



Short-Range Service Plan (2007-2012)

The LSC Team prepared this Final Report, which includes the Short-Range Transit Plan for Eagle Transit. The Short-Range Plan establishes transit services which will be provided over the next six years.

SHORT-RANGE SERVICE PLAN (Six-Year Transit Plan)

Eagle Transit shows limited expansion of the existing services as the plan for the next six years, due to local funding constrains. The major assumptions used in developing revenue and cost projections are sources currently dedicated to Eagle Transit or to be realized over the short planning horizon. Currently FTA has allocated a large amount of FTA Section 5311 funding for general transportation providers; however, this funding requires a local match for both operating and capital, and it is this local match which is in short supply. Unless innovative funding mechanisms become realized by Eagle Transit, service will likely remain unchanged except for minor improvements; however, a plan is also designed to incorporate “what if” scenarios, such as increased local funding sources. This Plan attempts to be both realistic, as well as optimistic. Chapter XIII presents the implementation strategies and financial plan for the Transit Plan.

The Preferred Transit Plan incorporates ten elements:

- Route-deviation service in Kalispell
- ADA service in Kalispell
- Increased service in Columbia Falls
- Increased service in Whitefish
- Limited commuter service
- Downtown Kalispell shuttle system
- Operations Manager Position
- Marketing program
- Capital improvements
- Countywide Dial-a-Ride and South Valley expansion

Each of these service options is presented with a brief description and operating measures. These options are not discussed in detail—refer to Chapter VII for more details on each of these elements.

Service Components

Kalispell Route-Deviation System

This service component will be operated with two vehicles from 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Figure XII-1 presents the routes and service area for the route-deviation service. Two deviated fixed-routes are designed to run both generally north/south and east/west with a timed transfer point at the Kalispell Center Mall in downtown Kalispell. Buses would be dispatched to pick up passengers off the route using computer-aided schedule and dispatch software. These passengers would be charged 2.0 times the route stop fare. If passengers pay \$1.00 at a published stop on the route, they are then charged \$2.00 per deviation pick-up or drop-off in the service areas. Preliminary operating schedules are shown in Appendix H.

ADA Service in Kalispell

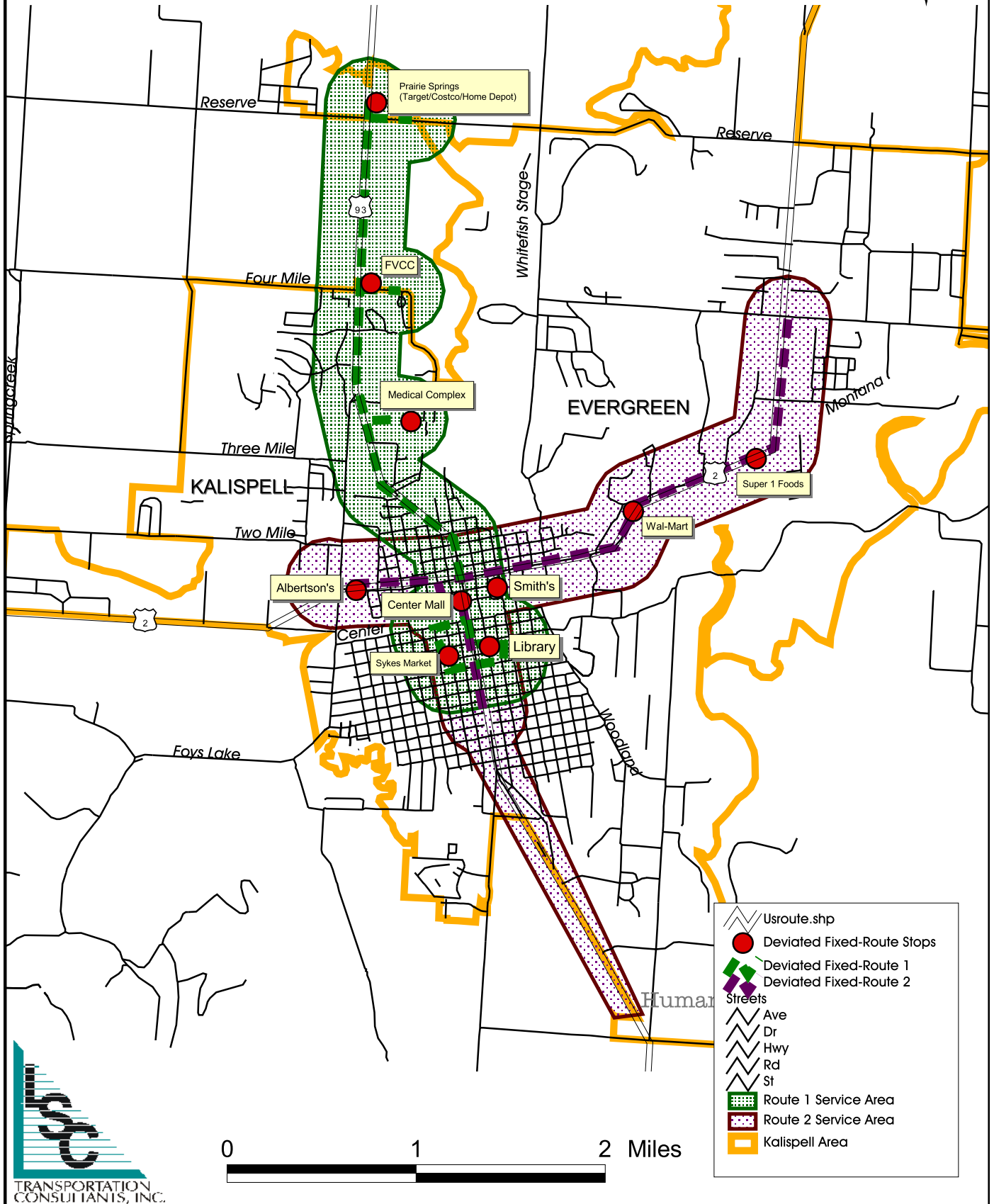
ADA service in Kalispell will be provided to subscription or certified riders only. Fares would be established at a rate of \$2.00 per trip per ride. This service would be done with one small body-on-chassis vehicle or a small van with a lift. Only passengers within the city limits of Kalispell are eligible for ADA service. Passengers outside who are ADA certified will continue to be served with the County Dial-A-Ride service.

Columbia Falls Service

Columbia Falls will be served with one vehicle five days per week from approximately 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Multiple “tripper” runs could be done out of Columbia Falls between either Kalispell or Whitefish daily or Hungry Horse/Canyon. These would be published runs and occur for any one passenger. Fares in-town would be established at \$1.00 per trip with out-of-town trips at \$3.00 per trip.



Figure XII-1
Deviated Fixed-Route Service



Whitefish Service

Service in Whitefish would be provided Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 8:00 a.m. until approximately 5:15 p.m. This service would provide two “trippers” to Kalispell daily, one scheduled in the mid-morning and one in the mid-afternoon. This service would also provide the limited commuter service discussed in the next section. Service would be provided on these days until an average of 5 passengers per hour is reached, at which point, service should be increased to five days per week.

Limited Commuter Service

Commuter service would be incorporated into each of the options listed above. Commuter service is envisioned to operate from Kalispell to Hungry Horse and back twice per day as well as between Whitefish and back twice per day.

Downtown Kalispell Shuttle Service

A downtown shuttle has been discussed with local Kalispell business leaders. This shuttle would serve the downtown area during normal business hours and be free to patrons. The shuttle would help alleviate downtown congestion and allow downtown patrons to travel around the area without having to drive their car. This will be developed further as discussions progress with business leaders who have expressed a willingness to fund this type of service.

Operations Manager Position

An Operations Manager Position should be formed. This position should be formed from the existing Driver Supervisor/Scheduler position. Once computer-aided scheduling is in place, the current supervisor/scheduler should take over more a role of operations manager. This position would continue to oversee the driver’s schedules, training, and other administrative duties as well as assist in operations management, tracking of records, and overall maintenance functions. While this is actually being done by the scheduler, these scheduling duties would be replaced by such functions as marketing of the system, tracking ridership, on-time performance monitoring, grant preparation, and planning. No significant cost is assumed to be incurred by this position; however, significant training may be

required on grant writing, report preparation, and other duties as seen fit by the Transit Manager.

Marketing Program

An aggressive marketing campaign and program should be established. As step one, a Marketing Plan should be prepared detailing plans for one fiscal year of marketing strategies and efforts. Some of these ideas and strategies are presented in Chapter XIII as an example. As system changes occur in the near future, increased public awareness is a priority. This ranges from newspaper advertisement, radio spots, television appearances, the formation of an education and speaker forum, all under the direction and responsibility of the Transit Manager. This is likely to cost from \$15,000 to \$20,000 per year for elements such as schedule printing, advertisement, travel costs, and other promotional material.

Additional Capital Improvements

Additional capital is likely to be needed to make Eagle Transit more effective and efficient. Several items include the following:

- Computer-aided dispatching and scheduling hardware/software
- New fareboxes
- Communication equipment for drivers and dispatchers
- Office equipment such as color printer/copier
- Bike racks
- General maintenance equipment
- On-sight wash bay/rack
- Passenger amenities such as fixed-stop shelters

While not all of these elements are needed, vehicles are a must and therefore must be planned for if a transit system is to operate. Some of these items, such as dispatching software, will allow Eagle Transit to more effectively serve passengers as the system progresses to more of a deviated fixed-route system.

Chapter XIII presents a detailed financial plan for Eagle Transit services.