

# Technical Memorandum

September 27, 2022

Project# 27269

To: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

From: Miranda Barrus, PE, and Matt Kittelson, PE

Project: Harney County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan

Subject: Final Tech Memo #2: Initial Public Workshop and Stakeholder Interview Summary

## INTRODUCTION

This memorandum summarizes the approach to and outcome of the first round of public outreach efforts conducted for the Harney County Coordinated Human Services Public Transportation Plan Update ("Coordinated Plan"). The goal of the first round was to seek community input on transportation service needs across Harney County. Outreach was accomplished through two primary avenues: public outreach in the Burns/Hines area and stakeholder interviews over the phone/via email. The following sections present more details on those events and the input received. Community input will be incorporated into the upcoming transit needs analysis and contribute to the transit strategies development for the Coordinated Plan update.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

Public outreach was conducted in three formats: (1) pop-up style events at public locations in the Burns/Hines area that are typically frequented by transit riders, (2) a flyer provided to patrons of Meal Days at Harney Hub, and (3) an online survey for community members who preferred to participate virtually. Harney Hub Transit offered 25 free rides via a raffle for those who participated.

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### Pop-Up Events

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These events were held on Monday, July 11 from 10:30 to 11:30AM at the Harney District Hospital and 3:30 to 4:30PM at Safeway and Thriftway. The intent of this format was to meet community members where they are to seek input on existing transit services. The setup included poster boards, shown in Figure 1, that presented information on current transportation services, posed questions to the public about transportation service needs, and provided information on next steps in the project and how to stay involved. Community members provided a variety of input, which is summarized later in this memo.



Tell us what you think about **transportation services in Harney County** and enter a raffle at the chance to win **25 free rides with Harney Hub Transit!**

**PROJECT PURPOSE**  
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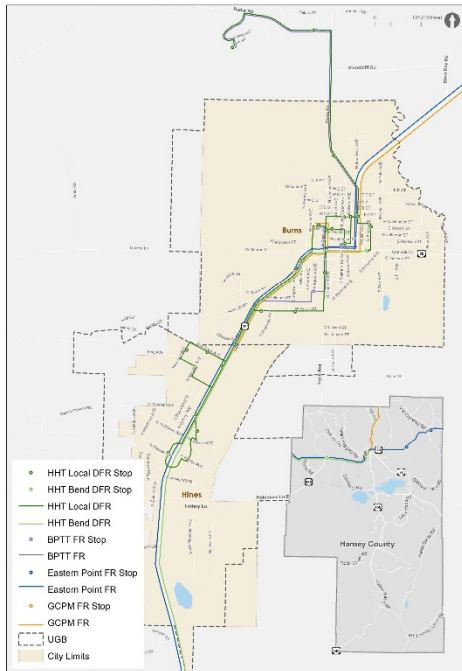
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**Definitions**

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The most important transit need we have is...

The biggest question this plan should answer is...

Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?

**WHAT'S NEXT?**

The project team will be developing a draft plan over the next few months that will include the needs we heard from you, strategies to address them, and other considerations. Check the project website for the next touch point this fall where we'll want your feedback on the draft!

Figure 1: Pop-Up Event Poster Boards

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## Meal Days

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Harney Hub hosts Meal Days on site during the afternoon on Tuesdays each week, which provides nutritious meals to the public for low-cost, or a donation, depending on age. Many of Harney Hub's transit riders attend Meal Days. A flyer containing all the information from the pop-up events was provided to Harney Hub to distribute to its patrons so they too can provide input on transportation services, either directly onto the flyer or by way of the online survey. 13 patrons provided their input, which is summarized later in this memo. *Attachment A includes copies of the Meal Days flyer and surveys completed on paper.*

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## Online Survey

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For community members who preferred to provide their input virtually, an online survey was also hosted from Monday, July 11 to Monday, July 18 that posed the same questions from the pop-up events and Meal Days. The survey received input from one participant who also provided similar feedback in person during the pop-up events.

# STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Leading up to the public workshop, input on transportation services was also sought out through interviews with stakeholders. The County identified these entities as stakeholders in this project:

- Ashley Manor
- The Aspens
- Burns Veterans Clinic
- Burns Paiute Social Services
- Burns Paiute Tribal Housing
- Burns Paiute Wadatika Health Center
- Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Welfare
- DHS Adults and People with Disabilities
- DHS Self Sufficiency
- Early Childhood Center
- Harney County Health District
- Greater Oregon Behavioral health
- Symmetry Care Inc.

Each stakeholder was contacted for an opportunity to comment on the following questions:

1. What do you see as Harney County's key public transportation and coordination needs today?
2. What do you foresee as its biggest challenges in the coming years?
3. In what ways should this plan seek to address existing and future needs?
4. What do you hope to see this plan and process accomplish?
5. What groups should be engaged throughout the planning process?
6. How would you like to be involved in the planning process?
7. What other thoughts or comments do you have to share?

Responses were received from the Early Childhood Center, the Department of Human Services (DHS) Self Sufficiency and Child Welfare offices, the Burns Paiute Tribe, and the Harney County Health District administrative team – which consists of Harney District Hospital (HDH), HDH Family Care Clinic, NewSun

Energy & HDH Specialty Care Clinic, HDH Emergency Medical Services, and the HDH Physical and Sports Therapy clinic. Input from these stakeholders is summarized in the following section along with other public input. *Attachment B includes email copies of the stakeholder interview responses.*

## PUBLIC INPUT

Through the outreach efforts described above, the following describes general themes of the transportation needs and feedback shared by the public and stakeholders:

### ■ Services

- Continue existing services and prevent current economic climate from impacting riders
- Continue providing regularly scheduled, free bus service / expand with growing needs including out to or beyond Airport Lane
- Continue allowing pets to ride
- Provide reliable, safe, affordable, and wheelchair accessible public transportation for various trip needs (e.g., medical, social):
  - o To destinations within the county far from Burns/Hines (e.g., Fields, Princeton)
  - o To destinations outside of the county (e.g., Bend, Ontario, Boise, etc.)
  - o Considering those on fixed incomes
  - o Considering hospital patients
  - o Considering families with transportation needs (emphasis on transporting children under age 13 and preschoolers)
- Expand Burns/Hines deviated fixed-route service to provide more stops, including to northeast Burns
- Increase weekend service options, including providing local fixed-route service on Sundays
- Extend service hours into the evening (especially important for hospital staff and patients):
  - o Beyond 3PM on Sundays (demand response service)
  - o To 10PM on Fridays/Saturdays
  - o To 9PM on weekdays

### ■ Facilities

- Add bus stops at the Library, Erickson's (westbound), and Apple Peddler/Dollar Tree (eastbound)
- Remove stops with low or no usage
- Provide benches at local deviated fixed-route stops (coordinate with local businesses on advertising opportunities)

### ■ Vehicle Fleet

- Increase number of buses operating local deviated fixed-route service (1 for Burns/1 for Hines) to reduce headways
  - o Some riders have been seen waiting long durations for pick-up, sometimes up to an hour (e.g., near the Dollar Tree)
- Increase vehicle fleet and staff with growing needs (including possibly expanding service to include trips to VA facilities in Boise, Medford, and/or Portland)
- Consider more fuel-efficient vehicles and/or consider alternative fuel sources, including electric vehicles

### ■ Information & Technology

- Increase advertisement/marketing about services
- Enhance messaging about public transportation to attract more riders (not just those who depend on it)

■ **Operations**

- Avoid moving people's rides who are on a schedule
- Identify funding sources for bus maintenance

■ **Coordination**

- Coordinate with businesses that have employees who use public transportation
- Increase coordination among transportation providers in the region:
  - o Grant County People Mover on services to Grant County/John Day
  - o Tribal services

## NEXT STEPS

The project team will incorporate the feedback received through this outreach effort into the next phase of the plan development, which is focused on identifying projects and strategies that would improvement transit services within Harney County.

## Attachment A Meal Days Flyer and Surveys Responses



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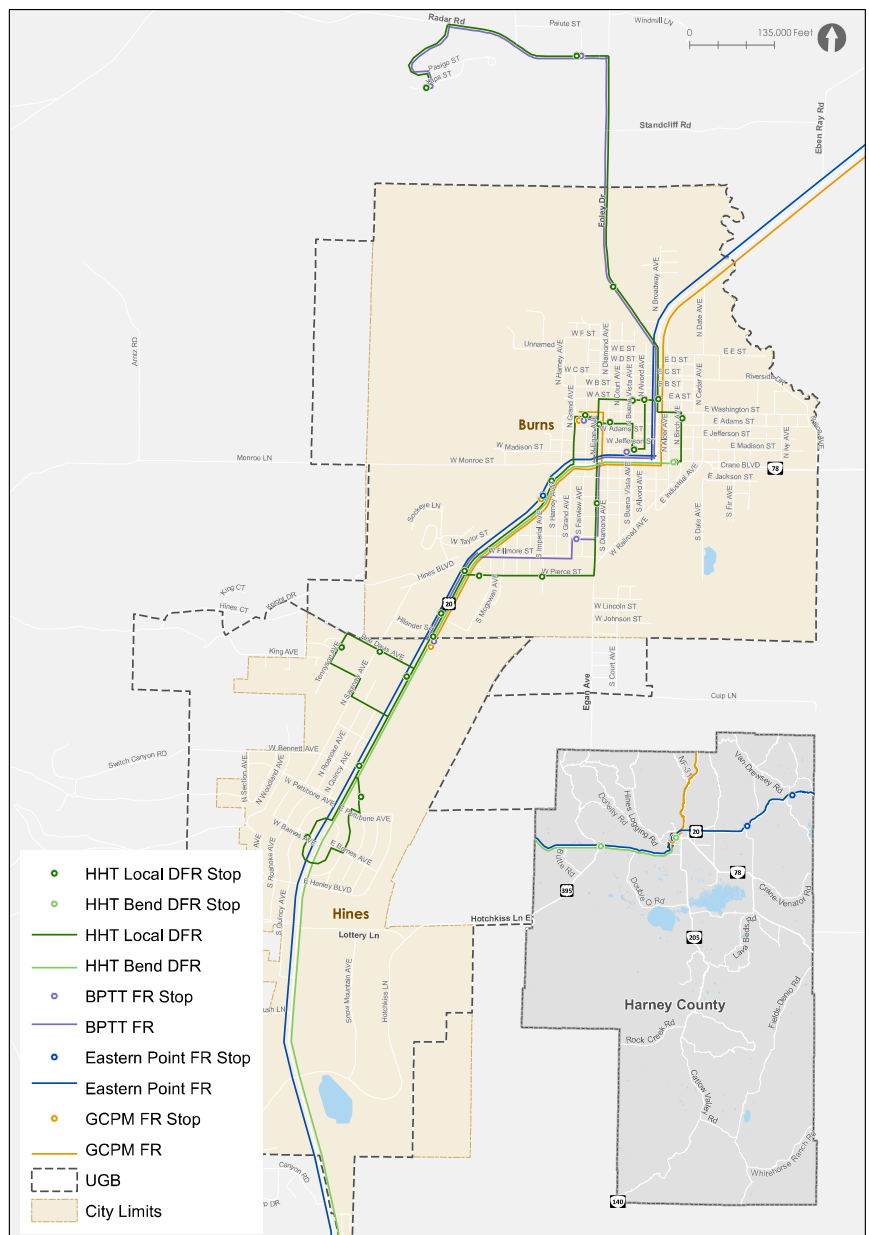
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## The biggest question this plan should answer is...

## Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?

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<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C63GBZX>.

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TAC - Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

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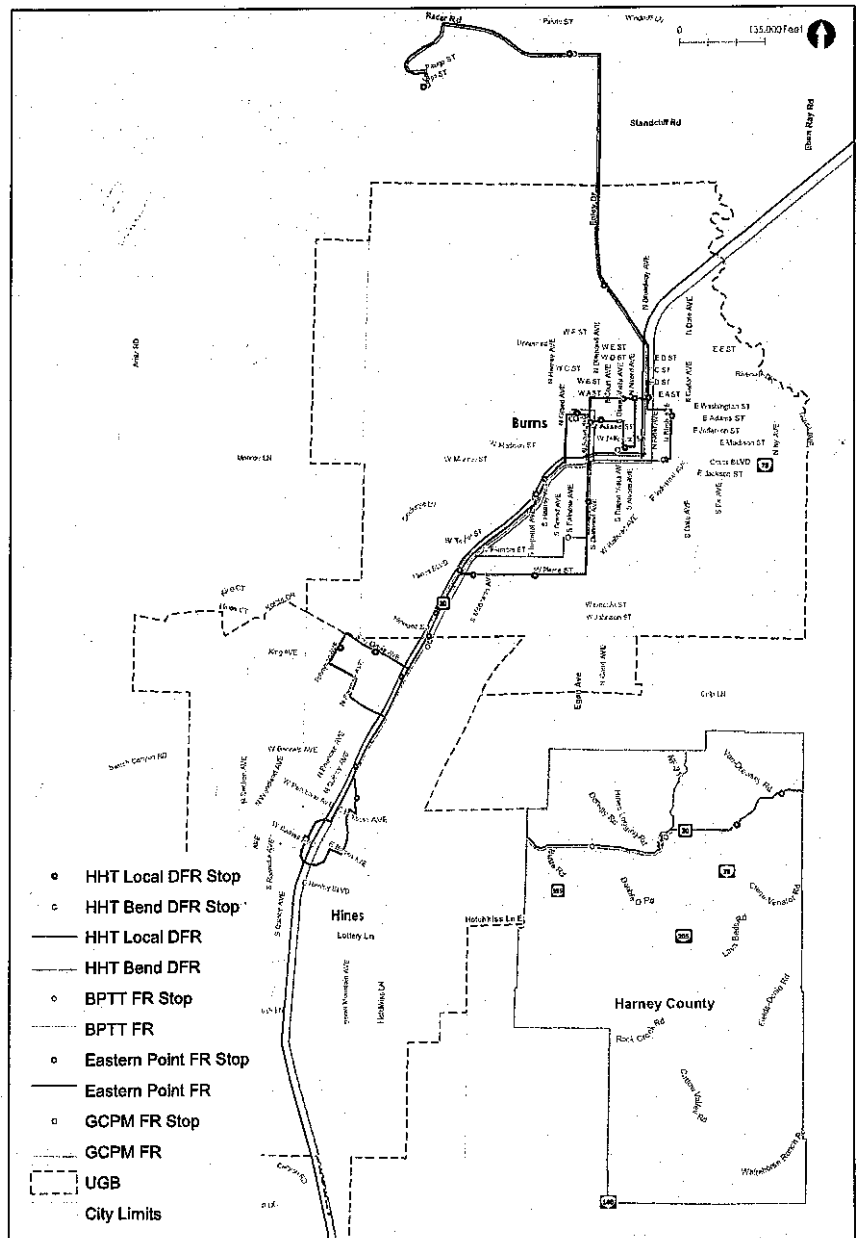
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

*out of Town Trips medical & Social*

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

*what ~~are~~ are our growth opportunities*

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

*IT is a vital service to our community. A much needed resource*

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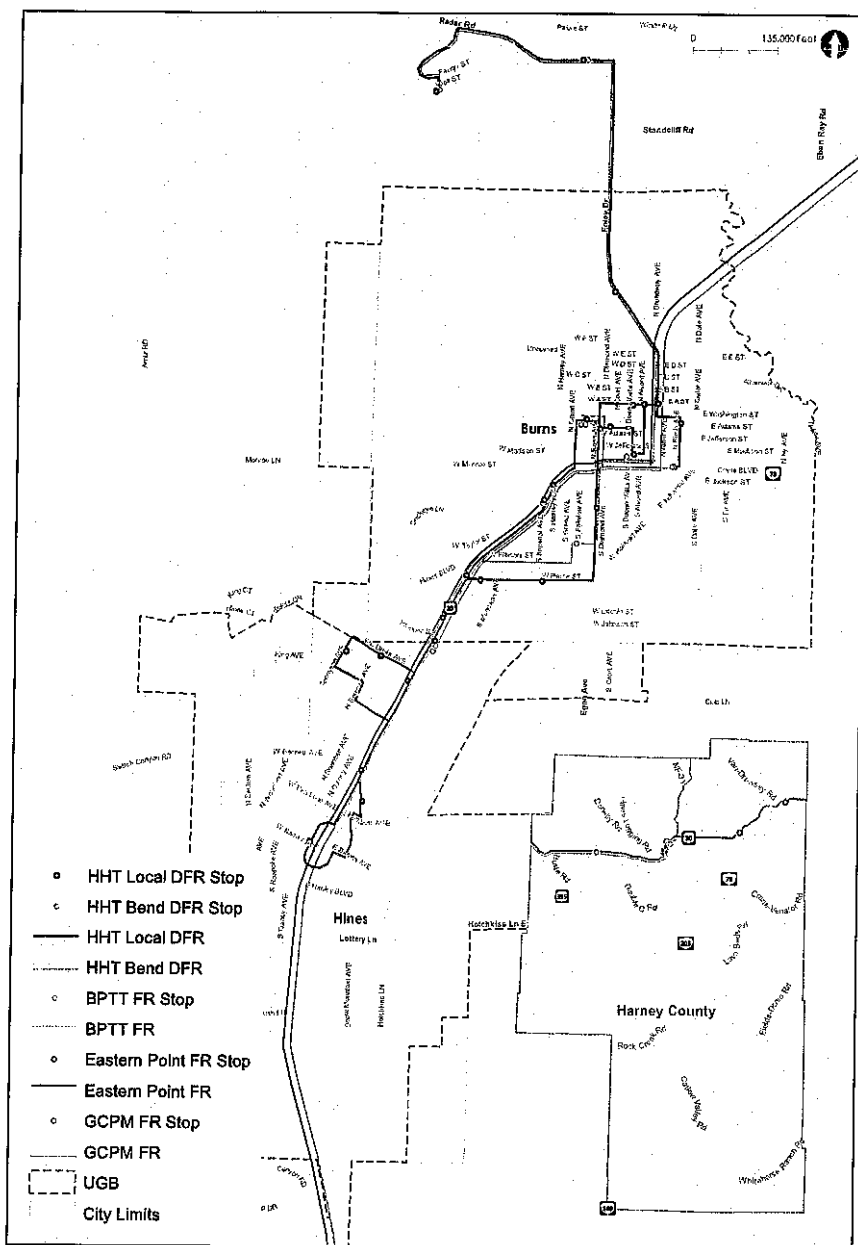
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The most important transit need we have is... *To add a set curb to curb bus. Benefit: offers a job to a local person*

- ① No Sat lunch hour closed
- ③ provide to stops outside route.

The biggest question this plan should answer is... *If adequate service being offered. If needed, hire more drivers & bus.*

Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County? *Three more locations that would benefit from bus stop. Add stops:*

- ① Library, when bus turns on B street.
- ② Add stop on west route at Ericksons
- ③ Add stop on east route at Applepedders/Dollar

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- ④ You will also be entered into the raffle for 25 free rides with Harney Hub Transit!
- ⑤ possible rides to evening events.
- ⑥ lighter Sunday later to attend 3PM events (concerts)

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*⑥ Remove stops that have no/low usage.*

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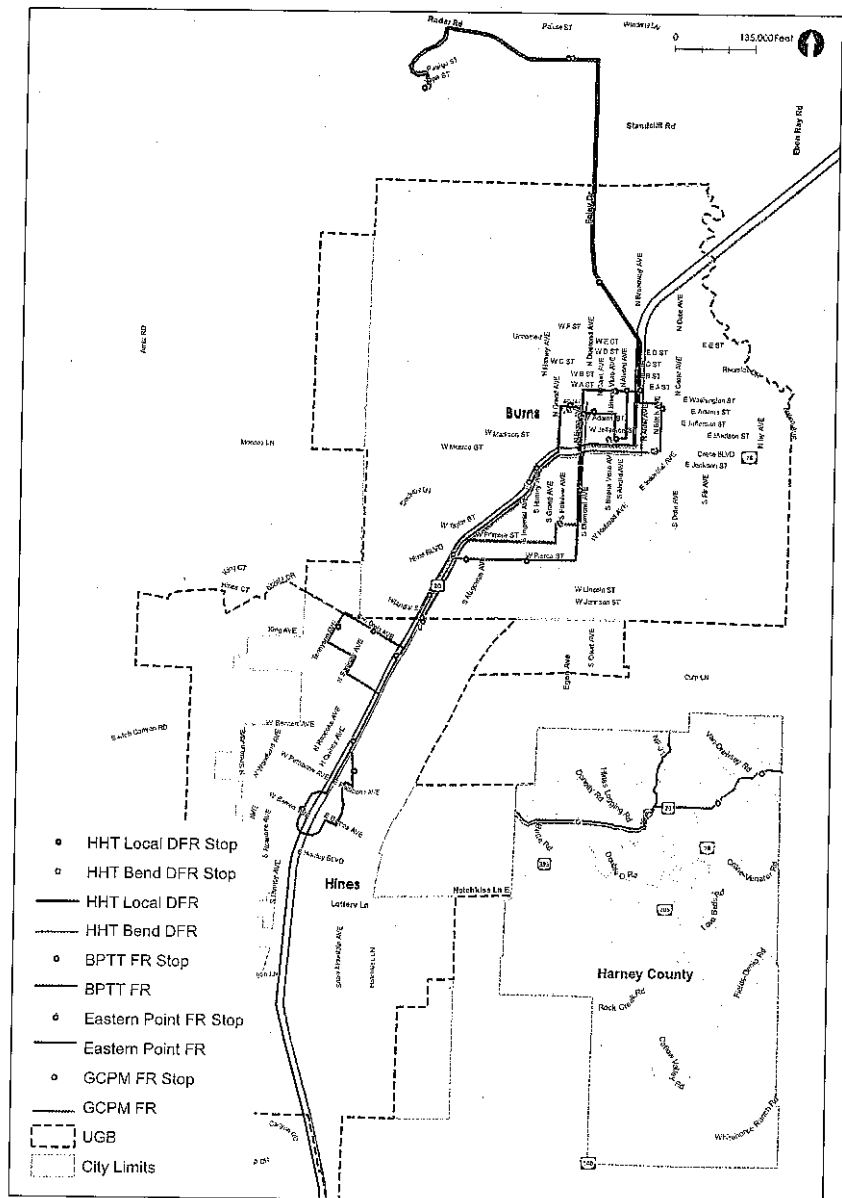
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**The most important transit need we have is...** *appointments*

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...** *cost*

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?** *I don't know*

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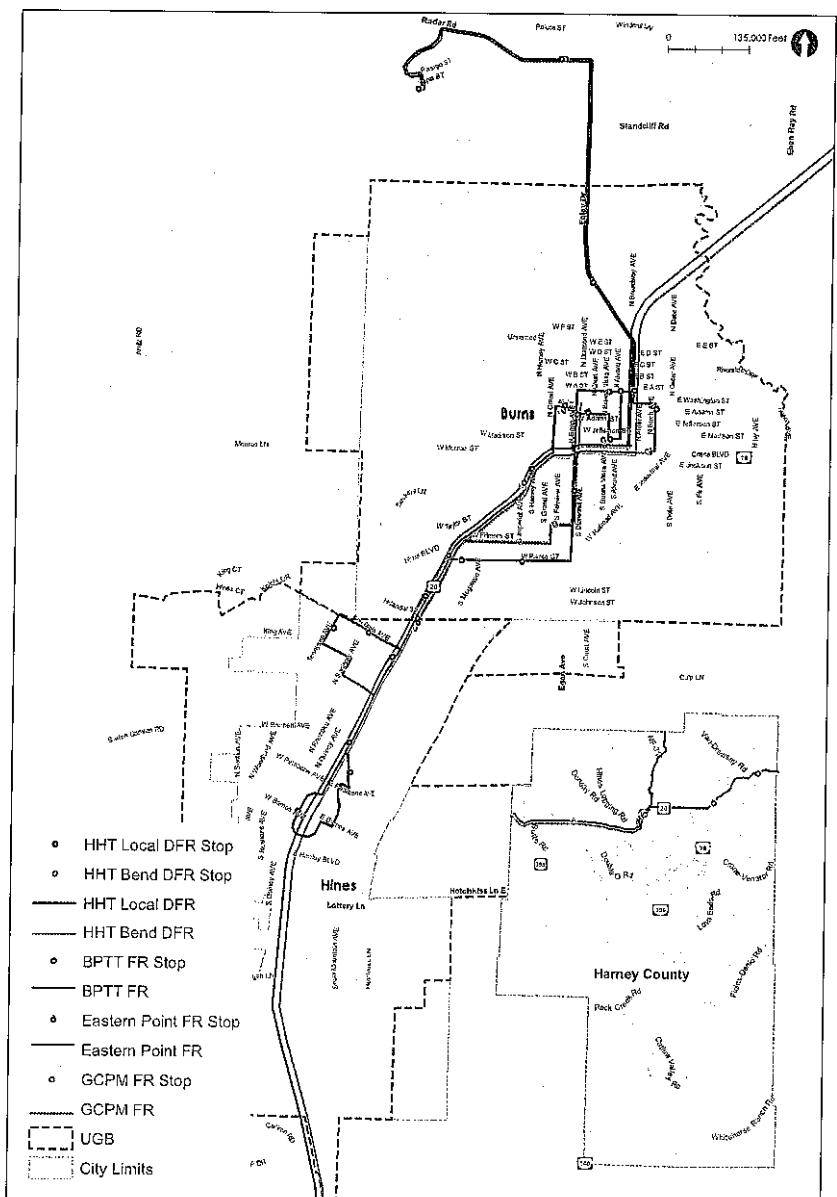
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**The most important transit need we have is...** *Running on Sundays*

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...** *Longer hours*

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

*Can't really improve much*

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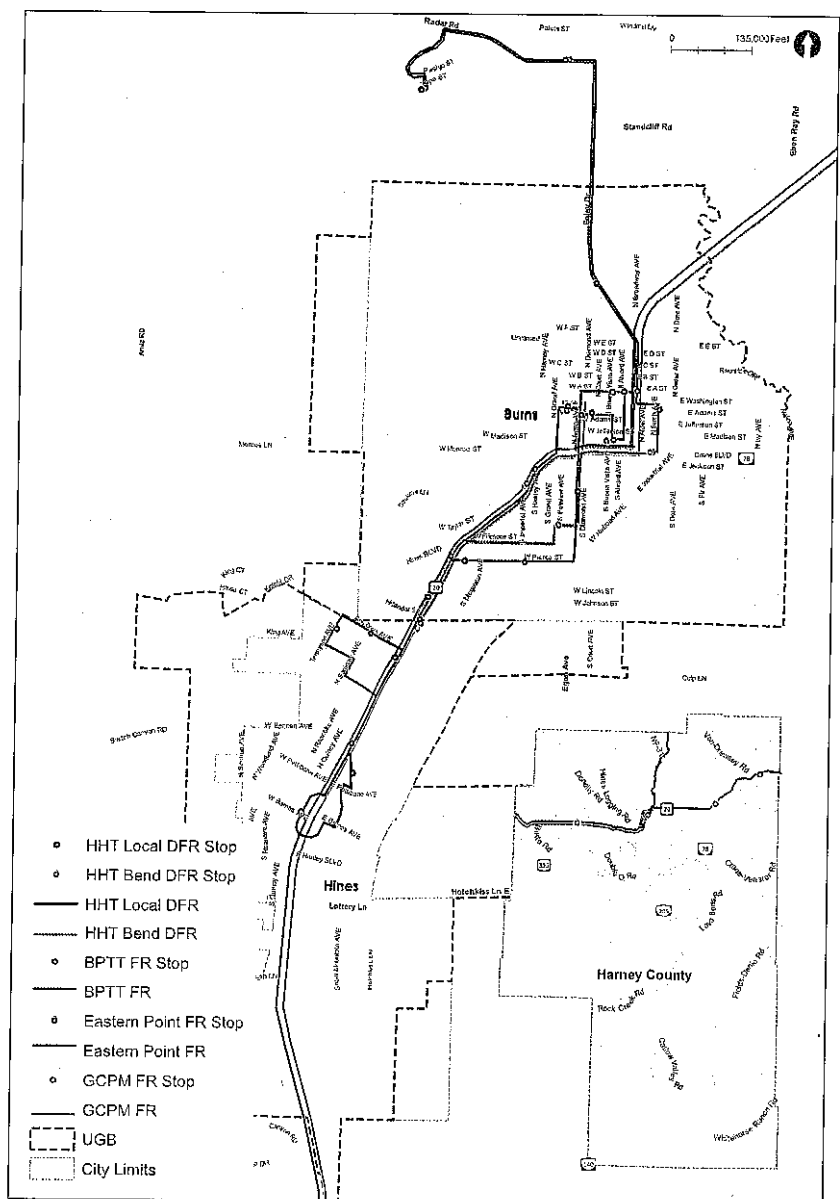
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

Have more fixed route buses (possibly 1 for Beans & 1 for Hines)  
extend hours of fixed route to possibly 10 PM on Friday & Saturday  
possibly have fixed route on Sunday.

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...** How can we better serve the citizens of Harney County (including the reservation)

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

Great staff and drivers

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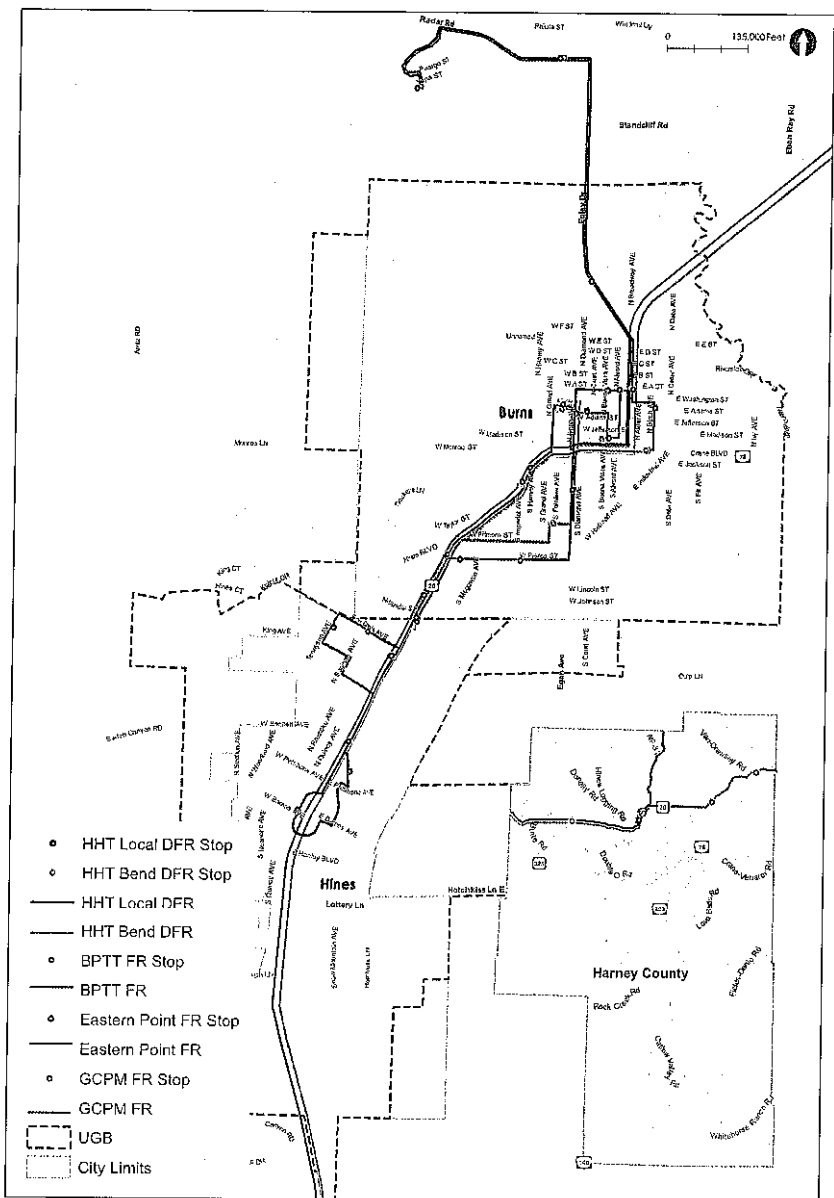
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

Moving people on a schedule

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

Who needs this & where & when do they need it

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

I would like to see the NE covered a bit more

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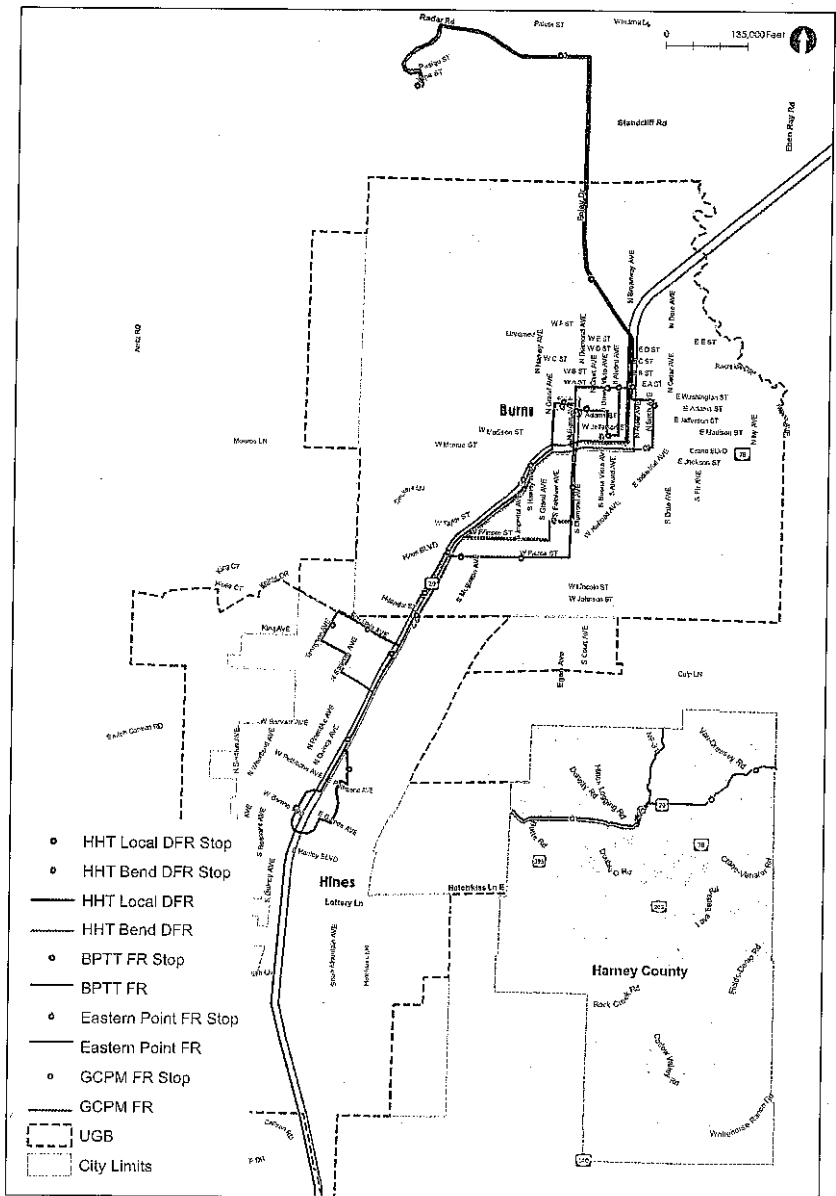
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

*Extend "free" service out to <sup>and beyond</sup> Airport Lane - several seniors live out that could use the service for medical appointments or going to the HUB for lunch.*

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

*How to effectively move people around in Harney County. Better advertisement about the availability and benefits of using "public" transport.*

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

*"Special Events" transportation to.*

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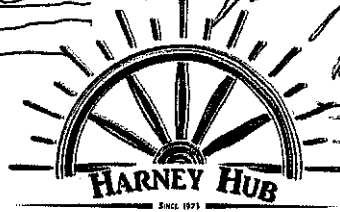
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Promotion will help your Business



Tell us what you think about **transportation services** in Harney County and enter a raffle at the chance to win **25 free rides with Harney Hub Transit!**

*Advertise your Business*

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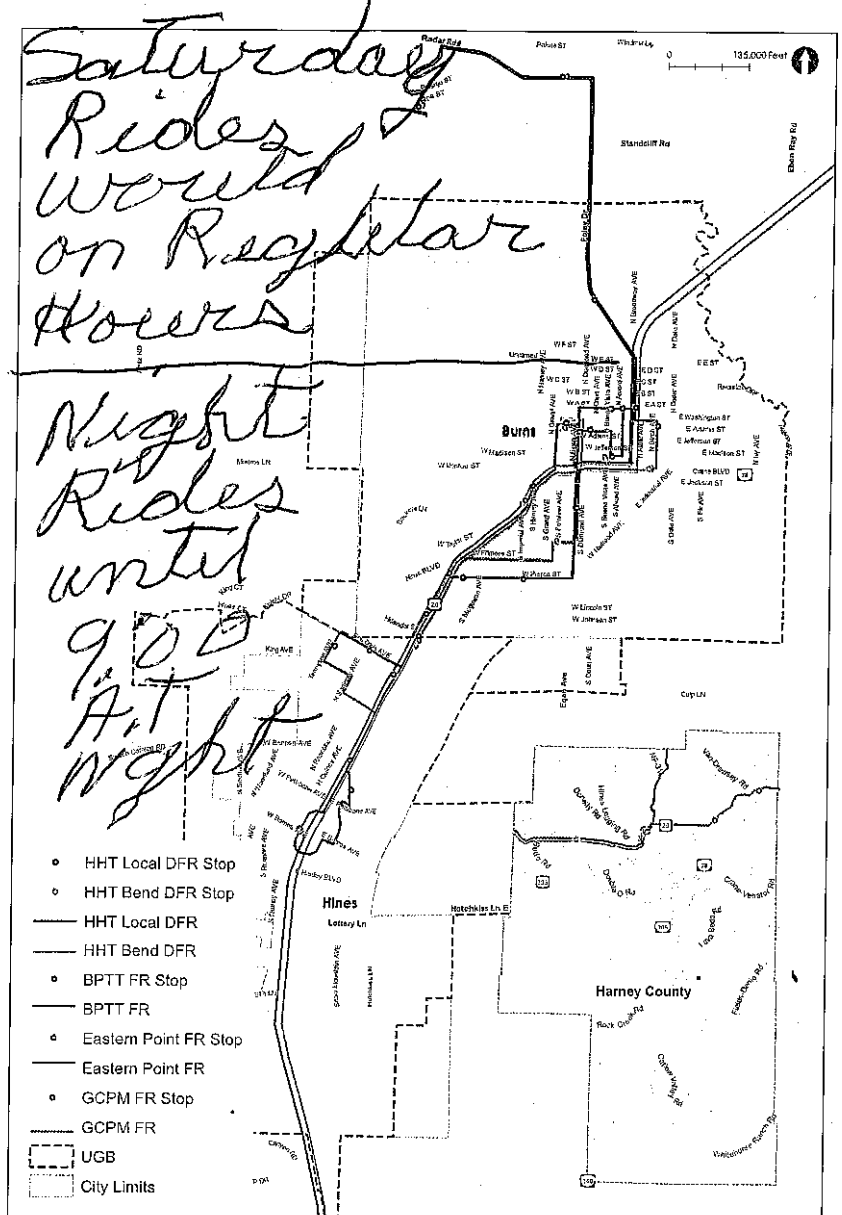
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*Mary E Campbell*

We have a lot of visitors coming to this Harney County

The most important transit need we have is...

you need to advertise your Business

The biggest question this plan should answer is...

Advertise your Business

Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?

Seats At the Stops

Ask other Business How you can Help Them

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Make your Friendly Business

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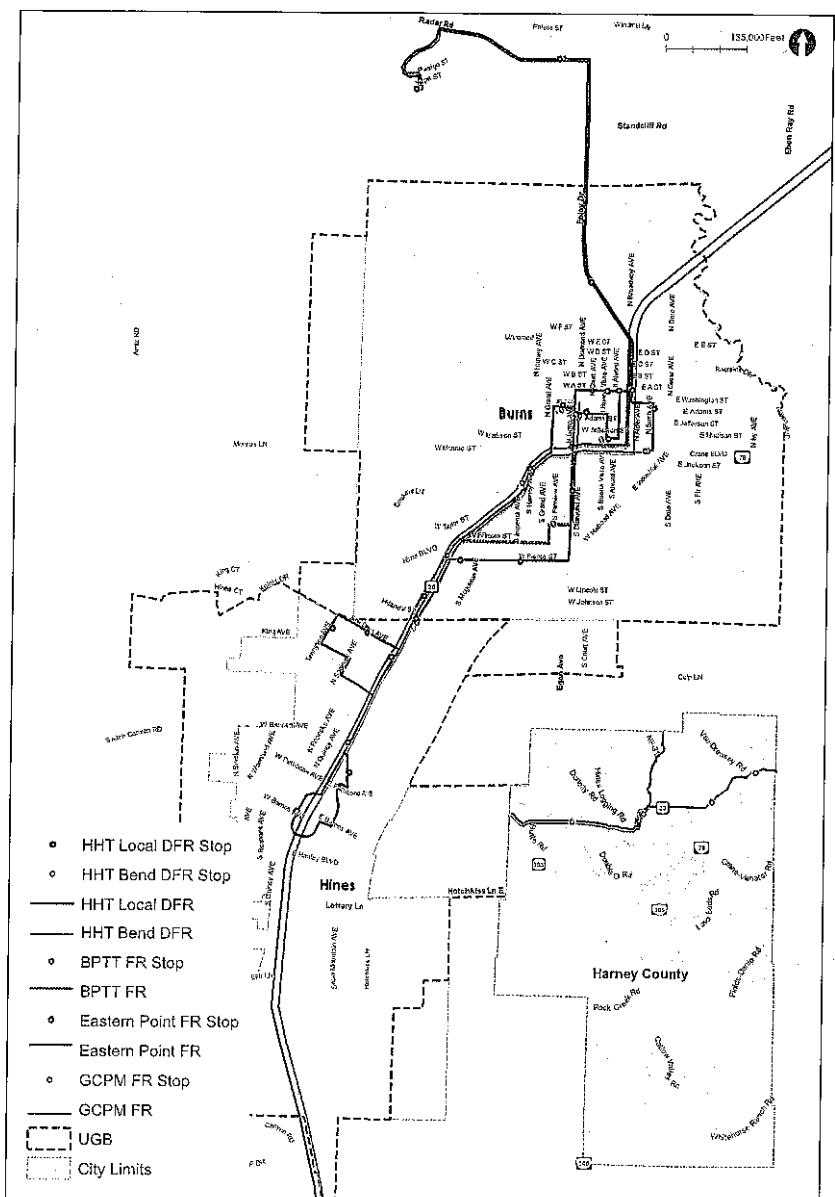
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

*Expand route or have 2 different routes  
Need more stops*

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

*Children need to be able to ride during school year  
Under 13 5-12 years*

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

*It is wonderful for those that do not have other transportation*

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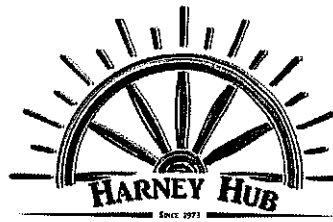
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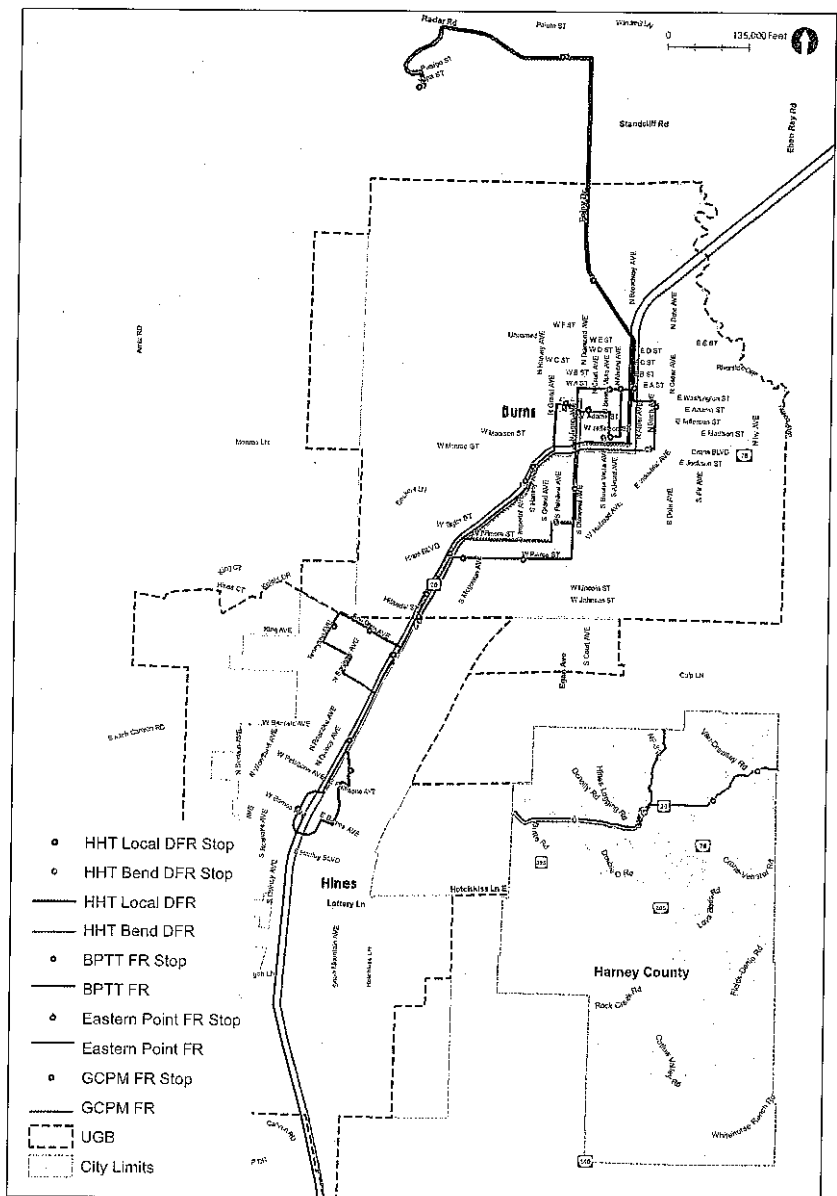
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

- Stop @ the library  
for fixed route

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

how to better ~~serve~~ serve HC

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

N/A

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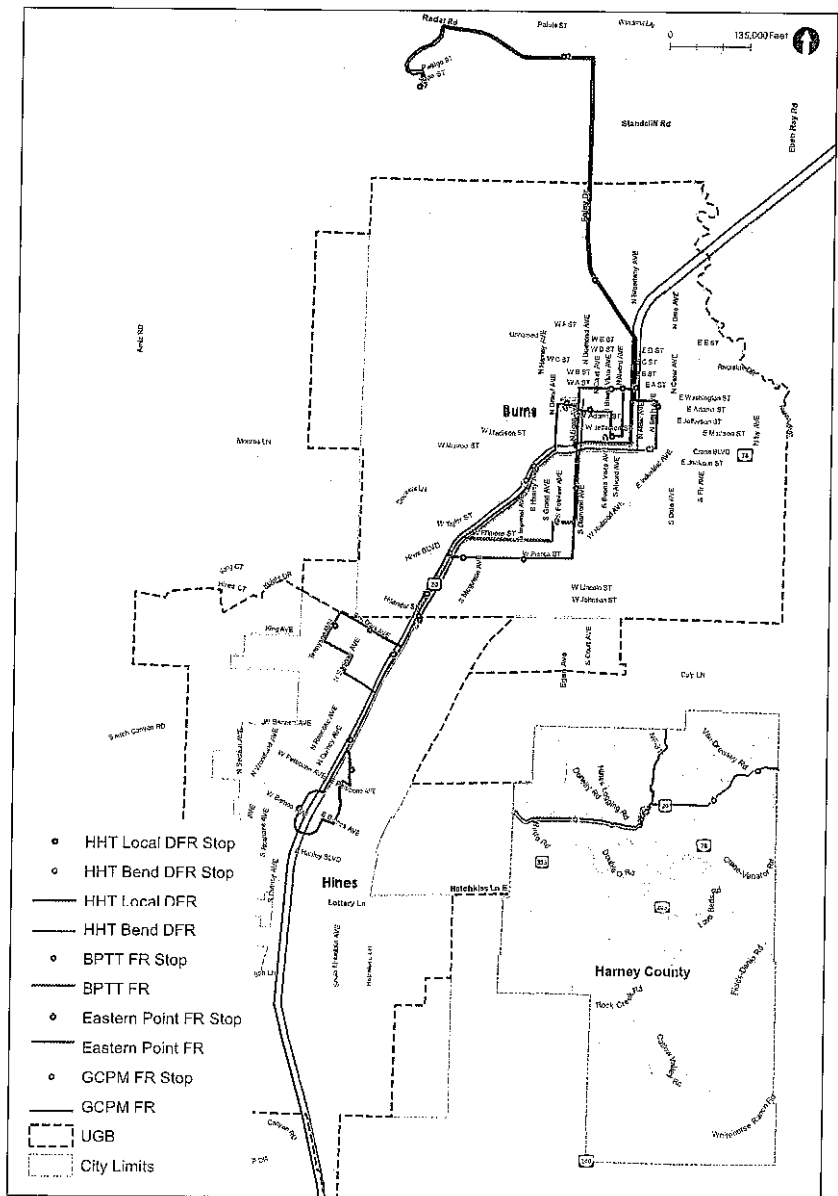
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**The most important transit need we have is...** another fixed route stop at the library

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...** how to get more monies for maintenance on buses

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?** I personally have had many of our riders telling me how much they appreciate this service and how lost they would be without it.

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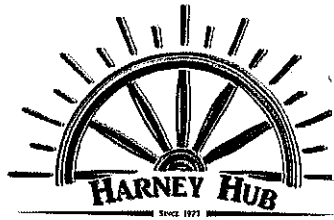
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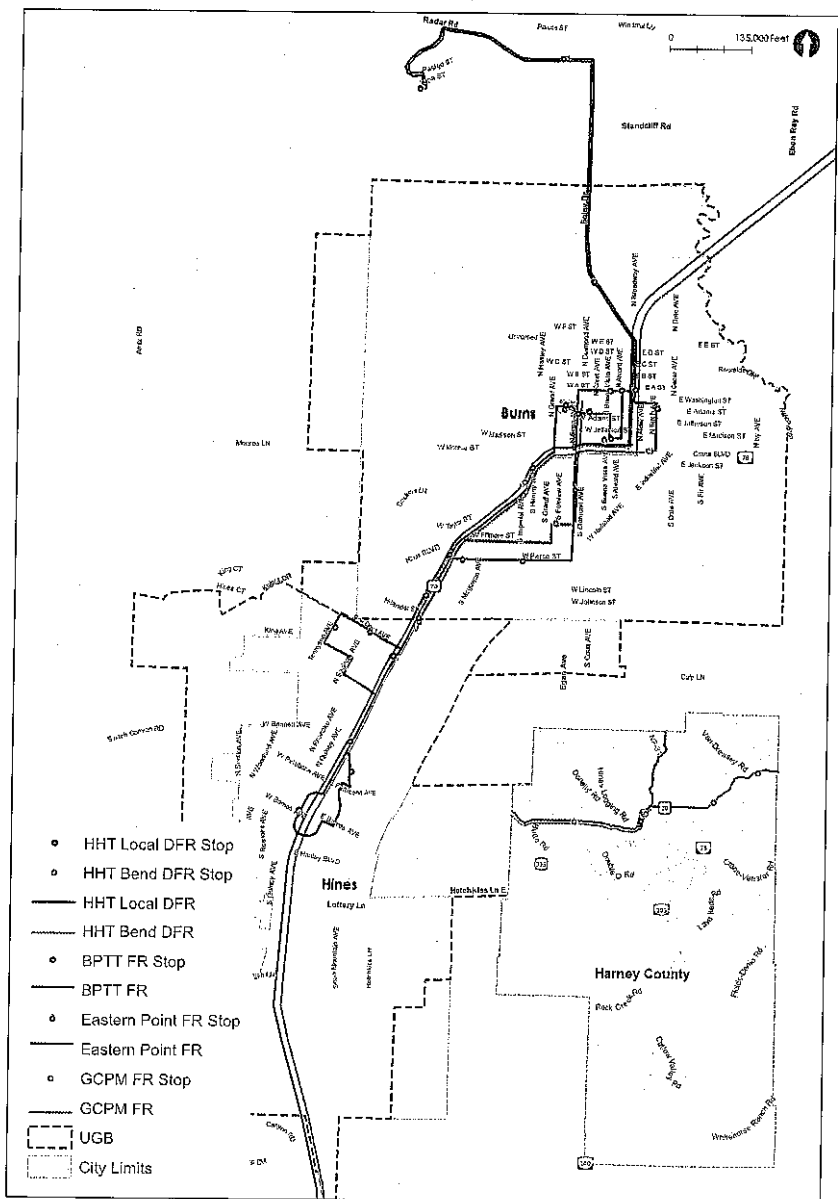
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**The most important transit need we have is...** The route bus + Bend bus meet the needs of HC to necessities of getting groceries, medical appointments.

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

Who are our customers + do we want to expand our customer base  
Why we go to the Reservation when they have their own?

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

There is low acceptance by general public for every day use. Need to rebrand that the bus is cool. NOT JUST FOR "THOSE" PEOPLE

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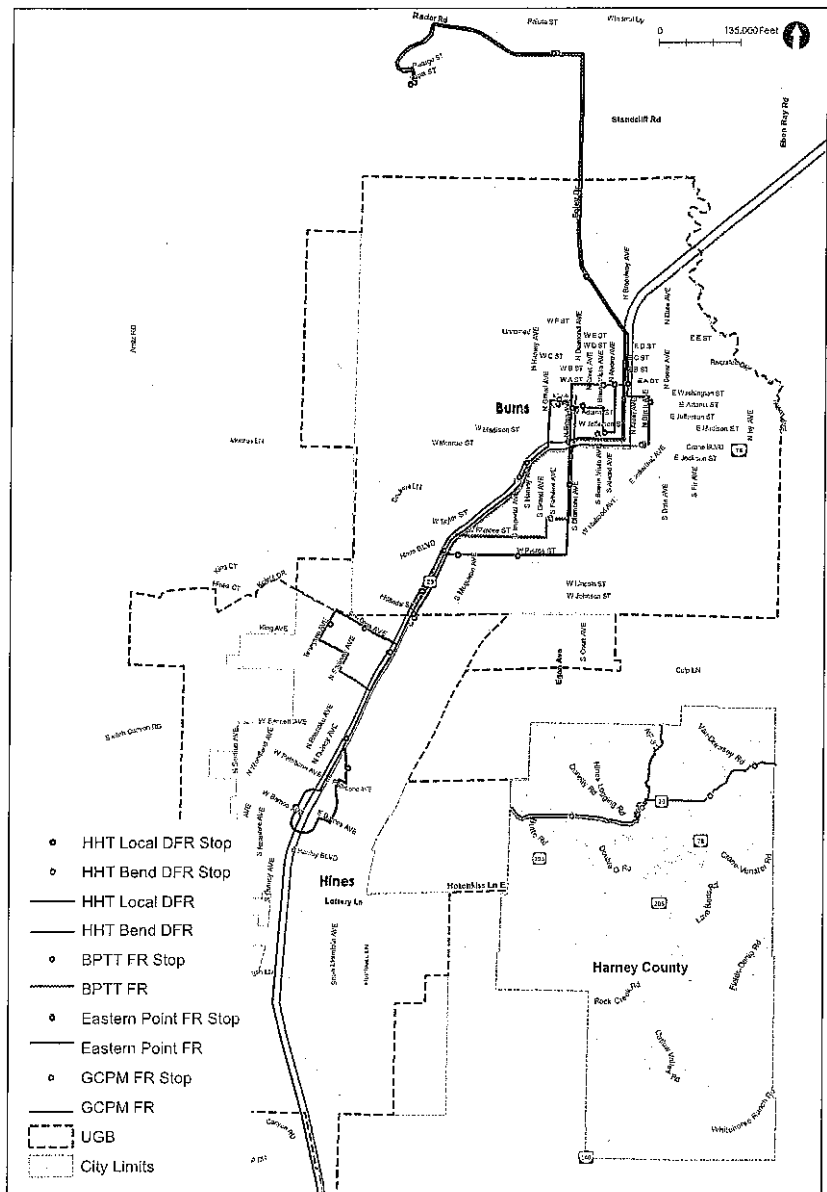
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**The most important transit need we have is...**

Regular connection to John Day / Grant County?  
Regular connection to Bend?

**The biggest question this plan should answer is...**

How to get passenger rail service from Ontario in the East to Lincoln City to the west. Think big!

**Anything else we should know about transit in Harney County?**

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# Attachment B Stakeholder Interview Responses

Hi Miranda,

Thank you for the option to complete the survey by email.

1. Harney County's key public transportation need is to provide affordable services to families with transportation needs. Public transportation is vital to many families we serve at the preschool for getting children to school and back home. If personal transportation costs (cars and gas costs) continue to rise then the need for public transportation will most likely continue to rise.
2. The biggest challenge will be keeping up with the need, finding employees and keeping up with the rising costs of transportation expenses.
3. To continue to meet the current needs while allowing for expansion.
4. To continue services provided and making allowances for growth in the community.
5. All groups that do business that have customers delivered by public transportation should be involved.
6. I would like to know the options for being involved in the planning process.
7. Public transportation is a wonderful option for the community.

Thank You,  
Brenda Engebretson

On Thu, Jun 30, 2022 at 11:26 AM Miranda Barrus <[mbarrus@kittelson.com](mailto:mbarrus@kittelson.com)> wrote:

Hi Brenda,

It was nice talking with you this morning! As I explained on the phone, we are a consultant helping Harney Hub Transit update its coordinated public transportation plan and are interviewing community stakeholders to identify key public transportation needs in Harney County. Thanks for being willing to participate! Our questions are listed below – answer to the best of your ability. The most important is #1.

1. What do you see as Harney County's key public transportation and coordination needs today?
2. What do you foresee as its biggest challenges in the coming years?
3. In what ways should this plan seek to address existing and future needs?
4. What do you hope to see this plan and process accomplish?
5. What groups should be engaged throughout the planning process?
6. How would you like to be involved in the planning process?
7. What other thoughts or comments do you have to share?

If possible, we're hoping to get your input by **Tuesday, July 12**.

Hello Miranda,

I only have a few minutes but wanted to make sure I at least responded to the first question before the deadline. I hope it's helpful for you.

1. What do you see as Harney County's key public transportation and coordination needs today?

I think the key public transportation need is (and will be for the foreseeable future) the need to have a regularly scheduled bus (or something similar) offering free rides within the community for those who do not have ready access to transportation. Also I see that there is a need for trips that extend beyond Harney County, i.e. trips to Bend, Ontario, Boise area which would likely have a cost associated with them, in which case it would be desirable to find ways to help offset this cost (perhaps through some type of community grant). I believe that currently the county's public transportation is coordinated through the Harney County Senior Center and they seem to do very well in this role. If anything, I could see it being necessary to add additional buses and staff to accommodate growing needs (expanded routes to include trips to VA facilities in either Boise, Medford or Portland).

2. What do you foresee as its biggest challenges in the coming years?
3. In what ways should this plan seek to address existing and future needs?
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7. What other thoughts or comments do you have to share?

Arik Swindlehurst  
Operations Manager  
District 14  
John Day & Burns, OR

Hi Miranda,

After consulting with Harney County Health District's administrative team, I am providing the following answers to your questions regarding Harney County's public transportation needs.

Harney County Health District consists of Harney District Hospital (HDH), HDH Family Care Clinic, NewSun Energy & Harney District Hospital Specialty Care Clinic, HDH Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and the HDH Physical and Sports Therapy clinic. The hospital, EMS, and all of these clinics operate under the same administrative team and board of directors.

**1. What do you see as Harney County's key public transportation and coordination needs today?**

Many local patients rely on public transportation to get to and from their medical appointments. Unfortunately, some folks would forgo routine, preventative, and nonemergency medical care if they did not have access to public transportation. This would be detrimental to patients' health and wellness and could eventually contribute to higher volumes/greater strain on the local emergency department.

Additionally, some patients who are being discharged from Harney District Hospital rely on public transportation to get home. The hospital is at a loss when local public transportation options are not available, as this seriously delays discharges from the emergency room or floor.

For these reasons, it is essential that community members continue to have access to reliable, safe, affordable, and wheelchair-accessible public transit. Local patients and healthcare providers would also benefit from expanded hours of operation for public transportation services.

Although the Harney County Health District and other local providers are able to offer an impressive array of services for a small/rural/isolated community, 48 percent of respondents in a recent community survey (the 2022 Community Health Needs Assessment) said they received healthcare services outside of Harney County in the past six months. This was mostly because they were unable to see a specialist locally and/or their provider referred them to services outside of the area. With that in mind, a key public transportation/coordination need may be to expand upon existing efforts to offer/coordinate roundtrips for medical care outside of the area (primarily to Bend, Oregon and Boise, Idaho).

**2. What do you foresee as its biggest challenges in the coming years?**

Rising gas prices will likely contribute to increased operating costs. Many organizations have experienced staffing shortages in recent months, so maintaining a reliable workforce of drivers could also be a challenge in the coming years. Increased costs associated with employee wages and benefits may also present a challenge.

**3. In what ways should this plan seek to address existing and future needs?**

It may be wise to consider options for making public transportation as fuel-efficient as possible and/or consider alternative fuel sources or electric vehicles. It may also be wise to prepare for wage/benefit increases, which may be necessary to attract and maintain reliable drivers.

**4. What do you hope to see this plan and process accomplish?**

We hope that Harney Hub will be able to continue offering its excellent, reliable, and affordable services to the Harney County community. We hope the plan will find ways to address rising costs of fuel and wages without impacting riders, as this service is a vital resource for some of the community's most vulnerable and economically challenged populations.

**5. What groups should be engaged throughout the planning process?**

In addition to contacting major community hubs and service providers, it may be wise to talk to folks who frequently use public transit to assess their transportation needs and identify any gaps in services.

**6. How would you like to be involved in the planning process?**

We appreciate this opportunity to share our ideas and feedback. Feel free to contact us if you have any further questions or would like any additional information.

**7. What other thoughts or comments do you have to share?**

We appreciate the work that Harney Hub is doing to provide transportation services to our community. This is a vital resource, and we hope it continues to thrive.

***Samantha White***

Marketing and Public Relations Specialist  
Harney District Hospital  
557 W. Washington  
Burns, OR 97720

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Hi Samantha,

It was nice talking with you this morning! As I explained on the phone, we are a consultant helping Harney Hub Transit update its coordinated public transportation plan and are interviewing community stakeholders to identify key public transportation needs in Harney County. Thanks for being willing to participate! Our questions are listed below – answer to the best of your ability. The most important is #1.

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