Joplin Regional Transit Study

Joplin City Council Meeting | February 2, 2026

Final Presentation

JOPLIN MISSOURI

TransPro Driving Excellence

Agenda

1. “Why” and Success Definition
2. Study Updates
3. Final Recommendations
    - Governance
    - Revenue
    - Service
4. Next Steps

“Why” & Success Definition



- There is a **market for transit** in the Joplin region
- The current system is **not sustainable or regionally funded**
- Increased local funding could unlock **untapped federal funding** up to $6 million
- Success is defined as: “The Joplin area will have a regionally governed and operated transit system that is **operationally sustainable, connects people to destinations, and promotes economic development.**”

Updates

What We Heard	Actions
District Size	Eliminated Carthage and unincorporated areas to the north and west. The boundary remains changeable before the legal process completes. Most retail sales are contained within urbanized areas, thus additional rural coverage would not add significant revenue to the TDD.
Fleet	Recommended services would require a fleet of 31 vehicles, a mix of small and large buses based on ridership for each route. Federal funds can match 80% of the cost.
Employer Outreach	Requested more frequent service, more hours of service, and more destinations. A unit cost for additional hours of service is provided, allowing decision makers to adjust proposed days, hours, and frequency of service when services are funded and ready to deliver.
Rural Funding	MoDOT confirmed rural coverage would qualify for state and federal funding the City doesn't currently receive. Additional state funding has been estimated, but additional federal funds would be subject to annual applications. Both would be subject to annual appropriations. Local sales tax revenue from rural areas would be minimal.
Elected Official Outreach	Preference for the sales tax, with no clear consensus on the district boundary. Webb City was the most cited destination and Trolley service is now recommended there leveraging the savings from elimination of service to Carthage.
Next Steps	Setup the nonprofit, confirm the TDD details (partner, boundary, revenue, budget).

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Our Process

GOVERNANCE
Determines the Framework and Funding Options

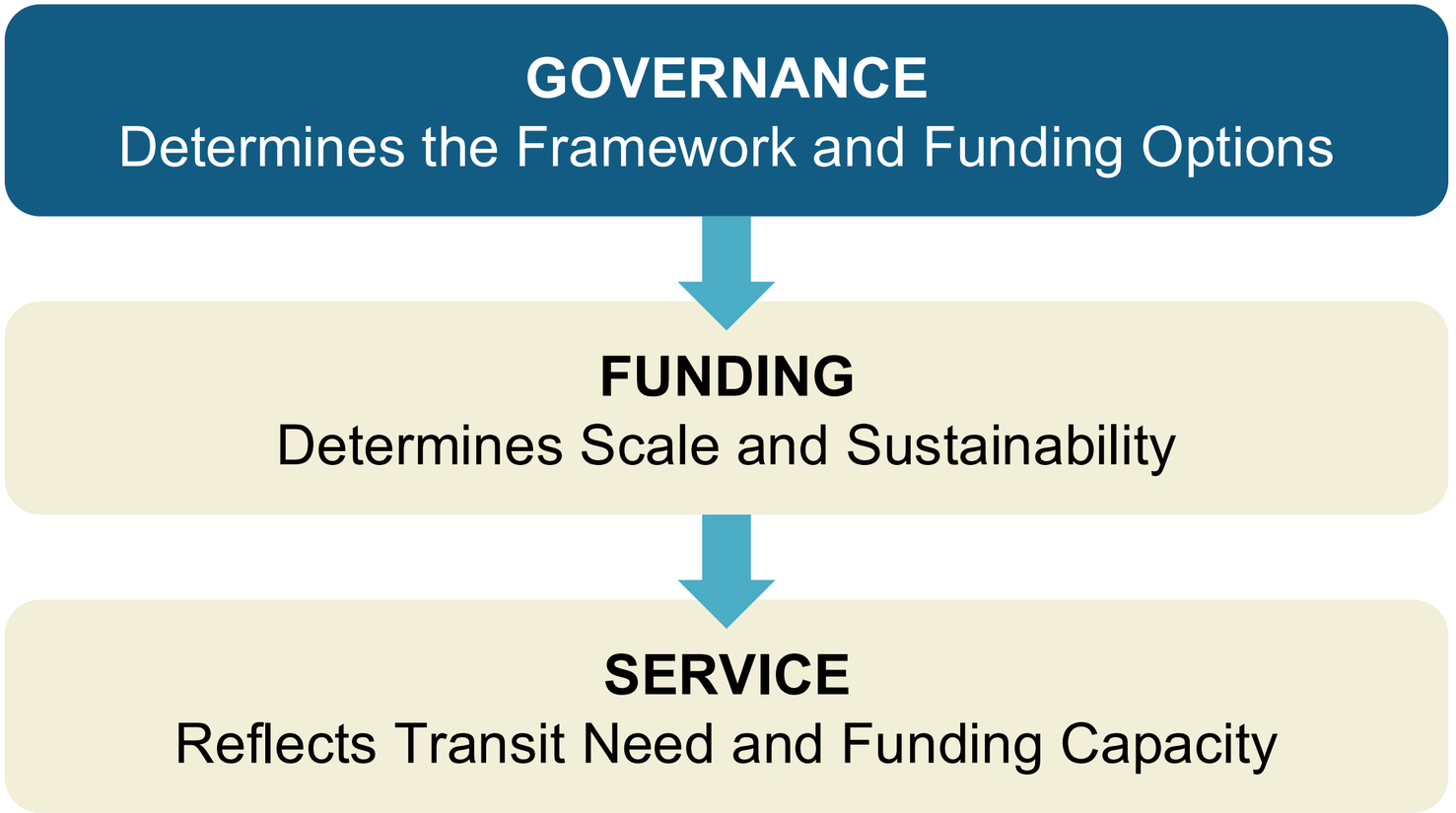


FUNDING
Determines Scale and Sustainability



SERVICE
Reflects Transit Need and Funding Capacity

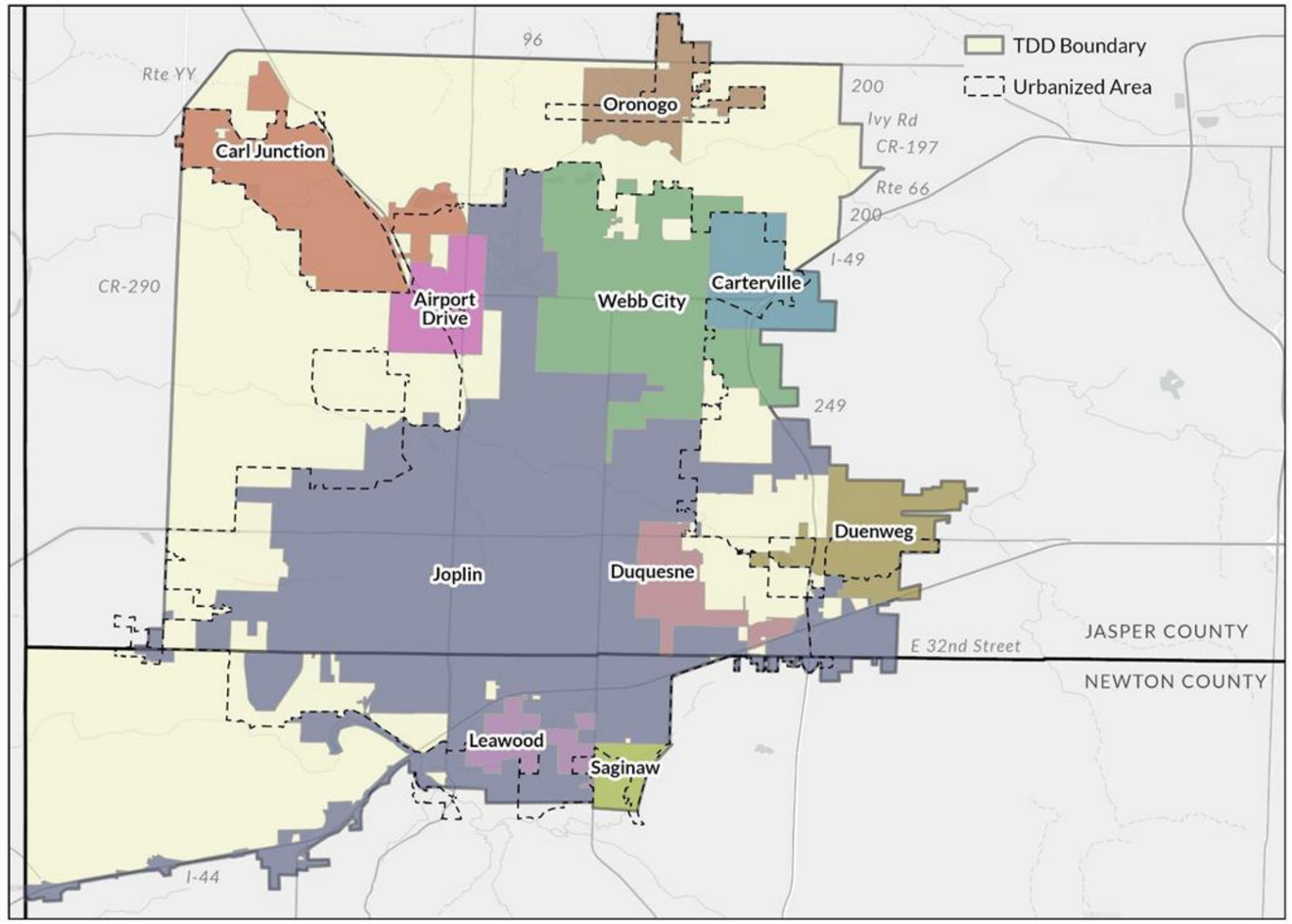
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Governance

Joplin Transit Today	Available Options	Considerations	Our Recommendation
City of Joplin – Staff and Council	• County Transit Authority • Transportation Corporation • Nonprofit • Transportation Development District (TDD) • Status Quo	• Newton County is not of the first order, so County Transit Authority is not a viable option • Other options do not have dedicated revenue source	**Nonprofit and TDD**

Our Recommendation



TDD Boundary

- Nonprofit owner / operator
- Proposed TDD maximizes flexibility of service area and funding options
- Transportation Development District boundary recommendation includes:

  *Joplin, Leawood, Saginaw, Duquesne, Duenweg, Webb City, Carterville, Airport Drive, Oronogo, Carl Junction, and unincorporated parts of Jasper and Newton counties.**

- Boundary can be changed before election, but ideally not during Circuit Court process
- OATS is a nonprofit transit operator since 1973
- Kansas City Streetcar Authority is a nonprofit and TDD combination since 2012

**Service can be provided to communities outside the TDD with a service contract. The Joplin airport is within the TDD boundary and would be served by MAPS.*

Nonprofit and TDD Boards

Nonprofit Board (Recommendation)

- 9 Directors, all residents of Jasper County, 2-year staggered terms
- **5 appointed by Joplin City Council** (1 City transportation director or designee, 2 representing Joplin businesses, 1 from the City Council, and 1 representing neighborhood or homes association)
- **4 appointed by Jasper County** (1 County transportation director, 3 reside in the County but outside of Joplin with experience in public affairs, neighborhood association, or active in the business community)

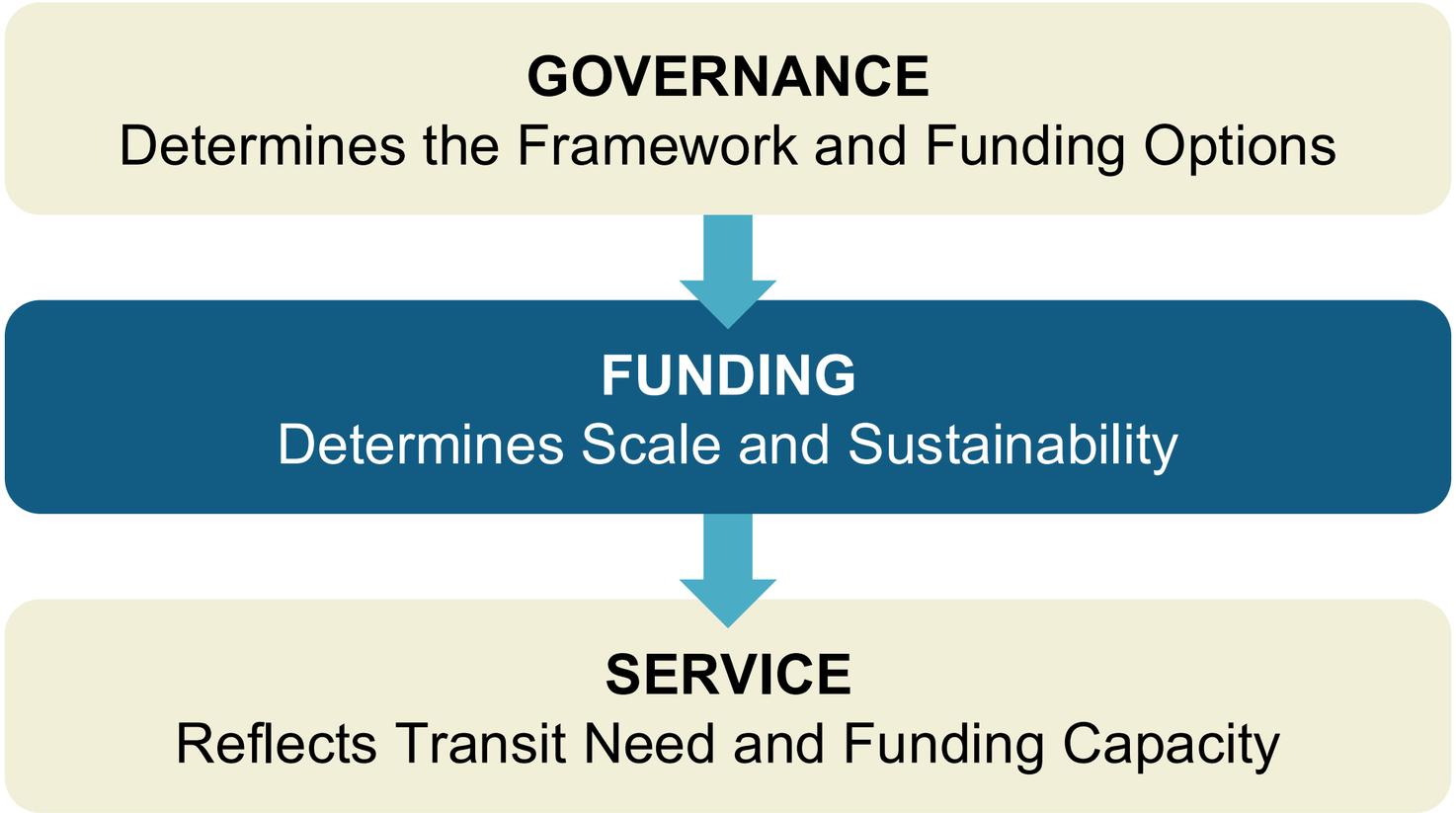
TDD Board (Statutory)

- For a TDD created by the petition of two transportation authorities, the Board is made up of the **presiding officer of each authority** and **one person designated by the governing body of each authority**

Collaboration (Recommendation)

- Interlocal agreement or contract **binding the nonprofit and TDD** for the purposes of funding and operating a public transit system for the region.

Our Process

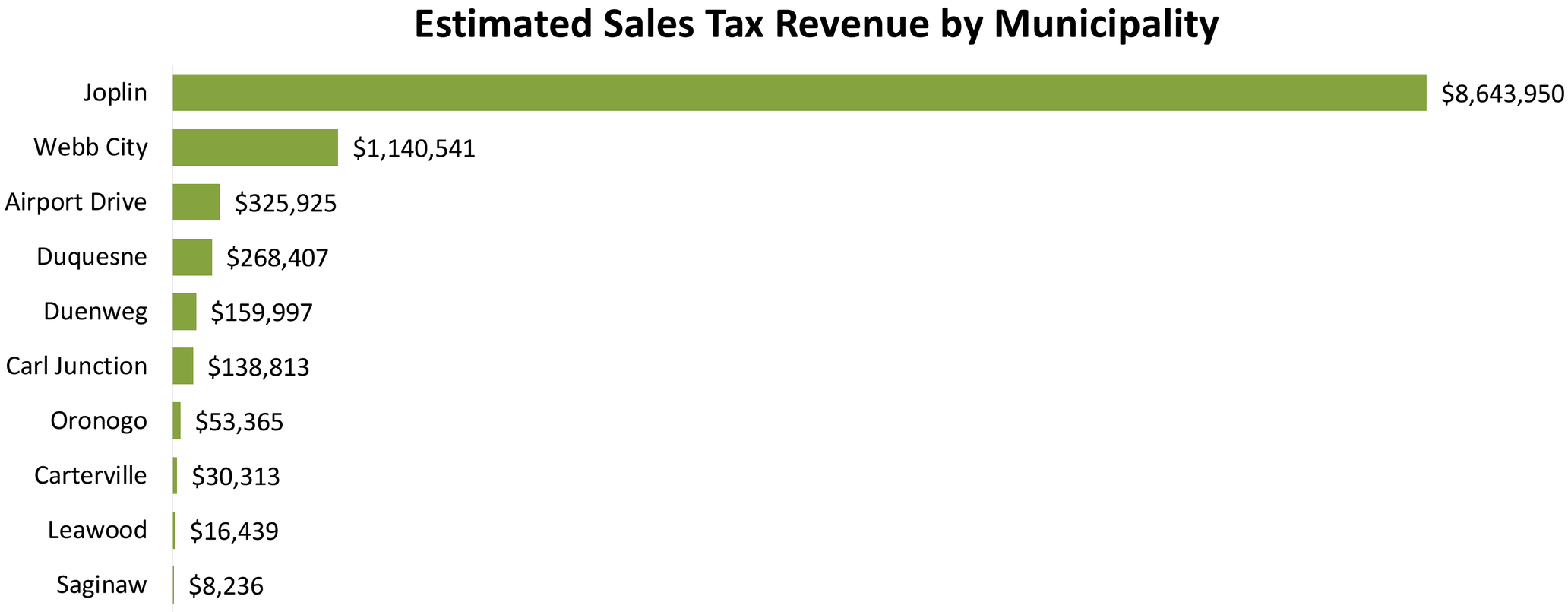

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Funding

Joplin Transit Today	Available Options	Considerations	Our Recommendation
Joplin Transportation Sales Tax (shared with street maintenance)	• Property tax • Special assessments • Sales tax (⅛-cent to 1-cent)	• Property tax and special assessments are unpopular • ⅛ – ¼-cent sales tax would provide similar levels of service to what is operated today with service mostly in Joplin • ½ cent sales tax would allow for service expansion, especially with increased operator pay (necessary to improve retention and provide reliable service)	**Dedicated ½-cent sales tax**

Funding

- Joplin is estimated to contribute 80% of TDD sales tax revenue (assuming ½-cent sales tax, based on 2024 total sales)
- Unincorporated areas are not included in sales tax estimates



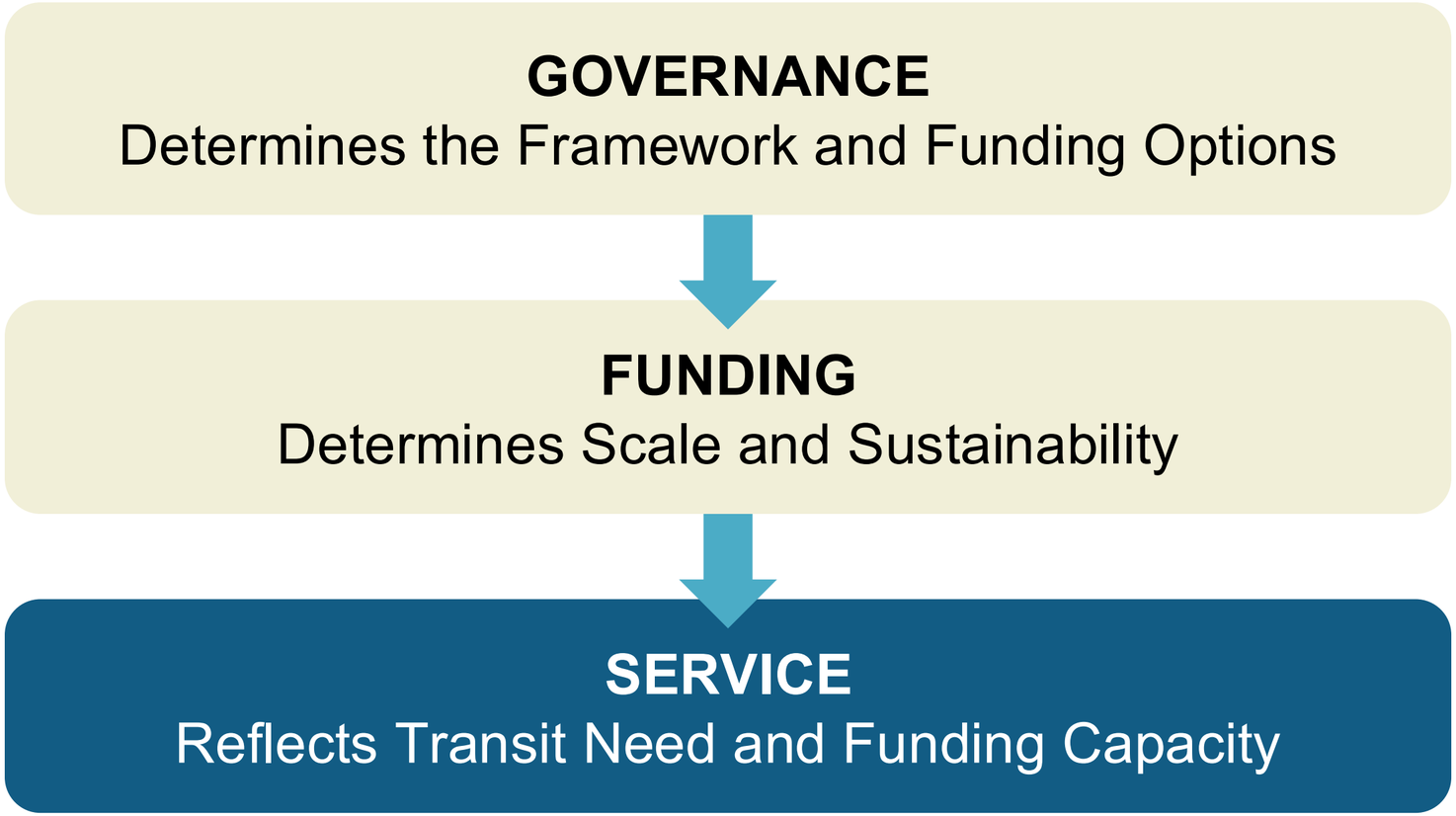
Our Recommendation

- ½-cent sales tax within TDD will be the main revenue source
- 10% set-aside for capital purchases ($1,079,500)
- Federal funding (Sections 5307, 5310, 5311, and 5339)
- State funding (urban and rural)
- Other directly generated: customer fares, advertising, charitable donations, contracts, and Medicaid reimbursements

Operating Revenue Category	Estimated Year 1 Revenue
Local TDD Sales Tax (0.5%)*	$9,715,500
Other Directly Generated Revenue (fares and advertising)	$643,000
Federal Operating Assistance**	$2,100,000
State Operating Assistance	$98,000
Total	**$12,556,500**

**Does not include 10% capital set-aside*
***Does not include estimates for Sections 5310 and 5311 funding as they are unknown at this time*

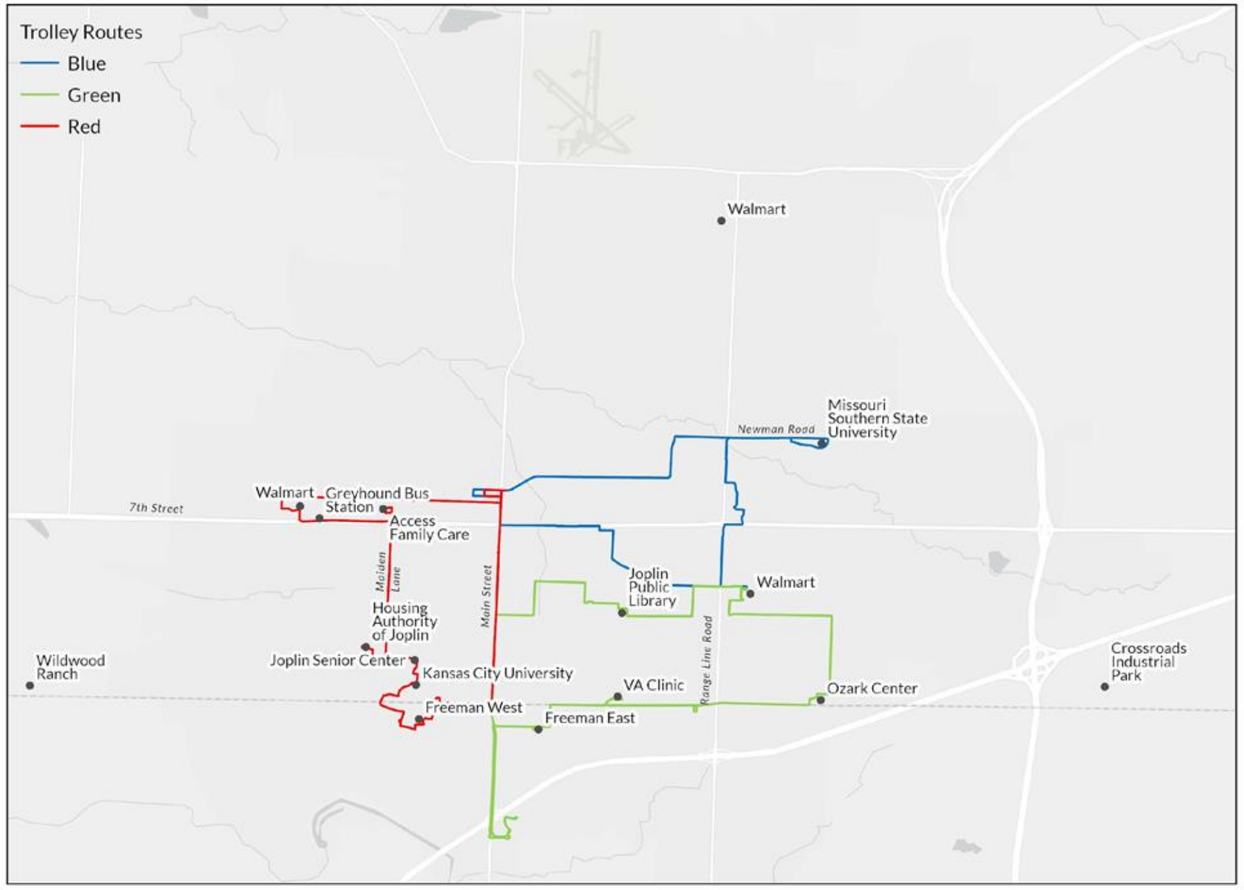
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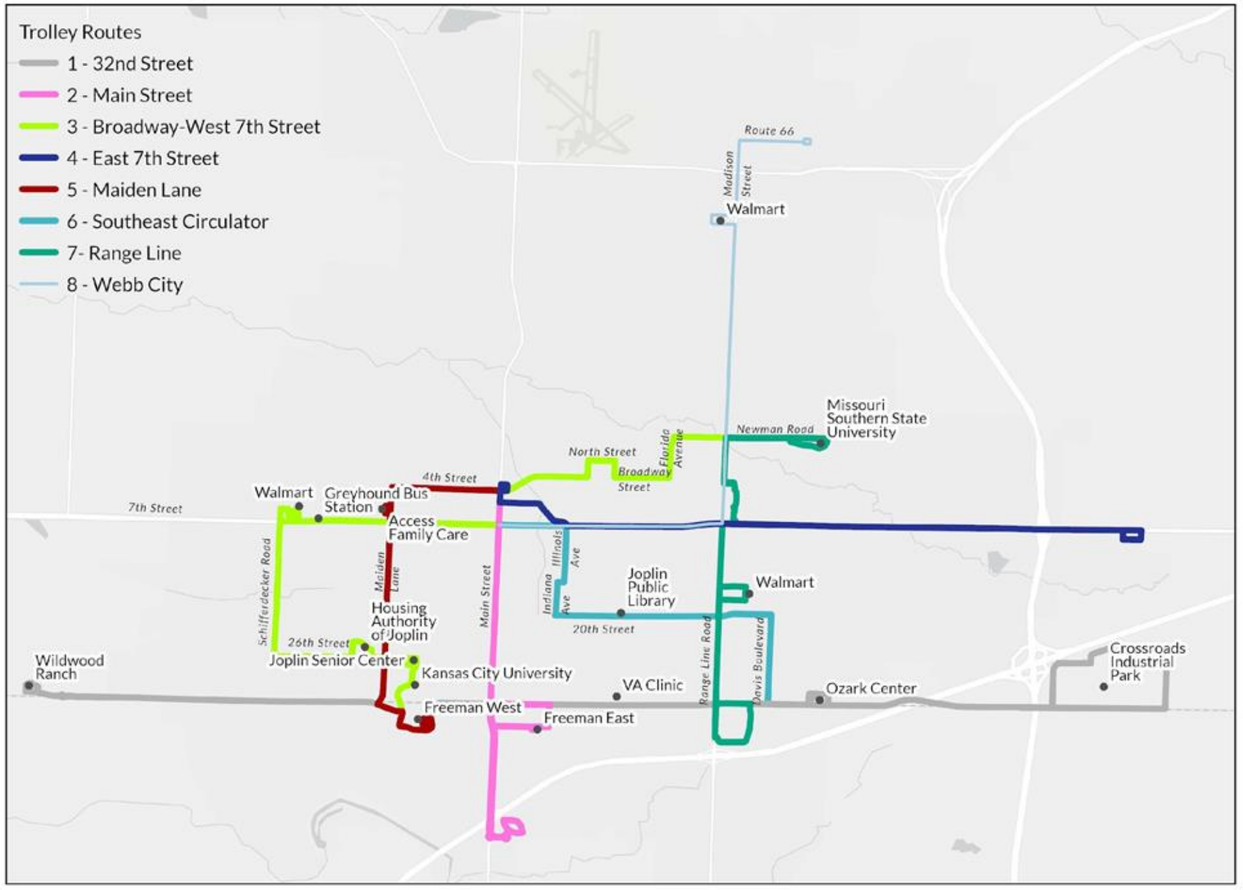
Trolley Service

Service Elements	Joplin Transit Service Today	Recommended Service
Routes	3	8
Cities Served	Joplin	Joplin, Webb City, Duenweg, Duquesne
Frequency	60 minutes, one-way loops	30 minutes, bi-directional
Days of Service	Monday - Friday	Monday - Saturday
Population within 0.5-mile buffer of routes	~40,000	~56,000
Jobs within 0.5-mile buffer of routes	~36,000	~45,000

Trolley Service

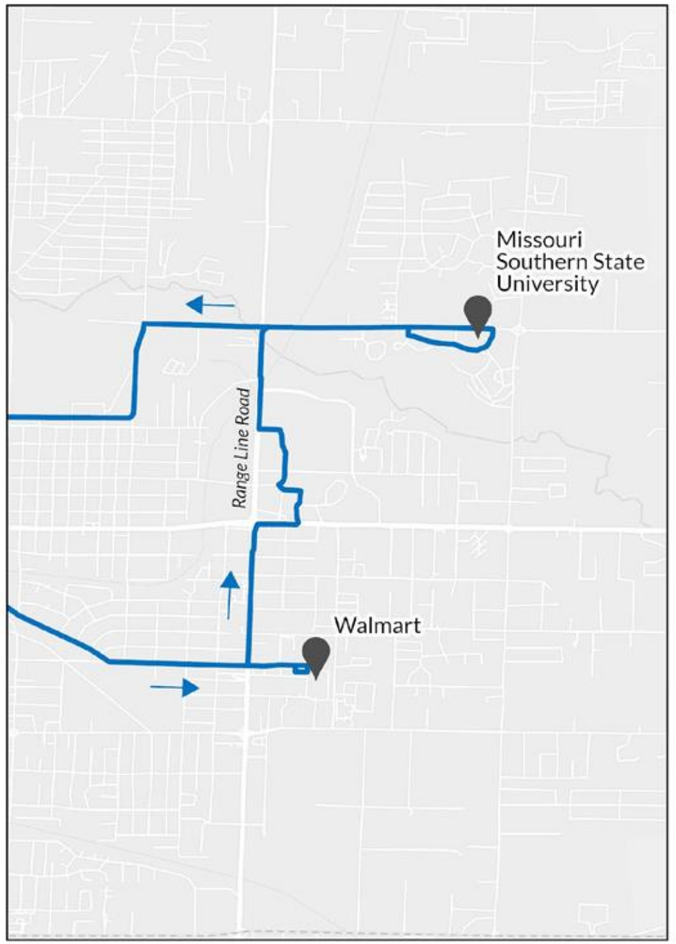


Existing Trolley Service



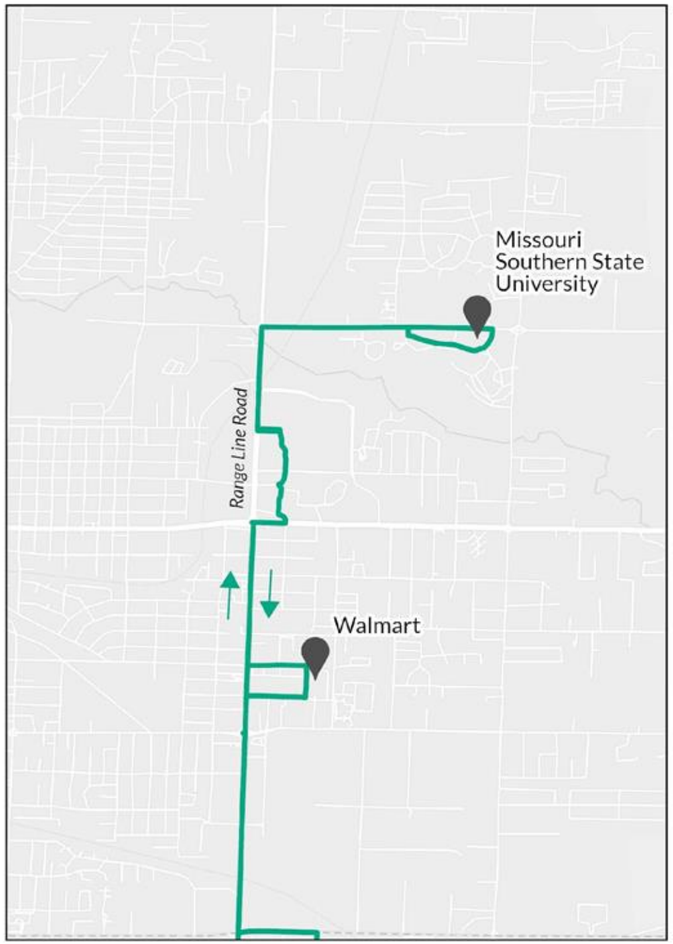
Recommended Trolley Service

Customer Journey



Existing Service

0 0.25 0.5 Miles N



Recommended Service

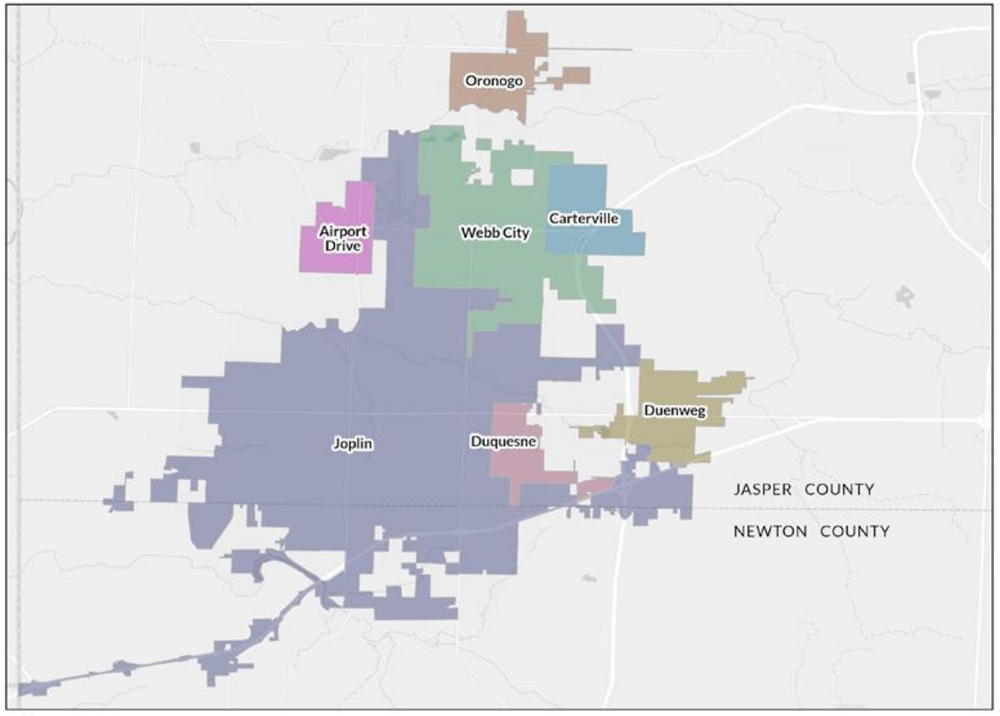
0 0.25 0.5 Miles N

Example Trip	Existing Service	Recommended Service
MSSU to/from Range Line Walmart	Blue Route 45 minutes 15 minutes	Route 7 - Range Line 22 minutes Both directions

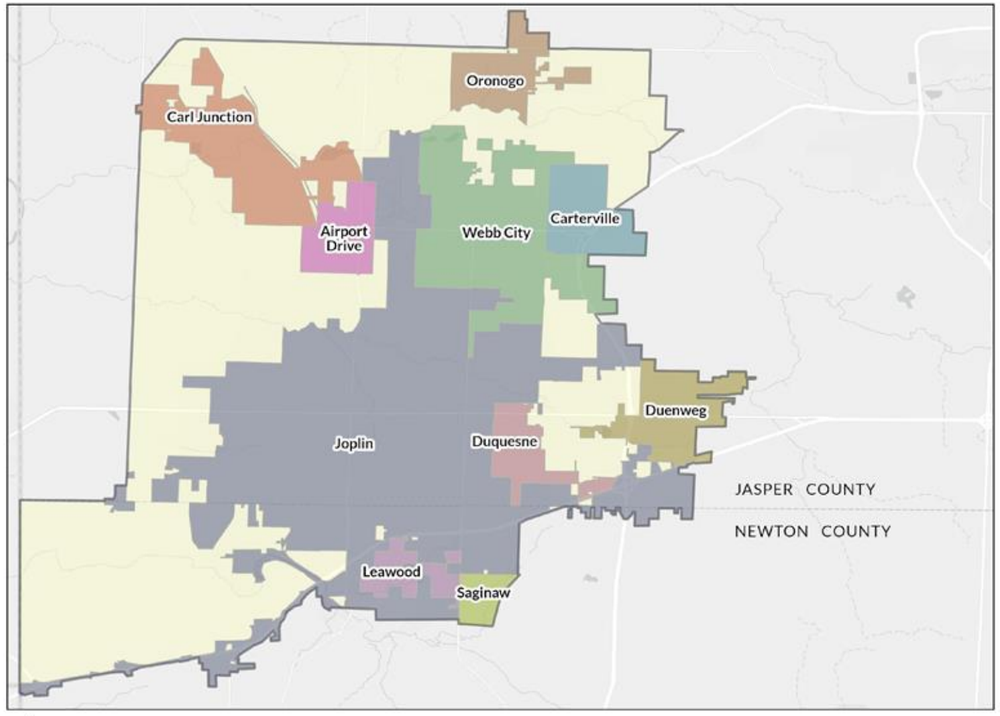
- ✓Consistent travel time in both directions
- ✓20+ minutes of travel time savings in the southbound direction
- ✓More flexible departure time because future Route 7 will come every 30 minutes, while existing Blue Route comes every 60 minutes

MAPS Service

Service Elements	Joplin Transit Service Today	Recommended Service
Cities Served	Joplin, Webb City, Duenweg, Duquesne, Oronogo, Airport Drive, Carterville	Joplin, Webb City, Duenweg, Duquesne, Carl Junction, Oronogo, Carterville, Airport Drive, Leawood, Saginaw
Days of Service	Monday - Friday	Monday - Saturday
Population Served	~73,000	~93,000
Jobs Served	~48,000	~52,000



Existing MAPS Service



Recommended MAPS Service

Implementation Steps: Pre-TDD Formation

Estimated time frame: 1-3 years

Phase	Task
Phase 1 – Form Nonprofit Owner/Operator	Create Missouri Nonprofit
	Appoint Nonprofit Board Members
	Conduct First Nonprofit Board Meeting
	Approve Shared Resources Resolution with City
Phase 2 – Transfer Transit Assets & Responsibilities	Transfer Staffing from City to Nonprofit Operator
	Hire Permanent General Manager
	Lease Facility to Nonprofit Operator
	Approve Maintenance Agreements
Phase 3 – Restructure Existing Service	Plan Revised Trolley Routes
	Conduct Public Outreach
	Deploy Trolley Service Changes (as needed)

Implementation Steps: Post-TDD Formation

Estimated time frame: 3-5 years

Phase	Task
Phase 4 – Form Transportation Development District	Determine Participating Authorities
	Confirm District Boundary, Name, & Scope
	Confirm Revenue Projection
	Prepare District Budget
	Contact MHTC
	Identify TDD Board Members
	File Formation Petition
	Conduct TDD Election
Phase 5 – Develop Strategy & Identify Grants	Develop Strategic Plan
	Submit Federal Grant Applications
	Submit State Grant Applications
	Order Vehicles
	Create Operating Schedules
	Hire and Develop Staff

Next Steps

- Initiate process to establish new nonprofit
- Confirm transportation authorities to form TDD
- Determine timing and election cycle



Questions?