



Transit Implementation Plan (2006 - 2012)

INTRODUCTION

LSC has prepared the following Transit Implementation Plan. The Transit Implementation Plan identifies the steps to be taken within the next six years, as well as the long-term actions to meet the future transportation needs. Chapter XI includes a timeline which illustrates the projects and programs that could be implemented over the planning horizon (next five years) and long term (10 to 20 years). Also discussed are the implementation steps and financial requirements for the development and installation of the preferred transit service alternative.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

The Tribal transit service, operated by the Developmental Human Resource Department (DHRD) under the direction of the Tribal Council, should continue to operate the general public transportation. CSKTFR has the legal and financial capabilities to ensure the stability of public transportation services within the community. If additional funding for the implementation of Phase III is developed through coordination, a new Tribal Transit Department (TDD) should be created to oversee transit operations.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Preferred Transit Service Alternative

Details on the preferred transit service alternative were presented in Chapter X. The proposed service improvements for CSKTFR include the creation of four fixed routes that link together at Polson, Ronan, and Ravalli; demand-response service; regional commuter service to Missoula and Kalispell; and a carpool/vanpool broker program coordinated with the Missoula-Ravalli Transportation Management Association (MR TMA). The financial details are shown in Table XI-3 (presented later in Chapter XI).

The following is a list of activities that need to be completed in order to implement the preferred transit service alternative, which will be developed in three phases. Phase I (2006 through 2007) increases the operational cost by \$181,400 over the existing operational cost of \$146,000 for a total operational cost of \$303,000. Phase I covers the cost of fixed-route service, limited regional service, and demand-response service. Phase II (2008 through 2009) increases the operational cost of the system by \$357,000 over the existing operational cost of \$146,000 for a total operational cost of \$488,000. Phase II includes improved fixed-route service and expanded regional service. Phase III (2010 through 2012) increases the operational cost by \$607,000 over the existing operation cost of \$146,000 for a total operational cost of \$746,000. Phase III increases the regional service to three times per day to Missoula and Kalispell and includes an additional demand-response bus. Note that the above costs include an annual inflation rate of three percent.

The preferred transit service alternative would continue to focus on stable transit-user markets, such as the elderly and disabled. It would be difficult for transit to become a competitor of the automobile in the near future since the automobile continues to play a key role in the Flathead Reservation area (particularly in developments with low density).

Benefits

- The residents of the Flathead Reservation would obtain increased connectivity and mobility.

Timing

- The first step is applying for TANF and TransADE funding which can then be used as local match to apply for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) 5311 funding. With this funding estimated at over \$200,000, the first phase of operation could be implemented.
- A new TTD should be developed in Phase III.
- Intergovernmental agreements would need to be created between DHRD and other governmental entities and agencies throughout the Flathead Reservation. It is recommended that the intergovernmental agreements last for at least three years in order to give the new transit service a base to develop the other phases of the preferred transit service alternative.

- In Phases I and II, DHRD would need to create three-year intergovernmental agreements with the county governments, educational institutions, and human service agencies in order to cover the local match needed for implementation of Phases I (\$16,000) and II (\$90,000). The local match amounts depend upon the amount of state and IRR funding which can be applied for. If these funds are available, then the amount of local match the Flathead Reservation could use to match FTA funding would increase by \$60,000 for all Phases
- In Phase III, DHRD would need to develop three-year intergovernmental agreements with the county governments, educational institutions, and human service agencies in order to cover the \$270,000 to \$285,000 in local match needed for implementation of Phase III, or \$225,000 if state or IRR funding is available.

Responsibility

- The DHRD transit staff would be responsible for planning and implementing the preferred transit service plan for the Flathead Reservation area.
- If a new TTD is created, it will be the responsibility of the new Transit Coordinator (rather than DHRD) to implement the following steps of the transit plan.

Implementation Steps

- DHRD should educate the public about the new transit services and how to use the new services.
- DHRD, through CSKTFR, should apply for the appropriate operating funding for the new transit service.
- DHRD should work with the local government entities and agencies in order to secure additional funding.
- DHRD should create a logo for the new transit service.
- DHRD should print and distribute copies of the new transit service schedules and brochures throughout the service area.
- DHRD should advertise the new transit service with the local newspaper, radio, and television stations.
- DHRD should continue to collect passenger ridership data and evaluate the new transit service on a monthly basis.

Rideshare Program

One of the short-term service recommendations is the development of a rideshare program through MR TMA. DHRD would need to coordinate with the MR TMA program out of Missoula. A rideshare program would allow the transportation providers to create an economy of scale. The rideshare program involves a call

center where trips are routed to the transportation provider that can best serve the individual trip. The call center would also function as the central location for carpooling and vanpooling for the region. Since the rideshare program is only a coordination effort, LSC has not estimated any additional costs for the program.

Benefits

- The residents of the Flathead Reservation area would have transportation that provides increased integration and mobility throughout the region.

Timing

- The rideshare program should be implemented in fiscal year 2008 to 2009, depending upon the availability of the local match funding and whether the MR TMA program could accommodate the possible riders from the Flathead Reservation.

Responsibility

- DHRD would be responsible for planning and coordinating the rideshare program for the Flathead Reservation.

Implementation Steps

- DHRD should develop a coordination committee to develop the rideshare program. The committee should represent all of the counties in the service area. A kick-off meeting should be held one year before the program begins.
- Federal and/or state funding should be identified.
- Quarterly meetings with MR TMA should be conducted in order to maintain communication and provide aid regarding program adjustments.

CAPITAL PLAN

Bus Stops and Shelters

In order to improve the fixed-route service, bus stops and shelters should be installed at key locations. The bus stops and shelters would allow the public to easily identify the transit pick-up locations and the routes that serve that location. Bus stops and shelters would reduce the barriers to using the system and would increase the public profile of the service.

Based on the recommended fixed-route service, LSC recommends that a bus stop and shelter be placed in every community that the fixed routes operate in. A few communities, like Polson and Ronan, would have several bus stops and shelters. The following is a short list of the major communities where the bus stops and shelters should be installed—Polson, Pablo, Ravalli, Ronan, Dixon, Hot Springs, Arlee, Big Arm, and Elmo.

LSC recommends that all of the bus stops have shelters. The bus stops and shelters should be located at key locations such as the major employment, shopping, and medical destinations. Bus shelters should also be placed at locations where there is an identified high number of riders with no building (shelter) already near the bus stop. LSC estimates a total of ten bus stops and shelters.

Each bus stop should include a sign on a pole. On the pole, there should be a carousel that displays the schedule and route that serves that location. Each bus stop should also have a concrete pad (for the transit users to stand on), bench, and shelter structure. Bus stop diagrams are presented in Appendix G.

The cost is estimated at \$12,000 to \$15,000 for each bus stop. The total estimated cost for the bus stops and shelters is estimated at \$150,000. LSC has estimated that DHRD could implement about \$15,000 worth of bus stops and shelters per year. The installation of the bus stops and shelters would be completed in about 10 to 12 years.

Vehicle Replacement

LSC recommends that DHRD purchase 27 vehicles over the short term (next six years) and 73 vehicles over the long term (25 years). In the short term, the total cost is estimated at \$1.15 million. The funding breakdown is \$1 million in federal transit funding and \$150,000 in local match funding. Details on the recommendations for vehicle replacement purchases are shown in Tables XI-1 and XI-2 for the short term and long term, respectively. The new vehicles should contain the new communications system in order to solve the issue of poor cell phone coverage.

Table XI-1							
Vehicle Replacement (6-Year Plan)							
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Minivans	6		1		2		8
Replacement Body-on-Chassis			2				
New Body-on-Chassis			2		3		3

Source: LSC, 2005.

Table XI-2						
Vehicle Replacement (25-Year Plan)						
	Minivans	Replacement Buses 20"	Replacement Body-on-Chassis	New Buses 20"	New Body-on-Chassis	Total
2006	6					6
2007						0
2008	1		2		2	5
2009						0
2010	2				3	5
2011						0
2012	8				3	11
2013			2			2
2014						0
2015			3			3
2016						0
2017			3			3
2018	7					7
2019			2			2
2020						0
2021			3			3
2022						0
2023			3			3
2024	7					7
2025				3		3
2026						0
2027						0
2028				3		3
2029				3		3
2030	7					7
Total	38	0	18	9	8	73

Source: LSC, 2005.

New Transit Facility

A major capital investment is the development of a new transit facility. It is recommended that DHRD build a bus barn, maintenance building, and administrative

office. The cost of this facility could range widely, depending upon the amenities. At this time, LSC estimates \$300,000 for a maintenance building, bus storage area, and small office area (including a dispatch room). The facility would need to be planned and designed in 2006 in order for construction to begin in 2007. The facility could be completed by the end of 2008 depending on funding. DHRD could place the facility on Tribal complex land. The facility could be shared by the Tribes and any other agency or governmental entity that participated in the funding of the facility for both vehicles and operations.

Park-and-Ride Lots

LSC has recommended that DHRD (in cooperation with the Montana Department of Transportation, county governments, and local communities) implement shared park-and-ride lots for the regional commuter service in the short term. For the long term (25 years), LSC recommends the implementation of formal park-and-ride lots to replace the shared/informal park-and-ride lots. The formal park-and-ride lots should be implemented based on the success of the regional service.

Funding for the formal park-and-ride lots could be obtained from CMAQ funding and Montana. Depending upon the commitment of the state, the local communities may not need to fund the construction of the park-and-ride lots. The local agencies would already be committed to the regional service through intergovernmental agreements that support the operations of the transit service.

Communications

Due to the poor cell phone coverage, it is recommended that DHRD and their partners invest in a communications (radio) system that covers the entire Flathead Reservation. DHRD could work with the Tribal police or the Power Company to find the correct level of radio service that the transit service could use. The cost of the radios in the vehicles is included in the vehicle costs. The cost of the central radio system and service is included in the office equipment costs. If DHRD utilizes the radio service that the other Tribal departments already use, the implementation cost of the radio system could be lower.

Administrative and Maintenance

The administrative and maintenance capital includes the purchase of office equipment, hardware, software, dispatching software, radio, and maintenance equipment. LSC has estimated a total of \$30,000 over the next six years. The FTA would cover 87 percent of the cost with \$26,000. The local share is estimated at \$4,000, with the annual cost estimated at \$700 over each of the next six years.

FUNDING PLAN

The following section presents the proposed budget for the next five years. Table XI-3 presents the expenditures and revenues for CSKTFR for 2006 through 2012, with the assumption of an annual three percent inflation rate.



Federal Funding

LSC recommends that CSKTFR continue to apply for funding (such as TANF) in order to support public transportation services on the Flathead Reservation. Federal funding is expected to remain relatively stable over the next few years. CSKTFR should also continue to work toward establishing new revenue sources. Additional funds may be generated by pursuing grants from agencies and foundations other than the Montana Department of Transportation or FTA.

Flathead Reservation Funding

LSC recommends that, in the short term, CSKTFR (through DHRD) apply for FTA funding. The current TANF, TransADE, and Tribal funding should be used as the local match for Phases I through III. Federal funding is available for 54 percent of the operating costs for general public transportation services. The remaining operating costs should be divided among the local government entities and local agencies depending on the intergovernmental agreements and contract services.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total
EXPENSES								
OPERATING								
Existing Service Level (DHRD)	\$120,000	\$123,600	\$127,308	\$131,127	\$135,061	\$139,113	\$143,286	\$799,495
SERVICE CHANGES								
Phase I	\$181,382	\$183,366	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$183,366
Phase II	\$0	\$0	\$356,716	\$367,417	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$724,133
Phase III	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$607,508	\$625,733	\$644,505	\$1,877,747
Ridership Program		\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Marketing Program	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$4,000	\$22,500
Subtotal	\$303,882	\$309,466	\$488,024	\$502,545	\$746,569	\$768,846	\$791,792	\$3,607,241
CAPITAL								
Transit Buses (Cut-a-Ways)	\$0	\$0	\$267,800	\$0	\$200,850	\$0	\$232,840	\$701,490
Vans	\$210,000	\$0	\$38,245	\$0	\$76,491	\$0	\$334,335	\$449,071
Bus Bike Racks (9)	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,090	\$3,183	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,273
Transit Stop Improvements (10 stops over 10 years)	\$0	\$15,000	\$15,450	\$15,914	\$16,391	\$16,883	\$17,389	\$97,026
Transit Maintenance Building and Office	\$0	\$150,000	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$300,000
Office / Administration / Maintenance Eq./Radios	\$0	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$45,000
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$210,000	\$175,500	\$482,085	\$26,596	\$301,232	\$24,383	\$592,064	\$1,601,860
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$513,882	\$484,966	\$970,109	\$529,141	\$1,047,801	\$793,229	\$1,383,855	\$5,209,101
REVENUES								
FTA 5311 Program (operating)	\$164,096	\$167,112	\$255,433	\$263,031	\$394,554	\$406,326	\$418,451	\$1,904,906
FTA Tribal			\$15,000	\$15,450	\$15,914	\$16,391	\$16,883	\$79,637
BIA								
TANF	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$360,000
State Grant/ MDT (TransADE) / IRR	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$360,000
Subtotal	\$284,096	\$287,112	\$390,433	\$398,481	\$530,468	\$542,717	\$555,333	\$2,704,543
FTA 5310 Program (capital)	\$91,350	\$76,343	\$209,707	\$11,569	\$131,036	\$10,606	\$257,548	\$696,809
FTA 5309 Program (capital)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
FTA 5311 Program (capital)	\$91,350	\$76,343	\$209,707	\$11,569	\$131,036	\$10,606	\$257,548	\$696,809
State	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$182,700	\$152,685	\$419,414	\$23,139	\$262,072	\$21,213	\$515,096	\$1,393,618
Local Revenues								
Local Match (capital)	\$27,300	\$22,815	\$62,671	\$3,458	\$39,160	\$3,170	\$76,968	\$208,242
Local Match (operating)	\$16,786	\$16,354	\$89,591	\$95,064	\$206,102	\$215,129	\$224,458	\$846,698
Advertising	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Fares	\$3,000	\$6,000	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$11,000	\$12,000	\$56,000
Subtotal	\$47,086	\$45,169	\$160,262	\$107,521	\$255,262	\$229,299	\$313,426	\$1,110,940
TOTAL REVENUES	\$513,882	\$484,966	\$970,109	\$529,141	\$1,047,801	\$793,229	\$1,383,855	\$5,209,101

Source: LSC, 2005.

Transit Implementation Plan (2006 - 2012)

The 2006 to 2012 Transit Implementation Plan anticipates \$304,000 in operational costs in fiscal year 2006 and \$309,000 in fiscal year 2007, with an increase in each of the following years based on the implementation of the three phases. Additional funds would allow DHRD to provide increased transit service to the Flathead Reservation area residents. The costs could be covered by FTA 5311 operational funding at a 54/46 (federal/local match) split.

Benefits

- Local funding displays a level of commitment on the part of the local governments and citizens.
- The local match funds are needed to help secure the matching federal funds.
- The funding helps to provide a service needed by the local citizens.

Timing

- DHRD and CSKTFR should immediately begin the process of obtaining funds from the local government entities and agencies on the Flathead Reservation.
- The local communities' budgetary offices should be prepared to incorporate local transit funding when the transit budget is presented for the 2006-2007 budget cycle.

Responsibilities

- DHRD and CSKTFR would be responsible for presenting the initial information to the local agencies and governmental bodies, and for building support for local transit funding.
- DHRD would be responsible for developing the transit budget and presenting the budget to the local governments.
- The CSKTFR members should assist in the presentations to the local agencies and governments.
- The CSKTFR members should work with DHRD to educate the public on the benefits of the new transit services in order to obtain political support for the development of the intergovernmental agreements.



Implementation Steps

- DHRD and CSKTFR should meet with the local agencies and government officials to present the need for local funding.
- DHRD should prepare the detailed transit operating budget for approval.

- DHRD and CSKTFR should present the approved transit budget to the local agencies and local governments.
- The local governments would need to agree to provide funding for the transit services in an intergovernmental agreement for one to three years in duration (preferably three years).
- A grassroots group should be created and should meet every month. The grassroots group should develop the public educational programs regarding the benefits of supporting the intergovernmental agreements and the level of local commitment to transit service.

MANAGEMENT PLANS

Transit Coordination

DHRD and MR TMA should begin the process of developing coordination with several other local agencies within the Flathead Reservation. There is currently no formal mechanism for this coordination. The existing Lake County Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is an appropriate representative to develop the coordinated efforts. The local government and private entities should be encouraged to provide staff time and financial support for the coordination activities in order to cover some of the local match requirements.

DHRD and MR TMA should coordinate the development of the intergovernmental agreements with the county governments first, then with the Tribal Health and Human Services and other agencies. These intergovernmental agreements should detail the parties' responsibilities.

The second area of coordination is the marketing, promotional, and public education programs. Additional promotional efforts would allow the Flathead Reservation area's residents and visitors to obtain information on all available transit services within the region. Information should be provided in such a way that the public sees an integrated transit system. DHRD may want to consider developing a brochure. A marketing plan for presentations to local agencies regarding the new transit service would need to be implemented. With the development of a transportation coalition, DHRD could begin the process of informing the communities about the improved transit system.

Once the coordination of the local governmental entities and other agencies has been developed through intergovernmental agreements and service contracts, a TTD should be created under DHRD.

DHRD should also work with MR TMA, the Montana Department of Transportation, and Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) to identify training classes that the DHRD and TTD staff could attend. The staff training should cover FTA and state standards for the safety and operations of public transportation services.

Implementation Steps

- DHRD should distribute transit brochures to the local agencies. The social service agencies should use the transit services to promote client independence and self-sufficiency.
- The transit hours of operation and types of services should continue to be publicized regularly.
- Local governments and private entities should provide and/or increase financial support for the transit services.
- DHRD, through the Lake County TAC, should continue to meet on a minimum of a monthly basis in order to stay informed about transportation options within the Flathead Reservation.
- The purchase of vehicles or office equipment should continue to be consolidated into a cooperative effort with the Montana Department of Transportation.
- The development of coordinated marketing, public education, and promotional materials should be continued and expanded.
- A transit coalition should be developed in order to increase the political support for additional local funding from all of the region's communities in order to improve the transit services. This should include the senior centers, social service agencies, veterans association, Chambers of Commerce, and major employers.
- DHRD should work with local, state, and federal agencies on staff development and training.

Marketing Programs

DHRD, with the coordination of MR TMA and other agencies, should create a marketing program. Short-term marketing efforts should focus on the development of the new transit services. DHRD should print and distribute improved schedules throughout the region. Focus should be placed on organizations that may want to

contract for special event transit service, such as school programs or social service trips.

The second focus of the marketing program should be on residents and visitors. A new brochure reflecting all of the transportation resources available on the Flat-head Reservation should be created and introduced as soon as possible. Schedules should be displayed at the local hotels, Chambers of Commerce, schools, medical offices, major employers, stores, and social service agencies.

Marketing should be viewed as a management philosophy focused on identifying and satisfying the 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, the word "marketing" is often 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 funds is often ill-advised.

Obviously, the marketing program must fit within the 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 upon media support for their public relations programs.

The best marketing approach is to provide services that people want.

Enhancing service is an element of marketing because it provides a desirable service to those who will utilize it. In order to provide good service, it is essential to have information which may be used by management for the evaluation and improvement of the service.



DHRD must maintain customer orientation in every part of the Transit Implementation Plan.

Promotional Activities

Several specific promotional activities have been identified which would enhance the overall implementation and marketing efforts. DHRD should work with the local newspaper and radio stations to provide periodic human interest stories. Human interest stories can be used to reinforce the benefit of transit service for the communities on the Flathead Reservation. Examples of good stories would be individuals who are able to work or attend school because of the availability of public transportation, someone with a disability who is able to make a contribution within the community because of public transportation, or someone who is able to obtain medical treatment because of the coordinated efforts between DHRD and the social service agencies.

One of the best marketing efforts that DHRD could begin is to reach out to the commuters. This would mean developing elements in the new brochure and advertisements which are focused on the commuters that travel from the Flathead Reservation to Missoula and Kalispell for work. The brochures would need to promote the benefits of transit in terms of the economic and environmental benefits of regional service and the overall transit services.

DHRD should also make use of news advisories for significant events and employee accomplishments. The most cost-effective way to reach large groups of the general population is via the news media. A system should be developed to disseminate news advisories to the media announcing new schedules, fares, services, community involvement activities, outstanding employees, safety records, major management changes, or awards. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the media should not be overwhelmed with too much information that is not meaningful and which might otherwise dilute the attention paid to other more important communications.

Service Evaluations

The most essential, and most often overlooked, element of a marketing plan is an evaluation effort. Evaluations should be performed in terms of the stated marketing objectives. The 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, the data should include a survey of the general public in order to establish the level of public awareness and image regarding the transit service. The evaluation process is crucial because it allows future objectives and strategies to be refined.

Marketing Strategy

DHRD should create a transit marketing strategy which includes the following:

- Distribution of schedules and brochures at the local hotels, Chambers of Commerce, schools, medical offices, major employers, stores, and social service agencies.
- Regular radio advertisements that emphasize any current promotions which are underway.
- Regular newspaper advertisements that emphasize the same promotions as the radio announcements.
- Presentations at key community organizations.
- Development of programs that promote communication between passengers and drivers.
- Development of the clean bus program, where the interior and exterior of each vehicle are cleaned daily. During the course of the day, the drivers should clean up litter in the aisle and under the seats.
- Coordination with the transit services in Missoula and Kalispell to promote the regional service with the Flathead Reservation.

Recent research has cataloged the marketing efforts that have helped transit systems around the country increase their public exposure and ridership. Some of these successful initiatives may be useful for DHRD. Many systems have found print advertising (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:*** A volunteer is used to explain 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.

- ***Publish transit schedules and service hours in the newspaper:*** The publication of the transit system's schedules and basic information in the local newspaper twice per year would be a cost-effective way to ensure that the residents are familiar with the transit service. DHRD should look into the local newspaper printing the schedule as a public service. Alternatively, some transit systems have covered the cost of such an initiative through a reciprocal agreement to carry advertising for the newspaper on the buses.
- ***Direct mail program:*** If new neighborhoods are added to the transit service area, it may be advantageous to institute a direct mail campaign to households within the new areas. Such a campaign would ensure that the residents know about the transit service. It would be useful to include coupons in the mailing to encourage residents to make their first transit trip. At this time, DHRD does not send a coupon to new residents in the Welcome Wagon mailing.
- ***Cooperation with utility companies:*** A good way for DHRD to keep abreast of new residents is to pursue an arrangement with the utility companies to be notified of requests for new utility service. The new residents could then be targeted for direct mailing.
- ***Shopping center underwriting:*** Some transit systems have developed arrangements with shopping centers that provide coupons for riders. The coupons would provide an incentive for riders, and would be beneficial to both the transit system and the shopping center.

Support and Improve Service Quality

LSC recommends continuous efforts to create and support transit service quality. A key precept of marketing is to provide a quality "product." In the case of public transit, a reputation of providing quality service encourages increased ridership and 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, passenger amenities, and

peak-time service. This effort is undoubtedly the most important marketing strategy available to the Tribal transit service.

Enhance the Public Education Programs

Public education programs inform the public of the benefits (for the individual and the community) of the transit services available in the region. Such benefits include improved mobility and access for the transit-dependent population, decreased congestion, improved air quality, and reduced fuel and energy consumption. There are significant studies and reports that detail the benefits for an improved transit system. According to the FTA and American Public Transportation Association (APTA), for every dollar invested in transit (in either capital and/or operations), the community could generate \$3 in return. Also according to APTA, improved transit usage can save the transit system anywhere from \$.50 to \$2 in transportation cost savings per mile.

A public education coalition could be formed to identify the benefits of an improved transit system in the Flathead Reservation region. The coalition would present these benefits to the key stakeholders and community leaders in order to develop financial and political support for funding of the transit system. Public education materials (such as presentations and brochures) should be created to inform the general community of these benefits in order to gain community support for the funding and expansion of the transit system.

Service Monitoring

System Performance Measurement

LSC recommends that DHRD monitor the service performance and quality of the transit system. A monitoring program is essential to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of the service being provided. Monthly reports (including information on productivity measures) should be created and prepared by DHRD and presented to the Tribal Council and Lake County TAC. In addition, a rider survey should be conducted every other year.

Productivity measures should indicate the number of passengers per revenue-hour and passengers per revenue-mile by service area. The actual productivity should be compared with system standards.

In order to monitor productivity, it is essential that passenger ridership data continue to be collected on an ongoing basis. The simplest approach for collecting the ridership data is to equip each bus with manual counting devices that allow the drivers to register each passenger who boards by the appropriate fare category. The ridership data should be collected by route and not buses. This is done so that each route can be compared to the whole system. When a bus moves from route to route, the count should return to zero. Hence, runs should also be counted individually. This would allow DHRD to track the service demand not only by route, but also by hours (peak and off-peak hours).

The performance measurement data should be entered into a spreadsheet or database for analysis and presentation to the Tribal Council and Lake County TAC. The data would help DHRD establish ridership patterns and characteristics. As ridership data are collected and appropriate changes are made as part of the Transit Implementation Plan, better methods may be developed to project ridership trends based upon service alternatives.

Cost information should also be reported monthly by DHRD to the Tribal Council and Lake County TAC. Such information includes the cost per passenger, cost per revenue-mile, ridership, and average fare. These data should be collected and tracked based on each route of the transit system. The monthly reports on costs should also be prepared in a spreadsheet or database format for the continuing analysis of data and trends. DHRD and the Lake County TAC could then determine the appropriate policy direction and recommend funding decisions to the Tribal Council.

Driver Monitoring Program

Service can also be monitored through a driver tracking program. The drivers could use a tracking sheet to gather data for evaluating the transit service's performance. Table XI-4 presents a draft tracking sheet. The tracking sheet is designed to have

the driver log in the number of passengers on each bus or at each location; the number of agency, wheelchair, and discounted fare clients; and the starting and ending vehicle mileage for each day. The information from the tracking sheet should be entered into a spreadsheet or database in order to analyze the performance of each route, service type, and transit stop.

Provide Comment Cards and Boxes

LSC recommends that DHRD provide comment cards and comment boxes on each transit vehicle so that the passengers have an opportunity to provide input regarding the transit system.

Route Number																Table XI-4 Draft Log Sheet	
Driver Name																	
Vehicle Number																	
Location																	
Run	Stop1		Stop 2		Stop 3		Stop 4		Stop 5		Discount Fares	Wheel-c hairs	Total Passengers	Notes			
	Start Time	End Time	General	DHRD	General	DHRD	General	DHRD	General	DHRD	General	DHRD					
1																0	
2																0	
3																0	
4																0	
5																0	
6																0	
7																0	
8																0	
9																0	
10																0	
Start Mileage																0	
End Mileage																	

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

Figure XI-1 presents a timeline of the information from Table XI-3. LSC has also included the planning phase for each recommended project and program in order to aid in the development. The planning phase is conducted the year before implementation. LSC recommends that DHRD and the Tribal Council evaluate each project or program after implementation.

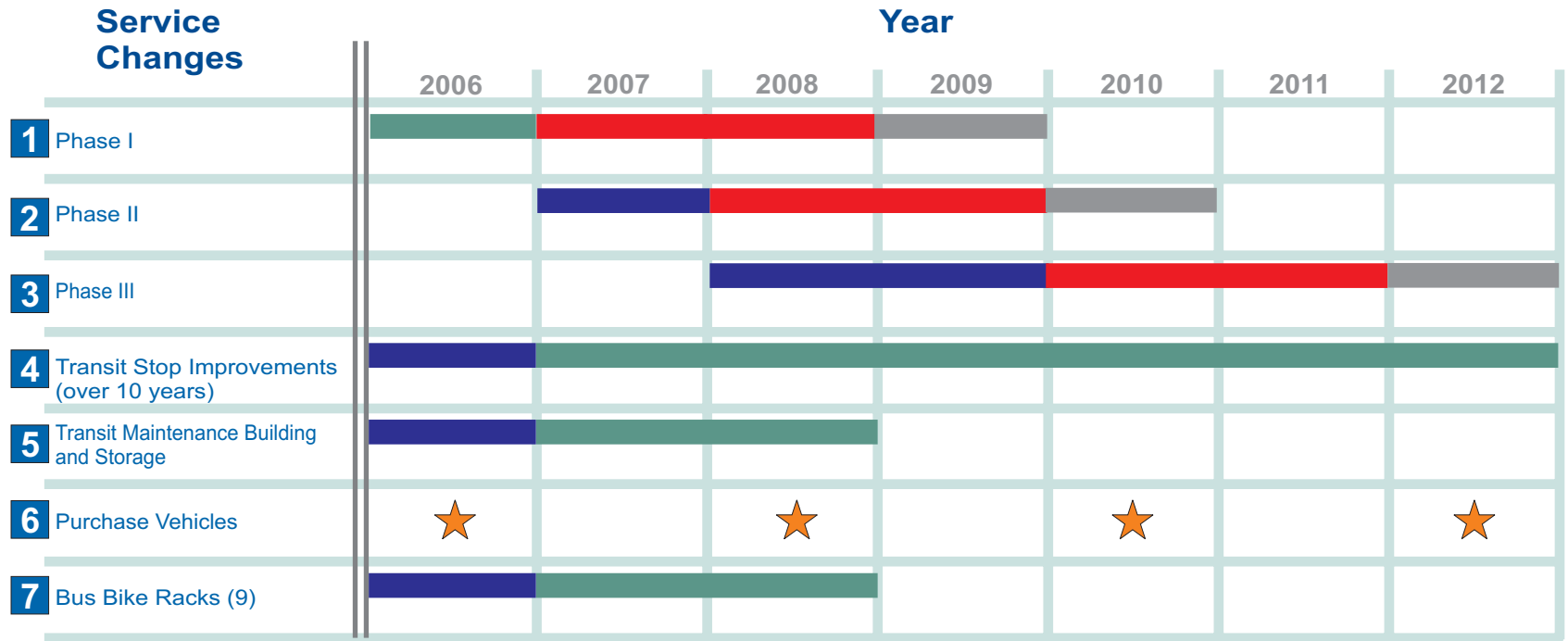
In the timeline, LSC recommends the planning and implementation of Phase I by mid-2006. Phase II, which requires more coordination between agencies and the transfer of funding through the development of intergovernmental agreements or service contracts, should be planned in 2007 and implemented by 2008. Phase III has additional intergovernmental agreements, thereby increasing the complexity of the service implementation. For this reason, LSC recommends the planning for Phase III in 2008 and 2009, with implementation in 2010. Each phase should be evaluated prior to implementation of the next phase.

On the capital side, LSC recommends the development and installation of ten bus stops over the next ten years. The first bus stops should be located in Polson, Ronan, and Ravalli since these will be the center transfer points of the fixed-route service and regional service.

Depending on FTA and Montana Department of Transportation funding, the transit maintenance and administration facility should be planned and designed in 2006. Construction should begin in 2007, with completion by the end of 2008. Until then, the vehicles could operate out of the DHRD office and the Tribal complex.

The timeline is designed to implement the preferred transit service alternative over the next five to six years. This timeframe allows those agencies and government bodies who are dedicating funding to the transit system the time to shift funding. The timeframe also allows for the refinement of the transit service in Phase I, and the development of the bus stops and transit facilities that would be needed by Phases II and III.

Figure XI-1 Short-Term Plan Timeline



LEGEND

- Planning Phase / Intergovernmental Agreements
- Implementation/Construction Year
- Operations
- Feedback
- Purchase Vehicles