

Issues, Vision, and Goals for Transit

INTRODUCTION

In developing a six-year TDP and long-range transit plan, it is necessary to recognize the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of public transportation. The mission, vision, and goals set the direction to be taken in the transit plan, and the specific objectives, along with corresponding performance standards, provide the specific direction for implementation. A vision for public transit has been developed and is presented in this chapter. A draft mission statement and goals are also presented. The Transit Advisory Committee should review the mission statement and goals to ensure that this accurately reflects the vision for transit in Grand and Jackson Counties.

This chapter also presents the process which has been used to identify specific issues to be addressed in the TDP. These issues will form the basis for various alternatives which will be developed and evaluated for public transportation service in the two counties.

ISSUES

Public transportation issues were identified through a number of sources. Personal interviews were conducted with various stakeholders in the two counties. Members of the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) met to discuss issues and develop a vision for public transportation services. A series of public meetings was also held to provide an opportunity for local residents to identify issues of importance to them.

Key Person Interviews

As part of the process to identify issues, interviews were held with key representatives of the community who are involved in some way with transit services. These interviews included transit service providers, representatives of agencies who rely on services from the various providers, elected officials, and other government representatives (state and local). The interviews were open-ended and provided opportunities for the interviewees to make any comments they wanted or to ask questions. Appendix A includes a list of key persons interviewed.

The form of the interview, when applicable, included an introduction to the project and the Consultant Team. The primary tasks of the interview were described so that the interviewees could have an understanding of the study objectives. The interviews were guided by a set of core questions asked of all persons interviewed, including their agency's role and relationship to transit services, opinion of existing services, and ideas about what the various providers might be doing in five years to better meet the needs of the community. The interviews were intended to be a relaxed format so that interviewees would not feel intimidated and be willing to share their views and experience to enhance the TDP.

The questions and responses are summarized in the following paragraphs. Below each summary, a table lists the specific issues for each community.

1. What are the most important issues in Grand and Jackson Counties and how do transportation issues rank?

Growth was seen as a major issue in Grand County and transportation needs related to that growth are seen as very important. Economic development and access to employment is a major issue in western Grand County and in Jackson County. Affordable housing is a primary issue in the Fraser Valley and Grand Lake.

What are the most important issues in Grand and Jackson Counties, and how do transportation issues rank?	
Jackson County	Economic development and affordable housing. Access to employment and handling growth properly.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Economic development, access to employment.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Water preservation and affordable housing, growth management, economic growth.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Affordable housing, US 40 congestion, growth management.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Affordable housing, traffic congestion, economic development.



2. Please describe the County’s current transportation problems.

The primary transportation problems in Grand County are congestion on US 40, particularly in the Winter Park area. Other transportation problems noted were the lack of transportation alternatives, long travel distances, need for employee transportation, and the relationship to transportation in the I-70 corridor.

Please describe the County’s current transportation problems.	
Jackson County	Lack of transportation alternatives, long travel distances to key facilities and employment.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Congestion of US 40 winter/summer seasons, employee and general public/children transportation alternatives.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Remote location. Employee transportation. Transportation alternatives.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Congestion on US 40, impacts of Moffat tunnel development and I-70 corridor, employee transportation options.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	US 40 congestion, year-round transit service, employee transportation. I-70 corridor development.

3. How do these transportation problems affect economic vitality? Air quality? How do they affect your organization?

Air quality was not identified as a major issue in either county. Employee transportation is seen as a direct factor in the economic vitality of the region. Jackson County residents need transportation to reach jobs in Routt County and Grand County. Grand County residents need transportation to reach jobs in the Winter Park area and Summit County.

How do these transportation problems affect economic vitality? Air quality? How do they affect your organization?	
Jackson County	Directly related to economic vitality—transportation to jobs in Routt/Grand County.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Directly related to economic vitality—transportation to jobs in Routt/Summit County.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Directly related to economic vitality—
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Directly related to community vitality—must accommodate needs without surrendering.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Directly related to economic vitality—need transportation alternatives for the major traveled corridors year-round.

4. If you could look into a crystal ball, what do you think Grand and Jackson Counties will look like in 20 years? How does public transit fit into your vision?

The future of Grand County looks like continued development in the Fraser Valley. Winter Park is being positioned as a destination resort rather than a Front Range ski area. More second homes will be built. Congestion will increase on US 40 between Winter Park and Granby. Public transportation will be needed to serve employees and to relieve congestion. The gondola in Winter Park will help relieve congestion within Winter Park. As Winter Park becomes more of a destination resort, other activities will have to be added such as transportation to Hot Sulphur Springs and Grand Lake.

If you could look into a crystal ball, what do you think Grand and Jackson Counties will look like in 20 years? How does public transit fit into your vision?	
Jackson County	Similar rural area with more people. Public transit not really in the future, but would be nice and would provide economic development. More tourists.
Kremmling/Parshall	Expanded community. Employee shuttles will be available to Summit Count, Routt County, and to the Fraser Valley.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Summit County and Granby will be joined. Increased congestion, tourism. More business geared toward tourism. Transit will be present.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Resort destination community. More year-round visitors. Gondola connecting ski areas and Winter Park. Bus service frequent and attractive to all of East Grand County for employees and general public.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Area will continue to be tourist haven in the summer. Traffic will increase because of RMNP business. Long-term: shuttles for the downtown area to alleviate congestion.



5. What benefits do you believe public transit currently provides in the community? To your organization?

The current services provide transportation for skiers and other visitors in Winter Park. Buses provide access to the ski area, shopping, and restaurants. Bus service at Silver Creek provides access to the ski area from lodging areas. Silver Creek also provides pupil transportation from residential areas to the school bus route on US 40. Employees are served for commuter services from Grand Lake and Granby. Seniors have some transportation services and have minimum needs met.

What benefits do you believe public transit currently provides in the community? To your organization?	
Jackson County	Good service for senior citizens.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Good service for senior citizens, and commuter service successful. Provides jobs for the community.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Good winter service for Fraser Valley tourists. Average service for local employees. No service for the general public. Average service for senior citizens.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Excellent ski area service during winter season for employees and residents of Fraser Valley.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Limited service for all.

6. What factors currently limit transit ridership? How can these factors be addressed?

There are concerns that local residents do not use any of the transit systems. The only local residents who use any of the buses are employees commuting to work. More convenient schedules and promotion of the service as available to the general public locally may help.

What factors currently limit transit ridership? How can these factors be addressed?	
Jackson County	Service for senior citizens only. Perception that residents will not ride. Provide transportation to jobs, and tourist service will work.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Service for senior citizens and commuters only. Provide additional service for general public.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	No general public services to Granby/Hot Sulphur Springs. Provide intercity service to Granby/Hot Sulphur Springs and Grand Lake—convenient for tourists and residents.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	More convenient schedules and upgraded equipment to attract more riders.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	No service for general public now. Employee shuttles, but limited hours.

7. What are your perceptions of the Winter Park Lift transit system as it currently exists? Strengths? Weaknesses? What of the other transit providers?

Some indicated that the system needs a face-lift. The school bus type vehicles do not support the image of a major resort. The new paint scheme has improved the look of the vehicles. New management is perceived as a great improvement. Schedule adherence is seen as a weakness of the system.

What are your perceptions of the Winter Park Lift transit system as it currently exists? Strengths? Weaknesses? What of the other transit providers?	
Jackson County	Good service for skiers in the Fraser Valley. Would like to see employee shuttle services to Walden.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Good service for eastern Grand County, no real effect on Kremmling. Good senior citizen service.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Good service for Winter Park and Fraser. Need to expand to Hot Sulphur Springs, Granby, Grand Lake for the general public. Could use upgrades for more attractive service.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Good service for area. First priority: on-time service and frequency. Possible new face lift in the long-term future to compete with other destination ski areas.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Good service for the Fraser Valley, but very limited outside that area. Would like to see more summer services to Grand Lake to get visitors between the two areas.



8. What changes in the transit services would you like to see in the next six years? What would be your priorities?

There is a general desire to have service along the US 40 corridor so that residents could go from Kremmling to Winter Park with connections to Grand Lake and the YMCA/Snow Mountain Ranch. Other desired services include circulator services within Grand Lake.

What changes in the transit services would you like to see in the next six years? What would be your priorities?	
Jackson County	Employee shuttles available to Routt County and Grand County. Also, tourism service to bring more people to the area to increase economic development.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Continued employee shuttle service to Summit County for jobs. Also, service to the Fraser Valley along US 40.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Provide year-round general public service for residents and visitors from the Fraser Valley to Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, and Grand Lake.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Continued winter season service and improved year-round service. Establish a stable funding source. Continued employee shuttles possibly to Jackson County, Grand Lake, and Kremmling.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Provide year-round general public service between Fraser Valley and other east Grand communities—Hot Sulphur Springs, Granby, Grand Lake, and RMNP. Possible summer circulator service within Grand Lake to RMNP.

9. How can future transit services best work with or support other community goals, such as traffic congestion reduction, economic vitality, or air quality improvements?

The proposed gondola in Winter Park is seen as a benefit to traffic congestion in the Winter Park area. Transit is also seen as a way to reduce congestion on US 40. Transit is seen as crucial to the economic vitality of all communities within Grand County. Public transportation is needed to provide access to employees and jobs and to provide mobility for visitors to the Winter Park area.

How can future transit services best work with or support other community goals, such as traffic congestion reduction, economic vitality, or air quality improvements?	
Jackson County	Employee transit service could increase economic vitality in the County.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Employee transit service could improve the economic vitality of the area. Additional service to the Fraser Valley provides alternative transportation modes.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Year-round service will provide an opportunity for visitors and residents to use another mode of transportation besides the automobile. Congestion will decrease.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	The future gondola and enhanced bus service provides an incentive for people to use transit conveniently. Improved transit and transit friendly designs will continue to support the character of the communities.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	A downtown circulator with transit-friendly downtown planning will provide a relief for traffic congestion in the summer. A year-round shuttle between the east Grand communities will support economic development and improve mobility.



10. Many communities are modifying their land use development pattern regulations to encourage increased transit use. Do you think this type of strategy can benefit Grand/Jackson Counties over the long term? Would you support such changes?

Some concern was expressed that local design does not consider transit. Some streets and intersections have not been designed to easily accommodate buses. Land use and development patterns related to transit were not major issues. Designated bus stops should be added to encourage the use of transit.

Many communities are modifying their land use development pattern regulations to encourage increased transit use. Do you think this type of strategy can benefit Grand/Jackson Counties over the long term? Would you support such changes?	
Jackson County	Support and should encourage.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Support and should encourage.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Support and should encourage.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Support and should encourage.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Support and should encourage.

11. Given our discussion as a whole, what would you suggest are appropriate goals for future transit service in the County?

Goals for public transportation include operating a system that meets identified needs. A transit system should meet the needs of county residents in addition to the visitors.

Given our discussion as a whole, what would you suggest are appropriate goals for future transit service in the County?	
Jackson County	Provide service that people will use—employee and tourism service.
Kremmling/ Parshall	Goals that serve the needs of the community.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Year-round general public service among the east Grand communities.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Provide transportation that meets the needs of the residents and visitors within the County and communities.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Provide general public countywide transit service that operates efficiently.

12. Do you have any additional comments about transit in Grand and Jackson Counties?

A transit maintenance facility is needed for Winter Park. There is some consensus that coordination of services is needed and will help improve the efficiency of transit services.

Do you have any additional comments about transit in Grand and Jackson Counties?	
Jackson County	Need transit service that the County can afford and still benefit the communities.
Kremmling/ Parshall	No other comments.
Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Silver Creek, YMCA	Need year-round transit service for the east Grand communities outside the Fraser Valley. Would like coordinated main facility.
Winter Park/ Fraser/ Tabernash	Need to have service that competes with other destination resort areas. Gondola will be in the long-term future. Interested in coordinated maintenance facility.
Grand Lake/ Three Lakes Area	Need countywide, year-round general public service to meet all transit needs.

The opinions for regional commuters and visitors will be summarized from the resident and visitor survey and also the employee survey. These results will be presented in Technical Memorandum #2.



Transit Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC has been formed to address transit issues in the two counties. LSC met with the TAC on February 3, 2000 to start the project and again on March 2, 2000 for a workshop to develop the vision for transit. The TAC identified a number of issues and helped to formulate a vision for transit in Grand and Jackson Counties. The vision that has been developed from the TAC input is presented later in this chapter.

The TAC identified the following issues to be addressed as part of the TDP update. Each of these issues will be used in creating transit alternatives that will be presented in Technical Memorandum #2.

Grand County Issues

- Year-round service
- Countywide service
- Low resident ridership
- Getting people out of cars
- Existing service is aimed at alpine skiers
- Service for all employees
- Resident skiers don't use transit
- Funding for vehicle replacement, particularly for seniors and youth
- Accessing recreation facilities (RMNP, YMCA, etc.) without a vehicle
- Connections with airports, rail, and bus lines
- Getting younger teens to employment
- Bus maintenance facility
- Getting residents and visitors to Summit County, Denver, CIFGA, Steamboat, etc.
- Keeping employees residing in county when their jobs moved to Empire
- The Fraser Valley Parkway, bypassing Fraser
- Funding equity
- I-70 corridor congestion
- Air quality

Jackson County Issues

- Countywide service
- Year-round service
- What type of service is feasible?
- Will service be cost effective?

Public Meetings

In addition to meetings with the TAC, public meetings were held in several communities. The first meeting was in Kremmling on March 1, 2000 with a meeting in Winter Park on March 2, 2000. The following week, meetings were held in Grand Lake (March 8) and Walden (March 9). The TDP process was presented and residents were given the opportunity to identify transportation issues. Key issues which were identified at these public meetings are presented below. The key issues are summarized and will be used in creating transit alternatives, which will be presented in Technical Memorandum #2.

Kremmling

- Commute patterns from Kremmling are primarily to Summit County.
- Vanpools may be the likely transit service to and from Kremmling.
- Kremmling has locational significance: 50 miles to Keystone, Winter Park, and Steamboat.
- Wolford Reservoir attracts visitors, but most have their own vehicles.
- Main economy in Kremmling is tourism, primarily related to hunting.
- Young people need transportation for access to jobs.
- Need to look at service consolidation for elderly.
- Loss of mining-related jobs has forced more workers to commute to Henderson Mine.

Winter Park

- There is a need for a transit connection from Winter Park to the I-70 corridor, particularly with plans for transit in I-70 corridor.
- Moving affordable housing farther away loses the sense of community.
- How can we get local employees to ride the bus?
- Amtrak and Greyhound are seldom on schedule.
- There are no reasonably priced alternatives to DIA .

Grand Lake

- Service in west Grand County is inadequate.
- Grand Lake is essentially at the end of a 16-mile dead-end road much of the year.
- Many workers cannot afford a car which is dependable in winter conditions.
- Get drunk drivers off the road.
- Housing is expensive.
- The senior population in Grand Lake is impacted by the lack of public transit.
- Winter and summer transportation needs are different.



- There is a lack of information on available transit.
- Parking is an issue in Grand Lake.
- There is a need to provide access to summer evening recreation in Grand Lake.
- There is a year-round need to get people from Grand Lake to Granby for evening recreation.
- Is there a possibility to have the Ski Train operate daily and also help with transportation needs within Grand County?
- There is a need for a train station in Kremmling with transportation to Summit County.
- Access to the hospital in Kremmling.
- Need to be proactive about growth.
- There is a need for park-and-ride lots along SR 34.
- Need to provide transportation to and from Rocky Mountain National Park. Need to coordinate with Park transit study.
- It should be possible to get around without a car.
- Need for Grand Lake circulator service during the summer.
- Need year-round taxi service in Grand Lake.

Walden

- Residents of Walden need access to jobs in Steamboat Springs and to Winter Park in Grand County.
- Jackson County needs connections to more traveled corridors (I-70 and I-80).
- Need for small package delivery.
- Improve the airport and create transit connections to and from the airport.
- Replace the Jackson County senior van.
- Need education/advocacy regarding benefits of transit.
- Explore transportation for snowmobilers and their machines.
- Some carpool matching assistance would be helpful.

Additional public meetings will be held when a draft plan is prepared to provide the opportunity for residents to comment on the draft plan. All interim documents will be made available in the local communities and on the Internet so residents may have an opportunity to provide input as the plan is developed.

MISSION STATEMENT

Having identified many of the issues, it is important to establish a mission for public transportation services. Since there is a desire to provide a coordinated transportation system, a single mission statement has been drafted for Grand and Jackson Counties. This mission statement will be reviewed by the TAC and revised as needed to reflect the vision of the community.

Public Transportation Mission

Public transportation services in Grand and Jackson Counties will meet the needs of residents and visitors by providing access to employment, recreation, and essential services while enhancing the quality of life and protecting the environment.

VISION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Based on input from the TAC, key person interviews, and public meetings; a vision for public transportation was developed. The following is a statement of the community's vision for transit:

In the future, a regional public transit system will connect all of the communities of Grand and Jackson Counties, tying the region together socially and economically.

Benefits:

- Residents, employees, and visitors will make frequent use of a network of public transit services to improve their mobility, and it will be possible to live and work in Grand County without being dependent upon a car.
- Teenagers will benefit from improved access to recreation and to all year-round jobs.
- Elderly people will benefit from improved access to social activities and health care.
- The tourism economy will be strengthened by linking a greater variety of recreational activities, and by improving the recruitment, retention, and productivity of employees.
- Resorts will avoid the costs of unnecessary parking supply, and resort communities will avoid the need to widen roadways.
- Transit will assist local and regional goals for protecting the environment.
- Transit will assist in the reduction in vehicles by providing an alternate mode of transportation.
- Counties will encourage the use of mass transit in the development of their development, planning, building, and zoning processes.
- Overall quality of life in the region will be enhanced by improved mobility, reduced pollution, and travel cost savings.



SHORT-TERM GOALS

To achieve the public transportation mission, policy decision must focus on achieving certain goals. The following goals have been drafted for Grand and Jackson Counties to accomplish the mission and move toward the vision. These goals have been set for the six-year portion of this TDP.

1. Year-round public transportation will be provided between communities, major residential areas, and activity centers of Grand and Jackson Counties.
2. Public transportation services in Grand and Jackson Counties will provide intermodal connections with other transportation services including Greyhound and Amtrak.
3. Transportation services will be coordinated to achieve the best use of resources.
4. Public transportation service will be efficient and effective.
5. Quality of service will be emphasized to make the service attractive to potential users.
6. Fund public transportation through a variety of reliable sources.

Once the goals have been reviewed and adopted by the TAC, specific objectives will be established for each of the goals. As an example, an objective for reliable service would be criteria for on-time performance. The objectives will be more specific, measurable, and will have associated time periods. Performance measures and standards will be developed for each objective when the operations plan is developed.