



MOVING OUR COMMUNITY FORWARD

SERVICE REDUCTION & COMMUNITY IMPACT CASE STUDY

The Real Impact of Reduced Transit Service in Douglas County

FIXED-ROUTE & COMMUTER RIDERSHIP

FROM FY 2024-25 TO FY 2025-26

48,274

FEWER PASSENGER TRIPS



45.5%

DECLINE IN ONE YEAR

*Service cuts have real consequences.
Riders. Jobs. Healthcare. Opportunity.
Our community feels the impact.*



UMPQUA PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT

Service Reduction & Community Impact Case Study

The Real Impact of Reduced Transit Service in Douglas County

Umpqua Public Transportation District (UPTD) provides essential public transportation throughout Douglas County, Oregon—a predominantly rural and frontier county covering approximately 5,037 square miles.

UPTD connects residents with employment, healthcare, education, shopping, veterans' services, social services, and other essential destinations through fixed-route, commuter, ADA paratransit, Dial-A-Ride, and specialized transportation services.

In recent years, UPTD built a stronger regional transit network and experienced substantial ridership growth. Financial constraints, however, forced the District to make significant service reductions, including:

- Elimination of Saturday service
- Elimination of the South County Yellow Line
- Reductions in weekday service hours

Today, UPTD's Red, Green, Blue, and Grey Lines operate Monday through Friday, generally between 6:35 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.

The impact of these reductions is now clearly reflected in UPTD's ridership.

Service Cuts Reversed Years of Ridership Growth

Before the service reductions, UPTD experienced several consecutive years of strong fixed-route and commuter ridership growth.

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Fixed-Route & Commuter Trips</u>
FY 2021-22	55,553
FY 2022-23	87,839
FY 2023-24	102,828
FY 2024-25	106,019
FY 2025-26	57,745

Between FY 2021-22 and FY 2024-25, ridership increased from 55,553 to 106,019 passenger trips—an increase of approximately 91%.

UPTD had nearly doubled its ridership in three years.

Following the service reductions, fixed-route and commuter ridership fell to 57,745 passenger trips in FY 2025-26. 48,274 Fewer Passenger Trips.

That represents a 45.5% decline in a single fiscal year, reversing nearly all of the ridership growth UPTD had achieved over the previous several years.

The trend has continued. In July 2025, UPTD provided 7,261 fixed-route and commuter trips. In July 2026, that number was 4,029 trips—a 44.5% year-over-year decline.

The lesson is straightforward:

Passengers cannot take trips on buses that are no longer operating.

Rural Service Cuts Have a Greater Impact

The elimination of the South County route demonstrates the consequences of reducing transit in rural communities.

In FY 2024-25, South County service provided 15,191 passenger trips, connecting residents with employment, healthcare, shopping, education, and other essential destinations.

Eliminating the route did not eliminate the reasons residents needed transportation.

It eliminated the public transportation option available to make those trips.

Rural transit should not be evaluated using urban ridership expectations. Communities are smaller, residents are more geographically dispersed, and destinations are farther apart.

Most importantly, alternatives are limited.

In a larger urban area, a passenger affected by a service reduction may be able to use another bus route, transit provider, rail system, taxi, or rideshare service.

In many parts of Douglas County, those alternatives either do not exist or are not affordable.

For a rural passenger, a service reduction can mean there is no bus at all.

The Need for Transportation Has Not Disappeared

UPTD's demand-response ridership provides an important comparison.

While fixed-route and commuter ridership declined 44.5% year over year in July 2026, demand-response ridership remained comparatively stable.

Demand-response services provided 1,650 trips in July 2025 and 1,628 trips in July 2026—a decrease of only 1.3%.

Paratransit remained nearly unchanged at 1,025 trips compared with 1,021, while Dial-A-Ride provided 307 trips compared with 305.

This contrast is significant.

The substantial decline in fixed-route ridership should not automatically be interpreted as a decline in the community's need for transportation.

Rather, the decline closely follows the significant reduction in the availability of service.

The Community Impact

Public transportation in Douglas County is more than mobility. It is part of the infrastructure that supports the local economy and allows residents to remain independent.

Employment

UPTD connects residents with employment opportunities throughout Roseburg, Winston, Sutherlin, and surrounding communities.

Reduced weekday hours limit access to early-morning and evening shifts, while the elimination of Saturday service creates an additional barrier for employees working weekends and non-traditional schedules.

When workers cannot reliably reach their jobs, the impact extends to local employers by reducing the available workforce.

Transit is workforce infrastructure.

Healthcare & Essential Services

Residents depend on transportation to reach medical providers, pharmacies, behavioral health services, government offices, social-service agencies, grocery stores, and other essential destinations.

For seniors, individuals with disabilities, veterans, low-income residents, and households without reliable vehicles, public transportation may be one of the few affordable options available.

Education & Opportunity

Transit connects residents with educational opportunities, including Umpqua Community College, while also providing access to training, employment services, and other resources that help residents participate in the local economy.

When transportation is unavailable, access to those opportunities is reduced as well.

Further Reductions Carry Long-Term Consequences

UPTD has taken significant steps to stabilize its financial position while protecting the services that provide the greatest community benefit.

The District continues to pursue federal, state, and local funding opportunities, partnerships, and operational efficiencies.

However, a transit system cannot indefinitely respond to funding challenges by continuing to reduce service.

Additional reductions could mean:

- Fewer operating hours
- Reduced frequency
- Additional route reductions
- Further loss of regional connectivity
- Reduced access to employment and healthcare
- Increased isolation for transit-dependent residents

Service reductions also have long-term consequences for ridership.

Passengers organize employment, medical appointments, education, and other activities around transportation they believe will be available. When service disappears, passengers must find alternatives where alternatives exist.

Once those travel patterns change, restoring a route does not necessarily mean ridership immediately returns.

Building ridership takes years. Losing it can happen very quickly.

The Case for Stabilizing Rural Transit

UPTD's experience demonstrates both what transit investment can accomplish and what happens when that investment cannot be sustained.

When service was available:

UPTD's fixed-route and commuter ridership grew approximately 91%, from 55,553 annual passenger trips in FY 2021-22 to 106,019 trips in FY 2024-25.

After service was reduced:

Ridership fell to 57,745 trips in FY 2025-26—a 45.5% decline in one year.

Those 48,274 fewer passenger trips represent more than a change on a performance report.

They represent connections to:

Jobs. Healthcare. Education. Groceries. Veterans' services. Independence. Family. Community.

UPTD has already made difficult decisions to align service with available resources.

The next phase should be about stabilizing and rebuilding Oregon's rural transportation network—not determining how much more service rural communities can afford to lose.

Investing in UPTD Means Investing in Douglas County

Public transportation should not be measured solely by how many passengers are aboard an individual bus.

Its value is also measured by what that trip makes possible:

A worker getting to a job.

A senior reaching a medical appointment.

A student accessing education.

A veteran reaching services.

A person with a disability maintaining independence.

A rural resident remaining connected to the community.

UPTD's ridership history demonstrates that Douglas County residents will use public transportation when reliable service is available.

The question facing Oregon is not whether rural residents need transportation.

The question is whether sustainable funding will be available to provide it.

Stable transit funding protects mobility, supports Oregon's workforce, connects residents with essential services, and preserves the investments already made in rural communities.