

# Technical Memorandum No. 1: Summary of Transit Plans

This technical memorandum reviews pertinent local and regional plans. The review includes those plans with direct relevance to this study and those with peripheral relevance. Local multimodal and other studies that do not address transit are not included in this review.

The purpose of this effort is to:

- Understand previous plans and strategies
- Gather demographic and travel data
- Document needs and strategies

The project team will use the information in the previous planning efforts to build upon the findings and take care as to not duplicate any activities. The first part of this memorandum reviews the studies and plans relevant to Northern Arizona Council of Governments (NACOG) Passenger Transportation Study. These plans are then summarized at the end of that section. The second part scans other plans such as the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) funded local multimodal studies which focus primarily on roads and pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

## RELEVANT PLANS AND STUDIES

The following previous plans and studies are reviewed in this section:

- NACOG's Northern Arizona 2018-2023 Transportation Implementation Plan (TIP)
- NACOG 2017-2020 Coordinated Mobility Plan
- Flagstaff MPO Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan (2018)
- Winslow Transit Plan (2017)
- 2016 NACOG Community Needs Assessment
- Hopi Senom Transit System Five Year Plan (2009)
- A Coordinated Transit Plan for ECoNA in Northern Arizona (2014)
- NAIPTA Regional Five-Year and Long Range Transit Plan (2013)
- Yavapai Regional Mobility Management Implementation Plan: Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan (2016)
- Kayenta Township Multimodal Transportation Study (2012)
- Show Low Sub-Regional Transportation Plan (pending)

## **NACOG Northern Arizona 2018-2023 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)**

The TIP is a holistic, multi-year capital program to implement improvements for the regional transportation system, which includes four counties, nine tribes, 22 incorporated cities and towns, and two Metropolitan Planning Organizations. The TIP prioritizes community investments in state highways, local roadways, pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, planning and public transit. Over the next five years the TIP details over \$15 million in community investment with \$4.48 million going to public transportation (\$3.65 million of the \$4.48 million coming in 2018). The TIP is developed by NACOG and the plan is approved by NACOG's Regional Council, which includes 32 elected officials representing member governments and eight private sector members. For 2018 the TIP details FTA 5310 and 5311 grants for: the Navajo Nation, Nazlini Chapter, Helping Hands Agency, Northern Arizona University, Change Point Integrated Health, City of Show Low, Hopi Tribe, City of Cottonwood, NZACARE Inc., New Horizons Disability Empowerment Center, Rainbow Acres, Verde Valley Caregivers, and NACOG (for mobility management services).

## **NACOG 2017-2020 Coordinated Mobility Plan**

The purpose of the regionally coordinated transportation plan is to provide a framework for more efficient and effective public and non-profit transportation services, especially for priority populations including individuals with disabilities, seniors, people with low incomes, veterans and others. The plan assesses the transportation needs of the public; determines the existing transportation resources; identifies gaps and barriers to transportation; develops strategies, projects and activities to rectify gaps; and determines priority areas for funding. This plan focuses on FTA Section 5310 funding and does not discuss in detail Section 5311 programs or strategies. Strategies from the Coordinated Mobility Plan included:

- Information and Referral Call Center – A one call, one click center.
- Travel Training and Trip Planning – Accessing service and connectivity.
- Vouchers – user side subsidies on existing services.
- Volunteer Driver Program – Mileage reimbursement and organizing the effort
- Supporting Connections – Connectivity is crucial to the success of transit in the region.
- Promote and Market Existing Services – increasing awareness for residents and visitors.
- Joint Dispatching – A single dispatch center for multiple transportation providers.
- Replace vehicles as appropriate – Greater wheelchair access as well as vehicles appropriate and suited to the area.
- Uniform Driver Training – To be able to provide service for each other, reduce training costs and improve training.
- Shared Maintenance – Either working together or having shared maintenance centers.
- Use of Technology to its Fullest – there are a variety of safety and operational technology that may be able to improve service.
- Mobility Management – Providing a wide array of support for all operators of transit. The wide variety of services, need for connectivity and need to coordinate are all reasons to utilize a mobility manager:

- Increase emphasis on rural communities
- Seek additional public and private partners
- Identify gaps and duplication

These strategies would be implemented through 2020.

## **Flagstaff MPO Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan (2018)**

Separate from the NACOG coordinated plan, the Flagstaff MPO (FMPO) coordinated plan addresses coordination issues in the Flagstaff area. The focus is on Northern Arizona Intergovernmental Public Transportation Authority (NAIPTA) and human service agencies. NAIPTA is already engaged in a variety of activities with its human service partners including: shared maintenance, driver training, travel training, taxi vouchers, bus passes, support and other activities.

FMPO regional priorities include:

1. Mobility management position (First priority)
2. Sidewalk/access improvements (First)
3. Enhanced volunteer and taxi voucher programs (second)
4. Vehicle replacement (second)
5. Regional vanpool program (third)
6. Expanded travel training (third)

## **Winslow Transit Plan (2017)**

The Winslow Transit Plan conducted by NAIPTA calls for a regional fixed route from Winslow to Flagstaff and an internal Winslow circulator. At this time, Winslow has been funded for service. Potential future connections from the Hopi reservation and Holbrook are also discussed.

The Winslow Transit Plan explored a variety of alternatives for both commuter services and local services. It analyzed routes and schedules as well as created a five-year revenue and cost analysis for each alternative. Commuter transportation services explored were both commuter routes to Flagstaff and Holbrook and a vanpool program. Local transit services explored include Winslow Frequency and Winslow Coverage fixed-route services, complementary ADA/paratransit service, and general public demand-response service.

The Winslow Transit Plan achieved the following objectives:

- Identified service alternatives that are “right size” solutions for transit connections along I-40 to Flagstaff and Holbrook, and local transit service in Winslow.
- Recommends actionable items that are achievable in a five-year timeframe.
- Developed performance-based measures to guide funding decisions.
- Recommended governance and service provision structure.

- Explored sustainable funding opportunities such as establishing a sales tax, finding creative mechanisms to have services that pay higher than typical portions of operating costs, and the potential for partnership.

Phased recommendation includes partnering with established transit providers where possible beginning with:

- Identifying, recruiting, and retaining a Transit Manager;
- Teaming with NACOG's Mobility Management Program to help establish partnerships with existing transit providers;
- Starting a vanpool program to build commuter ridership;
- Partnering with Hopi Senom Transit to build bus stops and market existing route;
- Establish ridesharing matching program; and
- Establishing transit hub for park-and-ride, vanpool, and Hopi Senom Transit to all connect and that allows for Greyhound to stop in Winslow. 2 Once that is complete, consider:
- Establishing a commuter service to Flagstaff, and
- Establishing a general public demand-response system. 3 And finally:
- Partner to establish commuter route to Holbrook, and
- When the annual ridership for demand response service reaches 20,000, implement deviated fixed-route local service based on the Coverage alternative.

## **Hopi Senom Transit System Five Year Plan (2009)**

In 2009 the Hopi Senom Transit Program developed a five year plan which included community transit goals, evaluation of existing services and conditions, transit demand estimates, strategies and alternatives, and an implementation plan. Unfortunately the plan is 10 years old, but it does give us some insights and we note that many of the issues and conditions identified, continue today. Strategies included developing and retaining qualified transit staff. Operational strategies focused on regional connectivity while capital strategies looked at accessibility and vehicle replacement. Since this plan was completed Hopi Senom Transit has replaced several vehicles. Coordination opportunities with human service and Medicaid transportation (NEMT) were noted as well. Marketing strategies were discussed as ways to increase ridership and provide more cost effective service.

## **A Coordinated Transit Plan for ECoNA in Northern Arizona (2014)**

This study identified potential strategies for transit in the Flagstaff to Williams and the Williams to Grand Canyon corridors. These corridors have a variety of trip need ranging from medical, employment, and tourism. This planning effort was an initial step in trying to develop a coordinated transportation service in the study area. The plan recommended the following:

- Employee Vanpools
- Park and Ride Facilities
- Williams to Flagstaff (commuter and medical services)
- Williams to Grand Canyon (vanpools and commuter service)
- Williams Circulator

The study also looked at funding opportunities and included an implementation plan. Funding opportunities examined included FTA section 5310 and 5311, General Fund appropriations, Advertising, Voluntary Assessments, Private Support, Transportation Impact Fees, Hotel Bed Tax, Sales Tax, and the formation a Regional Public Transportation Authority.

### **NAIPTA Regional Five-Year and Long Range Transit Plan (2013)**

The Flagstaff Regional Five-Year and Long Range Transit Plan (Transit Plan) proposes a long-term vision for Flagstaff's regional public transportation system and identifies and establishes a short- (1 to 5 years), mid-(6 to 10 years), and long-term (11 to 20 years) service plan; funding plan; and implementation plan. The plan details existing services and the demographic make-up of the study area. Building off of the success of the NAIPTA 2005 plan, the 2013 plan outlines strategies, financial plan, and implementation steps for success including:

- Mountain Line and Mountain Link route tweaks and revisions
- Introducing a crosstown rapid bus service
- Enhancing service to new areas
- Supplemental services
- Capital investment (vehicles, new transit centers, infrastructure and equipment)
- Service area expansion

### **Yavapai Regional Mobility Management Implementation Plan: Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan (2016)**

A key task in this study is establishing a public governance structure responsible to plan, allocate, and manage the resources available for mobility services throughout the County. Steps are identified for developing a consensus around the appropriate governance structure. Other key activities include:

- Obtaining access to FTA urban area funding.
- Establishing a vanpool program using the FTA funds.
- Providing uniform and easy to understand customer information.
- Reporting on the impact of existing services using uniform performance measures, and the value of these services.
- Undertaking a range of activities to provide stable and expanded mobility services.
- Sustaining the existing services is a high priority

### **Kayenta Township Multimodal Transportation Study (2012)**

This study focuses on roadways but does have a recommendation for a local Kayenta circulator. This circulator would operate a one way loop. One hour loops are very ineffective and in this case

would require a 22 minute layover every hour. The nature of the loop routes requires riders to ride for one hour on each round trip, including sitting for 22 minutes.

## Show Low Sub-Regional Transportation Plan (2018)

This study looks at a variety of transportation issues and projects including roadway improvements, signalization, and passenger transportation. The study team is currently defining the transit projects that will go into the plan. Needs identified during the planning process to date include:

- Feasibility of an expansion of the Four Seasons route.
- Potential for a regional circulator that could bring persons to a transit hub in Show Low from White Mountain Lakes Community, Heber-Overgaard area, Snowflake /Taylor area, Concho, Vernon, and Springerville.
- A replacement program for transit shelters.
- Partnering with agencies, or potentially Apache County, to secure vehicles from Federal Transit Administration Section 5310 program for elderly and persons with disabilities.
- Improving transit service between Show Low and Holbrook.
- Coordinating with White Mountain Apache Tribe for a seamless connection.
- Considering a mobile application that would provide real-time bus information.
- Easements to add six bus pullouts on SR 260.

## SUMMARY OF RELEVANT STUDIES

While the list of studies are diverse, some regional and some local, the needs and strategies are similar. The most consistent themes were as follows:

- One stop information – Negotiating the current systems can be a daunting task, just to understand how to connect from one system to the other. A one call - click call center that can provide information for all systems in one place is needed.
- Connectivity – while most of the plans were locally based, there was discussion, most notably in the regional efforts, regarding the importance of connecting the various systems (including Greyhound).
- Vanpools/ridesharing – This is a potential answer for long distance commutes. A limited number of program for the region would work best from a logistics standpoint in that the more options available, the more chances for matches.
- Coordinated maintenance – This is a consistent theme where each system can help each other and/or develop centralized maintenance facilities.
- Coordinated training – Can reduce costs and provide for uniform training.
- Infrastructure – A variety of shelters, pull outs and parking lots are needed.
- Vehicles – Replacement and expansion vehicles are always needed.
- Expanded mobility management – Both Flagstaff and the NACOG regional coordinated plans call for expansion of this program.

- New services – In a variety of locations including Flagstaff, Williams, the Grand Canyon Village, Kayenta, Winslow, the Navajo Nation, and the Hopi Nation.

Overall, many of these themes come up consistently and will be appropriately recognized in this study.

## OTHER TRANSPORTATION STUDIES

Other transportation studies were reviewed for relevance to this study. The following transportation studies had minor transit components and for the most part are outdated, but do give the study team historical perspectives.

### **Navajo Nation Long Range Transportation Plan (2016)**

There were no transit recommendations, however there was an excellent discussion of priority destinations in the Navajo Nation including Tuba City, Kayenta, Fort Defiance, Window Rock, Crownpoint, and Shiprock..

### **Chinle-Many Farms and St. Michaels-Window Rock-Fort Defiance Multimodal Long Range Transportation Study (2012)**

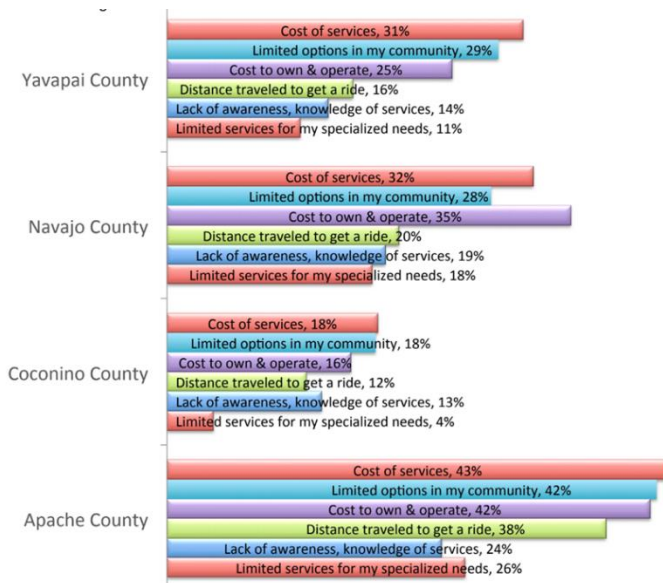
This report focuses on roadways, but does provide some recommendations for transit. These include additional shelters and a shuttle/circulator service in the Fort defiance/Window Rock/St. Michaels area.

### **2016 NACOG Community Needs Assessment**

NACOG conducted a comprehensive Community Needs Assessment in December 2016 for the purpose of understanding current perceived or real conditions from the point of view of citizens; ascertaining the community's expectations and priorities; and developing actionable strategies to meet community's priorities. Out of twenty-three unmet needs outlined for regional residents (including needs like housing, food, employment, healthcare, etc.) the top unmet need is transportation. Transportation for medical services is the top unmet transportation need.

This planning effort included a detailed community survey which asked participants with specific significant concerns regarding transportation to identify the barriers to meeting their transportation needs. Figure 1-1 shows the responses by county. As shown, the costs of services and limited transportation options where a major concern in each county.

**Figure 1-1: Barriers to Transportation by County**



### Round Valley Multimodal Transportation Study (2012)

The Round Valley Multimodal Transportation Study is a joint effort by the Towns of Springerville and Eagar, and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) to develop a long-range multimodal transportation plan to address the most critical current and future transportation needs for the Round Valley region. Transit was a side issue. In fact, the study concluded that:

“The current and forecasted population density in the region as well as the estimated future transit demand levels cannot support a local transit system; however, the Towns should work with NACOG to establish a community ridesharing program that could establish and coordinate services such as vanpools and carpools, to meet the regional or long distance transit needs of elderly, low income, and mobility limited population groups.”

The study team believes that this is an erroneous statement in that virtually every area can support some level of transit; it is simply a matter of what size system. Further, carpools and vanpools do not meet sporadic needs nor do they have accessible vehicles.

### Navajo County Central Region Transportation Study (2010)

The purpose of this study was to develop a multi-modal, multi-jurisdictional transportation plan that outlines the region’s transportation priority projects and provides a plan for ultimate implementation. The transportation study was focused around identifying regional highway and road mobility needs that can accommodate the anticipated future population and employment growth. The study is 8 years old and is not as relevant at this time.



While focusing mostly on roadway infrastructure the plan does recognize the opportunities to expand regional transit connections between Holbrook and Show Low. Additionally, the study recommends exploring opportunities to connect Winslow to Holbrook and Winslow to Flagstaff should be explored.

### **Kachina Village Multimodal Transportation Study (2010)** **Doney Park Multimodal Transportation Study (2011)**

Both of these studies focused on communities on the outskirts of Flagstaff and both call for vanpools and commuter service to Flagstaff. These communities are relevant because they are more affordable than Flagstaff and therefore lower income families live there and need transportation to jobs in the city. NAIPTA has recently changed their approach to their service boundaries specifically looking at ways to accommodate the needs of residents of communities like these.