

Preliminary Recommendations

LONG-RANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The long-range recommendations will be reviewed by the TAC. The final recommendations should then be incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan as part of the Preferred Transportation Plan. As funding is identified to implement the long-range transit elements, the recommendations should become part of the Financially Constrained Transportation Plan for the Northwest Transportation Planning Region.

Service Recommendations

The first long-range plan recommendation is to provide **regional bus service between Grand Lake, Kremmling, and Winter Park** with stops at all of the communities in between. The frequency of service should vary depending on the season and the time of day.

The second recommendation is to implement the **gondola in Winter Park** between the town of Winter Park and the base village.

The third recommendation is to implement a **circulator service in Grand Lake** which will connect with transit service implement by RMNP. This service should be implemented at the same time that RMNP starts their transit service on the west side of the park.

Institutional and Funding Recommendations

The recommended approach for long-term operation and funding of public transit is to establish a Rural Transportation Authority. The RTA has the potential to generate significant local funding for the operation of a viable public transit system in the two counties. The RTA also has the organizational and institutional capacity under state legislation to establish and operate a public transit system.

Although an RTA offers many benefits also for short-term implementation of transit services, it is doubtful that the political climate will support an RTA within the next six years.

SHORT-RANGE RECOMMENDED PLAN (6-Year Transit Plan)

The following text sections present the LSC Team recommendations. Once, these recommendations have been reviewed by the TAC, LSC will develop the detailed Long-Range Plan (19-Year Plan), and the Coordination Plan.

Service Recommendations

Several service recommendations are part of the Short-Range Plan. The first recommendation is to implement the **Route Deviation Service between Winter Park and Grand Lake**. The service should be provided year-round with higher service levels during the winter months. This service should be consolidated with the current employee shuttles operated by The Lift and Silver Creek.

The second service recommendation is for **the Demand-Response Youth Shuttle/After School Transportation**. This service should be coordinated with the East Grand School District. The coordinated efforts will keep the costs of the transportation lower. This service should be a pilot program for the West Grand School District to monitor. If successful, West Grand School District should look at this type of service for their after-school transportation needs. This service should be set up to be paid fully by user fares.

The third service recommendation is to implement the **Commuter Service from Walden to Winter Park and Grand Lake**. The service provides transportation alternatives for employees to find work and also provides access to jobs during the winter season in the Fraser Valley and the summer season in Grand Lake.

The LSC Team recommends that The Lift continue to operate essentially as is. The employee shuttle service should be integrated with general public service between Grand Lake and Winter Park. Other routes should be continuously monitored closely for costs and performance. These costs should be presented to Winter Park Recreation Area for any changes. An additional recommendation is for Winter Park Recreation Area to continue thinking about the type of service vehicles and image for the future.

These recommended service alternatives are presented in more detail within Chapter IV. The costs, service hours, ridership projections, equipment needs, and other details are presented within the chapter and will not be repeated here. These recommendations will be presented to the Transit Advisory Committee (TAC). The LSC Team and the TAC will work

together to select the preferred alternative plan. Once the preferred plan is decided upon, then the LSC Team will create a detailed short-range transit plan for the county. The detailed plan will include the funding methods to provide the service, responsibilities of each agency, and a detailed operational plan for the next six years.

Capital Recommendations – Short-Range Plan

LSC recommends a new maintenance and storage facility be built within the next six years. The facility should be a coordinated effort among the Winter Park Resort Area, Ryder, YMCA, Silver Creek, Grand County, and the East Grand School District. The facility site on the YMCA property should be the first choice.

The communities within Grand County should continue to purchase bus shelters and benches for high activity areas. Once the new service is implemented, new shelters and benches will be needed at key locations along the route. Bus stop signs should also show the bus schedules for eligible riders who are not familiar with the transit system. These schedules can be printed and attached to the existing signs.

Financial and Institutional Recommendations – Short-Range Plan

The LSC Team recommends that Ryder continue to serve as the public transportation provider over the next six years. Ryder would also serve as the primary countywide provider for the new service to be implemented, under contract with Grand County. Grand County Transit Advisory Committee would continue to serve as the primary Advisory Board for the countywide system.

LSC recommends that Grand County establish a Transit Manager Position. Currently, Grand County does not have such a position. However, for Grand County to have a successful countywide system, this position is needed. There is sufficient need for contract management, grant applications, and grant administration to justify a hired position to coordinate public transportation. The County Transit Manager would work closely with Ryder management staff.

The County Transit Manager would be responsible for overseeing the transit services and performing transportation-related duties. This person would typically provide day-to-day oversight and management of the transit operation, manage the contract with the provider, prepare applications for grant funds, review transit funding recommendations made by other interested parties, analyze transit system performance and recom-

mend changes in routes or fares, and respond to public comments and suggestions on service improvements. A reasonable salary for this position would be in the range of \$40,000, including a benefit package.

The LSC Team recommends that Ryder and the new countywide system develop a marketing program for residents and visitors. Marketing in the broadest context should be viewed as a management philosophy focusing on identifying and satisfying customers' wants and needs. The basic premises of successful marketing are providing the right product (or service), offering it at the right price, and adequately promoting or communicating the existence and appropriateness of the product or service to potential customers. Unfortunately, for too many persons the word "marketing" is associated only with advertising and promotional efforts that accompany "selling" the product or service to a customer. Instead, such promotional efforts are only a part of an overall marketing process. Without a properly designed and developed product or service offered at the right price, the expenditure of promotional monies is often ill-advised.

Obviously, the marketing program must fit within budgetary limitations of any organization. According to the American Public Transit Association, transit providers typically budget between 0.75 and 3.0 percent of their gross budget on marketing promotions (excluding salaries). Although this is less than most private sector businesses, public sector organizations can rely more heavily on media support for their public relations programs.

The LSC Team recommends continuous efforts to improve service quality for The Lift. A key precept of marketing is to provide a quality "product." In the case of public transit, a reputation of providing quality service both encourages increased ridership and increases public support for transit. Both tax-based funding and fares become more acceptable when service quality is high. A key marketing effort, therefore, is to begin other measures to improve on-time performance, improve passenger amenities, and improve peak load capacities. This effort is undoubtedly the most important marketing strategy available to The Lift and to the new countywide service.

The most essential, and most often overlooked, element of a marketing plan is an evaluation effort. Evaluation should be performed in terms of the stated marketing objectives. This process should provide the data and procedures by which the success of the marketing program can be determined. In addition to statistical data (such as ridership) collected over the



year, this should include a survey of the general public establishing the level of public awareness and image regarding the service. This evaluation process is crucial, as it allows future objectives, strategies, and tactics to be refined.

The Lift and the new countywide service should create a transit marketing strategy which include:

- Distribution of schedules and posters at major facilities, retail outlets, doctor's offices, social service agencies, lodging facilities, and restaurants.
- Regular radio advertisements that emphasize any current promotions that are underway.
- Newspaper advertisements that emphasize the same promotions as the radio announcements.
- Presentations at key community organizations.
- An ongoing program to promote communications between passengers and drivers.
- A clean bus program, where the interior and exterior of each vehicle is cleaned every morning. During the course of the day, drivers clean up litter in the aisle and under the seats.

Recent research has cataloged marketing efforts that have helped transit systems around the country increase their public exposure and their ridership, and some of these successful initiatives may be useful for The Lift and for the new countywide service to pursue. Many systems have found print advertising (e.g., newspapers, flyers, and direct mail) to be the most effective use of advertising dollars. Examples of successful marketing strategies are listed below.

- *Volunteers to Assist Potential Riders.* Under this program, a volunteer is used to explain the working of the transit system to the potential patron, and to accompany the person on a round-trip ride. Such programs have resulted in a newfound independence for residents, particularly elderly persons and persons with disabilities, who are now able to travel throughout the community without relying on friends and family to provide them with mobility.
- *Publish The Lift and the new countywide schedules in the newspaper.* Publication of the transit schedule and basic information about the system in the *Middle Park Times* twice a year for the different seasonal schedules would be a cost-effective way to ensure that the residents of the communities are familiar with the transit service. The newspaper may agree to print the schedule as a public service; alternatively, some

systems have covered the cost of such an initiative through a reciprocal agreement to carry advertising for the newspaper on their buses.

- *Direct Mail Program.* If new neighborhoods are added to the transit system service area, it may be advantageous to institute a direct mail campaign to household in the new areas. Such a campaign will ensure that residents of the neighborhoods know about the service. It would be useful to include coupons in the mailing to encourage residents to make their first transit trip.
- *Cooperation with Utility Company.* A good way for The Lift and the new countywide service to keep abreast of new residents is to pursue an arrangement with utility companies to be notified of requests for new utility service. The new residents can then be targeted for direct mailing.
- *Shopping Center Underwriting.* Some transit systems have developed arrangements with shopping centers that provide coupons for riders. These coupons would provide an incentive for riders and would be beneficial to the transit system and the shopping center.

Relevant Funding Sources

The crux of any issue regarding the provision of public service is the matter of funding. Provision of a sustainable, permanent funding source has proven to be the single greatest determinant in the success or failure of the transit service.

Federal Transit Funding Sources. Through the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), the federal government has substantially increased transit funding levels for small urban and rural areas. In addition, changes in program requirements have provided increased flexibility in the use of federal funds. Following are discussions of federal transit funding programs available for which Grand and Jackson Counties are eligible.

- *FTA Section 5309 Capital Improvement Grants.* These grants are split into three categories: New Starts, Fixed Guideway Modernization, and Bus and Bus Facilities. These funds were formerly apportioned directly by the FTA; however Congress has earmarked these funds directly now for several years. There is no indication that this trend toward earmarking these funds will change. Grand County is eligible for this program, and, in recent fiscal years, smaller urban and rural areas have received a greater share of these funds than in previous years.
- *FTA Section 5310 Capital for Elderly and Disabled Transportation.* In addition to the Section 5311 program, FTA funds are also potentially available through the Section 5310 Program. These funds are largely



for vehicles and may be used to replace the vehicles used by the Councils on Aging.

- *FTA Section 5311 Public Transportation for Rural Areas.* Federal transit funding for rural areas is currently provided through the Public Transportation for Rural Areas program for non-urbanized areas. A 20 percent local match is required for capital programs and a 50 percent match for operating expenditures. These funds are segmented into “apportioned” and “discretionary” programs. The bulk of the funds are apportioned directly to rural counties based upon population levels. This program has historically been the source of FTA funds for many rural areas in Colorado.
- *Job Access and Reverse Commute Program.* This program, funded through TEA-21, has an emphasis on using funds to provide transportation in rural areas currently having little or no transit service. The list of eligible applicants includes states, metropolitan planning organizations, counties, and public transit agencies, among others. Of the \$75.0 million available for the program in fiscal year 1999, 20 percent is set aside for small-urban areas. A 50 percent non-Department of Transportation match is required; however, other federal funds may be used as part of the match. FTA gives a high priority to applications that address the transportation needs of areas that are unserved or underserved by public transportation.

Local Transit Funding Sources.

- *Advertising.* One modest but important source of funding for many transit services is on-vehicle advertising. The largest portion of this potential is for exterior advertising, rather than interior “bus card” advertising. The potential funds generated by advertising placed within the vehicles is comparatively low.
- *Local Government Contributions.* The most likely short-term source of funding is from local governments. Additional funding to initiate the service between Grand Lake and Winter Park may have to come from county and local community budgets. Although not a stable source of funding, it may well have the greatest potential in these two counties to generate and new funding for transit.
- *Sales Tax.* A sales tax could be held with funds to go to transit services. Sales tax is the financial base for many transit services in Colorado and in the western United States. The required level of sales tax would depend upon the service alternatives chosen. One advantage is that sales tax revenues are relatively stable and can be forecast with a high degree of confidence. In addition, sales tax can be collected efficiently, and it allows the community to generate revenues from visitors in the area. This source, of course, would require a vote of the people to implement. In addition, a sales tax increase could be seen as inequitable to residents not served by transit. This disadvantage could be offset by the fact that sales taxes could be rebated to incorporated areas not served by transit. Transit services, moreover, would face

competition from other service which may seek to gain financial support through sales taxes.

COORDINATION OF EXISTING PROVIDERS

This plan includes several recommendations for coordination activities among the existing providers. The first is to implement the service from Grand Lake to Winter Park as a consolidated effort of the resorts and the local governments. The existing employee shuttles should be integrated with public transit service.

The second area of coordination is the construction of a consolidated maintenance facility. A single maintenance facility with consolidated purchasing will provide needed maintenance capabilities and potential cost savings.

The third area of coordination is the marketing and promotional programs. A cooperative promotional effort will allow visitors and residents to have information on all available transit services. Information may be provided in such a way that users see an integrated public transit system rather than numerous individual, independent services.

LAND USE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The land use planning and development guidelines presented in Chapter VII should be implemented by both counties and the local communities. Public transit is often made viable by the local development patterns. A good example is the higher density in the Winter Park area which supports a high level of transit service. Development patterns within the county should be encouraged in patterns that will support a high level of transit service in those areas to be served by transit.

