

# Appendix J: Comments on Draft Report

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Comments were received regarding the Draft Final Report which was posted on the Internet and presented at a public meeting on December 5, 2007. The following written comments were received at the public meeting:

## PUBLIC MEETING COMMENTS

- Add information about train use as a consideration.

*Response: The current and projected level of demand do not support passenger rail service. Passenger rail study is being considered in the US 93 corridor study being conducted separately by MDT.*

- Recommend that bus service between Lolo and Missoula be considered before additional vanpools, and recommend lane on highway be for buses and ride-share.

*Response: The recommendation to increase the number of vanpools is based on waiting lists for vanpools, demand estimates, and the cost to implement vanpools. Widening US 93 or designating lanes is beyond the scope of this study and is being addressed in a separate study for the US 93 corridor.*

- Would like vanpool to deliver at 8 a.m. and leave Missoula 5 p.m. or shortly thereafter. Would pay \$5/day.

*Response: Noted.*

- Would like bus service (yes) to the Bitterroot Valley Monday through Friday:
  - 6:00 a.m.
  - 7:00 a.m.
  - 8:00 a.m. - noon
  - 5:00 p.m.
  - 6:00 p.m.
  - 7:00 p.m.
  - Or every ½ hour a.m./p.m. Lolo/Florence

*Response: Noted.*

- I think any proposed public transportation systems should be looking at the long term rather than the short term. These valleys are surely going to continue to grow, so why not consider long-term, sustainable transit such as a light rail system that will not lead to increased traffic congestion and can possibly run on more flexible schedules.

*Response: Although needs were looked at for the long term, the study has made recommendations which may be implemented in the short term. A separate study is looking at long-term improvements for the US 93 corridor. The level of demand is not projected to support light rail service.*

- Please go with comprehensive bus service. People will use it! Trains seem to be inevitable over next 7-12 years.

*Response: Noted.*

- Final published report to discuss nascent (sic) efforts for Hamilton-Missoula rail commute: possible impacts/benefits. Also point out vans used in western Montana for VA experience.

*Response: A separate study is looking at improvements to the US 93 South Corridor. Rail service is far too expensive for the demand in any of these corridors. Vans have been used in western Montana for a variety of human services transportation programs. However, these programs do not address the needs for public transportation.*

## **SUBMITTED COMMENTS**

The following written comments were sent separately from the public meeting:

- Page VI-2, Service Concepts: I think it would be useful here to mention that ASUM also promotes a ride share program, and perhaps even address the problem that they promote a different program, more geared to a younger audience. I see this as a real short coming in ride share matching in the region, and we should all work together to find a solution. I don't know what the answer is, given that they target different types of users and neither seems willing to switch over and commit to a single system.
- Also, it would be helpful here to mention the role of MIM in Ride Share up front.

*Response: LSC was not aware of the rideshare program promoted by ASUM. That information has been added to the description of ridesharing. The role of Missoula in Motion has been added. The recommendations have been edited to include a recommendation that the rideshare programs be consolidated into a single program.*

- Page VI-4, "Unfortunately many communities have not explored the value of park and rides". I am unclear why they would explore Park and Rides when there is no transit currently available and ride sharing is so limited. I think it would be better to rephrase this to put a more optimistic spin on it for future outreach and development – create it as an opportunity not yet another existing shortfall.

*Response: This section has been edited.*

- Page VI-10, Program Funding Options: The placement of this information on tax benefits should probably be moved to a more central location, as it applies to both vanpools and transit. Its current location is under vanpools and its placement in that section implies that it is specific to vanpools, even though the text includes transit.

*Response: All of the funding options have been combined in a single section rather than discussed as part of the individual service options.*

- Page VI-16 Residential Proximity to Available Services: While I fully agree that people have a personal responsibility to make choices that work with their needs, the section in the report seems out of place and somewhat “preachy” to me. This section/concept, if it is retained at all, could be stated more shortly and simply.

*Response: This section has been rewritten as a short discussion of the important connection between land use patterns and the cost-effectiveness of providing public transit service.*

- Page VI-22 and VI-23: My reading of the descriptions of the Evaluation of Alternatives 1 through 10 does not match up with the scored criteria. For example, in the text numbers 5, 6 and 7 appear to have a possible score of 0 or 1, but the table shows them as scored 1, 2 or 3. Perhaps I am misreading, but in any case either it is incorrect or needs to be clarified.

*Response: There were errors in the table. These have been corrected.*

- Page VII-1 Rideshare program: again, ASUM’s program and the need for better coordination should be addressed.

*Response: A recommendation for consolidation of the rideshare programs has been included.*

- The recommendation of transit from Lolo to Missoula should be strengthened in this study.

*Response: Based on the level of demand and the cost to provide this service, LSC is not in a position to make a stronger recommendation to begin the service. Local transit providers may use the information in the study to implement the service if local officials agree the service is needed.*

- Timelines should be added for future additional sections of the transit to Stevensville and Hamilton.

*Response: The timeline for future phases has been added.*

- Possible/recommended funding sources should be listed.

*Response: Funding sources were identified for each service option. They have now been consolidated in a section on funding options.*

- Suggested action steps need to be listed.

*Response: Implementation steps have been added.*

- A summary of the document needs to be written.

*Response: An Executive Summary has been prepared.*

- We feel the idea of “subscription” transit should be deleted and replaced with “transit should be started as soon as possible.” One of the reasons that we believe transit is preferable to vanpools is that it isn’t subscription.

*Response: Subscription service is recommended as a starting point so that the service is not started with no demand. Although some people “feel” that there is a large demand, the detailed demand analysis and participation at public meetings do not indicate a high demand for this service. Starting with a subscription service will allow the provider to test the demand. Although the study recommends a subscription service as a starting point, there is nothing that precludes any of the transit providers in the region from starting regular transit service.*

- We do recommend that funding be suggested for marketing this new transit service. The study just mentions marketing of the rideshare program.

*Response: The operating budget for the transit service includes a marketing component. The rideshare marketing cost was identified separately as this is an element of the operating cost for the rideshare program that needs to be increased.*

- To be added to the rideshare section. ASUM Transportation is promoting GoLoco – a facebook application rideshare program. We have over 200 using this Goloco application. Next semester GoLoco will also have a non-facebook user site that will be available.

*Response: This has been included with a recommendation that the two rideshare programs be consolidated.*

- Ridesharing needs to be better defined in this document.

*Response: No changes have been made.*

- The whole tone of the study is very negative and it needs to be rewritten to try and strengthen the idea of transit in all these corridors as it is wanted, needed and justifiable.

*Response: Efforts have been made to be neutral in the presentation of the analysis and the study. The analysis and public input do not support the idea that transit is wanted, needed, and justifiable in all these corridors. Over 200 individual invitations were sent to those who indicated an interest and media releases were sent to local media, but only five potential users of service attended the final public meeting.*