

Long-Range Service Alternatives

Chapter III presents long-range alternatives for Grand and Jackson Counties. Each alternative is discussed with estimated costs for the service.

LONG-RANGE SERVICE OPTIONS TO 2020

1. Winter Park Gondola

The Winter Park Gondola would provide three-mile express service between the town of Winter Park and the ski area. The gondola would provide a more high-technology, high-capacity, and potentially faster means of conveying people between the town and ski area than the current bus system. The gondola application is being used all over the world and also locally between Telluride and Mountain Village in San Miguel County since 1996.



Some advocates of the gondola suggest that it is a unique way to handle increasing traffic in the Winter Park area. The advocates for the gondola indicate reduced traffic and air pollution as advantages. The initial costs for the gondola are higher than bus service, but advocates indicate operation and maintenance costs are lower in the long run and the gondola is more efficient. The town of Winter Park has been looking at the gondola concept for the past decade. The Mayor of Winter Park reports that pieces are coming together slowly but surely. This past year, the town of Winter Park purchased a parcel of land that sits next to the Winter Park free parking garage for \$1,100,000.

The gondola project is estimated to cost approximately \$20,000,000. However, the cost would depend upon the final technology used for the project. The gondola would operate from the town of Winter Park to the mountain-side for skiers, then continue to the Winter Park base village, where development continues on an upscale condo and retail complex. The gondola would operate continuously, allowing passengers a very short wait for the

next gondola car to arrive. Capacity of the gondola system would be 1,800 passengers per hour.

2. Extend Public Transportation to Kremmling

The concept behind this alternative is to serve the west side of Grand County, in particular the Kremmling area. East/west transit service would, in addition to reducing vehicular congestion, also contribute to protecting the natural resources and air quality of Grand County.

To add this service extension to Kremmling, the fixed-route service among the east Grand County towns would need to be revised to accommodate transfers from the other towns. This alternative makes the assumption that the fixed-route service among the east Grand County towns is operating and this service would be an extension of the town-to-town service. Assuming 12 hours of service per day, 5 days per week, it would cost approximately \$2,400 per week. For this service to operate 260 days per year would cost approximately \$125,000 in 2000 dollars.

This alternative would operate with one vehicle. The service between Kremmling and Granby would operate six round-trips per day. One institutional option is for an intergovernmental agreement between the town of Kremmling and the county. It would also be possible to operate as a county-only service or as part of a Rural Transportation Authority (RTA).

3. Grand Lake Summer Circulator

The purpose of the Grand Lake summer circulator would be to increase the circulation within Grand Lake. Traffic during the summer is very congested within the town. The service would be available within the town of Grand Lake, the Columbine Subdivision, and also connect to the Rocky Mountain National Park transit route.

The Grand Lake Circulator route, presented Figure III-1, would operate one vehicle from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. The frequency would be every 10 to 15 minutes. The cost for summer service is approximately \$48,000 using one vehicle. The circulator would operate approximately 1,080 hours and 16,200 miles for the 100 days of summer service. It is not considered feasible to decrease the frequency on this alternative as the wait time between buses would quickly exceed the time it would take to walk around the town. This route option is expected to place transit service demand at approximately 4,000 trips per year. This equates to four passengers per hour. The cost per passenger would be approximately \$10.67 in current dollars. If the service is operated in coordination with the RMNP shuttle

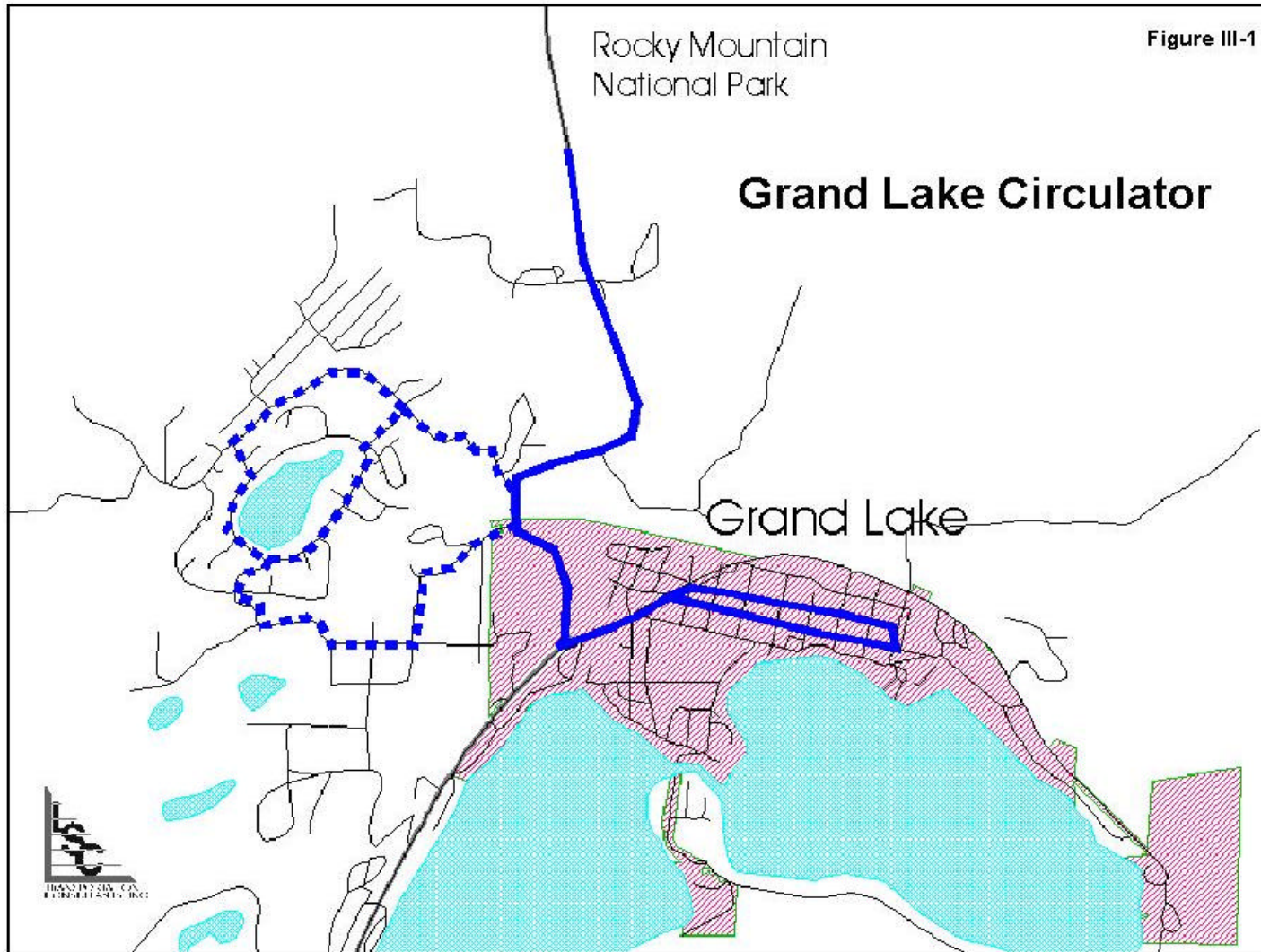
service, ridership could be expected to increase to as much as 50,000 passengers per year.

The Grand Lake Circulator could be operated by the county, town of Grand Lake, a nonprofit, public-private partnership, or by an intergovernmental agreement. This service could also be provided as part of an RTA. Maintenance and equipment needs for a single vehicle could be provided through the city, county shop, or contracted with a local mechanic.

Rocky Mountain
National Park

Figure III-1

Grand Lake Circulator



Grand Lake



4. Commuter Shuttle from Walden to Steamboat Springs

The Commuter Shuttle from Walden to Steamboat Springs would provide employee transportation options from Walden to Steamboat Springs. The shuttle, shown on the following page in Figure III-2, would operate during morning and evening peak hours of service. This option provides a lower cost alternative to employees who commute long distances. Specific bus stops would need to be designated and parking arrangements made. Parking options could include formal agreements with owners of existing parking lots or possibly construct a park-and-ride.

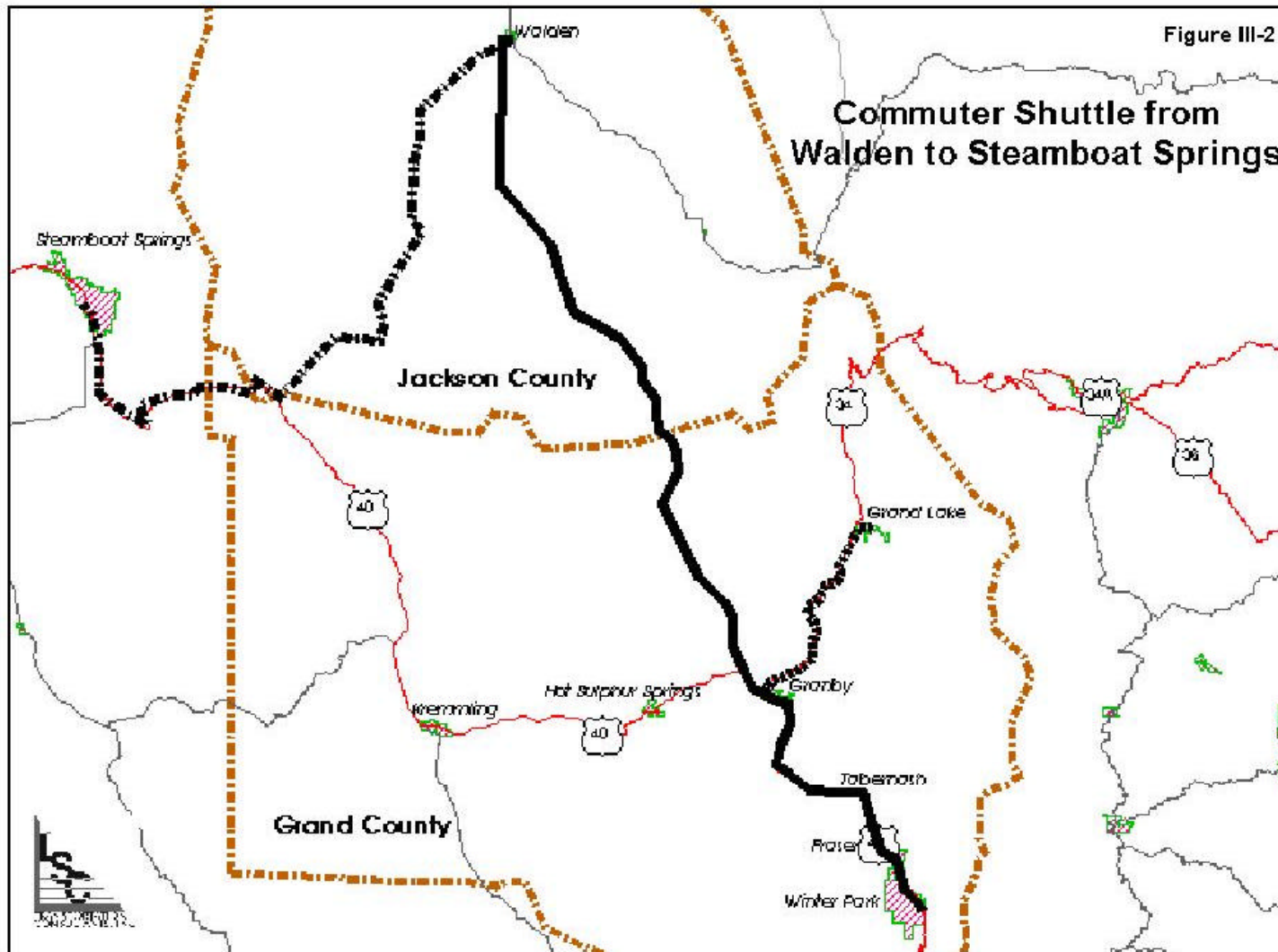
One round-trip per day during the peak hours is analyzed as an initial point of consideration of this alternative. Ultimately, user fares will play an important role in financing for the service. This alternative is at least partially predicated on the basis that it is cheaper for the employee to purchase this transportation, have the travel time available for personal use, and eliminate the need for a personal vehicle. The alternative is also predicated, in part, on the basis that employers benefit from not having to operate their own employee shuttles. Thus, employer/business contributions are a second likely source of funding for this option.

Costs for the shuttle are broken out into winter, summer, and annual time periods. Approximately four hours of daily service are used for the cost estimates at \$40 per hour.

Season	Hours	Operating Days	Costs
Winter	720	180	\$28,800
Summer	740	185	\$29,600
Annual	1,460	365	\$58,400

Figure III-2

Commuter Shuttle from Walden to Steamboat Springs



The potential demand for the Commuter Shuttle is based on peak commuting times. Data were collected from the Advisory Committee members, key interviews, and the employer and employee surveys to project the level of demand for commuter service. Based on the data, the estimated demand for this service would be 10 trips per day commuting between Jackson and Routt Counties and returning. This equates to 5 passengers per hour and \$7.89 per passenger.

Based on the demand estimates, this service could be initiated on a trial basis by the existing provider in Jackson County, Sage Brush Tours. This agreement could be a public-private partnership. Other options would be for Jackson County to expand their senior transit service to operate the route. This analysis assumes no deadhead mileage, meaning the vehicle would remain in Walden overnight and in Steamboat Springs during the day. As such, a parking space would need to be identified at each end. There is a possibility on the Steamboat Springs end that the vehicle could be put into the local route service or into service for one of the lodging units rather than being parked.

Institutionally, this alternative is likely to be served by either a public-private partnership, as a nonprofit venture, or by an extension of the Jackson County senior service.

5. Passenger Rail Service between Denver and Kremmling

The long-range concept of this alternative is to enhance and extend affordable passenger rail transportation to a corridor that currently has freight and passenger service. This type of service would be demand-warranted and would likely use heavy rail trains or diesel multiple units. Stops would be needed in each of the towns—Winter Park, Fraser, Tabernash, Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, and Kremmling. The service would need to run at least once per hour with several trips each direction in the morning and evening peak periods to attract ridership at any level.

This alternative would have varying costs depending whether existing freight tracks could be used or not. For commuter rail on existing track, the total capital cost would cost over \$100 million. To construct this on new track is even more expensive at \$20 to \$30 million per mile. These costs are exclusive of the land and right-of-way acquisition costs.

With a rail concept such as this, it is likely that many of the transit intercity trips would be served by rail, rather than by local transit.

Assuming that 10 percent of the trips would be diverted to this service, the projected annual ridership would be about 250,000.

The facility and equipment needs and institutional requirements would be determined upon the selection of specific technology and specific alignment (new versus existing track). It is likely that for this alternative to be successful, it would require the efforts of all local governments affected: Grand County, Winter Park, Fraser, Granby, Hot Sulphur Springs, Kremmling, Denver, and other concerned entities. Few, if any, institutional arrangements short of an RTA would be viable in producing the necessary long-term financial commitment and stability required for this alternative.

SUMMARY OF LONG-RANGE SERVICE ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives presented in this chapter were developed to fulfill the long-range transportation vision of service throughout Grand and Jackson Counties along the major transportation corridors. The alternatives would provide connections within the two counties, as well as connections to the Front Range and Routt County. The long-range alternatives are summarized in Table III-2.

**Table III-2
Long-Range Service Summary**

Alternative	Advantages	Disadvantages	Preliminary Minimum Costs
Winter Park Gondola	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Speedy transit service 2. Attractive technology 3. Quiet 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost 2. Breakdowns 3. Weather shutdowns 	\$ 20,000,000
Public Transit to Kremmling	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Countywide service 2. Reduce vehicular congestion 3. Protect natural environment 4. Protect air quality 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High cost per passenger 	\$ 125,000
Grand Lake Circulator	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduce congestion 2. Promote pedestrian-friendly environment 3. Could be creative marketing 4. Transportation to RMNP 5. Community support 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create transit right-of-way 2. High cost per passenger 	\$ 48,000
Walden to Steamboat Springs	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employee transportation 2. Community economic benefits 3. Lower employee transportation cost 4. Coordination emphasis 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination of many entities 2. Different employee shifts 3. Weather in winter 	\$ 58,400
Denver to Hot Sulphur Springs - Rail	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alternative mode of transportation 2. No traffic congestion 3. Scenic trip 4. Frequent service 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost 2. Right-of-way acquisition 	\$ 100,000,000