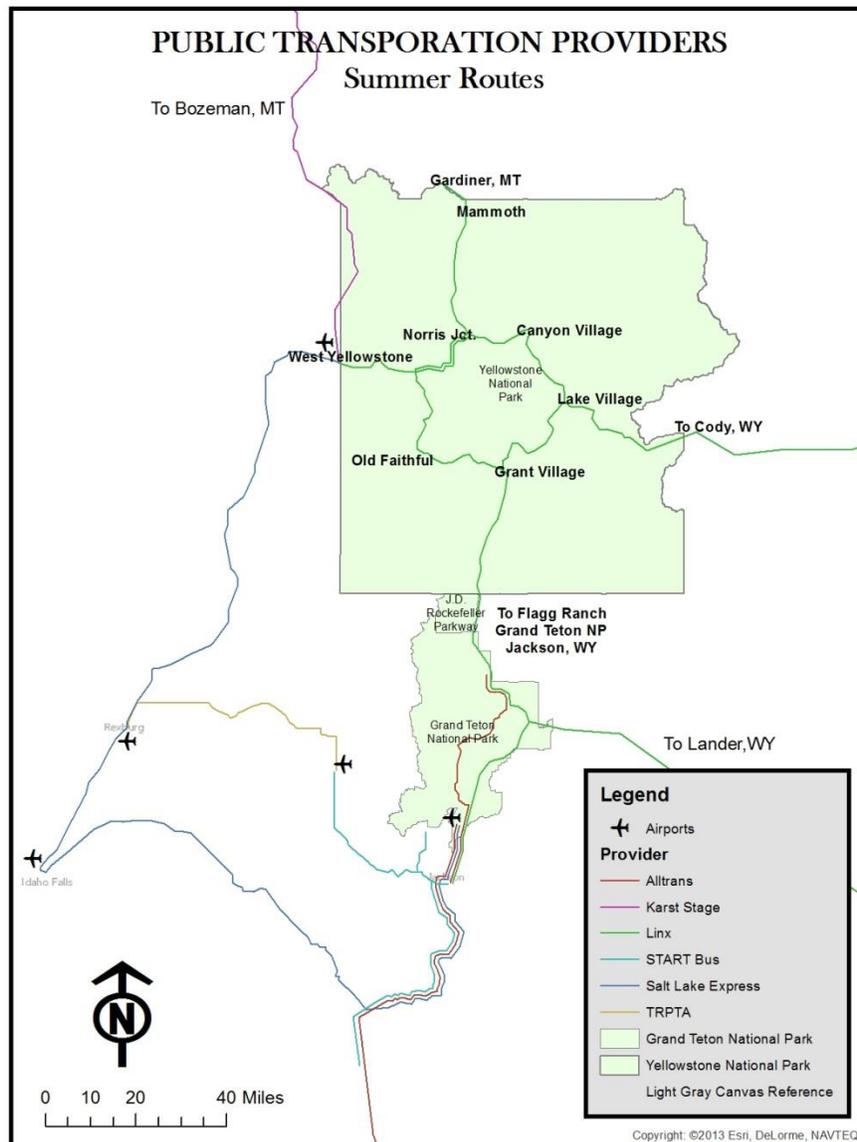


GOAL 2 - EXPAND INTERCITY BUS SERVICES TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY ACROSS THE WESTERN GREATER YELLOWSTONE REGION

Even if every county is able to improve its intra-city services through increased funding and public support, the goal of improved connectivity across all jurisdictional boundaries will require unparalleled cooperation among all 11 units of local governments in the Western Greater Yellowstone Consortium. To date, both Idaho and Wyoming DOTs have administered their Intercity Bus funding programs by subsidizing long-distance rural routes that have never enjoyed commercial bus service or were long-ago abandoned by Greyhound due to excessive costs. While local governments may be consulted or encouraged to work cooperatively on intercity routes, final funding decisions are still being made at the state level and may not take into account the changing needs of growing, tourism-based economies and how neighboring states are handling their own intercity bus programs in and around the national parks.





I. Salt Lake Express (SLE) is a private family-operated carrier based in Rexburg, Idaho, that operates a twice-daily round trip bus service between Jackson and Idaho Falls via Alpine Junction and Swan Valley, with continuing connections south to Salt Lake City or west to Boise. SLE also operates a bus twice daily between Rexburg and West Yellowstone, Montana, that serves the Fremont County communities of St. Anthony, Ashton and Island Park along US Highway 20. Both routes will be receiving 5311(f) subsidies by mid-2014 that should keep ticket prices in the \$25-\$35 range.

Salt Lake Express also operates the Idaho Falls-Rexburg-Butte, Montana, route for Greyhound, but it is best known for frequent shuttles to the Salt Lake City airport, that currently depart Idaho Falls nine times daily.

II. Alltrans’ Mountain States

Express – For those in Jackson or Teton Valley preferring an alternative route to Salt Lake City, a trip via the Star Valley is offered daily by Alltrans. The bus departs at 6:30 am and travels a WYDOT-subsidized route through Western Wyoming with a noon arrival at the Salt Lake Airport for \$70 one way. The return bus from the airport departs at 1:00 pm with an arrival back in Jackson at 6:00 pm.

The advertisement features a central graphic of a bus on a road with mountains and a sun. Below this are two maps: a brown map of Wyoming listing stops (Jackson, Hoback Junction, Alpine, Etna, Thayne, Afton, Cokeville, Kemmerer, Evanston) and a green map of Utah listing Salt Lake City and Park City. To the right, the text reads: "YOUR RIDE IN THE ROCKIES", "CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-652-9510", and "IN WYOMING CALL 307-733-1719".

III. Rexburg-Driggs-Victor-Jackson Service

The direct connections between these four Consortium cities were not identified as high priorities for funding under Idaho's 5311(f) Intercity Bus program. Therefore the Region 6 District Coordinating Council created mobility strategies (6.D001, 6B.L019) to make this route eligible for 5311 funding.

TRPTA Commuter Service - Currently TRPTA operates an on-demand commuter service between Rexburg and Driggs for \$12 one-way, with a reservation required by 4:00 pm the previous day. Buses depart 72 W. Main Street in Rexburg at 6:30 am and 3:30 pm with return trips departing the Driggs Community Center at 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. The morning bus does not arrive in Driggs in time for any passengers to transfer to the START commuter bus to Jackson, although the TRPTA bus leaving Driggs at 5:00 pm does allow transfer time to carry passengers who ride the early commuter bus from Jackson.

It should be noted that the TRPTA commuter bus does not operate at times nor from a departure location that allows any Fremont County residents or West Yellowstone travelers to transfer to or from TRPTA to a Salt Lake Express bus. Ridership on this Monday-Friday commuter service has been minimal so TRPTA is continuing to require ITD subsidies totaling \$35,000/year.

Upper Valley Connector (proposed) – The City of Rexburg has proposed for 5311 funding a midday bus service that would increase connectivity between the four cities and cities north and south along US Highway 20. The Connector would be operated for 100 days on a pilot basis through an acquisition of transportation services agreement in summer 2015. The concept is to time the Rexburg departure with the arrival of the southbound Salt Lake Express bus from West Yellowstone so that passengers from Island Park, Ashton and St. Anthony could transfer to the Jackson-bound bus. Transferring passengers could include those who came out of Yellowstone National Park or transferred in West Yellowstone from Big Sky/Bozeman, Montana.

The bus would leave Rexburg at approximately 11:15 am and stop (or deviate on demand up to ¾ mile) to pick up passengers along Highway 33 in Sugar City, Teton, Newdale, and Tetonia; arriving in Driggs between 12:15-12:30 pm. A second bus would depart Jackson Home Ranch at approximately 11:30 am, stopping at Buffalo Junction, the Village Road Transit Center, Wilson, and Victor; arriving in Driggs at approximately 12:40 pm to exchange passengers with the Rexburg-bound bus. Both buses would have brief breaks for passengers at the Driggs Geotourism Center before departing for their destinations not later than 1:00 pm, with a 2:10 pm arrival back in Jackson and a 2:15 estimated arrival back in Rexburg (allowing for all possible stops and Highway 33 deviations).

The Upper Valley Connector as proposed enables any rider from Jackson or Teton Valley to connect with the north-bound Salt Lake Express in Rexburg at 3:05 pm and access Fremont County cities or West Yellowstone by 4:55 pm. The northbound Karst Stage bus to Big Sky/Bozeman then departs at 5:30 pm, arriving at 7:30 pm. There in Bozeman, it is possible to make early morning eastbound

connections on Jefferson Lines to Billings and Fargo, North Dakota, and west-bound connections to Butte and Missoula, Montana.

Also of local interest would be the increased connectivity between Teton Valley and Jackson Hole when both midday and evening runs of the Connector service to Driggs are combined with the morning and evening START commuter service. The timetable below shows how the Upper Valley Connector integrates with both the START commuter bus schedule as well as the TRPTA on-demand commuter bus between Rexburg and Driggs:

Rexburg Service	Frequency	Leave REXBURG	Arrive DRIGGS	Leave DRIGGS	Arrive REXBURG
Commuter TRPTA-1	M-F	6:30 am	7:45 am	8:00 am	9:15 am
U-Valley Connector	Seven Days	11:15 am	12:30 pm	1:00 pm	2:15 pm
Commuter TRPTA-2	M-F	3:30 pm	4:45 pm	5:00 pm	6:15 pm
U-Valley Connector	Seven Days	8:15 pm	9:30 pm	10:00 pm	11:15 pm

Teton Service	Frequency	Leave JACKSON	Arrive DRIGGS	Leave DRIGGS	Arrive JACKSON
START Bus Commuter	M-F	--	--	6:25 am 7:05 am	7:30 am 8:10 am
U-Valley Connector	Seven Days	11:30 am	12:40 pm	1:00 pm	2:10 pm
START Bus Commuter	M-F	3:35 pm 5:10 pm	4:40 pm 6:15 pm	--	--
U-Valley Connector	Sat-Sun Only	8:30 pm	9:40 pm	10:00 pm	11:10 pm

RECOMMENDATION 1.2.1: Consortium governments and agencies should evaluate the proposed Upper Valley Connector service to determine what connectivity benefits would accrue to its residents and visitors in FY 2015. The City of Rexburg has advanced an ITD funding application for \$63,340 in 5311 funds with \$30,150 required in matching fund commitments.