you for keeping this tradition.

- Linda L, Visitor from California

Section II. History and Context

Before Mountain Rides can chart its course for the next five years, it is important to look at where we've been, where we are today, and at the big picture for public transportation locally, regionally, and nationally.

History

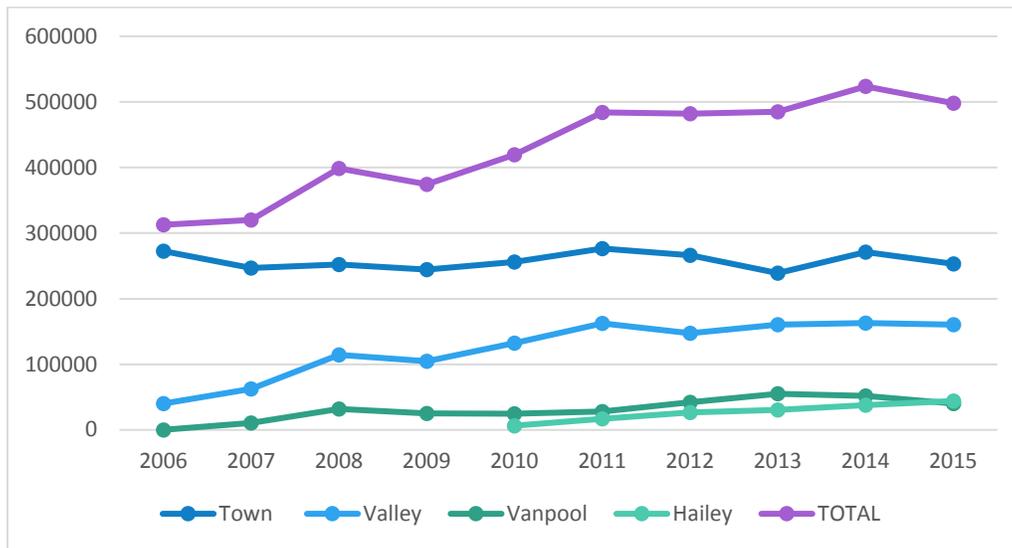
Mountain Rides was formed in 2007 as a Joint Powers Agreement between Blaine County and the cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley. Mountain Rides merged several independent transportation organizations – KART Bus, Peak Bus, and Wood River Rideshare – into one regional entity providing all public transportation modes throughout the Wood River Valley. KART Bus was the free bus for Ketchum and Sun Valley. Established in the 1980s it had the longest history, the most assets, and the longest track record of solid ridership. Peak Bus was a commuter bus started by Blaine County in 2002 with planning and development expertise provided by Wood River Rideshare. Wood River Rideshare was a non-profit with a mission of providing, supporting, and advocating for better multi-modal transportation through bus services, Safe Routes to School, vanpool, carpool, bike programs, and transportation planning.



Before 2008 Sun Valley Company operated its own bus service, taking guests from the Sun Valley Village area to Dollar Mountain, River Run Plaza, and Warm Springs' base area in old yellow school buses. Ahead of the 2008-2009 ski season, Mountain Rides developed a new partnership with Sun Valley Company to have Mountain Rides operate new public bus routes to duplicate most of what Sun Valley Company had operated. This partnership was another significant consolidation of bus services in the Sun Valley area and has been very successful over the years in generating ridership, creating a cohesive public transportation system, and benefitting both Mountain Rides and Sun Valley Company by enhancing the visitor experience.

Forming Mountain Rides through a Joint Powers Agreement took coordination and cooperation. In 2007, political support had built among the cities and the county to plan and fund a public transportation system for all who live, visit, or work in Blaine County. Prior to Mountain Rides, resources were segmented and separated, often resulting in duplication and inefficiency among KART, Peak Bus, and Wood River Rideshare. Mountain Rides' board and staff created a single organization for all modes of transportation, aside from the privately-owned, single occupancy vehicle, that the cities and the county could support because it improved the overall health of the tourist trade as well as the mobility of the entire community. Mountain Rides was made possible due to the foresight and political will of the leaders at the time to create an agency that could address transportation issues holistically.

Ridership history



From 2006 through 2014 Mountain Rides increased its service, ridership, and funding:

- Ridership soared from 300,000 in 2006 to over 520,000 in 2014 – a record year, as the first time public transportation in Blaine County reached the half million mark
- Service was increased through developing new routes, better year-round service levels, and adding more trips per day
- New services like the Silver Route, Bronze Route, Green Route, and Hailey Route were added
- New transportation partnerships were formed with the Sun Valley Company, Blaine County School District, St. Luke's, Wood River YMCA, Webb Landscape, Rocky Mountain Hardware, Community School, Sage School, Sun Valley Bronze, Power Engineers, Atkinsons' Market, Syringa School, Blaine County Recreation District, The Advocates, and many others
- Bike and pedestrian planning were developed through creating and adopting

the Blaine County Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

- Funding for public transportation grew by 32%, from \$1.8MM in operating funds to \$2.5MM
- Public awareness of public transportation and the Mountain Rides brand was heightened
- Nine new buses and fourteen new vans were added to the fleet
- A new bikeshare program was instituted in Hailey and Ketchum

These gains were largely made possible through careful planning and strategic execution. Mountain Rides adopted a strategic plan in 2008 that laid the groundwork for success. (See Appendix A.) The five year plan for 2016-2020 will pick up where past planning efforts left off and continue to seek ways to provide innovative, effective transportation solutions to the community.

Mountain Rides today

Today Mountain Rides is thriving as it continues to explore ways to make getting around without a car easier, safer, more convenient, and more fun. Mountain Rides has a strong team in place, is financially healthy, and is poised for future success:

Mountain Rides is the comprehensive provider of public transportation programs within Blaine County and adjacent communities, including fixed route bus, commuter bus, demand response van service, vanpool, rideshare, and bike and pedestrian programs. Transit services include free town routes in Ketchum and Sun Valley, a fare-based commuter route that runs the length of the Wood River Valley, a Hailey Route, and a commuter vanpool with eight to twelve routes that originate in the Shoshone and Twin Falls area.

Beyond the bus and van transit services, Mountain Rides provides a bikeshare program, Safe Routes to



Credit Steve Deffe

School program, general public education and outreach, as well as transportation planning services. The organization has anywhere from 28-45 employees, depending upon the amount of service at a given time of year. The bulk of those employees are in the operations and maintenance department.

Annual Operating Budget	\$2.6MM
Annual Capital Budget	\$500k - \$2.5MM, project dependent
# of Employees	28-45 depending on time of year (approx. 25 FTEs)
Type of entity	Local government subdivision organized by Joint Powers Agreement
Ridership	Record ridership of 520,620 in 2014; #1 per capita and 2 nd highest overall in the state of Idaho
Fleet	21 buses; 16 vans
Annual service hours	29,000 for fixed route bus
Annual service miles	450,000 fixed route bus; 300,000 vanpool
Services	6 free bus fixed routes, 1 commuter fixed route bus, 2 paratransit ADA vans, 8-12 commuter vanpool routes, Safe Routes to School, MR BikeShare, transportation planning
Notable	2014 winner of two leadership in public transportation awards, largest recipient of rural federal funding in Idaho, most rural capital funding awarded in Idaho from 2008-2015, 22 consecutive months of 0 at-fault accidents, over 850 consecutive days of zero on-the-job injuries

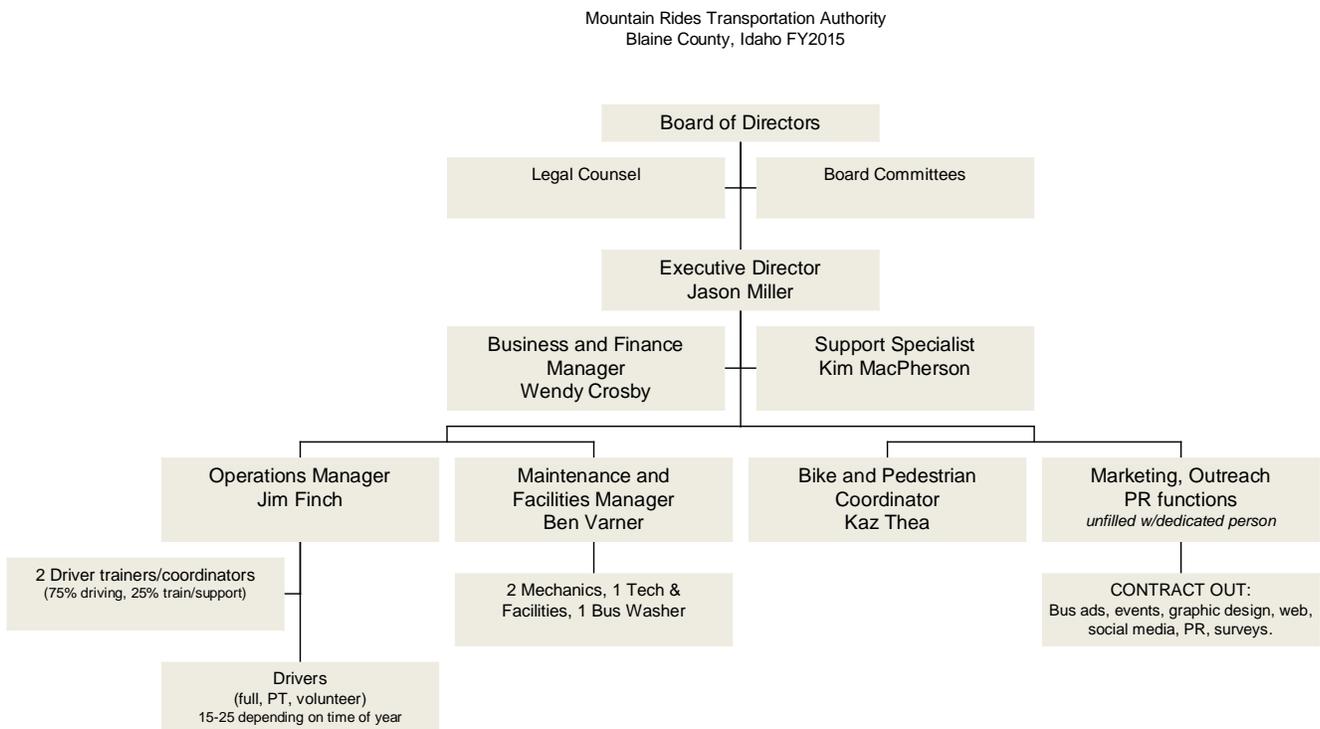
Structure, board, and management

Mountain Rides was established through a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) as a public, governmental agency to provide, plan, coordinate, and advocate for public transportation in Blaine County. The JPA currently has the cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley, as well as Blaine County, as signators. The JPA is valid for four years and has been extended twice, first in 2011 and again in 2015.

Mountain Rides has an eight member board of directors who are appointed by the cities and the county, with one at-large seat. Ketchum and Sun Valley each have two seats; Hailey, Bellevue, and Blaine County each have one seat. The current board members are: David Patrie, Chair (Blaine Co.);

Jane Conard, Vice Chair (Sun Valley); Joe Miczulski, Secretary (Bellevue); Steve Wolper (at-large); Mark Gilbert (Sun Valley); Kristen Derrig (Ketchum); Becki Keefer (Hailey); and Anne Corrock (Ketchum).

The board sets strategic direction, budget, policies, and high level goals, as well as approving the budget and managing the Executive Director. The Executive Director and staff implement the annual plan under the board's direction. Mountain Rides runs a lean organization with a small number of administrative and management personnel; most employees work in operations as bus drivers or in maintenance as mechanics. The current organizational chart is as follows:



This structure has served the organization well to date, but it doesn't allow us to expand services or spend time on long term planning and funding development. During peak season, staff focus primarily on keeping service running from day to day, with little or no time for working on larger projects, advancing major initiatives, or doing marketing or promotion.

Guiding Statements, purpose, and goals

From its inception, Mountain Rides has used guiding statements to describe how and why the organization operates. This statement of purpose and goals, formerly called the mission and vision, has been updated and improved over the years, but has always focused on providing high quality regional, multi-modal service that serves the community. The current board's Statement of Purpose and Goals are:

Statement of Purpose: Mountain Rides provides and supports a full range of transportation alternatives* for Blaine County and adjacent communities that are

safe, user oriented, environmentally friendly, economically sustainable, and supportive of a strong local economy.

Goals

- Provide and advocate for a well-funded transportation system that reduces the number of single occupancy vehicle trips and meets the needs of our communities and customers.
- Promote knowledge and increase awareness of the social, financial, environmental, and community benefits of transportation alternatives.*
- Promote regional cooperation on transportation issues.

**Alternatives include, but are not limited to, walking, biking, rideshare, vanpool, carshare, bikeshare, fixed route bus, paratransit demand response, custom bus, commuter bus, transportation planning, and transportation counseling.*

Credit Steve Deffe



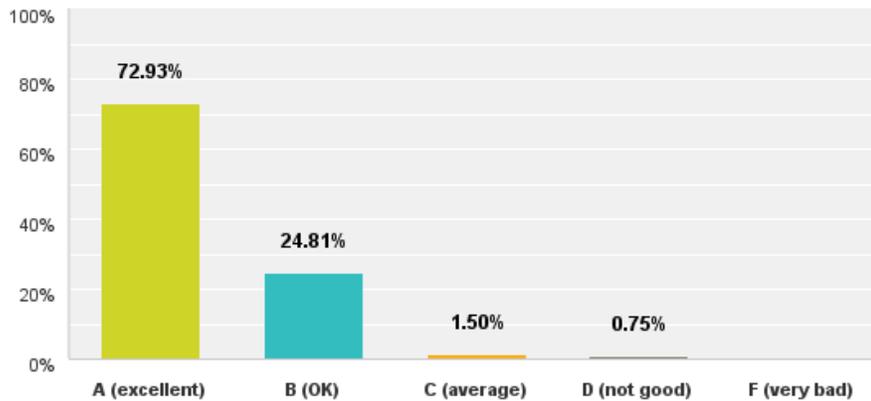
Customer satisfaction and demographics

For over five years, Mountain Rides has had a goal of 100% customer satisfaction. Mountain Rides has increased customer satisfaction from 92% four years

ago to almost 98% in our most recent survey (from the fall of 2015) when 97.74% of respondents gave Mountain Rides a grade of A or B:

Q7 Please grade the overall service that Mountain Rides provides:

Answered: 133 Skipped: 100



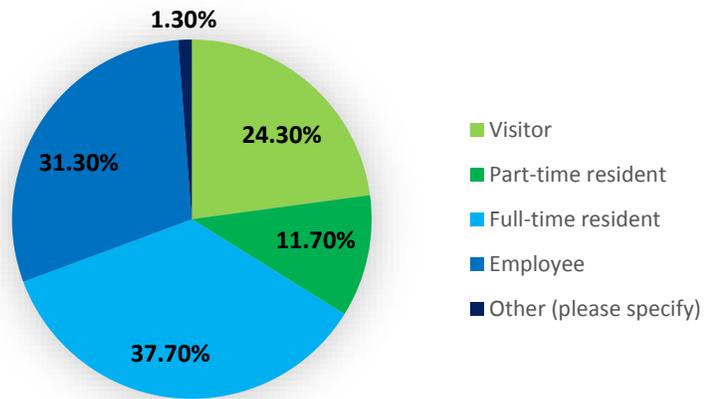
Courtesy Mountain Rides



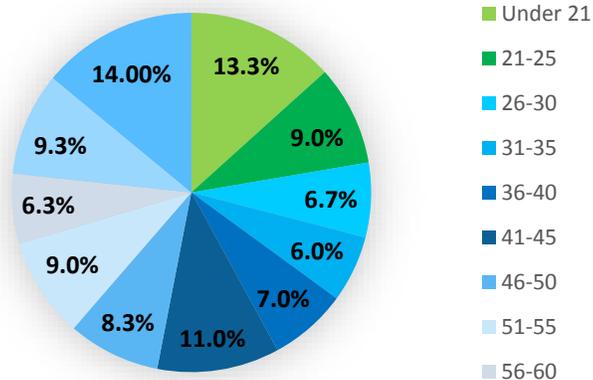
Based on a recent survey of ridership during a three week winter season period, the top three user groups in the Ketchum and Sun Valley area are: full-

time residents, employees, and visitors. Age distribution is fairly even: Most riders take the bus for recreation, work, and socializing/shopping.

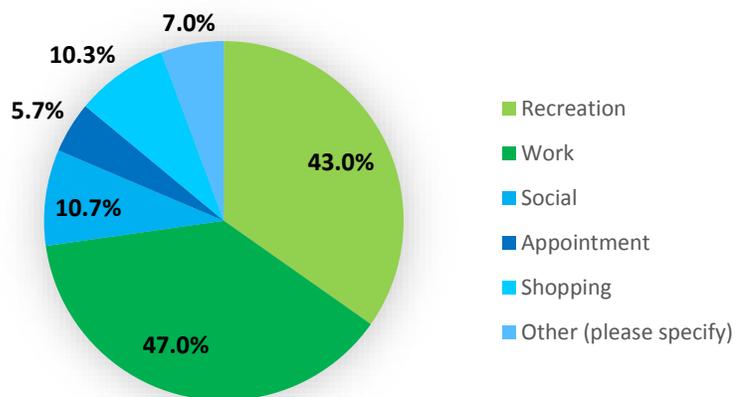
When you are in the Sun Valley area, are you a ____?



What is your age?



Which best describes the reason for using the Mountain Rides bus today?



Industry context

Public transportation, especially in resort areas, is characterized by growth and investment. In 2014, Americans took 10.8 billion trips on public transportation, which was the highest number in 58 years according to the American Public Transportation Association (APTA). In the past five years, public transportation has been revitalized throughout the U.S., with an overall ridership growth of 39% since 1995, outpacing a population growth of 25% over the same period.

In communities throughout the U.S. the relevance of public transportation is increasing. More people, especially younger people, are realizing that public transportation:

- Improves personal mobility and access to work, services, and entertainment
- Saves fuel and reduces traffic
- Provides economic opportunities and drives community growth and revitalization
- Saves money

Public transportation investments also have been on the rise. Within the peer resort communities that the Sun Valley area competes with, these investments include:

- Aspen, CO has invested over \$50MM in public transportation in the past two years, including the launch of the first bus rapid transit line, VelociRFTA, in a rural resort area



Launch of Aspen VelociRFTA service, Courtesy RFTA

- Tahoe City, CA recently opened a large multi-modal transportation center. Additionally the Tahoe area is investing in biking and walking as a way to build a better community



New Tahoe Transit Center, Courtesy Tahoe City

- Park City, UT is working on a downtown transportation plan to address parking, transit, and traffic –improving **downtown area** bike-ability and walk-ability to improve quality of life. Park City also has launched a car sharing program and recently received \$7.5MM to build a new transit facility
- Jackson, WY recently built a new transit facility with \$8MM in federal funding. Jackson also has invested in creating transit-oriented, walk-able, bike-able neighborhoods and commercial areas with complete streets and bike-ped connectivity; these projects are guided by the community's comprehensive plan of creating a safe, interconnected, multi-modal network and meeting future transportation demand by using more alternative modes



New Jackson, WY transportation center,
Courtesy START Bus

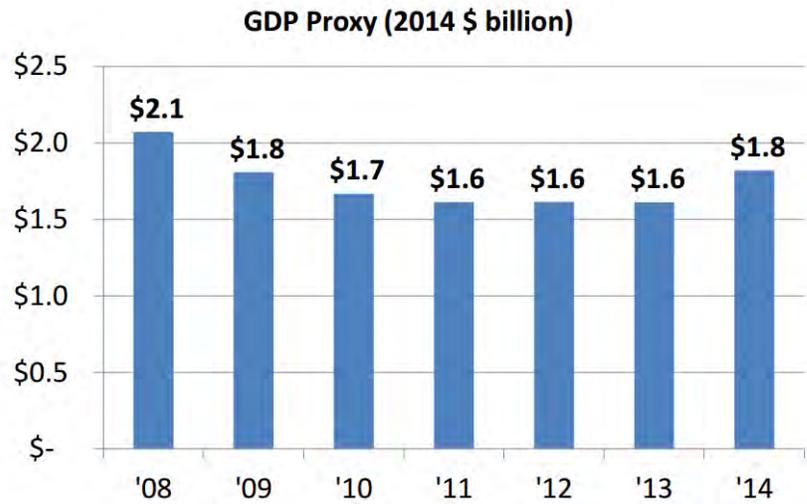
Mountain Rides has made frequent investments in public transportation but hasn't kept pace with peer resort areas. This plan charts a course for significantly

increased investment in both operational and capital spending.

Historical Blaine Co. Economy

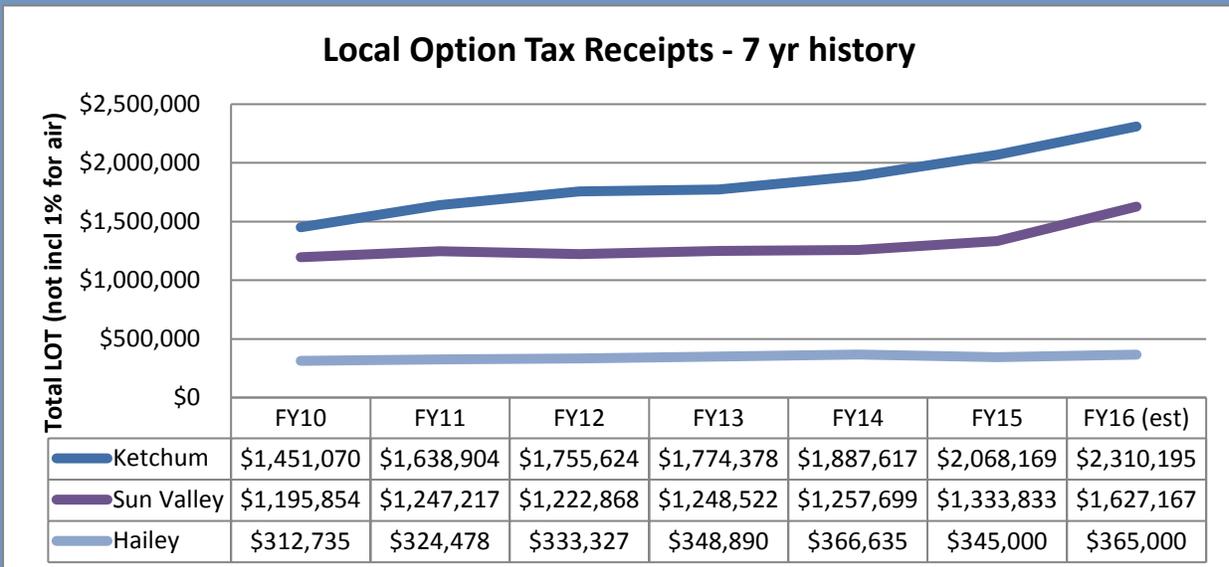
Economic context

On a local level, economic conditions look promising. After many years of stagnation, the Blaine County economy appears to be on the upswing, and **is expected to grow by 2-4% over the next five years** according to several data points. Research by the Sun Valley Economic Development organization shows that local economic output in gross domestic product has improved in the past few years:



Courtesy Sun Valley Economic Development

Mountain Rides relies heavily on the local option tax (LOT) for its operation. LOT receipts in the past few years are also on an upswing:



Plan development

Mountain Rides has developed this plan over the past twelve to eighteen months, providing the background needed to match opportunities with community needs and funding through:

- Strategic planning sessions and annual budget development
- Annual transportation service plan development
- Surveys to riders and non-riders
- Public meetings and workshops
- Meetings and workshops with the cities, the county, and other community partners

The ideas, goals, and objectives in this plan reflect what Mountain Rides has learned from the above. As well, Mountain Rides constantly receives input from riders, those who don't ride but would like to, funding partners, community stakeholders with transportation needs, state partners like Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and national partners like the Federal Transit Authority (FTA). This plan marries public input with staff and board expertise to choose a direction for the coming five years. Inherent in the plan is balancing what is needed with what is possible – funding, regulations, restrictions, and trial and error from past service efforts all inform a strong plan.

With regard to specific developments like route improvements and new services, Mountain Rides has previewed initial ideas with the general public and received very positive feedback. Recently, Mountain Rides conducted a public survey on what people want most in transportation service expansion. The survey had a strong response, with over 200 participants. An overwhelming majority of them said that we were on the right track, with 65.5% very comfortable with the proposed changes, and 16.7% generally comfortable. Only 3.4% were uncomfortable with the proposed service expansion; the remaining 14.3% were not sure, as they didn't ride the bus.

When it comes to *new services or improvements to existing services*, the top three requests were for:

- More frequent morning and afternoon commute hour service (composite rank of 8.27)
- Late night Valley Route service (rank of 8.19)
- More frequent year-round service with less variation between seasons, slack vs. peak (rank of 7.72)

Ranked closely behind were: Express Valley Route service (7.06), direct service between Sun Valley/Ketchum and Friedman Airport (7.06), and late night Blue Route service.

The top three things Mountain Rides could do *to encourage people to ride more or to ride at all* were:

- More frequent service in general (composite ranking of 6.53)
- If bus schedule better met my needs (rank of 6.44)
- If bus took less time than my car (rank of 5.26)

Right behind these items came: lighted bus stops with shelters (5.14), cheaper fares (5.09 rank), and bus stops closer to origin/destination (rank 5.04).

More than half of the total respondents also wrote comments about the improvements they would like to see. These are summarized below by route and type of service wanted:



Courtesy Mountain Rides

Comment topic	Number of occurrences in data
Hailey Route improvements	3
Red Route later service	3
Silver Route later service	3
More frequency in general	3
Hailey Route new fare	5
Valley Route midday	7
Green Route midday and/or weekend service	8
Valley Route evening	9
Valley Route commute time	9
Blue Route 30 min midday year-round	9
Blue Route late night service	9
Add or improve bus stops	9
Valley Route weekend	16
Requests for new services (everything from airport, 2; Twin Falls, 1; Valley Express, 3, RR-WS route, 1; special event services, 5)	19
Like and support the planned changes	21

Mountain Rides is incorporating this feedback and confirmation in its five year plan.

Plan maintenance and updates

This plan will be maintained and updated annually to keep it relevant and accommodate inevitable changes in funding, service needs, and market conditions. The plan will be tied into other annual planning efforts for the Capital Improvement Plan, the service plan, the budget development process, and goal setting. The result will be to adopt documents to guide Mountain Rides' board and staff.

The plan will be reviewed in November of each year at a goal setting workshop for board and staff. In December, draft edits from the goal setting workshop will be presented. These edits will be finalized and an updated five year plan, along with a implementation plan for that particular year, will be adopted by the board during the January board meeting.

Successful implementation is dependent on having a flexible plan, one that is current and reflective of an ever-changing public transportation landscape. Mountain Rides is committed to this update process in order to execute all the ideas, goals, and objectives herein.



Credit David Glasscock

Section III. Core Beliefs

Mountain Rides operates on the basic belief that:

A strong public transportation system supports and improves the vitality, health, and well-being of the communities we serve.

In order to continue to provide a strong transportation system for these communities, Mountain Rides adheres to the following beliefs.

We are part-time residents of Elkhorn (we live in Connecticut too). Your drivers are so friendly and helpful!! Since we are Senior citizens the drivers often help us while putting the bikes on the bike rack. We also use the bus back home after riding the bike trail to Hailey. The buses are always comfortable and on-time as well.

- Debbie and Gary B, Sun Valley and Connecticut residents

Core belief 1 – Mountain Rides’ services must be safe, reliable, convenient, and pleasant for those who visit, live, and/or work in our community.

Above all, Mountain Rides must operate safely for the sake of employees, riders, and others on the road. The past two years have been some of the safest in our history, with no at-fault accidents. Mountain Rides’ proud safety record is in part due to:

- switching to a new, comprehensive driver training curriculum from the best public transportation safety organization
- changing insurance carriers and insurance representation for the best coverage possible
- proactively asking for audits from independent, expert safety organizations, including Washington State Insurance Pool, Northwest Safety and Risk Services, Idaho Transportation Dept. (ITD), HUB International safety group, and State Insurance Fund
- providing more intensive training and a refresher course through a safety passport program developed in house
- requiring physical check-ups for all drivers every two years in addition to required drug and alcohol testing

Reliability is another key to our success. Mountain Rides has achieved nearly 100% in delivery of service. *Out of over 50,000 unique bus trips in 2015, defined as one bus going in a particular direction at a particular time, Mountain Rides only missed 20 trips – or only 0.04% missed trips!* That is outstanding in the public transportation industry, especially for those operating in winter conditions. Mountain Rides runs reliably 365 days a year. When someone goes to catch a Mountain Rides bus, they know that it will be there.

Another aspect of reliability is on-time performance. Mountain Rides has recently started tracking on-time performance through onboard computer tablets with cellular and GPS connectivity. These tablets record bus location every 15-30 seconds and report whether the bus is on time or running late. *For 2015, Mountain Rides achieved an on-time performance benchmark of 92.5% for all bus trips.* This is another metric ahead of the industry norm, where 90% on-time performance is the industry benchmark for reliability.

Mountain Rides also considers the convenience of customers and potential customers during the annual service planning process. Mountain Rides could have one extremely efficient route with high frequency, providing concentrated service to a high demand corridor, or 20 routes, with great service coverage but very low frequency. Over the years we have tried to find a balance between concentrated service and distributed service to provide for the largest number of potential users. In the attempt to serve the most riders, much of this plan moves towards a simplified system, with concentrated service on core routes in lieu of trying to serve the largest area with infrequent service.



Mountain Rides training session,
Courtesy Mountain Rides

Core belief 2 – People are our most important asset.

From employees to riders, people are Mountain Rides' most important asset. Our employees need to be hardworking, conscientious experts in their field to ensure that Mountain Rides fulfills commitments to riders, partners, and the community. An internal culture statement reads as follows:

Mountain Rides is defined by the excellent service we provide. Our employees operate with a commitment to the community built upon adaptable partnerships that improve the way people move around. Our relationships with each other are based on mutual respect and trust. The essence of Mountain Rides is that we perform our jobs efficiently by cooperating to get the job done to the highest standard.

When hiring, promoting, and mentoring employees this culture statement is a benchmark. Being committed to excellence and community service, being trustworthy, respectful, and efficient are attributes Mountain Rides employees need to bring to their work. Successful employees have a can-do,

“get your hands dirty” approach. It isn't uncommon to see a manager driving or washing a bus.

To retain and recruit the best employees possible, Mountain Rides continually evaluates pay and benefits to keep in step with comparable jobs in both the private and government sectors. In 2015, Mountain Rides conducted a salary survey showing that pay rates were 9.4% below those for comparable positions in the local job market. This survey resulted in an updated pay scale for FY2016 that will allow Mountain Rides to attract and retain excellent employees.

Mountain Rides strives to serve customers as well as possible. Everything in this plan benefits public transportation users, directly or indirectly. Investments in Mountain Rides' employees, vehicle fleet, facilities, and services all benefit the people who ride the bus. In return, Mountain Rides expects riders to respect bus drivers, vehicles, and facilities. Mountain Rides has a passenger code of conduct based on courtesy, respect, and common sense.



Mountain Rides staff having fun, Courtesy Mountain Rides

Core belief 3 – Mountain Rides stimulates and supports economic growth

Strong public transportation supports economic growth and competitiveness with other resort areas. According to research from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), investments in public transportation yield results:

- ✓ For every dollar communities invest in public transportation, approximately \$4 is generated in economic returns
- ✓ 1.1 million jobs are created or sustained annually
- ✓ 50,000 jobs are created through \$1 billion in federal investment
- ✓ Every \$10 million in capital investment in public transportation yields \$30 million in increased business sales
- ✓ From 2006-2011, residential property values performed 42% better on average if they were located near public transportation with high frequency service

New research from the University of California at Berkeley shows that public transportation supports economic “agglomeration,” which means that more economic activity occurs when people cluster in the same place. Communities with strong public transportation, which facilitates human interaction, reap economic benefits.

Mountain Rides increases the mobility of all who live, work, or visit here. As a tourist-based economy, the Sun Valley area needs good public transportation to

compete with other resort areas. A 2012 comparison showed that the Sun Valley area had a smaller budget and ridership than comparable resort areas

In most of the resort areas Sun Valley competes with, strong public transportation, usually fare free, helps to foster an outstanding visitor experience. As well, visitors have a richer, more interesting experience on buses by interacting with locals, not to mention the convenience of not having to drive, park, and walk long distances in ski boots.

Along with the economic benefits from visitors moving easily throughout the community, public transportation benefits those who live and work here: commuters save money and time by using public transportation; parents save money and time when their children take public transportation to activities and school events; employers attract and retain employees who have reliable transportation options; community organizations are able to get their customers and clients where they need to go; and cities improve their quality of life, especially for residents who enjoy walking, biking, and bus-taking.

Finally, Mountain Rides invests its funding in services and projects that directly benefit the community. Mountain Rides spends \$3-\$4 million per year in the local economy on wages, goods, and services. This amount comes from the local option tax (LOT) that is leveraged for federal funding. According to APTA, the community gets its Mountain Rides’ investment returned to them four times over.

2012 comps	Sun Valley	Jackson WY	Aspen CO	N.Tahoe CA	Summit Co. CO	Park City UT
Operating Budget	\$2.1 million	\$2.5 million	\$23.9 million	\$3.2 million	\$8.1 million	\$5 million
Ridership	460,000	838,000	4,137,905	370,644	1,630,000	1,900,000

**NOTE- this chart includes transit systems that are part of a city and may not be inclusive of all costs.*

Core belief 4 – People getting around the community by bus, car/vanpool, biking, and walking are good for the environment

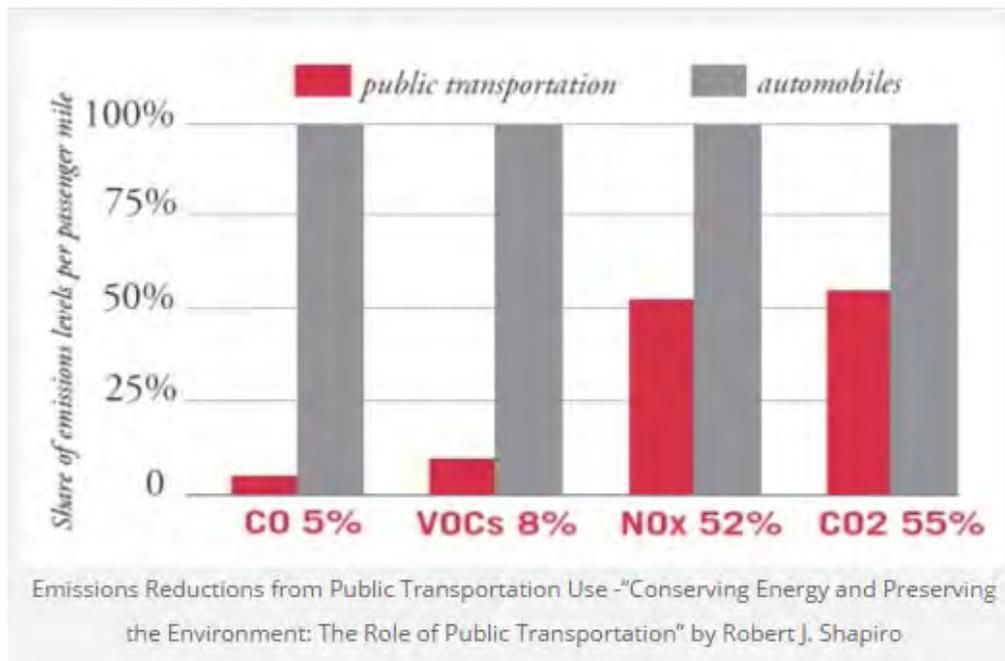
As part of its commitment to preserving the environment, Mountain Rides is always on the lookout for ways to decrease emissions from its own operations as well as from the transportation sector in general. According to APTA, those who use public transportation reduce their carbon footprint and conserve energy:

- U.S. public transportation saves 37 million metric tons of carbon dioxide annually — equivalent to emissions from the electricity generated for 4.9 million households, or every household in Washington DC, New York City, Atlanta, Denver, and Los Angeles combined
- Public transportation saves the U.S. the equivalent of 4.2 billion gallons of fuel annually, or more than 11 million gallons per day
- If an individual switches from driving a 20-mile roundtrip commute to using public transportation, his or her annual CO₂

emissions will decrease by 4,800 pounds per year, equal to a 10% reduction in a two-car household's carbon footprint

Mountain Rides currently operates a variety of vehicles that get between six and eighteen miles per gallon (MPG), depending on their size and capacity. Based on an average load of twelve passengers per mile traveled, **Mountain Rides' effective MPG is 216**, as compared to a single occupancy vehicle. As well, in this plan, Mountain Rides is changing over from diesel-powered buses to battery electric buses that could triple or quadruple MPG, resulting in 600-800 MPG as compared to a single occupancy vehicle.

As a community dependent on snowfall and winter conditions for a healthy economy, climate change is a real threat to community sustainability. Mountain Rides wants to reduce the carbon footprint of Blaine County, thus mitigating the negative effects of climate change on the winter ski economy, as well as on the environment.



Section IV. Goals and Objectives

In the next five years, Mountain Rides intends to improve and develop in a variety of ways that will yield significant benefits to Mountain Rides' partners, funders, users, and the community at large. This section details the five goals that will shape Mountain Rides over the next five years.

This section is the longest and most in-depth in the plan, especially Goal 1 that presents the path forward for transit routes. [Objective 1.3 gives the most detailed account of services – describing how

each route will change over the course of this plan. Other objectives in Goal 1 are related to how bus services should be simplified, with an emphasis on high frequency service with less seasonal variation.

Goal 2 gives an overview of potential services. Goal 3 lays out the course of bike and pedestrian activities. Goal 4 discusses how to encourage people to use Mountain Rides, and Goal 5 lists the funding and organizational support needed to make this plan happen.]

Mountain Rides is essential to county residents. Good public transportation, great biking and walking facilities and strong recreation opportunities all work together to make a healthier, more active, more mobile community.
- Jim Keating, Blaine County Recreation District Executive Director

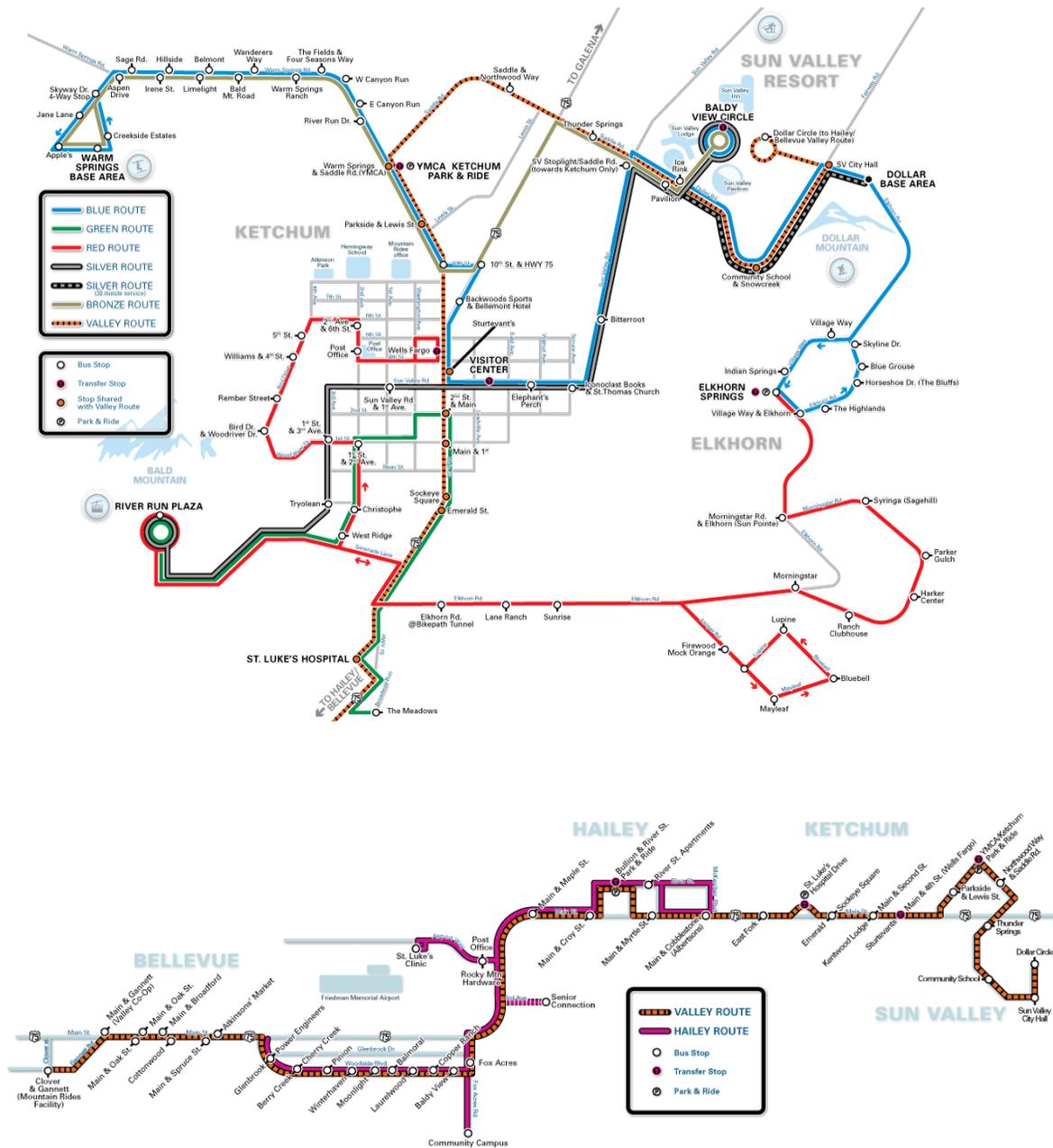
Much like your body's circulatory system, the service that Mountain Rides provides is the lifeblood of our community.
- Carter R. Ketchum

The partnership we have with Mountain Rides has been an overwhelmingly positive one for our employees. It's a partnership where we feel that not only are we providing a benefit to our staff but we are also doing our part with regard to the community and our carbon footprint.
- Tanya Keim, St. Luke's Hospital Director of Community Relations and Administrative Services

Goal 1: Build upon successful services by increasing service on core routes and simplifying the overall system

Over the coming five years, Mountain Rides intends to increase services to build ridership, investing in highly performing core routes that can operate

linearly with 30 minute frequency as the minimum base of service during peak-hours.



The current system consists of the following routes:

Route Guide – routes as of end of 2015

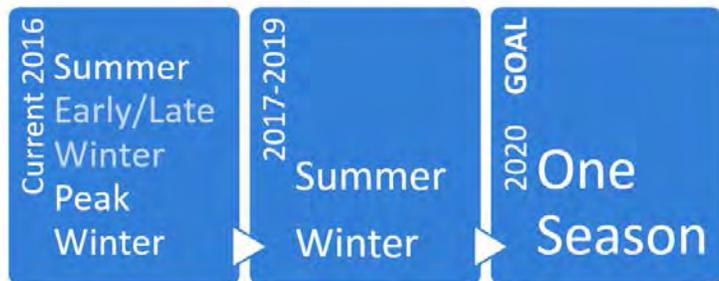
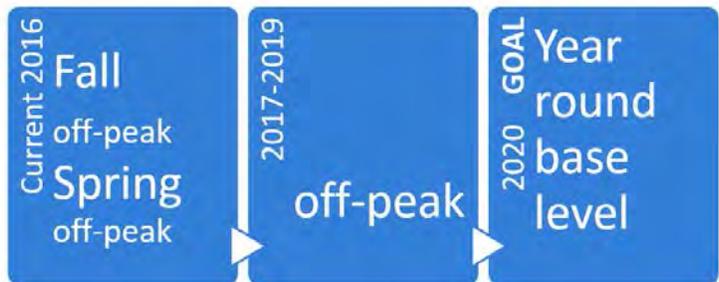
Route	Service Area	Seasonal or year-round?
Blue	Connects Warm Springs, downtown Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Elkhorn	Year-round with variations in level of service by time of year and time of day
Valley	Connects Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley	Year-round with weekday vs weekend variation
Hailey	Connects Woodside, Community Campus, Senior Connection, St Luke’s clinic/airport with downtown Hailey	Year-round Mon-Fri
Silver	Connects Sun Valley Village with River Run via downtown Ketchum, also connection to Dollar and River Run	Winter only with variation between early/late winter and peak winter
Bronze	Connects Sun Valley Village with Warm Springs via Saddle Road	Winter peak only
Red	Connects Elkhorn Springs and Elkhorn neighborhoods with River Run and downtown Ketchum via W. Ketchum (this W. Ketchum is a recent change)	Seasonal with winter and summer service
Green	Connects The Meadows and St. Luke’s with River Run and downtown Ketchum (recently eliminated W Ketch portion)	Year-round with weekday only service

These routes have been in place for many years. Some of them are performing well, such as the Valley, Blue, Hailey, and Silver routes, and some need improvement or adjustments, such as the Red, Green, and Bronze routes. The objectives are to invest in what is working and improve what is not.

Objective 1.1 Move to a system that has only two seasons, peak and off-peak, and increase the summer peak season

A primary strategy of the five year plan is to smooth out variations in service by replacing our present five to six separate seasons with two seasons – peak and off-peak – to provide a consistent base level of year-round service:

And simplify the summer and winter seasons into one peak season:



By condensing the current five seasons and six seasonal changes into one year-round base level of service that increases in winter and summer (the peak seasons), Mountain Rides will simplify service. The two seasons are complementary, since peak season service builds upon a year-round base level of service.

Peak service would look exactly the same summer and winter and would incorporate certain routes that only run during peak times. The year-round base level of service would look exactly the same year-round but many of the year-round routes would offer additional service during peak periods in the form of later night service and higher frequency. The 2020 goal is to have a strong base level of service and two peak periods that cover:

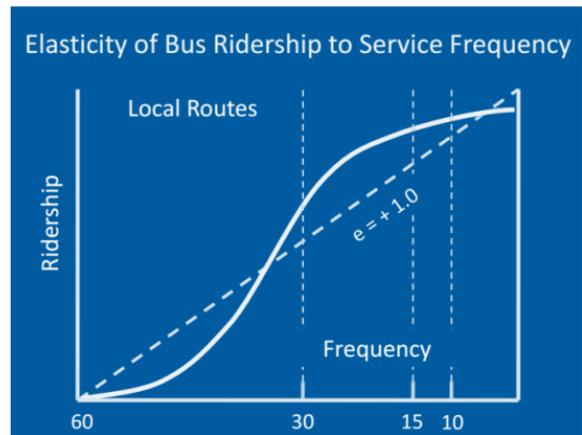
- Peak service during winter: ski area open until ski area close
- Peak service during summer: mid-June through mid-September with potential to extend into October

By consolidating seasons, we will improve service consistency and public understanding of the system. As well, we will be able to retain high quality employees throughout the year. As service expands, and as demand increases, summer service might extend into early fall, through the first weekend in October.

Objective 1.2 Improve year-round baseline service with a 30 minute standard frequency to maximize convenience

A 30 minute frequency, or headway, makes the system substantially more convenient. Long headways of an hour or more and variations in route frequency make it hard to attract new riders and retain existing ones. Currently, the baseline frequency for most routes is 60 minutes, with 30 minute frequency only during peak seasons. The Silver route – a winter-only route connecting Sun Valley Village to River Run Plaza – is the single exception, with better than 30 minute frequency.

As the graph below demonstrates, frequency improvements have a dramatic impact on ridership. According to Jim Charlier of the transportation planning firm Charlier and Associates, the relationship between ridership, the solid white line, and frequency of service, along the x axis, is non-linear. In other words, if you double your service from 60 minutes to 30 minutes, you more than double your ridership. Ridership continues to increase more quickly than the amount of service added until a little less than a 10 minute frequency.



Credit Jim Charlier

Throughout the next five years, Mountain Rides will increase the frequency of service until 30 minutes is the base level frequency **for peak hours of the day on all routes** year-round. In particular:

- The Valley Route goal for 2020 is 20 minute peak frequency during weekday commute times, then 30 minute frequency throughout the day, and 60 minutes in the evening. Weekend service will be 60 minute frequency during commute and 90 minute frequency throughout the day and evening
- The Blue Route goal is 30 minute frequency from 7a-9p year-round with 20 minute service during peak seasons; evening service will have 30 or 60 minute frequency depending on season

- The Hailey Route goal is 30 minute weekday frequency and 60 minute Saturday service
- The Silver Route goal is 15 minute frequency for entire winter
- The Bronze Route goal is 30 minute frequency for entire winter
- The Red Route goal is 30 minute frequency for entire winter

The goal of 30 minute frequency for all the routes during their peak times of the day/week/season, with additional frequency for certain routes during peak season, will make Mountain Rides more reliable and easier for riders to use. Consistent, high frequency service should result in higher ridership over the course of the next five years.

Objective 1.3 Make incremental investments to increase successful routes, while providing a base level of service on less successful routes (examine route by route over next five years)

The most critical aspect of this five year plan is how each route will be improved and/or adapted. Putting the strategies of Objectives 1.1 and 1.2 to work for each route is inherent in delivering service.

In general, objective 1.3 improves service on the Blue Route and the Valley Route by increasing year-round frequency, including midday, commute time, and late night service. The Hailey, Bronze, and Silver Routes will have more consistent frequency, longer service hours, and fewer midday and early season gaps. The Green, Red, and Vanpool will transition to a base level service or to alternative service delivery methods.

The following sections examine each route through its evolution over the course of the plan, year by year. As with any plan, this one must be flexible to handle opportunities and obstacles. The five year plan will inform the annual service planning of in-depth detail for route developments.

Courtesy Mountain Rides

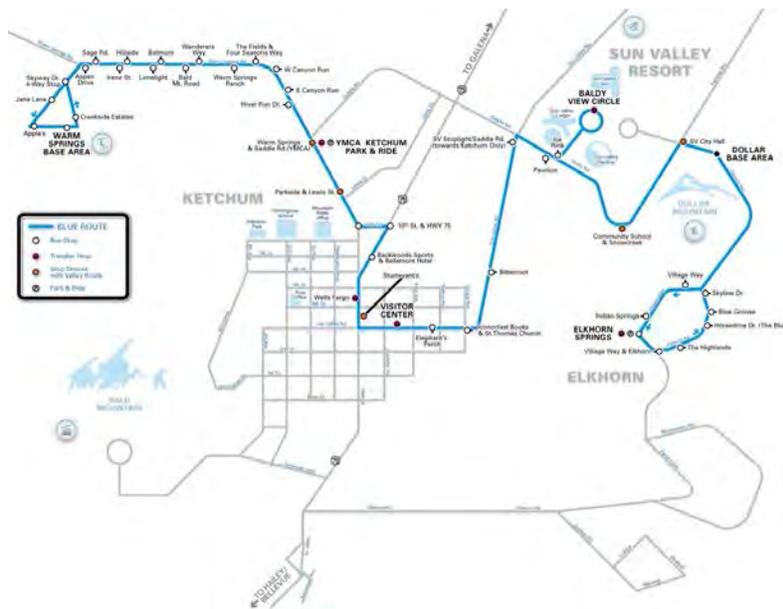


Blue Route

The Blue Route is a core year-round route, providing a variety of trips for recreation, school, shopping, and commuting – one of our highest performing routes, averaging nineteen passengers per hour. Currently it operates with 60 minute frequency in the spring and fall and 30 minute frequency during the winter and summer.

Over the next five years, the Blue Route will maintain its routing, while improving in frequency and level of year-round service.

The Blue Route will keep to the same route and timing (time points at stops) over the next five years; but adjustments to the route timing could improve transfer times as other routes develop. As well, it may be helpful to run a truncated, peak, late-night route after 9p on a route for the core area only, with one bus running twice an hour.



ROUTE DEVELOPMENT	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
YEAR-ROUND BASE LEVEL FREQUENCY	60 min	30 min during morning/afternoon commute times	Same as 2016	30 min all day with 60 min evening	Same as 2018	30 min all day and evening
PEAK SERVICE LEVEL FREQUENCY	30 min	Same as current	30 min with extended summer evening service	Same as 2017	30 min day and evening with late night service until 2a	20 min commute service
SERVICE HOURS	8,600	9,700	10,200	10,900	11,200	12,200
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	160,000	165,000	175,000	185,000	190,000	210,000

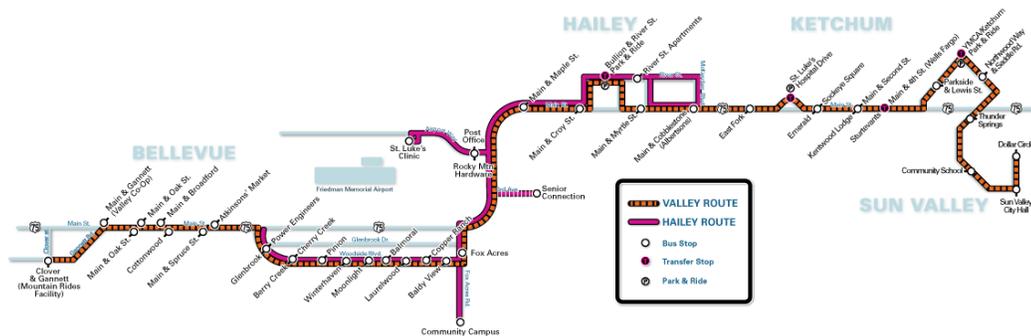
Valley Route

The Valley Route is the only regional fixed route in the Mountain Rides system. What began as a commuter route has evolved to serve a broader demographic, and as such requires a higher level of service on weekdays (midday and evenings) and weekends. The focus will remain commuters, but other opportunities exist for using the bus to go to dinner or to use it for shopping and recreation.

The Valley Route, like the Blue Route, is a high performing route with some of the best ridership numbers in our entire system. Significant service improvements over the coming five years will ensure that the Valley Route keeps performing well and

helps to reduce traffic in our community. Improvements to the Valley Route primarily will be restoring a midday and evening service that was cut over the past few years, and adding new service during commute times, on weekends, and at night.

The Valley Route performs well in terms of routing and timing, but Mountain Rides will try to improve the route. The key to success for the Valley Route has always been its consistency and lack of seasonal variation. We want to keep the existing routing and all of its bus stops, to maintain ridership for future growth.



ROUTE DEVELOPMENT*	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WEEKDAY SERVICE	15 roundtrips	16 RTs w/ midday trip added back	18 RTs w/ added commute hour trips	19 RTs w/ added evening trip	21 RTs w/ added commute trip; 20 min frequency for commute	22 RTs with additional late night trips
WEEKEND SERVICE	7 roundtrips	7 RTs	8 RTs w/ added commute trip	9 RTs w/ added evening	10 RTs w/ add midday	10RTs w/new late night
SERVICE HOURS	10,200	10,700	12,400	13,100	14,100	14,600
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	170,000	180,000	195,000	220,000	240,000	270,000

*AS A YEAR-ROUND ROUTE, IMPROVEMENTS ARE GIVEN FOR WEEKDAY VS WEEKEND, AND IN TERMS OF NUMBER OF ROUNDTrips PER WEEKDAY OR WEEKEND DAY

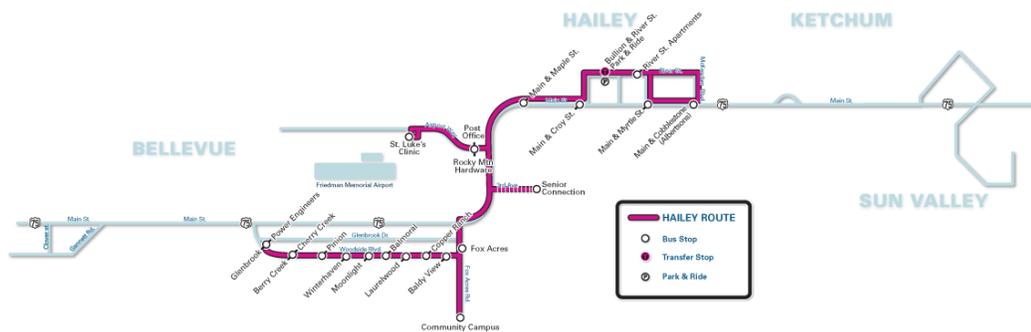
Hailey Route

The Hailey Route is one of the newer routes in the Mountain Rides system. Now in its sixth season, it has been one of our best performing routes in terms of productivity (riders boarding per hour) and ridership growth. Not only has the Hailey Route supplemented Valley Route service within Hailey, it connects to locations not on the Valley Route, such as the Community Campus and the St. Luke’s Clinic. The Hailey Route is a deviated route that will go off-route to pick up passengers who can’t make it to the regular

stops. In this way it has always served those who are most dependent on good bus service.

The Hailey Route will expand from an hourly Monday-Friday service to a Monday-Saturday service with additional service in the morning and evening.

These investments, endorsed by the City of Hailey, will ensure that the route continues to improve mobility for Hailey residents.



ROUTE DEVELOPMENT*	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WEEKDAY SERVICE	8a-5p, 60 min freq	8a-5p, 60 min freq	7a-5p 60 min freq	7a-6p, 60 min freq	7a-6p, 60 min	7a-6p, 60 min freq w/added peak hour service
WEEKEND SERVICE	None	None	None	Sat 10a-3p	Sat 9a – 3p	Sat 9a-4p
SERVICE HOURS	2,000	2,000	2,250	2,600	3,200	3,400
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	38,000	40,000	43,000	50,000	60,000	63,000
*AS A YEAR-ROUND ROUTE, IMPROVEMENTS ARE FOR WEEKDAY VS WEEKEND						

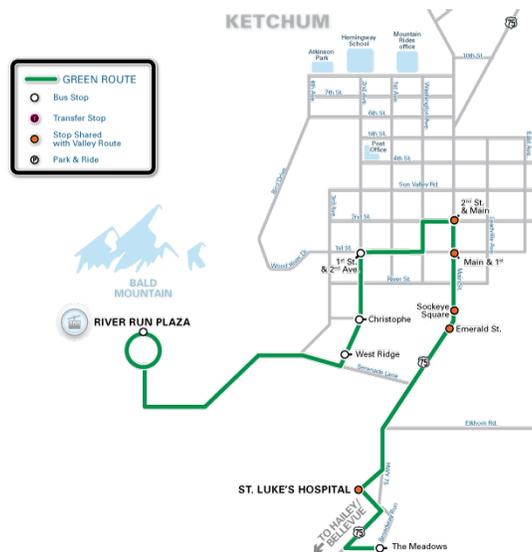
Green Route

The Green Route recently changed its routing and service to give additional hours to the Blue Route. As well, the Green Route's West Ketchum service was shifted to the Red Route, which shortened the Green Route so that a bus could drive the route twice in an hour instead of once in an hour. In this way frequency on the Green Route has gone from 60 minutes to 30 minutes.

Over the course of the five year plan, the Green Route is not slated to expand. With Valley Route service growing and duplicating Green Route service in the

Meadows and St. Luke's hospital area, there may be a better way to improve service to those areas.

From 2018 on, Green Route areas not served by the Valley Route, such as The Meadows, could be served by an on-demand, flexible service. At the same time, infrastructure improvements such as bus stop turn-outs, better pedestrian access, and a crosswalk or underpass at the southern intersection of Broadway Run Road and Highway 75 could completely eliminate the need for the Green Route, as passengers could access frequent Valley Route service.



ROUTE DEVELOPMENT*	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WEEKDAY SERVICE	7a-10:30a and 2:30p-5:45p	Same as current	Same as current	Look to potential on-demand service	Look to improve access to Valley Route by bus stop improvements	Possibly not run Green; use Valley and Valley Express
WEEKEND SERVICE		None, but Valley Route runs nearby on weekends, serving Ketchum to St. Luke's.				
SERVICE HOURS	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,400	1,200	800
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	1,200	12,000	12,000	10,000	8,000	5,000

*AS A YEAR-ROUND ROUTE, IMPROVEMENTS ARE GIVEN FOR WEEKDAY VS WEEKEND.

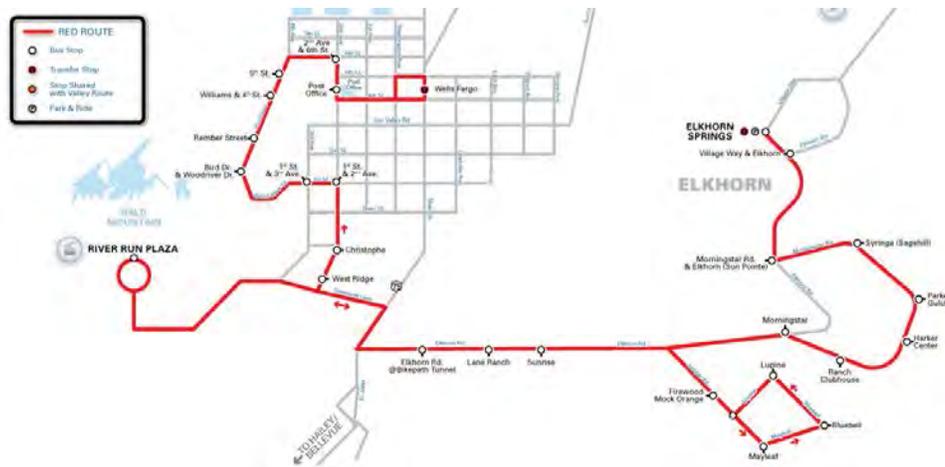
Red Route

The Red Route provides seasonal connectivity from Elkhorn Springs, Morningstar, and Twin Creeks to River Run and downtown Ketchum via West Ketchum (as of 2016, in conjunction with Green Route change noted above). The Red Route is used throughout the winter primarily to get Elkhorn skiers to River Run. In the summer, the route has very limited use – some summer camps use it and a few people on symphony concert nights.

Between now and 2020, the Red Route will be improved during the winter season to provide a higher level of ski service, but the summer service will be curtailed because of its significant summer underperformance for many years now.

This Red Route plan will improve current service in the winter, with 30 minute frequency for the entire winter. Winter service will also be extended to 6p from 4:55p during the peak winter.

The Red Route in the summer will change from a regular fixed route to an on-demand, flexible service by 2018 – a service that would be provided only when requested. This will be a more efficient way to deliver service while still providing mobility to those who need it. Given summer ridership, which is often less than one person per hour, a transition to demand service is warranted.



ROUTE DEVELOPMENT	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WINTER SERVICE	Winter peak	Same as current	30 min freq all winter 8:30a-5p	Same as 2017	30 min freq all winter 8a-6p	Same as 2019
SUMMER SERVICE	8:30a-5p, 60 min freq	Same as current	9a-3p, 60 min freq w/potential on-demand	On-demand	On-demand	On-demand
SERVICE HOURS	2,500	2,500	2,300	1,800	2,000	2,000
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	12,000	12,000	13,000	13,000	16,000	18,000

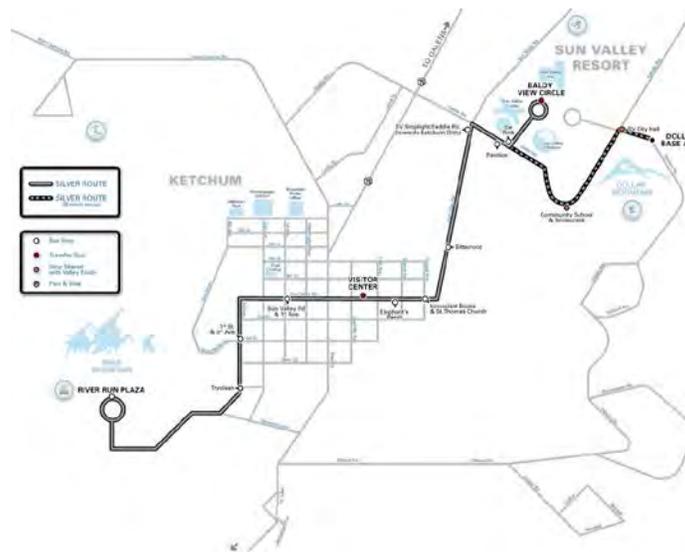
Silver Route

The Silver Route grew out of the partnership with Sun Valley Company when Mountain Rides took over the service from Sun Valley yellow buses. This route is subsidized by Sun Valley Company and has the highest peak productivity of any route, with as many as 25 passengers per hour.

Through 2020, the Silver Route will be improved to run one high level of service throughout the entire winter, from mountain open until mountain close. It may be necessary to expand the hours of service to start a little earlier and run a little later, if demand and

need grow for morning employee transportation and après ski trips.

Silver Route success is directly tied to the success of the Sun Valley Company and the number of winter skiers. A good winter with a lot of skiers means a lot of riders. As the only route in our system that currently runs at better than 30 minute frequency, with 15 minute frequency during the peak winter season, it is clear that higher frequency results in better ridership and usage.



ROUTE DEVELOPMENT	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WINTER SERVICE	Early and late winter 30 min freq 8a-6:30p; 15 min freq during peak winter	Same as current	15 min freq all winter 8a-6:30p	Same as 2017	15 min freq all winter 7:30a-7p	Same as 2019
SUMMER SERVICE	Silver Route doesn't run in the summer, but may be needed by 2020					
SERVICE HOURS	2,500	2,500	2,900	2,900	3,100	3,100
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	50,000	50,000	60,000	65,000	70,000	75,000

Bronze Route

The Bronze Route also grew out of the partnership with the Sun Valley Company, providing service from the resort to Warm Springs. The Bronze Route is a mid-level route in terms of ridership, with about ten to twelve riders per hour during the winter.

Over the five year plan the Bronze Route will remain intact in terms of routing and will be improved to run

a consistent schedule throughout the winter without a midday gap.

The Bronze Route provides extra service for the Warm Springs corridor. As the Bronze Route is improved to be more consistent throughout the winter, ridership may increase even more. Bronze Route success is largely tied to Warm Springs development and activity.

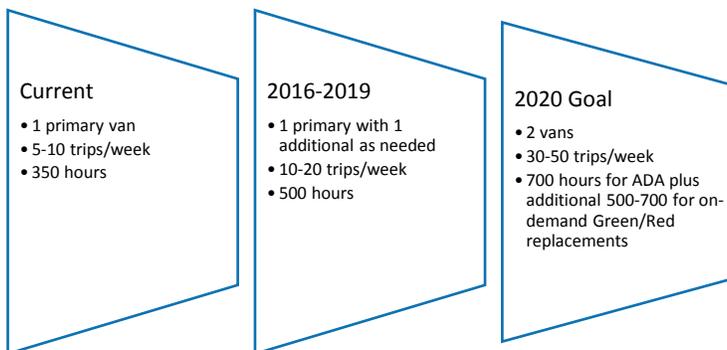


ROUTE DEVELOPMENT	CURRENT	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
WINTER SERVICE	30 min freq 8:30a-11a and 1:15p-3:30p	Same as current	Reduce midday gap to just 1 hour	Eliminate midday gap	Run entire winter	Run entire winter 8:30a-4p
SERVICE HOURS	500	500	600	700	950	1,100
ESTIMATED RIDERSHIP	5,500	6,000	7,000	8,000	11,000	14,000

Americans with Disabilities Act demand-response services

Currently Mountain Rides operates a relatively low level of demand-response van service, in accordance with requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). This is known as complimentary paratransit and is a door-to-door service for those who can't get to the bus stops. Mountain Rides currently operates one accessible van and one back-up van to make five to ten trips per week within three quarters of a mile of our fixed route service during the same days and hours that the fixed route service operates.

Although demand is currently low, Mountain Rides believes that it will increase with an aging population choosing to age in place. Mountain Rides expects to see an increase in the number of trips and may need to serve a larger area beyond the three quarters of a mile. By 2020, Mountain Rides anticipates more than three times the number of trips as today, with both ADA vans in service during the week – one serving Hailey and Bellevue and one serving Ketchum and Sun Valley. As the service grows, efficiency should increase by combining trips to carry more than the current one person per hour.



As the Red and Green Routes transition to on-demand service, at least for part of the year, these two demand-response vans will also be able to serve the Elkhorn neighborhoods, The Meadows, and West Ketchum areas. (Additional primary hours for demand service

near the Green and Red Routes are allocated to long-term planning for those routes and aren't included in the 2020 goal above.)

There is also an opportunity to pursue a partnership with the Senior Connection, the local senior center in Hailey, on transportation for seniors in the coming years. Mountain Rides and the Senior Connection could conceivably cooperate on a financial plan and service plan that could increase ridership and revenue for a more consistent and efficient demand-response service.

Objective 1.4 Eliminate midday gaps in service

Currently there are midday gaps that make the service difficult to use and understand for new as well as current riders. These midday gaps need to be eliminated. With consistent service throughout the day, ridership will increase, as riding the bus becomes a reliable alternative to driving.

The Bronze Route, the Green Route, and the new Blue two year-round services all presently have midday gaps from approximately 10a or 11a until 1:30p or 2:30p. This two to three hour gap challenges ridership and creates scheduling difficulties for staff around on/off/on/off work hours.

- The Blue Route will eliminate its midday gap in the off-peak seasons, with consistent 30 min frequency without a midday break by 2018
- The Bronze Route will eliminate its midday gap by 2017
- The Green Route will continue with a midday gap until 2018, when an on-demand service will be available throughout the day, effectively eliminating the midday gap and creating a more dependable service, although it will be delivered differently
- The Valley Route's two to three hour midday gaps for both weekday and weekend service

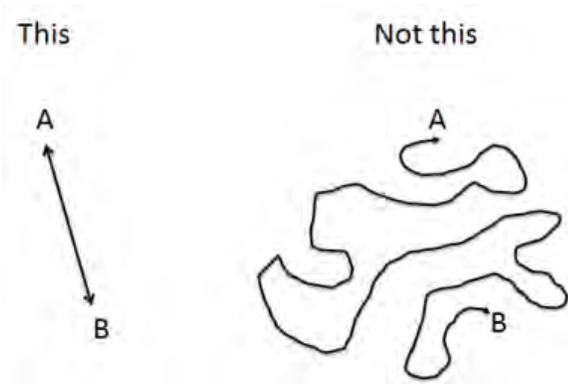
will be improved by incremental investments so that by 2020 there should be no more than a one hour gap on weekdays and one and a half hours on weekends

For all new services beyond 2020, Mountain Rides will have no midday gaps. Consistent service is the goal, as it will yield the largest return on investment and keep ridership strong.

Objective 1.5 Simplify the overall system by consolidating routes and by making routes linear

Easy-to-understand routes and schedules are crucial for effective public transportation. Mountain Rides needs to make routes as linear as possible and to reduce the number of overall routes. Mountain Rides often hears from new or non-riders that our system is confusing, with its many routes circuitously routed and named by color rather than destination. This objective is focused on making routes as linear as possible and consolidating them where possible. Mountain Rides must also consider whether color naming should be changed to include the route's major destination.

Linear service



The most highly used public transportation systems run on a defined, linear corridor. In larger areas, rail systems enjoy the highest ridership because they run in a straight line, connect major destinations, and are easy for riders to use and understand. Having the most linear route possible will also make Mountain Rides competitive with the car in terms of travel time.

The Blue Route and the Valley Route are the most linear routes in our system. We want to maintain their linearity and find ways to make the service even better over time. The Silver Route is another highly productive, linear route that needs to maintain direct routing to best serve skier ridership.

Consolidating routes

Right now, Mountain Rides has a system based on maximizing its coverage area by trying to serve many different areas, including low density neighborhoods, with at least a low level of service (60 minute frequency). Mountain Rides needs to maximize frequent service (30 minute frequency or better) in key corridors.

In order to do so, resources must be shifted to raise frequency in some areas while still providing for those who need transportation in others. As Objective 1.3 shows, the Valley Route and Blue Route buses will run more frequently, while Red summer service and Green service will transition from low-performing fixed routes to on-demand services for a more efficient use of resources. Also, much of the Green Route overlaps the Valley Route due to a lack of safe bus pull-outs and pedestrian crossings at Highway 75 and the south entrance to Broadway Run at The Meadows. If this infrastructure problem were fixed, riders would be able to access the Valley Route on the linear highway corridor without needing a Green Route diversion for the Meadows riders, many of whom are transit dependent.

Red Route buses will come more frequently during the winter; summer needs will be transitioned to a demand-type service. In 2016, the Red Route was changed to serve West Ketchum. Unfortunately, this change does not conform to the linear ideal of routing, but requires a lengthy deviation for a very limited ridership. With 15 minute service on the Silver Route within walking distance, it may make more sense to have the Red Route skip the West Ketchum part of the route, to layer in more service on the Silver

Route. If passengers could get between downtown Ketchum and River Run every 5-10 minutes, with the Red Route becoming the Silver Route for this portion, it would facilitate the goal of high levels of service, on linear corridors, with more consolidated routes.

Objective 1.6 Retain a necessary level of vanpool service

For the past few years, vanpool demand and ridership have been declining due to lower gas prices, loss of key employer partnerships, and increasing work demands on commuters who do not have a fixed work schedule (so cannot use a vanpool). More and more commuters want to use public transportation, whether van or bus, on a part-time, as-needed basis and not commit to an entire month of service. Employers also seek more flexibility than a vanpool can deliver.

As a result, the vanpool is not expected to grow over the next few years. Mountain Rides’ goal is to establish regular bus service to Twin Falls that could supplant much of the existing vanpool demand. In other cases, such as our partnership with Sun Valley



Mountain Rides’ vanpool van, Courtesy Mountain Rides

Company, the vanpool will still play an important role in getting employees to work cost effectively. As the impact of the new fixed route bus service between Twin Falls and Blaine County becomes clearer, vanpool resources could be redirected to establishing service in areas where none currently exists; a vanpool could be the first step for service between Fairfield and Blaine County and between Carey and Ketchum/Sun Valley.

Current Vanpool		
10 routes (3 public, 7 contract)	15 vans	35,000 ridership

↓

2020 Vanpool		
6 routes (2 public, 4 contract)	9 vans	20,000 ridership

Goal 2: Develop new transportation services that complement current services to meet community needs

Mountain Rides should actively seek to develop new services. Our “dream big” projects are currently unfunded and require financial support as well as new partnerships, community involvement, and market research.

Objective 2.1 Evaluate, plan, and implement express route directly to Friedman Memorial Airport

The Hailey Route has been operating since 2010. Currently, the Hailey Route does provide for a connection to Friedman airport, with a little bit of a walk and a transfer to the Valley Route for those coming from Ketchum or Sun Valley. As more people have inquired about this connection, Mountain Rides has considered developing a direct service between Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Friedman Airport that could also double as a Valley Express Route, which would increase service between downtown Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley.



Friedman Airport in Hailey, ID,
Courtesy of Friedman Memorial Airport

Our recent survey confirmed this as a requested new service. This service would be timed to correspond with incoming and outgoing flights, but Mountain Rides wouldn't be able to wait for delayed flights or suspend service when the airport was closed. As a public route with a published timetable, a Friedman bus connection would need to operate on a regular schedule, with little flexibility.

An initial airport express could have:

- Five departures in each direction from 9:30a until 6p during peak season, serving most incoming and outgoing flights; the initial season would be unlikely to provide service for early morning and late night flights
- A smaller 20-24 passenger bus with interior luggage rack
- A route that loops through the airport with one to two stops in downtown Hailey, two to three stops in downtown Ketchum, and one stop at Sun Valley Village
- An overlap with the Valley Route to provide additional general connectivity between Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley

This service would need approximately \$75,000 in additional local funding to operate for the winter and summer seasons. Start-date would be winter 2016-17; during 2018-2019 trips would be added and seasonal schedules extended. This service could add 20,000 to 30,000 new riders by 2020. One step towards this new service would be to have the Hailey Route loop through the airport, but this would require time savings somewhere else in the route.

The purpose of this service is not to replace any existing ground transportation options but to add to them for the traveler. On a spectrum of options where price and convenience are inversely related, Mountain Rides' Friedman airport fixed route service would be relatively inexpensive but not as convenient as existing taxis and shuttles.

Objective 2.2 Plan and implement fixed route connection to Twin Falls

For many years, Mountain Rides has considered the possibility of regular, scheduled service between Blaine County and Twin Falls along the Highway 75/93 corridor. In 2010, Mountain Rides was ready to begin

such a service, when the economy weakened and demand became uncertain. As a result, Mountain Rides continued to operate vanpools to connect commuters from Twin Falls, Jerome, and Shoshone.

Recently the demand for a regular fixed route bus service to Twin Falls has increased, with more people requesting connections from Blaine County to:

- interstate bus service along I-84, where passengers could transfer onto the Salt Lake Express to get to Boise or Salt Lake City
- St. Luke’s regional medical center in Twin Falls, since the need to get medical care in Twin Falls is growing and St. Luke’s is interested in supporting a reliable transportation option
- their place of employment, since commuter bus service could replace vanpool and also suit the commuter who wants to take the bus only a few times a month
- the College of Southern Idaho, which has campuses in both areas; more students could attend classes in Twin Falls that aren’t available in Hailey
- the Twin Falls Airport for travelers
- participate in general economic activity, whether jobs, travel, shopping, or work; the increasing economic interaction between Blaine County and Twin Falls would profit from this connection

In light of the above needs, Mountain Rides recently applied for and received \$400,000 per year in 5311(f) Interstate Connectivity Funding for fixed route bus service between Blaine County and Twin Falls. Funding will become active in late 2016. Between now and the end of 2016, Mountain Rides will work out the details of a service plan, but an initial plan could be three roundtrips per weekday that could become four roundtrips per weekday plus Saturday service. This service would need a higher fare box revenue to cover costs.

All federal funding requires local matching funds. With existing local funding allocated to existing or planned services that operate wholly within the boundaries of Blaine County, Mountain Rides must

identify new funding partners from communities that would benefit from this service, including Twin Falls and Shoshone.

Objective 2.3 Develop a third-party funded pilot service to connect Ketchum and Sun Valley with Sawtooth National Recreation Area and Galena Lodge

Mountain Rides has started a conversation with the Sawtooth National Recreation Area (SNRA), the Blaine County Recreation District (BCRD), the Forest Service, and Blaine County about the need for bus service between Sun Valley and Ketchum and the North Valley Trails, including the SNRA office, Baker Creek, Prairie Creek, and Galena Lodge. The need for this service has come from increased demand and limited parking in this Highway 75 corridor stretching 25 miles north of Ketchum; the service could be part of a more comprehensive transportation-demand management program for the SNRA. This service must be funded by organizations like BCRD and Galena Lodge and not come out of Mountain Rides’ funding.



Nordic Skiing on the Wood River Trail,
Courtesy of Blaine County Recreation District

For the 2016-17 ski season, the goal is to run a six week pilot service from 10a until 4p Thursday through Sunday, starting just before Christmas and running until just after the Boulder Mountain Tour. This service would use a small bus like a Sprinter with departures every two hours in each direction. The cost of a small pilot like this is approximately \$8,000-\$10,000.

Between now and November of 2016, we will develop the operational details of the service, including the funding model, necessary permits, and formalized partnerships. With investments in existing routes sorely needed, this new Galena service must be underwritten by new community partners. If successful, this service could fund 50% or more of its cost from rider fares. It could be included as an option when Nordic skiers buy their season ski pass.

If the pilot is successful, this service could expand from 2018-2020 into one operating most of the winter season, for five or even seven days per week. As long as funding and demand were strong, Mountain Rides could increase service in the winter season to more departures, more days of service, and a longer season. Beyond 2020, there may even be demand for summer service to move mountain bikers and Galena Lodge patrons along this same corridor.

Objective 2.4 Respond to new service demands as they arise

As needs and travel patterns constantly shift and change, Mountain Rides must be adaptable, responding with innovative solutions. As this plan

can't predict every need in the years to come, this objective is a placeholder for a variety of possibilities in new services and programs over the next five years.

Although potential services could address a variety of needs, some examples requested in the past could reappear again, including:

- An around town hotel, River Run, parking connector (aka a jitney), which might become a higher priority as new hotels in Ketchum are built, and if parking management is implemented in Ketchum
- A Bellevue/Hailey to River Run Valley Route bus when the River Run gondola lift is operating, which would be a more regular deviation of the Valley Route
- An additional route for Hailey serving its currently unserved areas
- Involvement in community discussions about ground transportation to/from Boise airport
- A direct Warm Springs to River Run bus route

Mountain Rides must be able to adapt to the needs of riders and the market.

This past Saturday, I rode the bus from Hailey. When I got to my destination, I realized I did not have my cell phone. I went back to the stop to see if my cell phone was on the bus. The driver pulled right over when he saw me, opened the doors, and said, "I'm giving cell phones away today!" I was so happy and impressed that he took the time at the end of his run to check the bus for lost/left items. Please let him know that it meant a lot to me and that I wish him the best during this holiday season!
- Debbie H, local resident

Goal 3: Support and coordinate the development of pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly communities, including infrastructure

Mountain Rides has always included bike and pedestrian programs in its mission to get more people out of their cars and moving around in an efficient and healthy way. Ever since Wood River Rideshare was merged with KART and Peak Bus to form Mountain Rides, specific programs have focused on biking and walking, including Safe Routes to School, biking and walking events such as Bike to Work Day, bike safety clinics, helmet giveaways, and a new bikeshare program. Mountain Rides will continue to employ a Bike and Pedestrian coordinator to achieve the goal of integrated bike and pedestrian movement throughout our community as part of a holistic approach to transportation needs.

Objective 3.1 Coordinate and implement Blaine Co. Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan

Mountain Rides has taken the lead in coordinating the ongoing development and implementation of the Blaine County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, which was adopted in 2014 by every city in the Wood River Valley plus Blaine County. This plan grew out of the collaborative efforts of Blaine County, the cities of Hailey and Ketchum, the Blaine County Recreation District, Mountain Rides, and Friends of Mountain Rides. The goal of the bicycle and pedestrian plan is to provide “a cohesive and comprehensive [interjurisdictional plan] for developing, standardizing, and growing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, amenities, and policies in Blaine County.”

The plan recognizes the benefits of the “bicycle friendly community” to a tourist economy. It recommends bicycle and pedestrian mobility guidelines, prioritizes projects, and cites recreational and health benefits of biking and walking. It concludes with a “difficulty matrix” for incorporated and unincorporated areas. Important needs and issues include:

- Connections/Missing Links – including the need to construct a number of sidewalks and pathways in the unincorporated county
- Safety – including pedestrian crossings, pathway intersections, vehicle and bike road-sharing, traffic calming, safety warning signage, and the need for sidewalks
- Education – increasing awareness of biking routes and safety tips, especially for tourists renting bikes
- Consistency – including pavement markings, pathway surfacing, wayfinding, and treatment of pedestrian crossings, which should be consistent between jurisdictions
- Amenities – including restrooms and parking areas
- Design Guidelines – standards for infrastructure and safety improvements
- Priority projects – each city and the county have specific projects ranked in terms of priority, funding required, and complexity. This priority matrix will determine when and how specific projects in the bike-ped plan are accomplished.

The ancillary benefit for Mountain Rides is that almost every bike-ped project and initiative in the master plan helps bus operations by making riding the bus easier, safer, more attractive, and better connected. Successful bus operations are dependent on passengers being able to walk or bike to and from bus stops.

During the next five years, Mountain Rides will continue to be the coordinating agency for developing this plan and its annual updates. Mountain Rides will also support implementation by working closely with municipal partners to plan, design, and construct projects. By 2020, at least

fifteen priority projects will be completed if all the bike-ped plan partners continue to make progress.



Great participation on bike to school events,
Courtesy Mountain Rides

Objective 3.2 Increase the awareness of and active participation in the Safe Routes to School (biking and walking to school) programs

For over ten years, Wood River Rideshare and then Mountain Rides have led the effort to increase biking and walking to school by modeling a program around the national Safe Routes to School effort. Safe Routes seeks to create safe, convenient, and fun opportunities for children to bicycle and walk to and from schools. The goal is to reverse the decline in children walking and bicycling to schools, increase their safety, and improve their health and wellbeing.

At the heart of Safe Routes are the six E's: evaluation, engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and equity. Mountain Rides has been

most involved in the evaluation, encouragement, and education pieces of the puzzle. During the next five years, the cities will carry out much of the evaluation, engineering, and enforcement, but Mountain Rides will support their efforts indirectly by facilitating dialogue on bike and pedestrian issues around the schools and helping coordinate infrastructure improvements. Mountain Rides will continue to lead the education, encouragement, and equity pieces of the Safe Routes to School program, including:

- Bike safety classes in the classroom
- Bike or walk to school events and challenges
- Helmet fittings and giveaways in schools and special events
- Marketing the biking and walking benefits to students and school staff
- Addressing bike or walk to school access for all students, regardless of background or income



Mountain Rides gives away 50-100 helmets per year to kids, Courtesy Mountain Rides

Objective 3.3 Partner with cities to make downtown core areas more pedestrian and bike friendly

This objective is incorporated into the broader effort of the bike-ped master plan; but, as the downtown core areas of Ketchum, Hailey, and Bellevue overlap with other Mountain Rides' efforts, this idea deserves its own, separate objective.

The City of Hailey, in partnership with Mountain Rides, was recently awarded funding under the New Mobility West program of the non-profit planning agency Community Builders to plan and design safety improvements, increase opportunities for bicycling and walking, and improve economic development in Hailey's downtown on Main Street. Consultants with experience in using a community's assets and character to promote economic development while maintaining a strong sense of community recently visited Hailey for an intensive three-day workshop, in which the community gave input on the improved street design. The goal is to have a community-supported design first, and then seek grant money for the work.

Mountain Rides will champion this approach beyond Hailey, in all the Wood River Valley communities that have Main Street highway issues. The template for Hailey could easily be applied to the downtowns of Ketchum and Bellevue, resulting in downtowns that are more interesting, safer, and friendlier to biking and walking. All these communities want to improve the streetscape of their downtown areas to attract more business. By 2020, at least two cities in the Wood River Valley should have a plan to retool their Main Street configurations to make them safer and more attractive for walking and biking as a result of Mountain Rides' activities on this objective.



Courtesy Mountain Rides

Objective 3.4 Continue to encourage biking and walking through programs like bikeshare

Blaine County and its communities should be places where visitors can relax and enjoy the downtown areas. Mountain Rides should champion a community where our streets are not just for vehicles, but support all transportation modes with sidewalks, bike paths, and bike lanes, so that people who walk and/or ride bikes downtown can do so safely. While the cities and the county are addressing these issues, Mountain Rides can support and encourage more biking and walking through improvements such as:

- Bikeshare – Mountain Rides started a bikeshare program in 2014 with 20 bikes in Hailey and added another 20 bikes in Ketchum in 2015. In the next five years, bikeshare will need to adapt to the delivery model that makes the most sense. Our original plan of having bikes available at major destinations may need to change to a business sponsored program with more dedicated bikes to specific needs and uses, but bikeshare will continue as a Mountain Rides' program.
- Bike-ped events – currently Mountain Rides sponsors a Bike to Work Day, but this will be expanded to a month-long event to celebrate biking and walking, sponsored by a broader partnership of businesses and organizations. The goal is to have this in place by 2018.
- Partnerships – Mountain Rides will continue to build partnerships that highlight the importance of safe biking and walking. Some examples include community bike rodeos, biking to/from special events and concerts, and providing more bike parking throughout the community.
- Education – Mountain Rides has done some bike and pedestrian safety education in the elementary schools, but these efforts must increase significantly by 2020. Mountain Rides will hold annual safety clinics for kids,

will incorporate bike-ped safety into driver training by local police departments, and will note safety tips on the map of suggested rides for bike renters.

In order to maintain a focus on biking and walking from year to year, Mountain Rides needs an action-oriented annual work plan that breaks down into a detailed initiative plan for each fiscal year, beginning in 2016.



Bike share bike, Courtesy Mountain Rides

Goal 4: Develop and support incentives that inspire more people to take public transportation

To compete with the single occupancy vehicle, Mountain Rides must market and advertise its services, programs, and benefits to the community. New incentives must make the choice to take public transportation as easy as possible. Good messaging, marketing, partnerships, and advanced customer information are essential for making the community aware of Mountain Rides, and increasing ridership. With an annual Marketing and Communications Plan that details specific, year to year work, this section will address the broader context of incentive efforts such as marketing, outreach, and partnerships over a longer term.

Mountain Rides must use a variety of low-cost, grass-roots approaches that focus on: leveraging and building partnerships with businesses and non-profits; community events that promote positive public relations; direct engagement and outreach to existing and potential customers; and low-cost technologies such as social media, online trip planning tools, and Mountain Rides' interactive website. Many of these efforts continue ongoing marketing and communication initiatives.

Disincentives to driving are crucial in encouraging public transportation use. Mountain Rides has little

control of such disincentives, however; these must be coordinated with our partners, in particular the City of Ketchum and potentially the Sun Valley Company, to make driving less desirable than taking the bus. The most effective tool for this is managed parking.

As well, Mountain Rides needs a clear brand identity so people know why our services are important and why they should choose to get out of their car. The Mountain Rides brand is based on being part of what makes this area a special place to live and visit: it improves the way people normally get around; and is an excellent, safe service. Specific marketing and PR messaging should move from a "do the right thing" message to a "do the most fun and easy thing" message. In particular, we need to promote:

- ✓ Mountain Rides as a time saver (recover time you've been wasting stuck in your car!)
- ✓ Mountain Rides as a fun and interesting way to get around that immerses you in the local culture and community in a unique way that no other service can match (car=isolation; bus/walk/bike =connected to community)

- ✓ Mountain Rides as part of how our community moves, for recreation, commuting, or special events, and that alternative transportation is the better way to go

Objective 4.1 Dedicate more resources to advertising and marketing

Currently we spend approximately \$21,000 on advertising and marketing, a very basic, no frills budget. Between now and 2020 the goal is to increase marketing and advertising resources to pursue a comprehensive marketing and outreach strategy, using technology to reach new customers.

PER YEAR ADVERTISING AND MARKETING	Current	2020 Goal
Website	\$2,500	\$4,000
Print ads	\$3,150	\$5,000
Radio ads	\$1,500	\$2,000
Promo Items	\$1,500	\$3,000
Events	\$2,500	\$9,000
Printing	\$10,000	\$15,000
Customer Information App	\$0	\$10,000
Social marketing/PR consultancy	\$0	\$10,000
Internet ads/promos	\$0	\$6,000
TOTAL	\$21,150	\$64,000

These resources will heighten overall awareness of Mountain Rides, and increase ridership. By hiring outside professionals for help with social marketing, public relations, and a customer phone app, Mountain Rides’ staff can focus on more direct outreach and partnership building.

Objective 4.2 Build more business support to encourage ridership

A large part of Mountain Rides’ success comes from the support of the business community. Many businesses underwrite routes and services, paying for

bus passes or supporting specific initiatives or programs.

An analysis of Mountain Rides’ impact on the local economy is a way to garner even more business support. The board has discussed making such an analysis for some time; to the point that Region IV Development is working on it as part of their mobility services contract with ITD, which looks at ways to market public transportation. This is a priority that can be achieved in the first year of this plan and leveraged through the coming years.

Mountain Rides must continue to build partnerships for subsidized passes. Through the years, Mountain Rides has seen that employer subsidies for all or part of a pass for employees to take the bus or a vanpool is one of the best ways to build commuter ridership. By 2020, Mountain Rides will build at least eight additional business partnerships for subsidized bus passes.

For new services or service additions, Mountain Rides must look at ways for businesses to help support services and programs. A new hotel may be able to support a service expansion that directly serves their guests. Bars and restaurants may be more directly able to support night service expansions. New real estate development may be able to help build bus stop upgrades. By 2020, Mountain Rides will strive to have ten additional business partnerships in place for subsidizing non-commuter routes or services.



Mountain Rides in annual Hailey 4th of July parade
Courtesy Mountain Rides

Another needed resource are marketing pieces and a section of the website that highlights how a business can take advantage of Mountain Rides' services and resources to point out all the ways a business could solve their transportation issues. Materials would also highlight information from the economic impact study on how public transportation benefits the local economy. Even if a business doesn't use Mountain Rides' services, the business community can be educated on why Mountain Rides is important to them, and in this way build community support.

By increasing efforts to involve businesses, Mountain Rides will be able to expand services and attract new ridership, while reducing traffic and improving the local economy. Businesses will realize direct and indirect benefits by partnering and supporting Mountain Rides in the coming years.

Objective 4.3 Strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones

Partnerships are crucial to the success of Mountain Rides. Partnerships with schools and non-profits have been some of the most successful in attracting new riders.

Youth riders have accounted for a large part of recent growth, and increasing youth access should continue. The freedom that safe and reliable public transportation offers younger riders appeals to children and parents. Currently, Mountain Rides has partnerships in place with almost all primary and secondary schools in Blaine County. Through 2020, Mountain Rides can strengthen these partnerships, to move toward the goal that every youth rider can take the bus year-round at discounted rates.

The non-profit community has always been receptive to partnering. In the coming years, Mountain Rides should look to forge a partnership with every non-profit with over five employees in the valley. Whether for bus passes, event participation, bus advertising, or cross-promotion, Mountain Rides can collaborate on a variety of non-profit initiatives.

Partnerships that encourage government sector staff and leadership to use alternative transportation should also be pursued. Working on how to get funding partners more involved with using Mountain Rides' services and programs is part of this objective – by 2020, the goal is to have every government official ride the bus at least once every six months, and be using an alternative form of transportation at least once a week to get around the community.

Objective 4.4 Implement additional technology-based customer information sources

It is clear that real-time trip planning tools in the palms of customer's hands are radically changing the way people interact with public transportation. Mountain Rides must capitalize on these technologies to make using the bus, walking, and biking as convenient as possible.



Real-time bus info sign at River Run,
Courtesy Mountain Rides

Mountain Rides has some new technology in place. Real time bus location and route info is available on several digital customer information signs at River Run, the YMCA, and the Visitor Center. Our goal is to have more real-time bus stop signs, as well as a Mountain Rides' dedicated phone app, and better information on the Mountain Rides' website.

Technology	Description	Cost	Implementation Goal
Bus info phone app	We currently have GPS tablets on the buses that report their location every 20-30 seconds through our RouteMatch system. Integrating this data into an app that tells passengers schedule and bus location is a high priority according to recent surveys.	\$10,000-\$20,000	Testing in 2016 with full roll-out in 2017
Additional real time info signs	Much like the phone app, these signs show real time bus schedule info and location through a digital outdoor sign or indoor computer monitor. We have signs in stock, ready to install, and need to get them installed. City support on negotiating locations could help.	\$1000-\$5000 of install costs per site	2 signs per year from 2016-2020 with 2020 goal of 10 signs in place
Website updates and upgrades	Tweaking and improving the website is ongoing but we need to integrate real-time info like the app and digital signage (a web portal). The website also will need a full update in 2-3 years.	\$10,000 up front plus ongoing costs	Web portal by 2018; full website update by 2019
Electronic fareboxes	Although more of a capital improvement project, this is an important marketing incentive, as we could build a lot of promotions and incentives around electronic fare cards – if we had these types of cards, we could do discounts based on usage	\$80,000 (\$60k already secure)	We have funding that will help with this project starting in 2017. Goal of implementation by 2018.
Bike and pedestrian resource phone app	A phone app to give cyclists and walkers information on suggested biking and walking routes throughout the community	\$5,000-\$10,000	2018

Objective 4.5 Work with local cities and the county on land use and other policies to encourage more public transportation use

Mountain Rides’ effectiveness is dependent on land use planning that encourages and facilitates public transportation. Land use planning that incorporates multi-modal public transportation is one of the best ways to reduce the congestion and traffic from development. Mountain Rides will work with local cities and the county on how to increase public transportation with a variety of tools, like:

- requiring bus stops, park and ride lots, bike and pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, bike lanes) to be included in development plans
- incentivizing development and growth near existing bus routes, bike paths, and community destinations

- carefully looking at parking requirements for new development – working with cities to allow developers to provide less parking if they subsidize better bus service and biking/walking programs
- looking at strategies to encourage people to take the bus (e.g., bus passes for employees of a new company)

One tool that has been successful in other resort areas is parking management. Mountain Rides will work with local cities on ways to manage parking to enable public transportation use without inhibiting commerce. For example, in the City of Ketchum, managing all downtown core on-street parking, in combination with a possible long-term parking lot or structure, could make for a much more pedestrian-friendly environment, one that encourages people to explore on foot and would move long-term parking

away from spots that need the highest turnover. Since parking congestion is a recognized disincentive to shopping, the City of Ketchum is currently discussing its parking needs and overall strategy; Mountain Rides will stay involved with this discussion.

The Sun Valley Company could also play a role in parking management. When the River Run parking lot was expanded in the 1990s, KART ridership declined steeply as more skiers drove to the mountain (instead of using the park-and-ride lot). If the Sun Valley Company were to start developing River Run in accordance with their existing entitlements, they could combine managed parking with a higher level of transit service. If parking at River Run weren't as cheap and plentiful as it is today, more skiers would take the bus instead. Between now and 2020, Mountain Rides will engage Sun Valley in a conversation about the future of parking at River Run,

and how to put more skiers on buses and therefore have less vehicle congestion.

Land use that encourages public transportation will only succeed with strong regional collaboration and leadership from elected officials from the cities and county. Mountain Rides can facilitate this collaboration through regular meetings of all of its Joint Powers Agreement partners. Mountain Rides can organize semi-annual meetings where elected representatives attend a public transportation summit to discuss all the issues around getting more people to ride buses and vanpools, and to bike and walk more often. It is important that Mountain Rides provides information and resources for elected officials so they can make educated decisions on how to plan and fund a balanced transportation system. Mountain Rides will work to start this meeting forum in 2016 and continue throughout the life of this plan.

Courtesy Mountain Rides



Goal 5: Build financial, structural, and organizational resources to fulfill Goals 1 through 4

Mountain Rides has built a base of resources to facilitate all of its programs and services. Having an incredible team of individuals matched with sufficient financial resources has been the recipe for success over the past eight years. To achieve all the goals of this plan requires further development of human and financial resources.

In the past seven years, Mountain Rides has grown its overall operational budget from \$1.8MM to \$2.6MM, an increase of over 44%. This funding comes from a few large buckets of funding; as shown in the chart below, Mountain Rides relies heavily on local and federal funding.

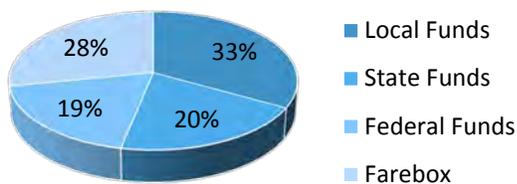
This reliance will continue, but Mountain Rides should maximize local funds, fares, and program fees, as these are the least subject to dramatic fluctuations. As

long as there is federal funding for public transportation, it will be a big slice of the pie. Federal funding will grow during the life of this plan, so local funding will have to grow to meet the matching fund requirements. The proportion of funding by 2020 should be:

- Federal share of 42% (on par with 38-42% average of past years)
- Local share of 40% (has run in between 37-43% in the past few years)
- Fare of 13% (this is right at historical average)
- Miscellaneous sources of 5% (includes bus ads, bikeshare, miscellaneous program revenue, small grants)

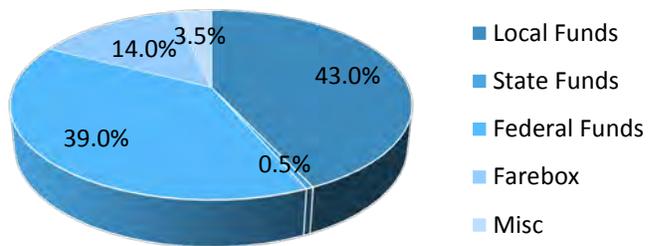
As for how funding is currently allocated, Mountain Rides spends the most on town routes in Ketchum and Sun Valley, followed closely by the regional Valley Route.

Typical Transit Agency*

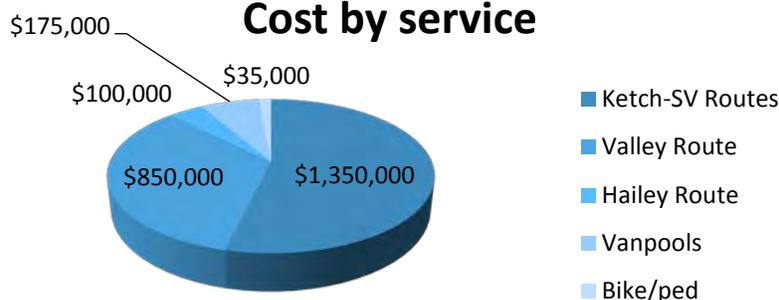


*US DOT 2006 Conditions and Performance Report

Mountain Rides



Cost by service



This proportion is expected to stay more or less the same as service grows in the coming five years. The exceptions are vanpool spending, which is likely to decrease, and the addition of new services that will change the overall spend ratios.

Objective 5.1 Project funding needs for the next five years so funding partners can plan ahead

As shown above, Mountain Rides is heavily dependent on local and federal funding. To facilitate all the goals and objectives of this plan, local and federal funding must increase steadily. The good news is that increases in federal and local funding are not only possible but likely.

Mountain Rides projects an increase in federal funding from the current level of \$950,000 to \$1,650,000 by 2020.

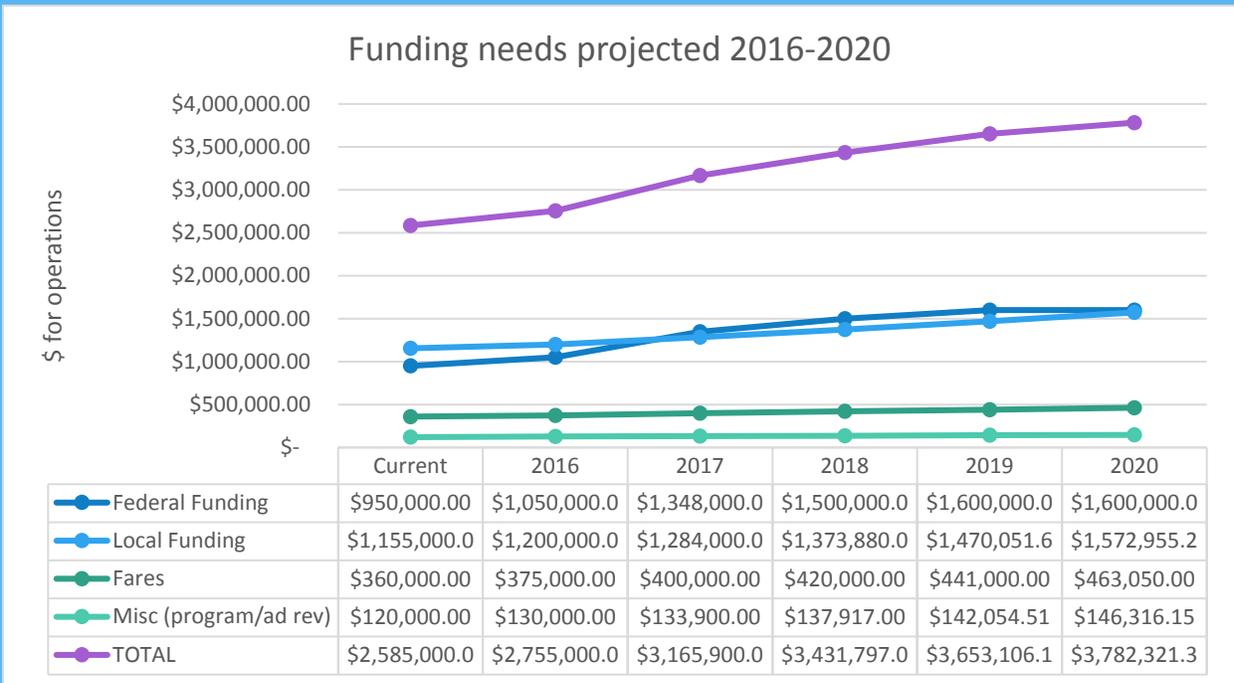
This federal increase reflects an overall improvement in federal funding by about 15%, plus new funds for the Twin Falls connection. Through 2018, the federal funding shown has already been approved and can be considered secure. Beyond 2018, federal funding is expected to flatten for ongoing operations, apart from the new Twin Falls service, but to increase for capital funding of buses and bus facilities.

In order to fulfill the goals and objectives of this plan, local funding must increase through a combination of:

- Overall economic improvement of 2-3% per year that increases local option tax (LOT) by same amount
- A return to more historical funding levels of the LOT for public transportation (25-30% of LOT receipts), or a more dedicated source of LOT for public transportation
- Other local funding partners, including existing partners such as Blaine County (who don't have a LOT) and new partners (e.g., cities outside Blaine that would benefit from the Mountain Rides' regional services)
- Bringing in new local funding partners, especially for new services like a Twin Falls connection that require matching funds

Local funding is vital – without matching local funds there is no way to qualify for federal funding. As federal funding opportunities increase, Mountain Rides needs to find more local matching dollars. Mountain Rides is lucky to have funding partners that support public transportation through the LOT and from general funds. For every \$1 of local funding, we can leverage for \$2 in federal funding for operations and \$4 for capital. The funding projections for all revenue sources are shown in the next table.

I love the fact that my sons can catch Mountain Rides steps away from our home and be safely transported to Baldy in six minutes! Or delivered to the movie theater in 8 minutes! All for free!
- Heather N, Ketchum resident



\$2,585,000 now → average growth of 8% per year → 2020 goal of \$3,800,000

Local funding includes: businesses (including hotels), Sun Valley Company, Blaine County and Bellevue general funding, and LOT funding from Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Hailey.

On the local front, Objective 5.2 details how a predictable share of the LOT could improve funding for Mountain Rides.

Objective 5.2 Work with local governments to increase funding and dedicate an increased, fixed percentage of the local option tax (LOT) to public transportation; work at the state level on dedicated funding for public transportation

Every year, Mountain Rides must build a budget from the ground up without any predictable funding sources. Federal funding will always fluctuate and be out of Mountain Rides’ control, but Mountain Rides has always qualified for new federal funding due to strong local funding, provided primarily by the local option tax (LOT). This funding is crucial to Mountain Rides.

Going forward, Mountain Rides needs a more predictable funding source in order to better plan

long-term. Mountain Rides must work with the cities of Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Hailey to craft a solution that commits a more predictable percentage of the LOT to public transportation.

This could be achieved in many different ways – a couple of potential ways to do this could be:

- Gain agreement from existing funding partners with the LOT (Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Hailey) to contribute a non-binding, fixed percentage of LOT to Mountain Rides
- Go to the voters to try to pass a dedicated LOT for transportation, much as was done in the 1% for Air Service campaign

Here’s a closer look at what Mountain Rides needs, stated in terms of existing LOT funding, in order to fulfill the goals of this plan. This analysis estimates and assumes a 2-3% increase in existing LOT each year:

LOT RECEIPTS vs PUBLIC TRANSP. INVESTMENT	FY2016	FY2017	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020
LOT estimated total receipts for all 3 cities w/LOT (Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Hailey)	\$4,300,000	\$4,385,000	\$4,470,000	\$4,550,000	\$4,620,000
TOTAL LOT to public transport FUNDING GOAL	\$900,000	\$975,000	\$1,060,000	\$1,140,000	\$1,225,000
TOTAL LOT to public transport % of LOT	21%	22%	24%	25%	26.5%

In addition to LOT funding partners, Mountain Rides must also continue to grow funding from other local partners outside of LOT sources:

Other local funding sources	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
TOTAL of non-LOT sources (Blaine County, Bellevue, Sun Valley Co.)	\$310,000	\$325,000	\$365,000	\$390,000	\$420,000
TOTAL local funding goal (LOT, general, and business)	\$1,210,000	\$1,300,000	\$1,450,000	\$1,530,000	\$1,645,000

The second option is about passing a dedicated transportation LOT, like the 1% for Air Service initiative from a few years ago, as another way to achieve this objective. This could be done either by creating a public transportation exclusive LOT, or by creating a more comprehensive transportation LOT to generate funding for public transportation as well as roads, bridges, sidewalks, and bike lanes. Either way, the idea is to have a voter-approved, dedicated source of LOT that is predictable over time.

By growing local funding and agreeing on a fixed amount of LOT percentages for public transportation, Mountain Rides can fulfill the goals and objectives of this plan. Without a solid and growing base of predictable local funding, Mountain Rides will not be able to meet the goals outlined in this plan.

At the state level, Mountain Rides should be involved with efforts to pass legislation to fund public transportation directly, through a property or sales tax increment. As of this writing, Idaho is one of only two states without any legal mechanism for direct state or local funding of public transportation. This puts public transportation providers like Mountain Rides at a major disadvantage when trying to build, maintain, and grow services.

Mountain Rides should advocate at a state level for predictable, sustainable tax funding by:

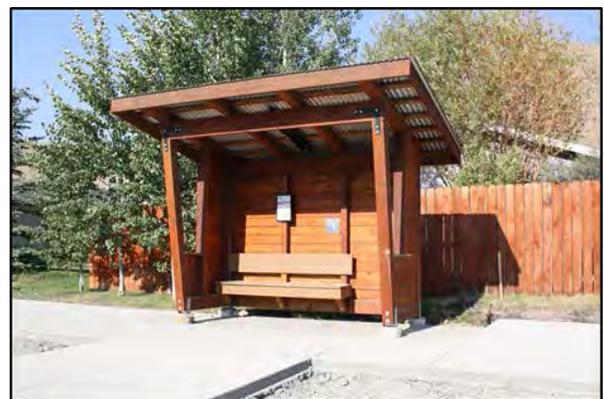
- Engaging with state legislators to educate them on the positive impact of public transportation
- Becoming more active with the Community Transportation Association of Idaho and their efforts to advocate for public transportation funding mechanisms
- Collaborating with other transportation providers throughout the state to tell the story of the impact of public transportation throughout Idaho communities
- Informing local elected officials about ways they can support state funding mechanisms

Objective 5.3 Continue to develop capital equipment, facilities, infrastructure, and technology projects through the five year Capital Improvement Plan

For over four years now, Mountain Rides has been developing and updating a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that details projections of capital needs over the next five years. (In fact, this plan was the impetus for creating a five year strategic business plan.) The CIP is updated and adopted each year in conjunction with the annual budget.

The purpose of the CIP is to provide a strategy, timetable, and estimated budget for capital needs over the next five years. These capital needs include:

- **On-street infrastructure and facilities:** Building infrastructure is vital. Better bike and pedestrian facilities in combination with high quality passenger waiting shelters will generate more ridership and better return on investment. Over the next five years, we will add more bus shelters and maintain the 24 bus shelters currently in our system. Additionally, we need infrastructure solutions along the Highway 75 corridor to allow Valley Route to better serve mid-valley and The Meadows. These solutions would have to involve ITD to include pedestrian tunnels, crosswalks, and turn-outs so that buses could safely drop off passengers in these areas.



Standard Mountain Rides' bus shelter,
Courtesy Mountain Rides

- Rolling stock – buses and vans:** Mountain Rides operates roughly 750,000 to 850,000 miles per year, causing the depreciation of one to two buses and two to three vans per year. Our vehicle mix includes vans, small buses, mid-duty buses, and heavy-duty buses. To continue to provide high-quality, attractive, comfortable service, we must replace and upgrade these vehicles over the coming years. We must also expand our fleet to expand services. With limited federal funds for timely bus replacement, we will continue to refurbish existing heavy-duty buses. By 2020 Mountain Rides should have at least one electric bus in the fleet. The transit industry already has begun the shift to electric buses, which is expected to accelerate in the next few years; there may be more federal funding for electric buses that Mountain Rides can pursue. The transition to electric buses will be complex and require coordination with the cities, possibly to install on-route charging stations.
- Technology improvements:** We need a strong backbone of technology to support our future. Mountain Rides hopes to implement technology solutions for customer service and management including: automatic tracking of vehicles via GPS, real-time traveler information via signs and web-based technology, automation of passenger counts, electronic fare boxes, back-end fixed route management software, and automated next-stop signs and announcements on buses. Real-time bus information at as many stops as possible and in the hands of passengers through their device will dramatically increase the ease with which passengers can use our services.
- Improvements to Ketchum facility:** The existing facility, which includes bus maintenance, offices, and apartments, needs a remodel to the office area, bathrooms, driver break room, and to mechanical and HVAC systems, in addition to general maintenance and upkeep. New paint, roof repair, new roll-up doors, and general upkeep are all needed. We are also looking at



New Mountain Rides' South Valley maintenance bus and storage facility, Courtesy Mountain Rides

upgrades that will reduce energy consumption, such as lighting upgrades and a more efficient heating system.

- New South Valley facility:** With the completion of this project in FY2016, Mountain Rides will greatly improve bus storage and maintenance facilities. As Mountain Rides' most significant capital project to date, the new facility will support the Valley and Hailey routes, and save money due to reduced maintenance and more efficient operations.
- New Ketchum transportation center:** The need for a facility where Mountain Rides can connect all its routes in downtown Ketchum is still critical. The original transportation center at the Visitor Center and Elephant's Perch will still get bus stop upgrades, but a complete transportation center will likely need a different location in town and be part of a bigger picture that could include city parking, housing, retail, and development. With new hotels being built or planned, it may make more sense to locate the project closer to these developments.

To fund these projects, Mountain Rides will assemble funding from a variety of sources, including: Federal Transit Administration 5339, Livability and State of Good Repair funds; TIGER grant federal funding for larger projects; local funds (primarily for matching federal funds); and private fundraising for projects that have business benefits through joint development.

The CIP projections for the life of this plan are:

Capital Improvements	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Existing facilities	\$10,000	\$15,000	\$125,000	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$220,000
New facilities	\$1,070,000	\$50,000	\$225,000	\$1,085,000	\$1,000,000	\$3,430,000
Bus stops/signs	\$20,000	\$35,000	\$10,000	\$25,000	\$45,000	\$135,000
Technology	\$15,000	\$110,000	\$130,000	\$5,000	\$10,000	\$270,000
Buses	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$850,000	\$700,000	\$2,650,000
Vans	\$105,000	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000	\$0	\$175,000
Buses/vans for new services	\$15,000	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$200,000	\$50,000	\$515,000
TOTAL	\$1,735,000	\$645,000	\$740,000	\$1,435,000	\$2,840,000	\$7,395,000
Federal share (assumes 75% average)	\$1,301,000	\$484,000	\$555,000	\$1,076,000	\$2,130,000	\$5,546,000
Local share (assumes 25% average)	\$434,000	\$161,000	\$185,000	\$359,000	\$710,000	\$1,849,000

- Existing facilities' funding is largely for maintaining and upgrading the Ketchum facility, including a remodel of the office area in 2018
- 'New facilities' funding is for finishing the South Valley facility in 2016, incremental projects like park and ride developments, and land acquisition from 2017 thru 2018
- In 2019 \$200,000 goes to a mid-valley infrastructure improvement for Valley Route access to The Meadows
- Between 2018-2020, a total of \$2MM is slated for constructing a downtown Ketchum transportation center, but this project could be even larger depending on project scope and location
- 'Bus stops/signs' funding is for adding lighting, turn-outs, benches, shelters, and improved signage to existing stops
- 'Technology projects' funding goes to a phone app in 2016; electronic fare boxes in 2017; on-board annunciators/next-stop signs, passenger counters, and web upgrades in 2018; and smaller improvements in 2019 and 2020
- 'Buses/vans' funding is for a combination of small, mid-size, and large buses for new services, for an electric bus in 2019, and for refurbishing existing buses. Van replacement will decrease as the vanpool program does.

Objective 5.4 Hire more staff to meet plan goals

Mountain Rides will need more support staff to meet the goals of this plan. The current organizational structure is efficient but overburdened, especially at peak times of the year. If hiring new staff is not addressed, existing small gaps in supporting roles will become large gaps and limit the growth of Mountain Rides.

Obviously Mountain Rides will need more drivers as service increases, but as service hours grow 40-45% over the course of this plan, so must support positions. Today Mountain Rides employs six staff who aren't drivers or mechanics, and will need at least four more, or ten full-time equivalent positions by 2020 to meet the goals of the plan.

Administration

Currently the only administrative positions are the Business Manager, the Executive Director, and the Support Specialist. These three staff will not be enough for the further growth and development of Mountain Rides. Some new positions include:

- Financial support – to support the Business Manager with an accounts payable and receivable clerk who could also work on grant administration
- Marketing and PR – someone, perhaps on contract or through a firm, to handle PR, messaging, and social media. This is a position that Mountain Rides had in the past and needs again.
- IT and technology – as more technology is incorporated into Mountain Rides, we will need someone to handle this area, most likely in a contract, part-time position.
- Planning and research – as new services are developed, Mountain Rides will have short term needs for transit planning, data collection, and market research. Some of this could be contract work, part-time work, or a college intern position.

Operations

The Operations Department is currently made up of drivers, an Operations Manager, and some part-time driver trainer support, which is not nearly enough to support existing services, let alone expanded services. To honor our commitment to the community to provide safe, efficient, and customer-friendly service, the Operations Department also needs to include:

- A dispatcher – a dispatch position to coordinate communication between the public and on-street conditions, and with maintenance when needed
- On-street supervisors – day and evening supervisors to manage day-to-day operations and give drivers support
- More training resources – develop the existing resources into a more dedicated function that can focus on keeping drivers up to date on safe operations

Maintenance

Maintenance has improved recently in both management and facility support, but needs to keep improving to realize the five year plan, adding the following staff:

- Full-time certified mechanics – with only one full-time mechanic, Mountain Rides does not meet the general industry guideline of one mechanic per ten large/mid-size buses, not to mention the vans for vanpool. Another full-time mechanic will be added in 2016, and another part-time mechanic in 2018.
- Additional qualified lube and facility techs – this position would support the new Ketchum and South Valley maintenance and storage facilities, as well as covering weekends and keeping bus stops and on-street facilities maintained
- Seasonal bus cleaners – keeping vehicles clean is a big job that is starting to overwhelm the single bus cleaner we employ. In 2017 we

will add another bus washer on a part-time basis, and use more contract labor from a cleaning service during the winter season, when buses get very dirty.



Mountain Rides' staff at annual safety banquet, Courtesy Mountain Rides

*I can't let the holiday season pass without a huge heartfelt thank you for the exemplary customer service provided by Mountain Rides and its drivers. You set the standard for attentive and professional service in the valley. More than once, I have seen and heard drivers go the extra mile to help visitors to our valley. The Wood River Valley residents, visitors and guests are tremendously fortunate to have Mountain Rides - safe, on-time drivers that add to people's days with thoughtfulness and caring. Keep up the good work. You SHINE.
- Carol E, Elkhorn/Sun Valley resident*

Section V. Success Factors and Outputs

Mountain Rides has focused on performance data, metrics, and benchmarks from its inception. A board level committee looks at performance, while staff uses this quantitative information to find ways to improve. Mountain Rides has a variety of data streams to track performance, primarily from:

- on-board computers that track ridership, efficiency, and on-time data
- financial systems that provide cost and budget data
- maintenance systems that report on vehicle fleet statistics
- manual systems for safety and compliance reporting

This section is about setting goals for success and predicting how this plan can increase the output of Mountain Rides. It is important that this plan bring

positive change in the community – the only way to know this is happening is to measure, analyze, and benchmark the data. Mountain Rides is committed to doing so over the course of the plan.

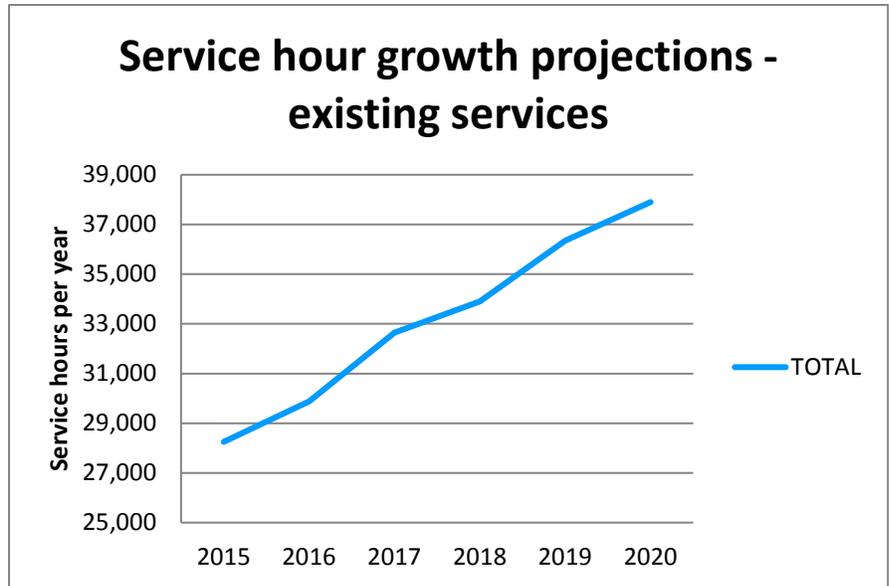
Service hours

One of the most direct outputs of this plan will be an overall increase in service hours, which is the best way to quantify the output of Mountain Rides’ transit services. New service hours need to match demand to be useful. If they are, then increasing service should support all other success performance metrics.

Service hours are estimated to increase by 36% over the course of the next five years for existing services. The projections for existing routes are:

Route	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Valley	10,200	10,700	12,400	13,100	14,100	14,600
Hailey	2,000	2,000	2,250	2,600	3,200	3,400
Blue	8,600	9,700	10,200	10,900	11,200	12,200
Red	2,500	2,500	2,300	1,800	2,000	2,000
Green	1,600	1,600	1,600	1,400	1,200	800
Silver	2,500	2,500	2,900	2,900	3,100	3,100
Bronze	500	500	600	700	950	1,100
Demand response	350	375	400	500	600	700
TOTAL service hours for existing service	28,250	29,875	32,650	33,900	36,350	37,900

This graph only shows the growth of existing services. With new services factored in, overall service hours could be another 10% higher, depending on how successful new services are and when they are implemented.

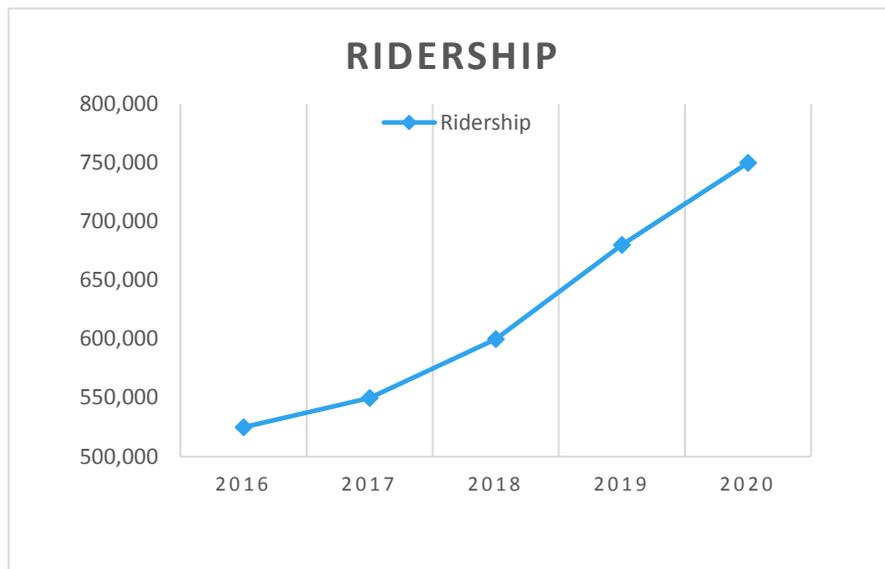


Ridership

The most frequently used performance indicator for transit systems is ridership – everyone wants to know how many people a system serves. This is natural but can be unfair; public transportation is criticized for “empty buses” when roads are rarely criticized for being empty. And ridership can be difficult to measure just by looking; a transit system can have high ridership overall with low ridership at certain times of the day.

That said, ridership growth is important, and riders per hour is a good indicator of overall performance. Through this plan, which invests in routes that have historically performed well, Mountain Rides estimates that ridership will grow by 50% by 2020. Ridership per route is also important to track.

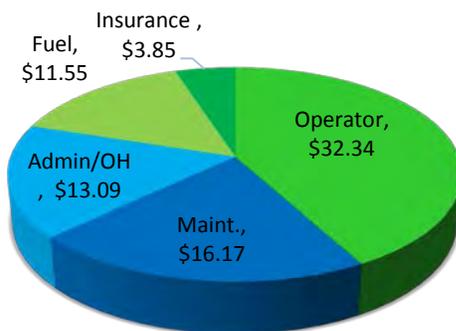
Having increased ridership by 65% from 2007 through 2014, this projected rate of growth is highly likely if Mountain Rides receives support from local partners and the community at large.



Cost targets

Another factor that will affect the success of the plan is the cost of service. Currently, Mountain Rides' cost is approximately \$77 per hour of average service. This includes general overhead, direct and indirect operating costs, but no capital costs (replacement buses, new facilities).

COST PER HOUR (2015)



How \$77/hr. breaks down

Mountain Rides' cost per hour is competitive within the industry, especially for rural resort areas. In fact, this amount is at the low end of the range of \$65-\$120 per hour for other resort area public transportation providers. Throughout the five year plan this cost should remain fairly stable, since even though costs will rise they will be spread out over an increasing number of service hours. Keeping our cost per hour in a range of \$75-\$85 per hour is a benchmark that Mountain Rides will track over the course of the plan. The biggest variable is in the price of diesel and

unleaded fuel over the next five years. Mountain Rides also tracks cost per mile. Currently the goal is less than \$5.50 per mile, and actual cost per mile is between \$5.10 and \$5.25 per mile for all direct and indirect operating costs. As service miles increase, Mountain Rides expects to maintain and even decrease the cost to \$5.00 per mile, depending on fuel prices.

Performance metrics

Mountain Rides tracks a variety of metrics including ridership, ridership per hour, accidents/incidents, on-time percentage, and fleet age (see chart below). Between now and 2020, Mountain Rides wants to continue to improve on these metrics.

Other non-quantitative outputs

In addition to factors that are easily tracked with data points, Mountain Rides will continue to measure progress in other ways. For many years now, Mountain Rides has conducted a customer survey every six months. This survey tracks performance in ten categories, resulting in an aggregate score that can be graded. For the past three years, Mountain Rides has received a 98% average satisfaction score. Performance will continue to be measured, with the goal of 100% customer satisfaction.

Mountain Rides will also use other online, customer intercept and focus groups to track community perception and service gaps. Mountain Rides will also use surveys and market research before launching new services or making service changes. Understanding how to attract new users to public transportation will be key to increasing use.

Performance Metric	Current Goal	Current Actual	2020 Goal
Ridership per hour	14 annual average	15	17
At fault accidents	Less than 2 per year	0 for 2014-2015	Less than 2 per year
Road calls (broken bus that can't complete a trip)	Less than 1 per 10,000 miles	0.3 for 2015	Less than 1 per 20,000 miles
Incidents (less than \$2,500 in damage, no injuries)	Less than 1 per 100,000 miles	0.1 for 2015	Less than 1 per 200,000 miles
On-time percentage	90% of trips	92.5% for 2015	95%
Average fleet age	8 years old or less	7	6

Section VI. Appendices

Appendix A: Original business plan for Mountain Rides

Strategic Business Plan

2008-2010

Overview

Mountain Rides Transportation Authority has gone through a period of tremendous change and growth in the past year to create a regional, multi-modal transportation organization. Within the last year alone, Mountain Rides has:

- ✓ Created a new vision, mission, and goals
- ✓ Regionalized with support and board representation from City of Ketchum, City of Sun Valley, City of Hailey, City of Bellevue, and Blaine County
- ✓ Rewritten the Joint Powers Agreement to broaden support and to facilitate our new mission
- ✓ Brought in all transportation organizations (KART, Peak Bus, Wood River Rideshare) into a one-stop shop for all modes
- ✓ Created new organizational structure to facilitate long-term growth
- ✓ Grown ridership and strengthened multi-modal programs
- ✓ Won Not-for-profit of the Year
- ✓ Put emphasis on marketing, planning, and land-use

Given all this change, Mountain Rides needs to focus its efforts in the coming years to achieve all that it can.

This Strategic Business Plan (SBP) comprises the direction forward for the next three years by reviewing strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities; presenting a series of fundamental statements relating to vision, mission, and goals; prioritizing major objectives; setting out when objectives are to begin; and outlining all the tasks, timeframes, and milestones necessary to achieve the desired objectives. This plan reflects the desires of the Board of Directors and staff, expressed during the Strategic Planning Workshop (SPW) on February 20, 2008.

The SBP is a document that results in specific actions and tasks that must be accomplished in order to achieve the big picture objectives, derived from the vision, mission, and goals. The SBP is not a visioning document or a long-range planning document – it only looks forward three years and puts focus on the core tasks that should be completed. The SBP will be a guiding document for staff in their daily work furthering the organization and realizing goals.

The Mountain Rides' Board of Directors has established this Strategic Business Plan as a flexible, working document that will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis at a minimum.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats & Opportunities

Before Mountain Rides looks to the future, there must be an assessment of the present strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities which reflect the current realities that the organization faces. At the SPW, the board was asked to identify all possible strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities and then vote on them to establish major trends in each area.

Strengths

Major identified strengths were focused around the fact that Mountain Rides:

- Has a strong team (board and staff) in place that has created positive momentum in an exciting new direction and is ready to take on challenges
- Is a multi-modal organization that is the one-stop shop for transportation alternatives
- Has the tourist-based LOT

The fact that there is good political will to continue to support the organization also emerged as a strength.

Weaknesses

Major identified weaknesses at the SPW were:

- Lack of a region wide funding mechanism in the form of a transit sales tax (this was overwhelmingly the biggest weakness identified)
- An inefficient route system that is constantly changing during different times of the year (e.g., slack, summer, and winter)

The lack of enough incentives for alternative transportation and disincentives to single occupancy vehicle usage was also identified as a weakness.

Threats

Two major identified threats tied as the most important to be aware of:

- Possible state and federal cutbacks on funding
- Change resistant culture both internal and external to the organization

A threat also identified was the reality of not being able to meet demand effectively due to lack of financial and capital resources.

Opportunities

The biggest opportunities identified by the board included:

- Creating a truly regional, integrated organization that offers a host of services
- A growing trend towards sustainability, alternative energy, and the possibility of rising energy prices, which would cause more interest and demand in our services

The opportunity to merge Sun Valley Company bus services into Mountain Rides was also identified as important.

Going forward, Mountain Rides must figure out how to leverage strengths, resolve weaknesses, minimize threats, and capitalize on opportunities. Given board and staff agreement on where the organization stands today, this will assist the organization as it carries forth the objectives and tasks.

Vision, Mission, and Goals

Originally adopted in February of 2007, the vision, mission, and goals have guided the development of Mountain Rides over the past year and must be reviewed annually to make sure that they continue to be relevant and achievable. At the SPW, Board and staff agreed that all were still relevant. For summary purposes, the vision, mission, and goals should be included in this SBP.

The stated vision of Mountain Rides is:

To be the sustainable transportation backbone of Blaine County and adjacent communities

The central purpose and role of Mountain Rides is:

Manage transportation demand by providing access and mobility to those who live, work, or visit Blaine County with service alternatives (including walking, biking, rideshare, vanpool, car share, custom buses, fixed route bus, rail systems, gondolas, telecommuting and transportation counseling) to the single occupancy vehicle that are environmentally sustainable, energy efficient, attractive, safe, convenient, reliable, and cost-effective.

Long-term business goals of Mountain Rides are summarized as:

- A. Provide attractive and easy to use multimodal transportation services at fair and equitable costs to users and tax payers
- B. Reduce Blaine County's transportation generated pollution and its "carbon footprint"
- C. Promote land-use policies in Blaine County that facilitate multimodal transportation

Major Objectives and Importance

Given our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as our stated vision, mission, and goals, Mountain Rides needs to move forward to accomplish much in the coming three years. During the SPW, board and staff worked together to refine a list of all the possible major objectives that could be accomplished between now and the end of 2010.

That list was paired down during the SPW to thirteen major objectives that will be the focus of the SBP. This list was then put to a vote to determine the relative importance of each objective. This is overall importance and does not reflect when the objective gets accomplished, just how the objective ranks. The ranked list, in descending order of importance, of major objectives for 2008-2010 is:

1. Develop system concept that defines routes and services to maximize ridership and efficiency
2. Develop multi-modal facilities including new bus shelters, transfer hubs, and bike/ped facilities
3. Develop a long-range financial plan that includes a Capital Improvement Plan and engages funding partners

4. Develop parameters for serving new land development and standard region-wide ordinances for multi-modal transportation to be used when reviewing new projects
5. Develop performance standards and work towards meeting them
6. Focus on the internal culture of organization to continue process of matching new vision, mission, and goals (create the new culture and develop the tools necessary to succeed)
7. Work to make travel by transit, carpool, and vanpool faster than single occupancy vehicles – make the roadway operate differently
8. Develop and initiate marketing and communications plan
9. Work on comprehensive parking management in Ketchum and beyond
10. Develop and begin implementing alternative fuel/technology plan
11. Development of a south county multi-modal facility (bus storage, maintenance, park and ride, and possibility of employee housing units)
12. Create inter-county partnerships and coordination of services (inter-county bus service, linkage to evolving airport solutions)
13. Develop plans for gondola service from Sun Valley Resort to downtown Ketchum and River Run

Strategic Action Priority

From the ranked list of overall priorities, board and staff worked to put this list of objectives into year-by-year priorities. These major objectives will set the agenda and the tone for each year moving forward, as we look to vigorously push forward to increase usage of alternative transportation. Staff and board must focus on these tasks in each year, knowing that not all tasks will start and finish within the same year – some tasks will carry over into subsequent years.

2008 *Primary focus objectives*

1. Develop system concept that defines routes and services to maximize ridership and efficiency
2. Develop a long-range financial plan that includes a Capital Improvement Plan and engages funding partners
3. Focus on the internal culture of organization to continue process of matching new vision, mission, and goals (create the new culture and develop the tools necessary to succeed)
4. Develop performance standards and work towards meeting them

2009 *Primary focus objectives*

1. Develop multi-modal facilities including new bus shelters, transfer hubs, and bike/ped facilities
2. Develop parameters for serving new land development and standard region-wide ordinances for multi-modal transportation to be used when reviewing new projects
3. Develop and initiate marketing and communications plan
4. Work on comprehensive parking management in Ketchum and beyond

2010 *Primary focus objectives*

1. Develop plans for gondola service from Sun Valley Resort to downtown Ketchum and River Run
2. Create inter-county partnerships and coordination of services (inter-county bus service, linkage to evolving airport solutions)
3. Development of a south county multi-modal facility (bus storage, maintenance, housing, park and ride, and possibility of employee housing units)
4. Develop and begin implementing alternative fuel/technology plan
5. Work to make travel by transit, carpool, and vanpool faster than single occupancy vehicles – make the roadway operate differently

2008 Implementation

To achieve the primary focus objectives for the year, each big-picture objective must be broken down into a series of tasks, timelines, and milestones. This is where “the rubber meets the road,” where broad language turns into action. To fulfill the purpose of a Strategic Business Plan – staff and board must stay focused on the tasks and completing them in a timely fashion in order to achieve success.

1. Develop system concept that defines routes and services to maximize ridership and efficiency

TASK	START	FINISH	MILESTONE
a. Define overall components of our system concept for the next 3 years	Now	April	System concept approved at April Board Meeting
b. Draft route improvements for rubber-tired services and how they will operate for FY2008-2009	Now	May	Several options for new route configurations
c. Present Sun Valley Company with options for services and associated costs	Now	May	An agreement for service in place
d. Complete FY2008-2009 Service Plan	April	June	Service Plan adopted at June Board Meeting
e. Research and define equipment needed to support service plan	April	June	New vehicles ordered by mid-June
f. Present draft route improvements to public for comment	May	May	Public comments received and preferred scenario selected
g. Refine FY2008-2009 service plan based on budget and equipment availability	June	August	Funded service plan in place for FY2008-2009
h. Create operational implementation plan for new Service Plan	August	November	New Service Plan being operated by start of winter season

2. Develop a long-range financial plan that includes a Capital Improvement Plan and engages funding partners

TASK	START	FINISH	MILESTONE
a. Hire full-time Accounting and Office Administrator	Now	March	Competent person in place by 3/28/08
b. Reformat budget and coding to allow for fund accounting and expense tracking by department and service	April	May	New budget format adopted at May Board Meeting
c. Evaluate potential for new grants/fundraising opportunities to diversify funding	May	Ongoing	Broader, increased funding
d. Define projects and components of a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP)	May	June	Present draft CIP at June Board Meeting
e. Review expenses by department and look for efficiencies ahead of next FY	May	June	Cost efficient budget for next FY
f. Create FY2008-2009 budget utilizing new budget format and present to funding partners	May	June	Draft budget approved at June Board Meeting
g. Complete and refine CIP	June	July	CIP adopted at July Board Meeting
h. Create 3-five year forward looking Financial Plan that includes CIP as well as operational funding required to support organizational/service growth	July	September	Funded service plan in place for FY2008-2009
i. Review financial policies, controls, and services (e.g., bank services, investments)	August	December	Best practices and maximum efficiency/returns in place
j. Hold series of workshops with funding partners to define how we can meet the needs of the long-term Financial Plan	Sept	December	Agreement on funding formula going forward

3. **Focus on internal culture of organization to continue process of matching the organization to the new vision, mission, and goals (create the new culture and develop the tools necessary to succeed – finish becoming Mountain Rides!)**

TASK	START	FINISH	MILESTONE
a. Finish implementation of Mountain Rides identity on buses, uniforms, customer info sources, etc.	Now	September	Well-identified organization within Blaine County and beyond
b. Focus on internal marketing to ensure all employees understand importance of new mission, vision, and goals	April	May	Plan for ongoing events and information flow
c. Engage employees (through special events, surveys, etc.) and create team-building opportunities	April	Ongoing	A cohesive and positive team environment
d. Rewrite employee manual, driver operation manual, and pay structure to reflect new structure and direction of organization	April	June	New manuals adopted at June Board Meeting
e. Complete name change process for all aspects of the administration of the organization (vendors, phone books, grants, state/federal government)	May	June	No more KART, Peak, or Rideshare confusion
f. Update organizational by-laws, as well as legal standing/structure, for compliance and liability protection	June	August	New by-laws adopted at August Board Meeting
g. Create cross-training opportunities for staff to become familiar with all aspects of the multi-modal, regional organization we have become	July	August	Employees who understand all aspects of our services
h. Develop employee training plan that covers short-term and long-term development of staff	July	September	Training plan in place
i. Hold series of fall informational sessions for new and returning employees	Sept	December	Staff ready to successfully implement new vision in all aspects of services

4. Develop performance standards and work towards meeting them

TASK	START	FINISH	MILESTONE
a. Research industry best practices and models for various performance standards	September	October	Several models/options for Board to consider at October meeting
b. Review current data collection methods and evaluate proficiencies and deficiencies	October	November	Refinements to data collection procedures
c. Work with Blaine County Planning Dept. on data collection possibilities (car counts, SOV vs. carpool, passenger surveys)	October	November	Plan in place to evaluate transportation trends on an ongoing basis
d. Create needed surveys for qualitative aspects of services	November	December	Surveys developed
e. Analyze how multi-modal services will be evaluated for performance (carpool, bike, and ped programs)	November	December	Tools for evaluating services that don't have ridership
f. Develop formalized Performance Standards that define what we will track, how often, and what goals we have for each data point collected	November	December	Performance Standards adopted at December Board Meeting
g. Define technology or procedures necessary to support Performance Standards data	December	December	Adequate technology in place or planned for
h. Implement tracking of Performance Standards on a monthly basis	January 09	January 09	First set of data presented at January 2009 Board Meeting
i. Evaluate how actual performance compares to benchmarks and make adjustments as needed	January 09	February 09	Reasonable, attainable benchmarks in place

2009-2010 Implementation

As future years are dependent upon what is achieved in preceding years, the implementation plans for 2009 and 2010 will be written at the end of 2008 for 2009 tasks; and at the end of 2009 for 2010 tasks. This ensures that any carryover activities are accounted for, as well as any new opportunities or priorities that may develop.

2010 Success Factors

Given all that has been laid out for the next three years, some success factors were brainstormed by board and staff during the SPW. These ideas are based on the premise that "If we are successful in implementing or exceeding our SBP, then what will be the quantifiable result at the end of 2010?" These are the dreams and hopes of board and staff, if we succeed in implementing this SBP, in no particular order:

- Annual Ridership of 550,000
- 25% mode split for transportation alternatives (carpool, vanpool, transit, bike, bus)
- South Valley Multi-modal hub designed, funded, and in progress (possibly combined with other public entity)
- 15 full vanpool routes
- Passage of a Blaine County bond to fund equipment and facilities
- 20 minute peak hour headways, 1 hour minimum headways on Down Valley service
- 10 minute peak hour headways on Around Town service
- Service contract with at least one hotel
- Increase bikes on bus capacity
- Bus shelters throughout our system
- Community bikes in at least one town
- Seamless, multi modal system that is the only bus system in the County
- Host a national Safe Routes to School Conference in Blaine County, with our program recognized as a leading rural example
- 2 express routes per day to Boise
- All new buses ordered are hybrid or alternative fuel
- Paid parking in Ketchum
- Civic center with underground parking
- Central Sun Valley and Ketchum hubs
- Storage and processing for alternative fuels
- Plans and funding for gondola
- Bus Route to Galena
- Bus turn-outs on Hwy 75 with HOV lane
- Known as the environmental leader in the valley
- Known as the nationwide leader in alternative transportation for resort towns

Appendix B: Glossary

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, including jobs, schools, transportation, and all public and private places that are open to the general public. Public transportation has specific rules about having accessible buses with wheelchair lifts or ramps and providing van service to those who qualify under ADA and can't make it to regular bus stops.

Bikeshare – a new transportation program, ideal for short distance point-to-point trips providing users the ability to pick up a bicycle at any self-serve bike station and return it to any other bike station within the system's service area. Mountain Rides started a bikeshare program in partnership with the City of Hailey in 2013.

Blaine County – a county of 21,329 people in south central Idaho that covers 2,661 square miles and has the City of Hailey as the county seat. Mountain Rides is based in Blaine County.

Capital budgets – Mountain Rides has three capital budgets: one for replacing and refurbishing buses and vans; one for maintaining and building facilities like bus stops, buildings, and transportation centers; and one for our work force housing rental units.

Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) – an organizational planning and fiscal management tool used to coordinate the location, timing and financing of capital improvements (bus, facility, and equipment needs) over a multi-year period — for Mountain Rides, the Capital Improvement Plan looks out five years.

Demand response vans – a service that operates on-demand and as needed for those who can't make it to regular bus stops. Trip reservations need to be made a day in advance and customers must be pre-qualified through a defined process. This service is also referred to as complimentary paratransit.

Federal Transit Administration – An agency within the U.S. Department of Transportation that provides financial and technical assistance to local public transit systems, including buses, subways, light rail, commuter rail, trolleys, and ferries. The Federal Transit Administration also oversees safety measures and helps develop next-generation technology research.

Fixed route bus – a bus that operates along a specified route at published times throughout a given period of time.

Frequency – how often a bus departs a given stop going in a given direction. If a bus departs at :00 and :30 after the hour, it is said to have 30 minute frequency or 30 minute headway.

Friedman Memorial Airport – located in Hailey, this is the only airport within 60 miles of Sun Valley with commercial flights. Current carriers include Alaska, Delta and United Airlines.

FTA – see Federal Transit Administration.

Headway – see Frequency.

Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) – the State of Idaho's governmental organization responsible for state transportation and for managing federal funding for public transportation.

Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) – the cities of Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley, along with Blaine County, have agreed to form Mountain Rides for the purpose of providing public transportation. The legal instrument that makes Mountain Rides an entity is called a Joint Powers Agreement.

KART – short for Ketchum Area Rapid Transit, this was the first public transportation system in Blaine County, formed in the 1980s by the cities of Ketchum and Sun Valley primarily to transport skiers.

Local Option Tax (LOT) – a special purpose tax that is voter approved and levied at the city level. In Idaho this tax is only available to cities who have a resort/tourist economy and a population of fewer than 10,000 people. Ketchum, Sun Valley, and Hailey all have a local option tax that is used to help offset the increased cost of services for a resort city. Public transportation was one of the founding reasons for the tax, but LOT can be used to pay for a variety of city services and needs.

Mobility – a term referring to how people get around a community and usually synonymous with public transportation.

Multi-modal – an industry term meaning multiple transportation modes that often interconnect. For example, someone walking to a bus stop, taking a bus, and then jumping on a bikeshare bike would be a multi-modal trip.

Operating budget – this is the budget for all the direct costs of running our services and includes payroll, fuel, maintenance, and general business expenses like supplies and insurance.

Peak Bus – a commuter bus formed by Blaine County with operational direction from Wood River Rideshare, this fixed route bus was the first regional service to connect Bellevue, Hailey, Ketchum and Sun Valley.

Peak season and baseline service – peak season refers to winter and summer when Mountain Rides operates a higher level of service to match the larger number of people moving around. Baseline service is that which operates year-round and doesn't change with the seasons.

Public transportation – general term referring to a variety of transportation modes including bus, carpool, vanpool, biking, and walking. Basically every transportation mode except driving in your own, privately-owned car.

Ridership – the number of boardings onto a bus for a given time period. One person riding the bus to and from work, for example, would add two to the ridership for that day.

Route – the route a bus takes to connect particular areas. A route may have multiple buses that serve the route in order to increase the frequency. Generally a route is multi-directional with an inbound and outbound trip, or a north and a south trip.

Safe Routes to School – a national program to make walking and bicycling to school safer and more accessible for children, including those with disabilities, and to increase the number of children who choose to walk and bicycle by focusing on the 6 E's of evaluation, engineering, education, encouragement, enforcement, and equity.

Sawtooth National Recreation Area – a national recreation area that consists of 756,000 acres of scenic mountain country with the headquarter office located nine miles north of Ketchum.

Schedule – the departure times that a bus runs on a given day.

Seasonality – in serving a seasonal resort area, Mountain Rides operates a different amount of service depending on the time of year. Some routes only operate in the winter, some routes increase service during the winter as compared with the spring and fall. Generally winter is the highest level of service, also referred to as peak service, summer is the next highest, and spring and fall are the lowest.

Service hours – the amount of time a bus operates in service on a route. Each hour that a bus is on a route counts as one service hour.

Stops – the places that a bus stops to load or unload passengers along its route.

Sun Valley Company – the operator of the ski resort that encompasses Bald Mountain, Dollar Mountain, the Sun Valley Golf, and the Nordic club, and the Sun Valley Village with hotels and shops.

Vanpool – a service where a group of commuters travel in a van together and share the costs of operating the van. The driver is a volunteer who is also a commuter. Mountain Rides operates vanpools for those commuting from Twin Falls, Shoshone, Jerome, and Gooding.

Wood River Rideshare – an alternative transportation organization formed in 2002 to promote, advocate, and provide alternatives to the single occupancy vehicle; Wood River Rideshare was instrumental in the formation of Peak and the merger of Peak, KART, and Rideshare to form Mountain Rides.

Wood River Valley – the area of Blaine County that starts in Bellevue on the south end and extends north to include Hailey, Ketchum, and Sun Valley. Also synonymous with the Sun Valley area.

Appendix C: Comments received from funding partners

Blaine County

The 5 year plan was presented to the Blaine County Commissioners on June 20, 2016. The commissioners were glad to see that Mountain Rides had created the plan and offered the following comments:

- Commissioner Greenberg expressed gratitude for Mountain Rides developing the plan and having a vision.
- Commissioner Schoen expressed concern about growing local funding sources by 30% over 5 years due to the county's inability to raise revenue by more than 3% annually. He stated that he was concerned that the county wouldn't be unable to increase enough to meet the goal. Commissioner Schoen also encouraged Mountain Rides to continue to improve the website and to improve bus stops by building more bus shelters at more stops that protect riders from elements and passing cars
- Commissioner McCleary commended Mountain Rides for its efforts and support of the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

City of Hailey

From City Administrator Heather Dawson:

Jason,

Great plan! I noted within it a discussion that the public often comments on there being "empty seats". I was interested to see the average mpg of your entire fleet. Is that based on ridership or available seats? I think it would be useful not only to track ridership, but to track and report on empty seats. I understand and agree with the stated concept that more frequent service expands ridership faster than diversity in routes and delivery points.

City of Ketchum

From Mayor Nina Jonas:

Mayor Jonas had detailed comments on the entire plan. Mayor Jonas didn't submit written comments, but she did meet to discuss and review her marked copy of the plan. Mayor Jonas praised Mountain Rides for tackling this project and for clearly showing the organization's vision of the future. In particular, she had the following comments:

- The plan should state that Mountain Rides' bus system is well-suited to a seasonal, resort economy in a mountainous area due to the ability for a bus system to be flexible and work with existing infrastructure.
- The goals of the plan should be more customer focused.
- The plan should talk more about importance of convenience.
- The approach of more frequent service on routes that see higher ridership is business savvy.
- The core belief on page 18 of the plan is wonderful and should be moved to the overview section so that it appears sooner in the plan and is emphasized more.
- The graph on page 21 needs more context – after explaining to Mayor Jonas that some of these other systems were city departments, she suggested adding footnotes to this chart.
- The information about Mountain Rides helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is great

- For Valley Route, think about adding service like WiFi that benefit the commuter and focus on the worker as top priority with secondary use for dinner, entertainment, and shopping.
- The approach to reduce Green Route service is good thinking.
- Does Mountain Rides vanpool service conflict with City of Ketchum goal to keep people living and working in Ketchum? Same comment for new bus service to Twin Falls. If bus to Twin is developed, it should be coordinated with air service board.
- Galena service is a great idea.
- Good to see comment about Ketchum parking – the city is working on this issue.
- Is the bike-ped plan management an undue burden and cost? Are there grants to fund?
- Safe Routes work is great and important and keep Ketchum in mind for Main Street improvements.
- For business outreach, think about decals that businesses could display and an letter to business owners that highlights services.
- Make the goal for getting public officials to ride the bus loftier – once a month isn't enough.
- The goal of trying to get local governments to dedicate a fixed percentage of LOT to public transportation or to establish a dedicated transportation LOT isn't good. What's wrong with current system? More funding isn't necessarily the answer – service should be focused on efficiency. It's important that future councils have flexibility in how they decide to fund Mountain Rides – budget requests and resulting funding reflect the job that Mountain Rides is doing.
- Hiring more staff should be done on contract as much as possible.
- The effort to educate state legislators is good and important.
- City is interested in helping support transition to electric buses with on-route charging, if needed.
- Please add riders per route as a performance metric in tracking success of each route.
- The Mountain Rides cost per hour is impressive – good job.

In addition to these specific comments, Mayor Jonas provided many edits and corrections that were helpful.