

## ATRC Virtual Public Meeting/Lewiston-Auburn Transit Study

April 7, 2021

6:00-7:30 pm

NOTE: To see full meeting presentation, click [here](#).

**Panelists:** Jennifer Williams, ATRC; Jill Cahoon, AECOM; Carol Morris, Morris Communications/Moderator

**Participants:** 29

### Meeting Introduction

- Jennifer Williams welcomed attendees and explained the purpose of the study and tonight's meeting.
- Carol Morris explained logistics of the online meeting and asked attendees to hold questions until the end of the presentation. She then kicked off an online mini-survey:

#### **Question 1: *How did you hear about this meeting?***

- 47% email
- 26% Facebook
- 5% newspaper
- 11% friend or coworker
- 15% through other means

#### **Question 2: *How often do you use transit?***

- 15% every day
- 20% occasionally throughout the year
- 10% a few times a week
- 50% never

### Current Demand for Transit Service: Jill Cahoon

- Reviewed citylink and WMTS available transit
- citylink
  - Weekdays: 9 routes, 83 hours, 15 riders/service hour
  - Saturday: 7 routes, 27 hours, 25 riders/service hour
- Lisbon Connection, GreenLine, BlueLine (upcoming)
  - Weekdays: 2 active routes, 23 service hours, 2 riders/service hours
- Most popular stops are the two hubs, Walmart, Lewiston Housing Authority, CMCC

- Routes generally serve areas of high population and employment density

### Survey Findings: Carol Morris

- 466 responses, predominantly in urban core, respondents correspond with density and transit services available
- Primary ways people get around:
  - 71% driver their own vehicle
  - 12% use the bus
  - 6% walk
  - 4% ride with family and friends
  - 1% bicycle
  - 6% other
- Where people are going:
  - 56% shopping
  - 41% medical
  - 43% work
  - 37% recreation
  - 27% social
  - 25% school
  - 10% other
- Transit satisfaction:
  - 96% think transit is very important to the community
  - 79% are satisfied or very satisfied with citylink
- Needs and improvements
  - 69% wanted weekday evening service until 8 pm
- Demographics:
  - 8% minority status - slightly higher diversity than cities as a whole
  - 64% women responded – possibly due to high distribution rate among social service agencies

### Transit service options – Jill Cahoon

- Core fixed route network includes:
  - Cost neutral options
  - Streamlined routing
  - Tri-hub
  - Demand response
- Service enhancements
- Lisbon options

### **Streamlined routing with demand response zones**

- Does not eliminate service outside of streamlined areas, would be replaced with demand response
- Increase from 12 to 43 trips to Walmart from Lewiston hub
- Increase from 12 to 32 trips to Walmart from Auburn hub
- No change in trips between Lewiston and Auburn hubs (34)

### **Demand response**

- Transit vehicles are dispatched in response to calls from passengers. A transit operator schedules a vehicle to pick up passengers and bring them to their destinations.
- All demand response:
  - No fixed route or schedule
  - No pre-defined stops
  - Pre-defined service area/zone
  - Rides are shared with others
  - Typically uses smaller vehicles
- Options comparison
  - Sunday bus service: 9:00am-5:00pm service with service every 120 minutes
  - Hourly Saturday service: Service every 60 minutes on all routes on Saturdays
  - Longer Saturday hours: Begin service an hour earlier and end an hour later on Saturdays
  - Longer weekday hours: Service on weekdays extended from 6:00pm to 8:00pm
  - Late evening service: Extend service from 6:00 to 10:00pm three days a week
  - More weekday service: Two routes have 30-min service (the rest have 60-minute service)
  - 30 min weekday service: 30-min service on all routes, but only 5 of 9 proposed routes will operate
  - Demand response zones: Replace fixed route segments with lower demand with demand response

### **Lisbon Connection Options**

- Make Lisbon Connection Route open door once it's outside citylink service area
- Serve via upcoming WMTS Blue Route connecting L/A to Brunswick/Bath (more expensive option)
- Extend the citylink Lisbon St Route (More expensive option)
- Create a demand response corridor

### **Question 3: Overall, do you think these are good suggestions for citylink?**

- 50% - Yes, they will be helpful to me

- 5% No, they will make it harder for me to use transit
- 40% - Some are helpful, some are not
- 5% - These changes would not affect me at all

### Questions and Discussion

Stephen Martelli: On Auburn planning board, been talking about transit service in the city for many years. New Auburn is being cut out totally and that is not fair. Waiting an hour or two for demand response to be picked up is not acceptable.

Jason Lavoie: On-demand service seems good, especially for people who can't get to work locations on citylink service, no bus goes down East Avenue to get to elementary school. Feels very good about direction of study (Follow-up Note: Connor's Elementary would be on a streamlined route).

Christopher Rioux: Lives in New Auburn, many friends have depended heavily on bus service, taxi rates are not as friendly, somewhat concerned about New Auburn being excluded completely. Even going to bottom of the hill would be preferred. Wondering what turnaround time would look like between making call and getting picked up.

- Jill: Turnaround time is technology dependent. In this case we're talking 20 minutes to an hour. Everyone hears the need for speedy options is paramount.

Susan Charle: How has the pandemic affected research and material to drive study? Took bus quite often until the pandemic started, now use it pretty sparingly. Also, when is BlueLine to start?

- Carol: As far as using transit, transit has taken a hit during pandemic. In terms of getting survey responses, people prefer to take online surveys than go to meetings (in general).
- Jill: Ridership has been impacted. Used 2019 numbers to look at "old normal" and looked at who is using the service now.
- Jennifer: Ridership has been affected due to COVID. Citylink is fortunate to have been able to keep system running at half capacity.
- Jill: BlueLine is eminent and related to vehicle availability, as soon as vehicles are available it will be up and running.

Sandy Buchanan – Executive Director of WMTS and operator of citylink and BlueLine service. Bus availability is a hold up of BlueLine, hoping to be able to use seasonal buses beginning June 1. Regarding ridership, it's beginning to increase, was holding at 36% to 40% overall, now closer to 50%.

Stephen Martelli: Having lived in New Auburn, many people are not being reached tonight because they don't have a computer. These are people you need to look at. Would be willing to hand a flier out to local people.

- Carol: That would be most helpful. I will email you after the meeting to set up a time tomorrow to talk. Thank you.

Jason Lavoie: As far as cost feasibility goes, concerned for those who buy monthly passes, could citylink bus passes be used for demand response? It would be awesome if they could.

- Jill: We are considering all the options, there is a specific set of survey questions asking for your thoughts on fares, so please everyone, take the survey.

Jennifer Williams: We want to follow up on next steps – we know that none of the recommendations can be implemented overnight. This is a good public process to get initial feedback.