



Five-Year Implementation Plan

A Five-Year Implementation Plan is presented in this chapter. Specific actions with corresponding responsibilities and timing are described. This implementation plan represents data from previous chapters of this report and provides guidance for future efforts for public transit service.



SERVICE PLAN

This section describes the service to be provided in the Helena area by the Helena Area Transit Service (HATS). The proposed service is a combination of flex-routes, and increased service hours within the primary service area. It is not likely that the new services would begin immediately, but be phased into service as capital and operating funds become available. Figure XIV-1 presents the overall transportation service for the area.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICE

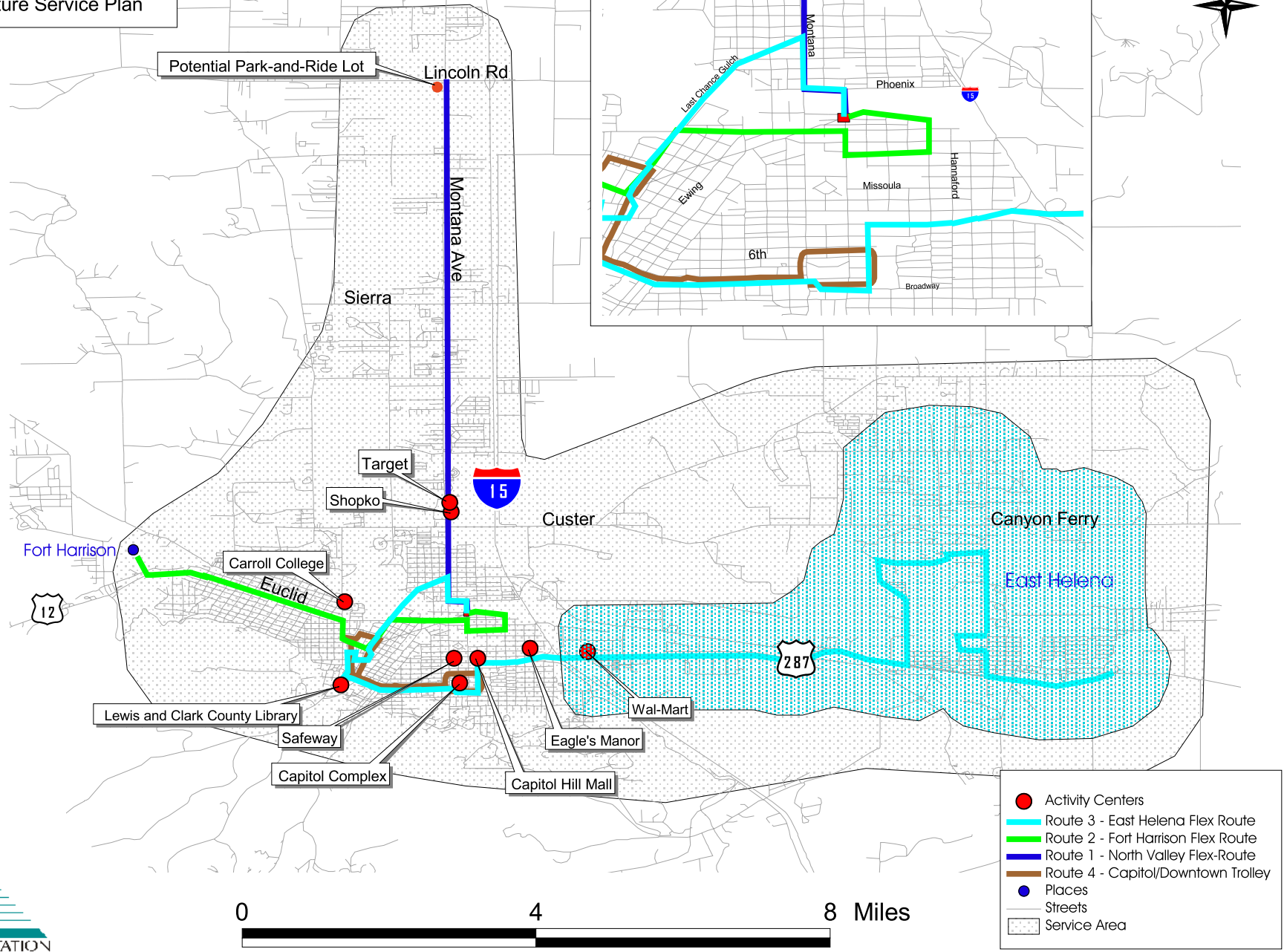
The preferred service plan includes the phased implementation of a four-route system. Due to the timing of the future Transit Facility, it is difficult for HATS to grow substantially in the next two years. Once this facility is constructed, vehicles can be purchased and services can be finalized. The 2007-2011 Service Plan includes sustaining operations through FYs 2007 and 2008 with North Valley Service being done in the second half of 2007 and an entire year in 2008. These two years include additional paratransit service coverage in the primary service area of Helena. All service is extended until Saturday service is included using a service route and dial-a-ride service from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Expansion of services to a flexible-route system with two routes—one which operates as a flexible fixed route in the City of Helena and the existing trolley service. There are also two flex-routes operating outside city limits—the North Valley and East Valley Routes—to meet the transportation needs of residents who live outside the City

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of Helena. The service plan assumes an FTA request for capital and operating funds with vehicle acquisition and operations to begin the following year.

All buses would travel on designated routes according to a published schedule, but the schedule would include additional time to allow the buses to deviate to serve passengers at locations off the route. Service would be provided throughout the day, five days per week. Routes would be set at 60-minute headways (frequency). Route-deviation areas would need to be finalized to construct a schedule.

Figure XIV-1
Future Service Plan



- Activity Centers
- Route 3 - East Helena Flex Route
- Route 2 - Fort Harrison Flex Route
- Route 1 - North Valley Flex-Route
- Route 4 - Capitol/Downtown Trolley
- Places
- Streets
- ▨ Service Area



Routes

Route 1 - North Valley Flex-Route

The North Valley Flex-Route would operate between the new transfer facility and Lincoln Road (Highway 279). This service would need to be coordinated with a park-and-ride lot at Montana Avenue and Lincoln Road. This service would travel from Lincoln Road on Montana Avenue to the new transfer center. Additionally, once a schedule is determined, this route could potentially travel to the Capitol area to directly serve commuters.

Route 2 - Fort Harrison Flex-Route

Route 2 would be a flexible fixed route operating from the new transfer station in the downtown area west to Fort William Henry Harrison. This route would also cover a small portion east of the proposed transfer station. The route would primarily travel on Lyndale and Euclid Avenues. This route would serve portions of the downtown area, Carroll College, the Veterans' Hospital, and Fort William Henry Harrison.

Route 3 - East Valley Flex-Route

The East Valley Route (Route 3) would continue to operate as it does today; however, it should be formalized into a flexible fixed route with designated stops at major activity centers. Future developments in the East Valley indicate that this service should increase ridership in future years. This route should stop at destinations such as the Department of Transportation, Wal-Mart shopping area, Home Depot, and the new COSTCO development. This route would travel to the Capitol area and downtown to the transfer center. A buffer indicating the service area of this route for deviations is shown in Figure XIV-1.

Route 4 - Capitol/Downtown Trolley

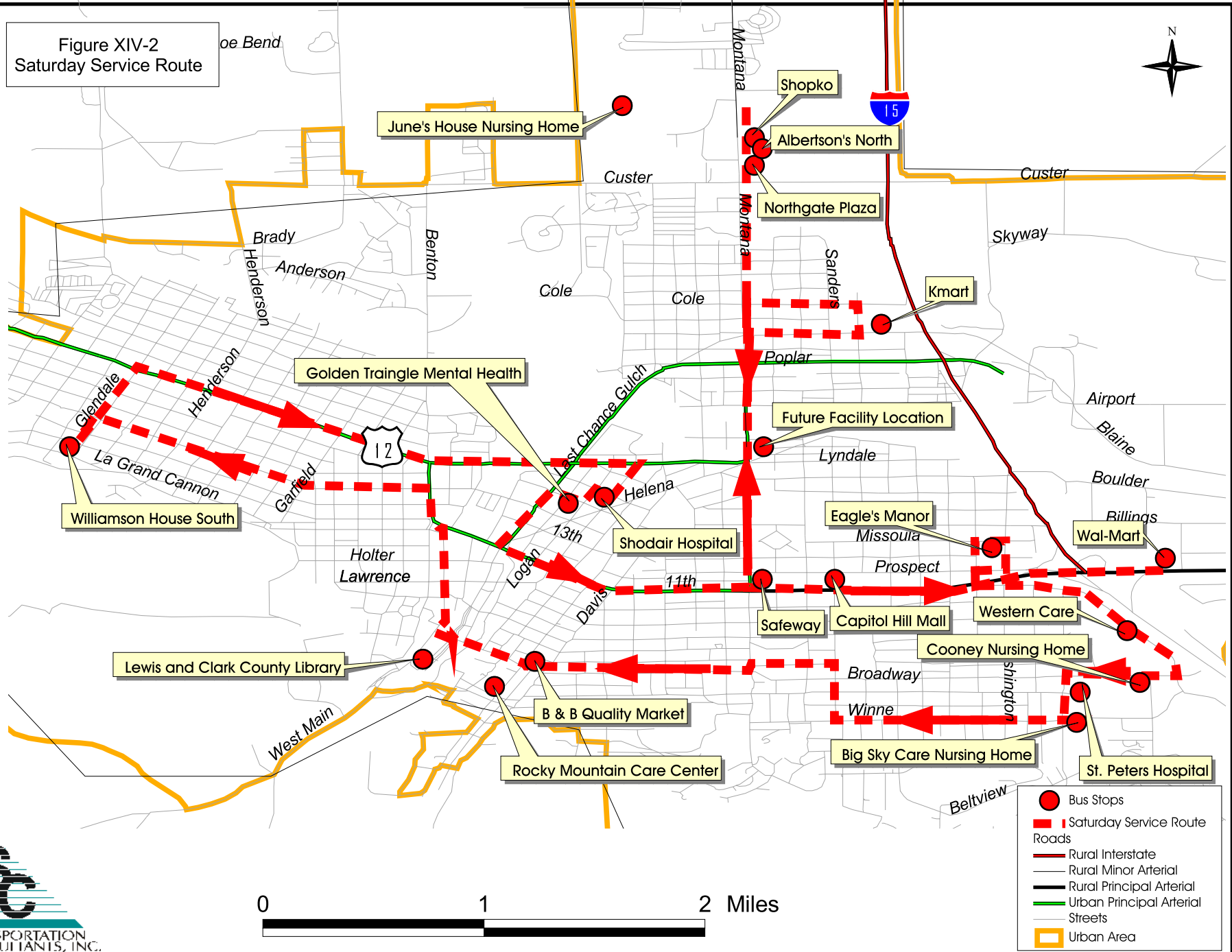
The Capitol/Downtown Trolley would continue to operate as it does currently providing service from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and used for special event service. No other changes are suggested for this service.

Weekend Service

Saturday Service

Saturday service would be accomplished using a modified service plan. Saturday service would be provided from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. One flexible service route would serve the major destinations in Helena. A service route is generally a low-frequency route which aids in getting those passengers to destinations, mostly for shopping. This route is set to wind throughout the area, serving a large area. No service would be provided outside the city at this time. Additionally, the Trolley would operate during this time, as well as the dial-a-ride bus. Figure XIV-2 presents the service to be provided on Saturdays. This would not require additional capital costs to operate; however, operating costs are estimated at approximately \$52,000 annually. Likely the Trolley route would need modification to cover a larger service area than it does currently.

Figure XIV-2
Saturday Service Route



0 1 2 Miles

Sunday Service

Sunday service would operate with only a dial-a-ride bus for the general public. Service would be provided from 7:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. using one vehicle. Estimated annual costs are nearly \$31,000 per year. This service could be on a trial basis to determine if it will be used by the general public. Additionally, local churches may be willing to contribute to HATS to provide additional service if needed. This could be used as local matching funds. Service would be initiated in 2010 or 2011.

Countywide Dial-a-Ride Service

A countywide dial-a-ride service is envisioned for 2010 or 2011 if funds become available to provide this service. Service would be provided using either body-on-chassis vehicles, or preferably, small minivans equipped with lifts. These smaller vehicles are more cost-efficient for these longer trips. Fares for service would need to be established, but could be based upon distance traveled. In this operating scheme, fare zones would be established based upon buffers around Helena. For example, those who live between one and five miles from city limits would be charged one rate, while those who are five to ten miles are charged a higher rate, and so forth.

Marketing

Increased marketing is anticipated to cost an estimated \$5,000 annually. This includes brochure design, printing, advertising, and public education on the new services.

Fare Structure

A proposed fare increase is suggested. Currently drivers do not make change on the checkpoint bus service. The current fare is \$0.85 for general public riders. An increase to \$1.00 on the city service would make payment more simplistic and make the fare structure more consistent across the board. However, the Trolley service should remain at \$0.50. This service is provided through a local grant and is intended not only for tourists, but those using it to travel between the downtown and Capitol area. Making this service less user friendly by increasing fares may

have a negative effect on service. This should be evaluated carefully prior to increasing fares for this service, and the BID should be consulted prior to this increase. Table XIV-1 provides a recommended fare structure for services in the future. Future services should be evaluated and be similar to the checkpoint and East Valley Routes.

| Table XIV-1 | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Helena Area Transit Service Fare Schedule | | | |
| Individual Fares: | Current Rate Structure | Proposed Structure | Change |
| Checkpoint Service Fares | | | |
| Checkpoint Service — General Public | \$0.85 | \$1.00 | \$0.15 |
| Checkpoint — Disabled/Seniors/Children/Students | \$0.85 | \$0.50 | (\$0.35) |
| Checkpoint Service — All Deviations | \$1.00 | \$2.00 | \$1.00 |
| Dial-a-Ride Service | | | |
| Curb-to-Curb Service — General Public | \$1.50 | \$2.00 | \$0.50 |
| Curb-to-Curb — Certified Disabled and Seniors | \$0.85 | \$1.00 | \$0.15 |
| East Valley Service | | | |
| East Valley Bus — General Public | \$0.50 | \$1.00 | \$0.50 |
| East Valley — Disabled/Seniors/Children/Students | \$0.50 | \$0.50 | \$0.00 |
| Downtown/Capitol Trolley Service | | | |
| Trolley | \$0.50 | \$0.50 | \$0.00 |

Coordination of Services

Coordination of transportation services is a concept that has improved services in many areas in recent years. However, the terms coordination and/or consolidation are often threatening to many agencies that provide some form of transportation. There is sometimes apprehension that the agency will lose control of their operations or that employees will lose their jobs. Therefore, a general discussion of transportation service coordination is provided as background for the development of specific suggestions. At this time, the details of the coordination plan are being submitted to MDT for review and a preliminary coordination plan is included in Appendix J.

Coordination has been interpreted as everything from telephone conversations to transfer of vehicle ownership. There are four different phases or levels of coordi-

nation with regard to the shared use and efficient operation of equipment and facilities. These levels are defined below:

1. **Communication** involves recognition and understanding of a problem and discussion of possible solutions. This improves the working relationships among various bodies who are in a position to influence transportation developments within their particular jurisdiction.
2. **Cooperation** involves the active working together of individuals in some loose association in a cooperative way. The individuals or individual agencies retain their separate identities.
3. **Coordination** involves bringing together independent agencies to act together in a concerted way in order to provide for a smooth interaction of separate units of a transportation system. In coordination, the primary concern is in the form of common funds, equipment, facilities, or operations. Members or agencies preserve their separate identities.
4. **Consolidation** involves joining together or merging agencies for mutual advantage. In the case of transportation services and in the context of this report, consolidation is used in reference to a fully-integrated transportation system in which all individual units have been combined or consolidated into one integrated system. Individual agency identity for the purpose of transportation is no longer maintained.

Many transportation operators have found coordination to be desirable and beneficial. Coordination has resulted in a reduction in overlap and duplication of service, more service capacity, greater productivity and operating efficiency, and reduction in capital and operating costs. The Montana Department of Transportation is interested in this cooperative effort between local human service agencies and HATS.

Coordination Opportunities for HATS

Opportunity for cooperation and coordination of existing resources is discussed in the following text.

- Spring Meadows and West Mont currently provide transportation services for clients, mostly aimed at getting clients to medical and jobs. Both should contract with HATS in the future to provide coordinated service. These funds again could be used as local match for the FTA 5311 funding for general public service. Each entity could subcontract with HATS who would operate general public service and special transportation for each agency.

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- The City of Helena and Lewis and Clark County, as well as local towns, should discuss future park-and-ride sites. Property should be set aside for the sites using a cooperative effort. Ridesharing with vanpools and carpools would alleviate traffic congestion on interstate and state highways.
- The local Head Start programs in the Helena area currently transport children during the school year. This service is being contracted to HATS and funded by RMDC funds. These funds can then be used as local match by HATS when applying for 5311 operating funds.

CAPITAL NEEDS

Vehicles

A total of approximately eight vehicles would be needed to operate the expanded transit system. Four vehicles would be needed for fixed-route/flex-route operations with some spares. Three body-on-chassis buses for the paratransit service and one trolley are needed. Additionally, one minivan for expanded countywide service would be required.

Table XIV-2 provides a capital replacement plan for HATS vehicles. This would be a plan which would need updated annually based upon the level of consolidation with local human service agencies.

| Vehicle Type | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Body-on-Chassis | XX | X | X | X | XX |
| Dual Purpose Bus | | X | | | |
| Low-floor bus | | X | X | | |
| Trolley | | | | | X |
| Van (countywide dial-a-ride) | | | | X | |

Facility and Passenger Amenities

A transit facility is required for HATS. The facility would require adequate office space for the Transit Manager, an administration assistant, driver training areas, scheduling/dispatching areas, break rooms, etc. The facility should also be able to house at least five buses. The new facility planning is underway and anticipated to be completed in the next year or two.

Bike Racks

Bike racks should be ordered and placed on all transit vehicles. Bike racks are anticipated to cost approximately \$600 per rack.

Passenger Shelters

It is recommended that passenger shelters be placed at key locations along the routes. These shelters would constitute the major time points which should be published on a schedule. Nine or ten shelters should be provided in the first year of service followed by additional shelters in future years. This is estimated to cost approximately \$8,000 per shelter. Costs can vary significantly; however, this amount should more than cover the cost of placing a suitable shelter for passengers.

FINANCIAL PLAN

Operating Funding

The five-year operations and capital budget is provided in Table XIV-3. Capital costs—including bus purchases, marketing, software and computer upgrades, and passenger shelters—are estimated at approximately \$3.0 million. Projected annual operating costs are estimated at \$7.7 million for the five-year period. An annual increase of five percent is used for inflation. This includes additional contract services which are planned for at this point. Likely this service plan will change as contracts are negotiated and local matching sources are identified.

Implementation of the full service plan will not require a local financial contribution of the entire \$10 million. There are some adjustments and built-in revenue sources that will moderate the cost, as well as FTA shares and local donations. The Federal Transit Administration's Section 5311 program provides capital, operating, and administrative cost assistance to support public transit services in communities with populations less than 50,000. The Section 5311 can provide operating assistance at 54 percent of the net operating deficit, or in the case of the HATS, approximately \$4.1 million. The remainder—an amount of approximately \$3.5 million—is a local match obligation. It must be noted that the \$4.1 million in operating assistance is the maximum that the Section 5311 program could provide

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and is not guaranteed. Section 5311 funds are allocated to states on a formula basis. The State of Montana receives a fixed level of funding which is in turn allocated to individual transit programs in the state. The existing Section 5311 recipients will require operating assistance in future years at increased levels, reflecting increased operating expenses for items such as fuel and insurance. Fortunately, funding levels in the Section 5311 program have grown modestly in recent years. The recently passed Safe, Efficient, Flexible, Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) has increased funding dramatically for the State of Montana and will support higher expenses and expansion of existing transit programs, and may also support new starts within the state.

The local match for operating assistance may be provided as a cash match, or through contract revenue. If the transit program provides services for other entities and organizations under contract, the revenue derived from provision of these services may be utilized as local match. Contract revenues may be used as match, even if they are derived from federal sources. The prohibition against using federal funds to match federal funds does not apply in this situation. The only federal funds that may not be used to match Federal Transit Administration grants are other FTA funds. This provision allows communities to integrate certain client transportation services with public transit services and apply the cost of operating the client transportation services to the match. The contract match is most effective when the contract service passengers are carried on the existing public transit services, without the need to operate additional services.

It must be noted that administrative costs can be applied for an FTA 80/20 split, where HATS would be responsible for a local match of 20 percent of these costs. Administrative costs covered at the 80 percent federal match are at the discretion of MDT. It is likely that some of the administrative costs could be applied for at this split and thereby reduce the local match. However, at this point, administrative costs are shown to be at the 54/46 split until MDT determines if they will allow these costs to be matched at 20 percent and a detailed line item budget is produced by HATS and approved by HATC and the Joint Commission.

**Table XIV-3
Transit Plan, 2007-2011 (assumed 5% inflation)**

| | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| EXPENSES | | | | | |
| OPERATING (Includes admin costs) | | | | | |
| Continuation of Checkpoint Service | | | | | |
| Existing Service (City Route, Dial-a-Ride, Trolley, EV) | \$888,100 | \$713,505 | \$749,180 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Additional Checkpoint Service | \$0 | \$219,877 | \$230,871 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Service Enhancements | | | | | |
| Starting service at 7:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. in 2010 | | | | | |
| Route 1 - North Valley (continuation from 2007) | \$0 | \$219,000 | \$230,000 | \$266,317 | \$279,633 |
| Route 2 - Fort Harrison Flex-Route | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$253,555 | \$266,232 |
| Route 3 - East Valley Bus | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$159,535 | \$167,512 |
| Route 4 - Capitol/Downtown Trolley | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$91,892 | \$96,487 |
| Additional Dial-a-Ride Service | \$0 | \$229,424 | \$240,900 | \$836,633 | \$878,465 |
| Additional Countywide Dial-a-Ride | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$158,867 | \$166,810 |
| Saturday Service (Helena Services Only) | | | | | |
| 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. 3-vehicles (1-City Bus/1-Dial-a-Ride) | | \$51,800 | \$54,390 | \$62,963 | \$66,111 |
| Sunday Service (Helena Services Only) | | | | | |
| 7:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. 1-vehicles (1-City Bus, 1-Dial-a-Ride) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$31,482 | \$33,100 |
| Contract Services | | | | | |
| Coordination of Local Human Service Agencies | | | | | |
| RMDC/Head Start | \$109,000 | \$121,000 | \$127,100 | \$133,455 | \$140,128 |
| Spring Meadows, West Mont, others | \$0 | \$50,000 | \$50,000 | \$75,000 | \$78,750 |
| Marketing Program | | | | | |
| | | \$5,000 | \$5,300 | \$5,565 | \$5,900 |
| Subtotal | \$997,100 | \$1,609,606 | \$1,687,741 | \$2,075,264 | \$2,179,128 |
| CAPITAL | | | | | |
| Vehicle Purchase and Replacement | \$486,000 | \$270,900 | \$71,663 | \$127,339 | \$526,314 |
| Dispatching and Scheduling Software | \$25,000 | \$5,000 | \$1,000 | \$1,050 | \$1,103 |
| Other Capital (Equip/Office/Hardware/Software) | \$0 | \$1,000 | \$5,000 | \$20,000 | \$1,000 |
| Passenger Shelters/Bike Racks | \$6,000 | \$13,800 | \$600 | \$31,200 | \$62,400 |
| Subtotal | \$517,000 | \$290,700 | \$78,263 | \$179,589 | \$590,817 |
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$1,515,000 | \$1,901,000 | \$1,767,000 | \$2,255,000 | \$2,770,000 |
| REVENUES | | | | | |
| FTA/MDT PROGRAM FUNDS | | | | | |
| FTA 5311 Program (Operating with 46% match) | \$347,728 | \$577,379 | \$603,361 | \$747,566 | \$782,578 |
| FTA 53111 Program (Admin/Maintenance) (Admin/Main with 20% match) | \$235,475 | \$380,125 | \$398,577 | \$490,094 | \$514,623 |
| FTA 5311 or 5309 Program (Capital with 13% match) | \$444,620 | \$250,002 | \$67,306 | \$154,446 | \$508,102 |
| Subtotal FTA Funding | \$1,027,823 | \$1,207,505 | \$1,069,300 | \$1,392,200 | \$1,805,400 |
| LOCAL MATCH/SYSTEM REVENUE | | | | | |
| Sinking Fund Carryover | | | | | |
| | | \$19,000 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| City of Helena | \$205,000 | \$250,750 | \$256,288 | \$293,102 | \$312,757 |
| Lewis and Clark County | \$92,000 | \$132,100 | \$131,705 | \$214,290 | \$230,005 |
| Advertising | \$5,600 | \$15,000 | \$15,750 | \$17,000 | \$20,000 |
| Gas Tax | \$6,000 | \$6,300 | \$6,615 | \$6,946 | \$7,300 |
| Headstart Contract | \$109,000 | \$121,000 | \$127,100 | \$133,455 | \$140,128 |
| BID Contract for Trolley | \$25,000 | \$26,250 | \$27,563 | \$28,941 | \$68,676 |
| Spring Meadows, WestMont, others as identified | \$0 | \$50,000 | \$52,500 | \$80,125 | \$90,000 |
| Fares/Charters | \$64,000 | \$73,600 | \$80,960 | \$89,056 | \$97,962 |
| Total Helena Local Match | \$506,600 | \$694,000 | \$698,500 | \$863,000 | \$966,900 |
| TOTAL REVENUES | \$1,534,000 | \$1,901,000 | \$1,767,000 | \$2,255,000 | \$2,772,000 |
| Note: *To be used as a guide for future service. Actual expenses may vary depending on services provided. Contingent upon future funding levels from City/County and other local contributors. | | | | | |

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Capital Funding

Table XIV-3 indicates that the capital expense for the purchase of vehicles over the five-year planning horizon will be \$1.1 million. Table XIV-3 includes other capital items such as bus shelters and signs, and computer hardware and software. The estimated cost of the other capital items is \$153,000. Some of these other capital items are optional. Vehicles, however, are essential. There are two primary federal sources for transit capital funding—the Federal Transit Administration Section 5311 rural program discussed earlier and the Section 5309 program. Both provide up to 80 percent of the cost of equipment (90 percent of the cost of ADA-related equipment such as wheelchair lifts). The local match for acquisition of \$1.1 million of vehicles and other capital items is \$150,000 (based upon the current 86.58/13.42 funding split in Montana). Unlike the match for operating assistance, this match must be in cash.

Depending upon the size of the vehicles, equipment can be expected to last anywhere from 5 to 12 years. The small low-floor buses that would be used for the HATS flexible fixed-route service would last up to seven years. HATS should anticipate capital replacement costs and reflect the annualized match requirements in yearly budgets. Ideally, vehicle replacements might be spread over several years so that match obligations are not maximized in a single year. There are also creative financing strategies, such as loan funding, to extend the period for payment of the cash match.

As mentioned earlier, Section 5311 funds are allocated to states based upon formula and are in turn allocated within states through an application process. HATS would compete with other existing and new Section 5311 capital applicants for funding. The Section 5309 program, which provides funding for buses and equipment for both urban and rural areas, has been entirely earmarked by Congress in recent years. HATS would also need to work through its Congressional delegation to pursue earmarked funds, such as the funding they will receive for the new facility. The issue with earmarked funding is that a local match is required.

The details of the financing plan to support the HATS will emerge as the community refines the plan. The most sustainable transit programs are those that have a diversified funding foundation. A number of funding sources have been identified. The financing plan should not be necessarily limited to these sources alone, particularly if some of the suggested sources do not materialize. It also might be noted that if there are not sufficient funds available to support implementation of the full plan as described, the service could be scaled back to match the resources available. Additional service elements could be added incrementally as resources were secured. Conversely, if additional needs develop beyond the capacity of the service plan as designed and additional resources were also available, the scope and scale of service could certainly be expanded.

FINALIZE SERVICE PLAN

The operating plan for the service must be finalized prior to implementation. This will include identification of specific stops and any agreements for use of sites identified for stops. The service schedule will be finalized indicating the specific stops and scheduled times for the service. It is assumed that transit services will be performed by the Transit Department. Figure XIV-3 summarizes the steps described in this chapter to further develop transit services.

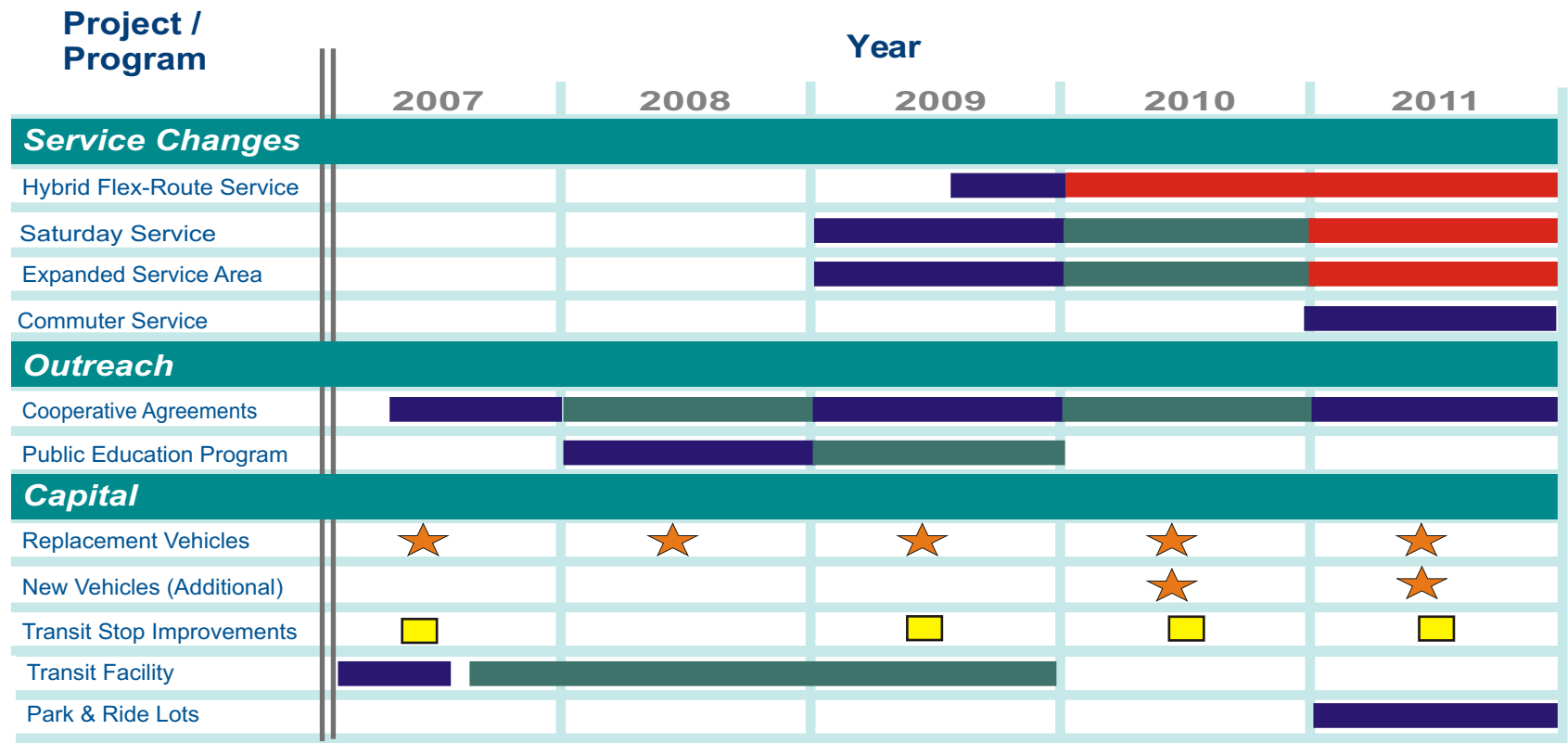
Timing

The service plan should be finalized three months prior to the date established to begin service.

Responsibility

The Transit Department Director and Manager will be responsible for developing the final service plan and schedules with input from the TAC.

Figure XIV-3 Short-Term Plan Timeline



- LEGEND**
- Planning
 - Implementation/Construction
 - Operations
 - Feedback
 - ★ Replacement Vehicles
 - Bus Stops



DEVELOP MARKETING/PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Marketing and promotional materials will be needed to publicize the new transit services and the coordination of existing services.

Brochures should describe the services and with a map of the area to be served. The brochures should include the schedule with times shown for each designated stop. The brochure should also describe how to use the service and be attractive and informative.



Posters and signs should be prepared which may be displayed in businesses, at places of employment, hospitals, and community bulletin boards. The signs or posters should provide a brief description of the service with a source to obtain additional information. If possible, the schedule brochures should be made available where the posters are displayed.

A speakers' bureau should be set up by members of the TAC. Speakers should be provided for City Council/County Commissioners and other interested parties. A standard presentation could be developed using display boards or a computer slide show which could be used by all of the speakers.

Announcements should be made through local media such as newspapers and radio. Articles should be written and submitted to the local news media describing the new services and the coordinated services with information about when the service will start, why it is being provided, what people must do to use the service, how it will be funded, and any other information of general interest.

Publicity should also be sought when the service begins. News releases should be given to the local news media describing the start-up of the new service.

Timing

Brochures, signs, and posters should be prepared one month prior to implementation. Signs and posters should be displayed one month before beginning the ser-

vice with information about the start date. Speaking engagements should begin immediately to develop support for the service.

Responsibility

The Transit Department Manager should have primary responsibility for preparation of the materials with assistance from other members of the Task Force. Members of the TAC should be responsible for displaying posters and signs throughout the service area.

HIRE AND TRAIN DRIVERS AND DISPATCH PERSONNEL

Drivers must be hired and trained in advance of the service. Training will include vehicle operations and passenger assistance.

The driver's salary should be approximately \$10.00 per hour, depending on experience and other salary levels. One lead driver or supervisor should be hired at a higher salary. This position would assist the Transit Manager with supervisor duties, driver training, and scheduling.

Timing

Recruiting should begin well enough in advance to allow time for hiring and training prior to starting the service. Training should begin so that the drivers are fully trained prior to the start-up.

Responsibility

The Transit Department Manager will be responsible for hiring and training all drivers.

MARKETING PROGRAM

The Transit Marketing Plan and corresponding strategies are presented in this section. This includes the three steps needed for developing a marketing plan:

- Developing the Preliminary Plan
- Calculating the Marketing Budget
- Establishing Evaluation Criteria for Marketing Efforts

This section will present the HATS Marketing Budget, provide an implementation time line for specific strategies, and provide a tool for measuring the effectiveness of the marketing efforts.

MARKETING BUDGET

The marketing budget is a tough field for many transit agencies. 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.

In reality, transit agencies must ask themselves questions, such as, “Will we get more riders with this campaign?” or “Will we get additional revenues from this marketing effort?” or “Why should we advertise something we are losing money operating?” Answers to these questions are subjective and may be influenced politically or may be continual efforts toward a particular market segment. The following text provides some “Rules of Thumb” that may be used.

| | |
|--|---------------------|
| Marketing budget per peak vehicle | = \$800 to \$1,200 |
| Amount of line revenue generated for each marketing dollar spent | = \$13 to \$16 |
| Marketing budget per rider (excluding transfers) | = \$0.015 to \$0.02 |
| Amount per person in the service area | = \$0.22 to \$0.25 |

3-5% of operating costs expended as follows:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| Salaries and/or Consultant Services | 66% |
| Printing Materials | 19% |
| Advertising | 7% |
| Merchandising | 4% |
| Other Direct Expenses | 4% |
| <hr/> | |
| TOTAL | 100% |

An annual budget of \$5,000 is anticipated for marketing efforts. This would include the cost of developing and printing brochures. The marketing budget of \$5,000 will use the above rules of thumb for the different marketing strategies, although adjustments have been made which are more closely tailored to HATS.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|
| Salaries and/or Consultant Services | \$3,000 |
| Printing Materials | \$1,250 |
| Advertising | \$550 |
| Merchandising | \$100 |
| <u>Other Expenses</u> | <u>\$100</u> |
| TOTAL Marketing | \$5,000 |

MARKETING EVALUATION

Evaluating the effectiveness of any marketing program is the key to refinement of the program and the development of new ideas. Marketing must return something on its investment if it is to benefit the agency and the bus riders. The following Marketing Evaluation form is designed to help evaluate all marketing efforts. Reviewing evaluations before starting new efforts will prevent costly mistakes that were made in the past. However, it must also be remembered that times, people,



and services do change and should be carefully reviewed before eliminating a new marketing idea.

| Marketing Evaluation | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Dates of Marketing Project: _____ | Date form completed: _____ | |
| Objective of Marketing Effort: | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Target Market Segment: | Budget: | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Techniques and Strategies: | | |
| Print _____ | Outdoor _____ | Radio _____ |
| TV _____ | Direct _____ | Other _____ |
| Anticipated Outcome and Evaluation Standard: | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Actual Outcome and Analysis: | | |
| Should this effort be _____ Repeated; _____ Modified; _____ Avoided | | |
| Why? | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Please attach relevant materials for the file. | | |

Evaluation of strategies should be on a case by case basis; however, this can be difficult if several strategies are implemented in the same year. However, the goal and measure of a marketing plan is **increased ridership**.

HATS MARKETING PLAN

The following section describes recommendations for increasing public awareness, attracting new ridership, creating a new image of transit in the area, and overall increasing the visibility and use of HATS.

Increase Public Awareness and Visibility

HATS should increase public awareness and visibility by creating an attract image of transit. This can be accomplished by the following:

- Design of a transit logo tailored to the public system in the area.
- Repaint buses with an attractive paint scheme or, alternatively, wrap the buses with a simple bus wrap, although wraps can be costly.
- Create simple bus stop signs which are attractive and easy to see.
- Redesign of an attractive rider brochure with key elements of service characteristics provided in an easy-to-read document.
- Hold a logo design contest for kids or college students.
- Design attractive bus passes.
- Attend local events such as festivals or fairs with an informational booth set up to provide service information or showcases the buses.
- Educate local agencies to refer clients to HATS for their transportation needs.

Promote Service to Users

This concept has been detailed throughout this report with several examples of promotion presented in subsequent chapters. Promotion for HATS should be tailored to the following:

- Establish an educational program which includes a simple one-page informational sheet.
- Establish relationships with local business to educate employers and employees on the use of the system.
- Visit local schools, including attending registration at the local college each semester.

Five-Year Implementation Plan

- Hold a training workshop for local social service agencies such as the Spring Meadows, Head Start, etc.
- Provide user incentives such as discount passes, free days, donation of canned food for charities, etc.
- Advertise in the local paper, highlighting employees' or patrons' stories.
- Allow local retailers/businesses to sell transit passes.
- Promote a special shopping tour for seniors/elderly/disabled which includes numerous businesses and retailers.
- Provide local businesses with information brochures they can post at their place of business, including local restaurants.
- Work with local businesses to allow them to advertise on the buses, thereby generating revenue and creating business partnerships.
- Increase the use of the Internet for advertising and information dissemination.
- An outreach program to groups and agencies where you visit these groups regularly to keep them abreast of the transit system and/or changes.



One-Year Marketing Plan

Table XIV-4 presents the detailed One-Year Marketing implementation plan for HATS. The detailed plan should begin as soon as financially possible.

**Table XIV-4
One-Year Marketing Plan**

| Month One Activities | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| STEPS | 1 | Establish a Marketing Planning Team. |
| | 2 | Distribute new brochures at key locations. |
| | 3 | Visit local schools/colleges and set up a special student pass system on a trial basis. |
| | 4 | Plan to attend an upcoming local event (1 to 3 months away). |
| | 5 | Investigate if local business or government agencies would be interested in advertising with HATS using bus wraps, flyers posted in the buses, or at bus stops. |
| Month Two Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Identify and begin planning for an upcoming community event. |
| | 2 | Investigate advertising costs on local radio stations. |
| | 3 | Identify those businesses and agencies that are interested in advertising with HATS. |
| | 4 | Develop a promotional kit for bus pass programs. |
| Month Three Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Attend a local community event with handouts, free daily passes, etc. |
| | 2 | Advertise on a local radio station. |
| | 3 | Hold a "Shopping Day" offering a communitywide shopping trip for senior citizens free of charge or for a minimal flat fee. |
| | 4 | Hold a "Free Ride Day" offering a one-way free ride on the HATS system. |
| Month Four Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Publish advertising flyer in local newspaper(s). |
| | 2 | Contact two employers or agencies regarding a bus pass program. |
| | 3 | Visit with local business/retailer to educate employees/employers on the transit system. |
| Month Five Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Visit local agencies and senior centers to discuss joint ventures to include promotional days and possible joint sponsorship of area trips. |
| | 2 | Make additional contacts, if necessary, for exterior/interior bus advertising. |
| | 3 | Hold a "Bus Riding Training Day" following a Helena Senior's Luncheon. |
| Month Six Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Hold Marketing Planning Team six-month meeting. |
| | 2 | Evaluate current marketing strategies to be sure HATS is "on-target" and accomplishing marketing goals. |
| | 3 | Contact two employers or agencies regarding a bus pass program. |
| | 4 | Establish the following year's marketing budget. |
| Month Seven Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Advertise on a local radio station. |
| | 2 | Visit with local schools to plan additional events. |
| | 3 | Plan "Helena Shoppers Week," a week of discounted fares for those doing holiday shopping. |
| Month Eight Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Coordinate with the City to update the website with transit information |
| | 2 | Contact two employers or agencies regarding a bus pass program. |
| Month Nine Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Start "Thrifty Thursday" with fares lowered to 25 cents for that month's Thursdays. |
| | 2 | Produce a "Transit Rider's Guide" for children and seniors. |
| | 3 | Quarterly Marketing Team Meeting. |
| Month Ten Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Distribute "Transit Rider Guide" to local schools and senior centers. |
| | 2 | Contact two employers or agencies regarding a bus pass program. |
| | 3 | Evaluate the success of senior and children's programs in the form of surveys and boarding counts to determine if these market segments have increased over past years' ridership levels. |
| Month Eleven Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Hold a children's art contest where children can compete for small prizes for designing transit-related picture or painting. Coordinate with schools to promote the program. |
| | 2 | Hang children's art in buses behind plexiglass for public viewing. |
| Month Twelve Activities | | |
| STEPS | 1 | Hold Marketing Planning Team year-end meeting. |
| | 2 | Evaluate overall marketing successes and failures for future marketing plans. |

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Short-Term Vision

Figure XIV-4 presents the Short-Term Marketing Vision. This represents a general outline of steps to be taken and should be used as a guide. This guide presents six steps comprising the marketing vision:

- An Update to the Marketing Plan
- Determining the Three-Year Marketing Budget
- Determining the One-Year Marketing Plan
- A Business Outreach Component
- A Review of Passenger Information
- Customer Surveys

Each project or program is visioned each year as being in a planning phase, implementation phase, or monitoring/evaluation phase. Several programs are envisioned as being a short review or periods to receive feedback on programs and service.

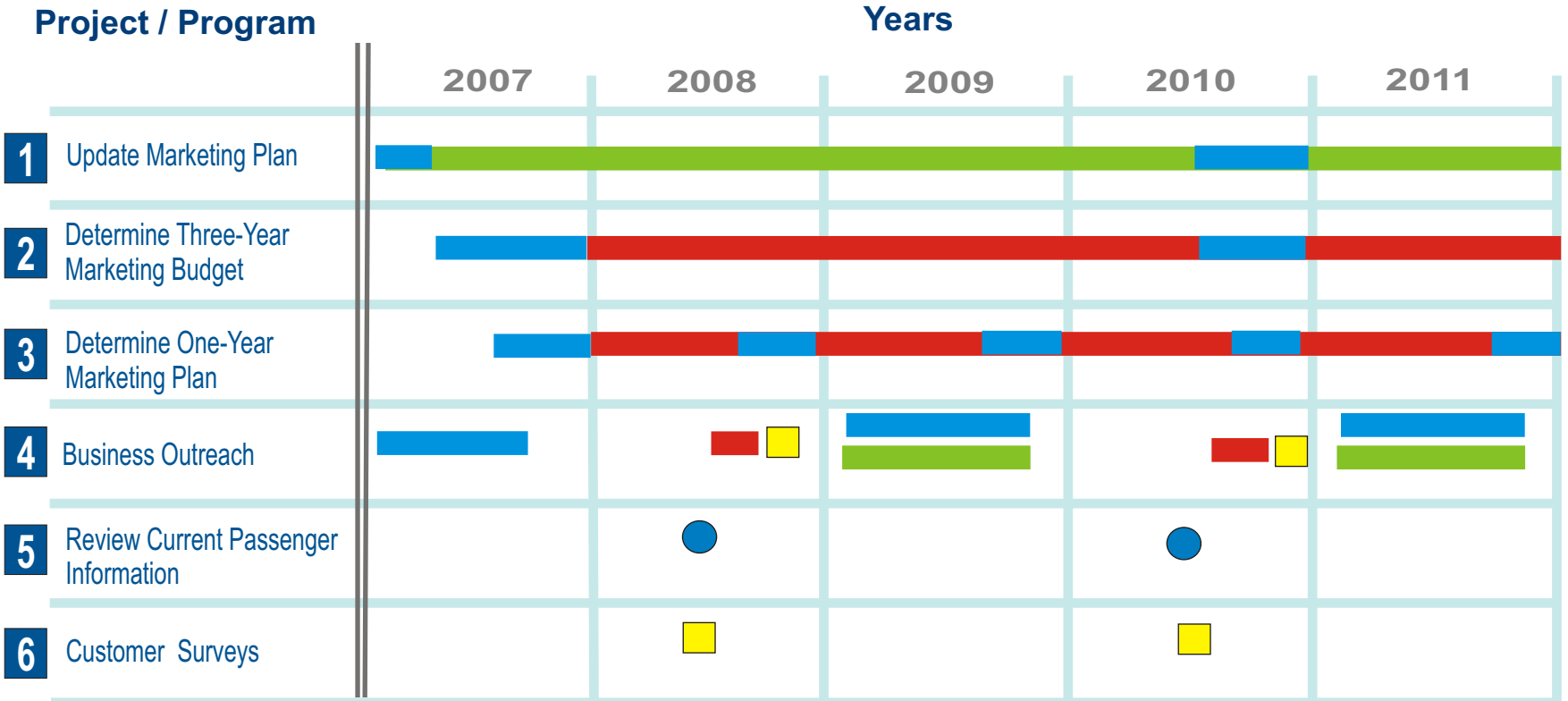
Update Current Marketing Plan

This program involves inventorying current marketing strategies and evaluating whether they are being effective or not. An update requires taking a comprehensive look at the marketing program, financial awareness for future programs, target markets, and future markets. An update does not have to be a costly part of the overall vision. Typically, staff can review this information every year with full marketing updates every three to five years by outside sources.

Determine Three-Year Marketing Budget

The three-year marketing budget should coincide with updating the marketing plan. The budget should be a rough estimate of future expenditures and revenues through the marketing program. A budget will ultimately determine the intensity of the one-year marketing plan.

Figure XIV-4 Short Term Marketing Vision



- LEGEND**
- Feed Back
 - Review
 - Planning Phase
 - Implementation Phase
 - Monitor/Evaluate



Determine One-Year Marketing Plan

A one-year marketing plan is a list of projects which should be completed throughout the following fiscal year. Table XIV-4 presents the One-Year Marketing Plan for HATS. This plan gives monthly steps for completion by the marketing team for an entire year. This should be used as a guide for future planning. While it may not be possible or feasible to complete all activities listed, this should be a framework for programmed initiatives and be followed as closely as possible.

Business Outreach

A Business Outreach program is included in the Marketing Vision as it represents both an effective advertising tool as well as can represent financial backing through local businesses and employers. An outreach program should be planned, implemented, and responsive to employer/employee feedback. This program can entail activities such as the following:

- Employer/employee surveys on service needs.
- Partnerships with local business/employees to help meet employment transit demand through various transportation alternatives (i.e., helping to arrange rideshare requests, additional employee tailored transportation with financial backing from employers/business, and/or employer/employee education efforts on the service).
- Outreach to local radio and/or newspapers for discounted advertisements.

These are just a few outreach ideas which HATS could choose to implement. An outreach program needs only to be a list of ideas which could be potentially implemented to form future partnerships within the communities. This should be incorporated into the one-year marketing plan, with activities such as meeting with a local business for advertising on the buses.

Review Passenger Information

Reviewing passenger information regularly to make sure that brochures, flyers, and other passenger information are kept up-to-date and current is a vital part of a short-term marketing vision. Incorrect or outdated information which is provided to customers is a sure way to decrease ridership. Information should be concise,

clear, and available if it is to be effective. Regular review of these promotional or informational materials will promote HATS as a reliable transit opportunity.

Customer Surveys

Customer surveys should be done at least every three years. Customer surveys require that a survey be designed which asks the important questions which help to improve transit service. Questions should inquire into service delivery, destinations, income, reason for riding, and perceptions of things such as driver friendliness, cleanliness of the buses, fare information, timeliness, etc. Surveys are an important measure of service performance. If you don't know the perceptions of the clientele you are serving, how can you effectively serve them? The way to measure these perceptions is to survey them.

MONITORING PROGRAM

Monitoring should begin immediately when services are changed. Data collection is essential to evaluate the service performance and to determine if changes should be made in the service delivery. This section provides information on data collection, databases, and standard reports which should be prepared.

DATA TO BE COLLECTED

Data to be collected fall into three basic categories. The first is ridership data, second is on-time performance, and third is financial. The following briefly describes these data collection categories.

Ridership

Passenger boarding data should be collected continually. There is a trade-off between data collection efforts and the value of information. It is just as easy to collect too much data as it is to collect insufficient data.

Passenger boardings should be recorded daily by route, fare category, and by trip. One goal all transit agencies should strive for is the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems, such as Mobile Data Terminals (MDT). Mobile

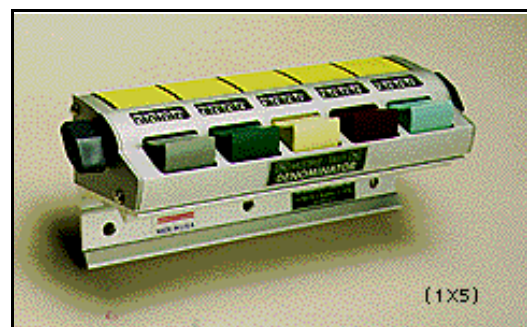
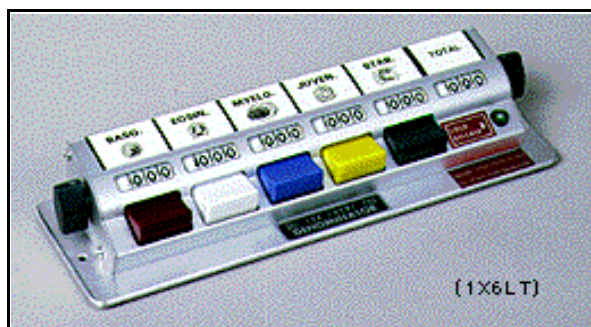


MDTs in use

Data Terminals include features such as recording each passenger by fare category as they board. This capability should be programmed into the capability of the software as it is implemented. Mobile Data Terminals also allow both data and voice communication between operator and dispatcher. It is similar to having an alphanumeric pager on the dashboard. Several successful agencies across the United States implementing MDTs include Central Ohio Transit Authority, Mountain Metropolitan Transit in Colorado Springs, Tri-Met - Oregon, Milwaukee County Transit System, Ann Arbor Transportation Authority, and Montgomery County Transportation Authority.

Passenger boarding data can also be collected using tally boards on the buses. Two sample counters are shown in Figure XIV-5. Sufficient buttons are required to record passengers in each fare category. A driver's log sheet should then be used to record the passenger counts at the end of each trip. The drivers do not need to calculate the number of passengers for that trip, but record the running total by fare category. As data are entered, the calculation of passengers on each trip can be made. An effective approach is to prepare the driver's log sheet for each of the drivers' runs. This will provide preprinted route and trip information, and the driver will need only to record the date and the passenger count data.

Figure XIV-5
Manual Passenger Boarding Counters



Twice each year, a full boarding and alighting count should be completed. If passenger boardings are counted using the MDTs and integrated with Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), the data can be recorded automatically. If it must be done manually, this is a more intense effort and will require the use of additional per-

Five-Year Implementation Plan

sonnel. Passenger counts are recorded for passengers boarding and alighting by stop for a full day. This information records the passenger activity at individual stops and is useful to determine if stops are appropriately placed and what amenities should be provided. If a stop has little or no activity, it would not warrant a bench or shelter, and may not even be appropriate as a designated stop. Data collection forms should be prepared for each route showing the stops and providing space to record the passenger counts. An example used for an existing system is provided. Similar sheets should be prepared in advance for the boarding and alighting data collection.

Time: _____ am / pm

Trolley Route

| ID | Bus Stop | ON | OFF | W/CH ON | W/CH OFF |
|-------|----------------------|----|-----|---------|----------|
| 10.00 | Great Northern Start | | | | |
| 11.00 | Transit Center | | | | |
| 12.00 | Wells Fargo | | | | |
| 13.00 | Mall | | | | |
| 14.00 | Broadway | | | | |
| 15.00 | Capital Lockey | | | | |
| 16.00 | Capital Sanders | | | | |
| 17.00 | Capital 6th Avenue | | | | |
| 18.00 | Broadway | | | | |
| 19.00 | City/County Building | | | | |

EXTRAS

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Time: _____ am / pm

East Valley Route

| ID | Bus Stop | ON | OFF | W/CH ON | W/CH OFF |
|-------|---------------------------------|----|-----|---------|----------|
| 20.00 | HATS Office (North Main Street) | | | | |
| 21.00 | Public Assistance Office | | | | |
| 22.00 | East Helena Valley | | | | |
| 23.00 | Leisure Village | | | | |
| 24.00 | East Gate | | | | |
| 25.00 | East Helena | | | | |
| 26.00 | Wal-Mart | | | | |
| 27.00 | City County Health Dept | | | | |
| 28.00 | St Peters Hospital | | | | |
| 29.00 | Capital Hill Mall | | | | |
| 20.00 | HATS Office (North Main Street) | | | | |

EXTRAS

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 30.00 | tizer road | | | | |
| 31.00 | humane society | | | | |
| 49.00 | broadway & stage coach | | | | |
| 50.00 | king & harrison | | | | |
| 51.00 | twilight trailer park | | | | |
| 52.00 | holiday inn express | | | | |
| 54.00 | 3465 valley drive | | | | |
| 55.00 | 2525 valley drive | | | | |
| 56.00 | Country Day Care | | | | |
| 62.00 | bluebird rd | | | | |
| 63.00 | jfk park | | | | |
| 64.00 | broadway & hannafor | | | | |
| 65.00 | white rock rd | | | | |
| 66.00 | cooney home | | | | |
| 67.00 | heritage house | | | | |
| 68.00 | kaitlyn loop | | | | |
| 69.00 | town pump (east helena) | | | | |
| 70.00 | jolly o's | | | | |

Time: _____ am / pm

Helena Checkpoint Stop Route

| ID | Bus Stop | ON | OFF | W/CH ON | W/CH OFF |
|-------|---------------------------------|----|-----|---------|----------|
| 20.00 | HATS Office (North Main Street) | | | | |
| 32.00 | Sunset Apts | | | | |
| 33.00 | Fuller & Placer | | | | |
| 34.00 | 6th & Fuller | | | | |
| 35.00 | Gaslight/ B& B Market | | | | |
| 29.00 | Safeway/ Capital Hill Mall | | | | |
| 27.00 | City County Health Dept | | | | |
| 28.00 | St Peters Hospital | | | | |
| 26.00 | Wal-Mart/ Staples/ Aware | | | | |
| 40.00 | Eagles Manor | | | | |
| 41.00 | Butte & Cooke | | | | |
| 42.00 | Helena Industries | | | | |

EXTRAS

| | | | | | |
|-------|--------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 43.00 | kmart | | | | |
| 44.00 | good samaritan/snyders | | | | |
| 45.00 | albertsons/shopko | | | | |
| 46.00 | mcdonalds | | | | |
| 47.00 | golden triangle | | | | |
| 48.00 | target | | | | |
| 53.00 | murdocks | | | | |
| 57.00 | national | | | | |
| 58.00 | aspen & harris | | | | |
| 59.00 | park plaza (holiday inn) | | | | |
| 60.00 | north gate plaza | | | | |
| 61.00 | 1616 lewis | | | | |

Five-Year Implementation Plan

Finally, an onboard passenger survey should be conducted periodically. We recommend that the initial survey be conducted after the new services have been operating one year. Following that, passenger surveys should be conducted at least every two years. Survey instruments with questions appropriate for the Helena area should be developed to collect information about passenger demographics, trip characteristics, and perceptions of the transit service. An onboard survey used in Helena in 2006 is provided as an example.

Ridership performance measures that may be used include:

Number of Trips by Purpose: Indicator of the service being provided. Particularly useful if work trips can be related to access to employment, prevention of welfare, etc. Data for this category should be collected from onboard passenger surveys.

Number of Wheelchair Trips: Often useful for political purposes. Could also be expressed as the ratio of wheelchair trips to total trips which can also be combined with measures of efficiency/effectiveness; i.e., a low pax/hour ratio may be the direct result of a high percentage of wheelchair trips (number wheelchair trips).

Guest of Helena Area Transit:

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey during your bus ride today. Your answers and suggestions will help us improve service.

Thank you!
The HATS Team

1. **Where did you come from before you got on this bus?** *(check only one)*
- Home
 - Visiting Friend/Relative
 - Recreation
 - Work
 - Shopping/Errands
 - Personal Business
 - School/College
 - Medical Appointment (doctor/dentist/therapist)

2. **Where did you get on the bus?**
(Street/Cross Street, for example: Montana/Prospect OR East Helena)
- _____

3. **How did you get to the bus stop?** *(check only one)*
- Walk
 - I was driven
 - Bicycle
 - Drove myself
 - Transfer from _____ Bus
 - Other *(please specify)*: _____

4. **Where are you going on this trip?** *(check only one)*
- Home
 - Visiting Friend/Relative
 - Recreation
 - Work
 - Shopping/Errands
 - Personal Business
 - School/College
 - Medical Appointment (doctor/dentist/therapist)

5. **What is the nearest intersection to that place?**
(Street/Cross Street, for example: Montana/Prospect)
- _____

6. **Where will you get off the bus?**
(Street/Cross Street, for example: Montana/Prospect OR Safeway)
- _____

7. **How will you get from the bus stop to your destination?** *(check all that apply)*
- Walk
 - Someone picks me up
 - Bicycle
 - Drive myself
 - Transfer to _____ Bus
 - Other *(please specify)*: _____

8. **Did you have an automobile available to make this trip?**
- Yes No

9. **Have you filled out this survey earlier today?** Yes No

If Yes, please stop here. If No, please continue and complete all questions.

10. **Do you have a valid driver's license?** Yes No

11. **What is your gender?** Male Female

12. **What is your age in years?** _____

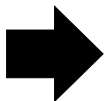
13. **Do you have a disability which makes travel difficult?**
- Yes No

14. **For what purpose do you MOST OFTEN ride the bus?** *(check only one)*
- Personal Business/Errands
 - Work
 - School/College
 - Shopping
 - Recreation
 - Other *(please specify)* _____

15. **What is a reasonable one-way fare for a ride within Helena?**
- \$1.25
 - \$1.50
 - \$1.75
 - \$2.00
 - More than \$2.00

16. **What is the MOST IMPORTANT reason you use HATS?** *(check only one)*
- Car not available
 - Bus saves me money
 - Cannot drive myself
 - Traffic is a problem
 - Bus is convenient
 - Other *(please specify)* _____
 - Parking is a problem

PLEASE CONTINUE ON OTHER SIDE



17. How many days per week do you typically use HATS? (check only one)

- 1 day/week 4 days/week Less than once a month
 2 days/week 5 days/week This is my first time
 3 days/week 1-3 times/month
-

18. Do you use any other forms of transportation and how often?

- Taxi: _____ Trips per week
 Agency Supplied bus/van: _____ Trips per week
 RMDC: _____ Trips per week
 Trolley: _____ Trips per week
 Other (specify) _____: _____ Trips per week
-

19. What is your total HOUSEHOLD income? (include all income from all members)

- Less than \$7,500 per year \$35,000 - \$49,999 per year
 \$7,500 - \$14,999 per year \$50,000 - \$74,999 per year
 \$15,000 - \$34,999 per year \$75,000 or more per year
-

20. If new services were to be implemented, where would you suggest the bus serve?(For example: North Valley)

21. If you live out side of the City would you use a public Park-and-Ride bus service?

- Yes — If Yes, do you live: North East South West of Helena

 No
-

Please share any comments.

22. How do you rate your present bus service? (check answers below for each part)

| | Poor | Fair | Good | Very Good |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Appearance of buses | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Friendliness of drivers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Appearance of drivers | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reliability of service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Buses on time | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Location of bus stops | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Frequency of service | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Hours of operation | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Schedules easy to understand | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Buses go where you need to go | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Driver safety | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Safety at bus stops | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| HATS website | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!

On-Time Performance

With any new system changes, it will be important to monitor on-time performance. An on-time performance goal should be established. For instance, an attainable on-time goal of 95 percent for the service may be considered for start-up. A recommended on-time window for deviated fixed-route systems is not earlier than the earliest scheduled pick-up time and no more than 10 minutes after the latest scheduled time. Minor adjustments may be needed to routes to ensure that schedules and headway adherence can be maintained. This is also important to determine the number of route-deviations which can be accommodated. Route schedules are set up so that there is a 10-minute earliest and 10-minute latest arrival time for the Helena area flexible fixed routes. If the bus is 10 minutes early, it will have to wait until the scheduled departure time so that there are no missed trips.

To record on-time performance, drivers should report actual arrival and departure times at designated bus stops along the routes and at major stops—such as the downtown, the Capitol, or the hospital—to the dispatcher. It should be emphasized that drivers should not leave prior to a scheduled stop time in order to make up time along a route. Leaving early could cause riders to miss a bus.

The dispatcher should then record this information so that the number of trips running late can be determined. Again, this capability could be integrated with the MDT and database system so that the data are entered directly by the driver. This effort should continue for the first three months of service. After that, on-time data should be checked randomly to ensure that performance remains acceptable.

The US Department of Transportation considers route-deviation systems as demand-responsive services. It should be noted that these categories pertain to scheduled route deviations provided by the service as well as complementary demand-response services. Therefore it is appropriate to consider the following categories of service as performance measures.

Missed/Late Trips

Continual missed and/or late trips can cumulatively impact overall service efficiency, on-time performance, and contribute to negative perceptions of transit service. The HATS and HATC should adopt a standard of performance for this service. A late trip may be considered as more than 5 minutes after the latest scheduled time, but less than 10 minutes after the latest scheduled pick-up time. A missed trip should be indicated if a passenger is picked up 20 minutes or later, or not at all, after a scheduled pick-up time. Missed and late trips should be monitored by dispatch and management staff on a daily basis. Data related to these categories should be compiled into the monthly performance report so that repeated occurrences may be addressed. If missed/late trips continue to occur after a three-month period, schedule adjustments should be considered as a corrective measure.

Financial Data

HATS should continue to carefully track financial data. Accounts should be kept so that separate costs can be tracked for each route. Financial data are required to evaluate performance measures such as the operating cost per hour of service and the cost per passenger-trip.

Related fiscal performance measure categories may include:

Subsidy/Passenger: Total cost less fares divided by the number of passengers. A good indicator of the public cost of providing service, better than farebox recovery ratio. Measure of cost-effectiveness. (Subsidy/pax)

Cost/Hour: Annual operating cost divided by the number of revenue-hours. Good measure of efficiency. (Cost/hour)

Cost/Mile: Annual operating cost divided by the number of revenue-miles. Good measure of efficiency. (Cost/mile)

Administrative Cost Ratio: The system administrative cost divided by the operating budget expressed as a percent. Good indicator of administrative overhead. (Admin. Cost Ratio)

DATABASE FORMAT

Several options are available for storing the data. The recommended approach is to set up databases in Microsoft Access to record passenger data. Example databases and assistance can be provided. A separate database should be set up for routine passenger data and a second for the boarding and alighting counts.

If the buses are equipped with Mobile Data Terminals (MDT), passenger count data can be entered directly into the database by the driver. The touch screen capability will allow the driver to record passenger boardings at each stop. This, combined with Automatic Vehicle Location systems, can record the data automatically by stop, eliminating the need for separate boarding and alighting counts. Similarly, drivers could report their arrival at the downtown transfer center via the MDT, and the time could be recorded automatically into a database for on-time performance. These capabilities should be programmed into the new software capabilities as they are implemented.

Onboard survey data can be entered into a database such as Access or a spreadsheet program such as Excel.

STANDARD REPORTS

HATS should provide monthly performance reports, as is done currently. The report should include performance data for the current month, the same month in the previous year, year-to-date performance, and the prior year-to-date performance. Information which should be reported includes passenger boardings by route, passengers per revenue-hour by route, total passengers by fare category, total passengers, and system passengers per revenue-hour. Financial information should be reported including the operating cost and the cost per passenger. The average fare should be calculated and reported based on operating costs and passenger counts.

Quarterly reports should be considered for providing recent trends and interim performance data to elected officials, the public, and other stakeholders. Additionally, an annual report should be compiled and presented. A sample report

format is provided. The information for these reports can be easily generated from the databases and the accounting system.

Performance Monitoring Categories

Transit performance measures serve as a guide to find out how a transit system performs. Performance measures define the type of data to be collected and give the tools necessary to identify transit system deficiencies and opportunities.

It is worth noting that criteria used for the selection of performance measures include the following:

- Be measurable.
- Have a clear and intuitive meaning, so that it is understandable to those who will use it and to non-transportation professionals.
- Be acceptable and useful to transportation professionals.
- Be comparable across time and between geographical areas.
- Have a strong functional relationship to actual system operations, so that, once changes occur in system operations, changes to the system can readily be determined.
- Provide the most cost-effective means of data collection.
- Where appropriate, be based on statistically sound measurement techniques.
- Be consistent with measures identified for other systems.

Performance measure categories that HATS should use include:

- On-time Performance
- Cost/Hour
- Cost/Passenger
- Daily Route Miles and Hours
- Monthly Route Cost
- Subsidy per Passenger
- Missed/Late Trips
- Passenger No Shows
- Fleet Maintenance

Many of these measures have been described above. Other performance measures that should be used are:

Passengers/Hour by Route: Number of total monthly and annual passengers divided by the corresponding revenue-hours. (Pax/hour)

Passengers/Mile: Number of total annual passengers divided by the annual revenue-miles. (Pax/mile)

Trips/Capita: Total annual trips divided by the population of the area served. A reasonable measure of the level of transit service, although the population within the service area (and the service area) must be determined. (Trips/capita)

Vehicle-Miles/Service Area: A good measure of the level of service being provided. The service area must be realistically identified. As an example, a county system may say they serve the entire county, but in fact, much of the county is very rural and service is never provided. (Veh.-miles/Serv. area)

Distance Traveled Between Mechanical Breakdowns - Service/Road Calls

Vehicle breakdowns are inevitable. Although frequent occurrences can create disruptions in a transit system, it is important to track the frequency and type of mechanical failures of each vehicle in addition to monitoring a fleet's age. Monitoring of vehicle breakdowns is one method of reducing system disruptions and may allow an agency to improve monitoring of vehicle replacement schedules and preventative maintenance practices. Data collection efforts should include date, time of day, type of failure, age of vehicle, vehicle number, vehicle mileage, and how the situation was rectified. Monitoring of these items will allow an agency to recognize repeated types of mechanical breakdowns, breakdowns related to vehicle type, age or mileage, and assist with preventative maintenance programs. Wheelchair lift failures should also be monitored. Data should be included in the monthly report.

Additional Fleet Maintenance performance measures may include:

Accidents/1,000 miles: Measure of driver safety. Accidents must be defined as a standard. (Accid/1,000 miles)

Average Age of Fleet: A good single indicator of vehicle replacement needs, although individual vehicle inventories, ages, and mileage should be tracked. (Avg. age of flt.)

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Ridership

| Route | September 2007 | | | September 2006 | | |
|-------|----------------|-------|---------------------|----------------|-------|---------------------|
| | Passengers | Hours | Passengers per Hour | Passengers | Hours | Passengers per Hour |
| 1 | | | | | | |
| 2 | | | | | | |
| 3 | | | | | | |
| 4 | | | | | | |
| Total | | | | | | |

Passengers by Fare Category

| | September 2007 | September 2006 |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Adult Cash | | |
| Senior, Disabled Cash | | |
| Monthly Pass | | |
| Discount Monthly Pass | | |
| Punch Pass | | |
| Route-Deviation | | |
| Demand-Response | | |
| Extended Demand-Response | | |
| General Public Demand-Response | | |

Financial

| Item | 2007 Budget | 2007 YTD | Percent of Budget | 2006 YTD |
|-----------------------------|-------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| Admin Salaries/Benefits | | | | |
| Operating Salaries/Benefits | | | | |
| Maintenance | | | | |
| Rental/Leases | | | | |
| Utilities | | | | |
| Fuel and Oil | | | | |
| Tires | | | | |
| Insurance | | | | |
| Taxes | | | | |
| Other | | | | |
| Total | | | | |

SUMMARY

This chapter has provided an implementation program. The implementation steps have been outlined. Adjustments may be necessary as implementation proceeds because of changes in possible funding sources or other unforeseen circumstances. This implementation program will serve as a guide to begin the new service, but flexibility will be required to ensure a smooth implementation.