

Public Transit in Central Yavapai



More Than a Bus

AREA CITIZENS FOR TRANSIT

- ✦ AARP Arizona, American Association of University Women (AAUW), Arizona Women's Education & Employment of Northern Arizona (AWEE), Catholic Charities Community Services, Church and Society Committee – Prescott United Methodist Church, Coalition for Compassion and Justice, Good Samaritan Society, Granite Mountain Home Care & Hospice, Granite Peak Unitarian Universalist Congregation Social Justice Program, League of Women Voters of Central Yavapai County, Neighbor to Neighbor, New Horizons Independent Living Center, Northern Arizona Consumers Advancing Recovery by Empowerment (NAZCARE), Northern Arizona Interfaith Council (NAIC), Northland Cares, People Who Care, Prescott Area Habitat for Humanity, Prescott Area Women's Shelter, Prescott College, Prescott Alternative Transportation, Prescott Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Project Aware, Quality Care Homes Association, Sacred Heart Catholic Parish, Territorial Transit, United Way of Yavapai County, USVETS, Inc., Wealth Management Concepts, West Yavapai Guidance Clinic, West Yavapai Guidance Clinic Foundation, Yavapai Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Yavapai County Coalition of Care for the Aging, Yavapai Regional Medical Center

Studies, Studies, Studies

- Prescott Area Transit Study (1991)
- Tri-City Transit Demonstration Project (1993-1994)
- Tri-City Transit Development Plan (1994)
- Northern Arizona Transit Development Plan (1995)
- Central Yavapai County Transportation Study (1995, 1998)
- Yavapai Regional Transit Plan (1999)
- Update to Central Yavapai Regional Transportation Study (2004-2005)
- League of Women Voters of Central Yavapai Transportation Study (2006)
- CYMPO Regional Transit Needs Study (2006-2007)
- CYMPO Transit Implementation Plan (2009)

What do these have in common?

They all cost us money and they all concluded that our region needs a moderately-sized public transit service!

Public Transit – Who Needs It?

- Seniors who can no longer drive with safety
- Workers who must commute to their job or job-training
- Persons with disabilities, especially returning war veterans
- College students getting to class/library
- Low-income families who cannot afford a car and/or the gasoline prices
- Drivers who want less-congested, safer highways
- Citizens who want cleaner air
- Local economies needing new business investment and increased business activity

Everybody benefits, whether user or not

Background

- Central Yavapai Metropolitan Planning Organization (CYMPO) has prepared a realistic plan to implement a regional public transit system.
- Based on extensive public input, the plan recommends a regional transit system based on a “**family of transit services**” to meet the needs of various groups of citizens, in various areas within our region.
- Funding the planned regional transit system will require a combination of available federal and state grant funds, user fees and local government subsidies.
- **The initial local share is estimated to be approximately \$425,000 per year. This annual cost would be split between Prescott, Prescott Valley and Yavapai County in approximately equal shares of \$125,000 to \$150,000.**
- The CYMPO Plan of Implementation has been shelved due to the economic recession and financial pressures on State and local government.

More Than a Bus

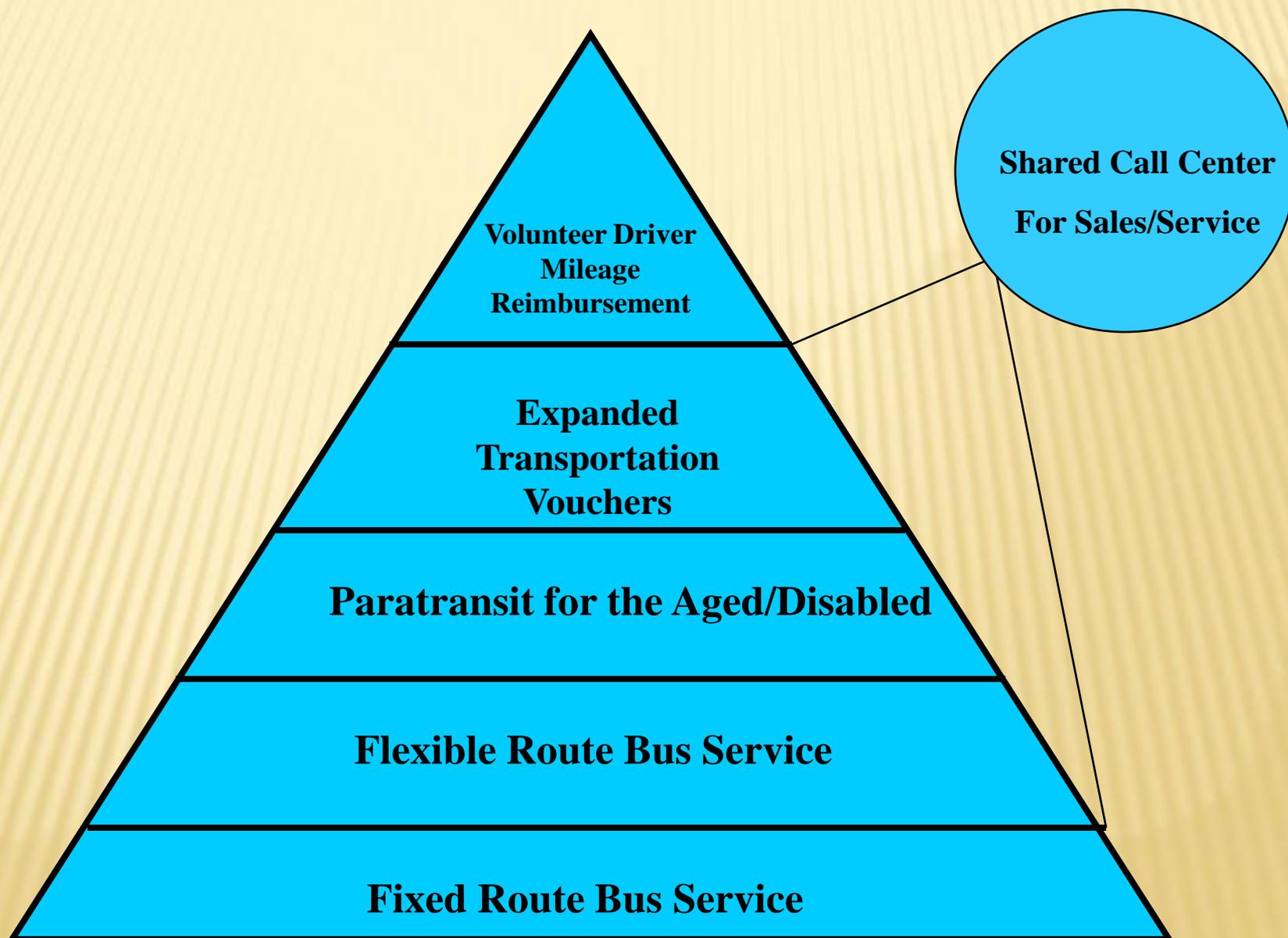
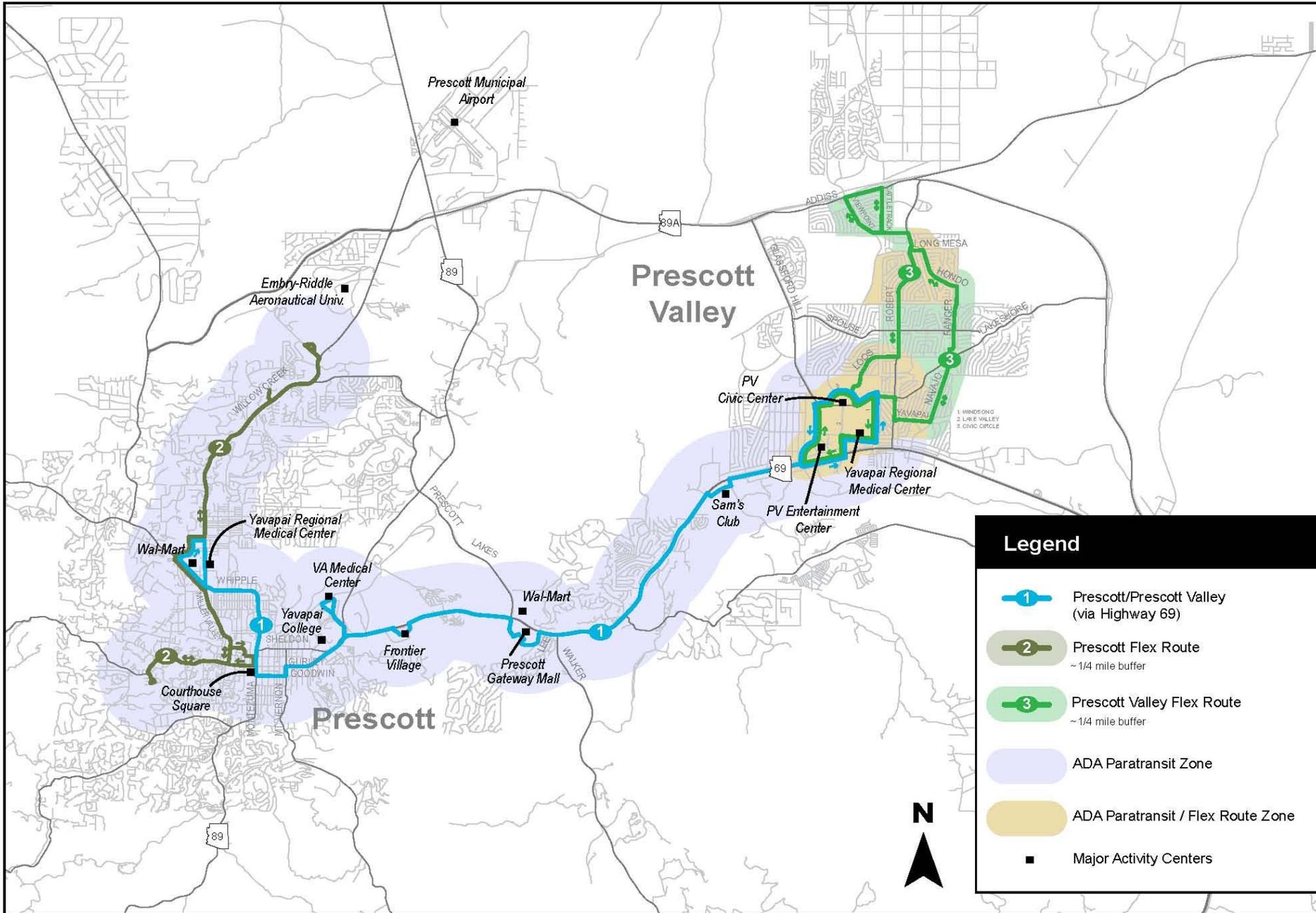
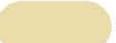


Figure 2.2 Expanded Fixed and Flexible Routes



Legend

-  Prescott/Prescott Valley (via Highway 69)
-  Prescott Flex Route ~1/4 mile buffer
-  Prescott Valley Flex Route ~1/4 mile buffer
-  ADA Paratransit Zone
-  ADA Paratransit / Flex Route Zone
-  Major Activity Centers

Paratransit Service For Persons With Disabilities

- **Federally Required by the Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**
- **Must be provided within $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of fixed route**
- **Provided upon called-in request, may be scheduled in advance**
- **Curb to curb required, wheel chair accessible; door to door assistance is proposed**
- **May be priced up to twice the fixed route fee**
- **Operates weekdays and Saturdays**

Expanded Transportation Vouchers

- **Prepaid paid discounted rides via pre-qualified commercial carriers (taxis, etc.)**
- **Previously funded by municipalities (Prescott - \$125K, Prescott Valley - \$75K)**
- **Central administration by Regional Transit Authority is proposed**
- **Available to general public in areas unserved by bus routes**
- **Reduced expenditures envisioned; limitations to be decided**

Shared Call Center

- **One Stop Center for Sales and Customer Service**
 - **Ticket Booklet and Monthly Pass Sales**
 - **Bus Route Flex Request**
 - **Transportation Voucher Application/Eligibility Determination**
 - **Paratransit Requests/Eligibility Determination**
 - **Route and Schedule Information**
 - **Service Status Query Handling (Weather/Traffic Delays)**
 - **Customer Quality of Service Feedback Collection**
 - **Vehicle Location Monitoring**

Volunteer Driver Mileage Reimbursements

- **Currently rides are provided to those with special needs by social service entities; Volunteer drivers are not reimbursed**
- **Proposal: Augment service for disabled through mileage reimbursement to volunteer drivers for rides outside the prescribed paratransit service area**
- **Clients would register and reserve rides in advance via a common call center.**

Ten Year Cumulative Financials

	Admin FTA Grant	Operating FTA Grant	Capital FTA Grant	Local Match Total	% Local Match
Initial Service	2.3M	9.3M	1.0M	5.1M	29.0%
Expanded Service	2.3M	12.5M	1.1M	6.7M	29.6%

Arguments Against Transit

- **Transit funds are better spent on more roadways**
 - **Studies repeatedly show added lane miles do not significantly reduce congestion but invite more traffic. What about non-drivers?**
- **Transit only works in high density areas**
 - **The issue is not population density but vehicular density (e.g. Hwys. 69 & 89 at rush hours)**
 - **Smaller communities in Arizona have successful systems**
- **Many elderly and disabled won't be able to use the bus**
 - **That's why we define our transit system as more than a bus (i.e. bus, paratransit, vouchers, and volunteer drivers)**

Arguments Against Transit

- **People love their cars**
 - **User targets are those who cannot or choose not to drive (seniors, students, low-income workers)**
 - **Volatile gasoline prices call for more economic options**
- **Public transit requires public subsidy**
 - **All forms of transportation receive public subsidy (roads, air traffic, rail lines, traffic controls, sidewalks etc.)**
- **Public transit should be the responsibility of private enterprise**
 - **If transit was profitable, without subsidy, private carriers would enter the market and provide it. But they haven't.**

Arguments Against Transit

Our terrain is too hilly and steep to be served safely

- Other communities more hilly than ours manage without difficulty.

We don't have the money

- We don't propose to implement service during the current economic recession. All we are proposing is that the plan be revisited when the economy permits.

Where are the on-going sources of local matching funds?

- Figuring that out is the job of our elected leaders. We accept, however, that a new, independent funding source will be required.

Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services (2003)

“In addition ...transit impacts communities through the wages paid and benefits provided to transit employees, local purchases of goods and services by the transit system, and the multiplier effects of wages and system purchases in the local economy. Such benefits have been shown, by both national and local analyses, to create positive returns on investments for local communities. **The ratios of benefits to costs of these returns have been shown to be approximately four or five to one in urban areas ... and three to one in rural areas.**”

Source: The Transit Cooperative Research Program (sponsored by the FTA). The Transportation Research Board is a division of the National Research Council and the National Academy of Sciences

DON'T FORGET THE NON-ECONOMIC BENEFITS

- Mobility for non-driving citizens
- Improved quality of life
- Reduced traffic congestion
- Increased road safety
- Better air quality
- Employee productivity
- Attraction of new business to our community
- Attraction to tourists visiting our city

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

- The need for public transit continues to grow
- Clearly, a regional public transit service is not affordable at this time
- Nevertheless, it should be included as a community need and goal within the life of this plan.
- The city of Prescott should review this issue with CYMPO after the economy has recovered