

# North-Central Montana Regional Public Transportation Plan

## Draft Final Report

Prepared for:

Opportunity Link  
2229 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 224  
Havre, MT 59501  
(406) 265-3699

Prepared by:

LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc.  
516 North Tejon Street  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903  
(719) 633-2868

LSC #074290

August 29, 2007

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Title	Page
I	INTRODUCTION .....	I-1
	Report Contents .....	I-1
	Study Approach .....	I-2
	Project Team .....	I-3
	Opportunities for Public Involvement .....	I-4
	Stakeholders Committee .....	I-4
	Summary of the Issues .....	I-4
	II	COMMUNITY CONDITIONS .....
II	Community Description .....	II-1
	Study Area Location .....	II-1
	Transportation System Overview .....	II-1
	Major Activity Centers .....	II-3
	Major Employers .....	II-7
	Study Area Demographics .....	II-11
	1990-2006 Population .....	II-11
	Population Density .....	II-17
	Population Projections .....	II-21
	Transit-Dependent Population Characteristics .....	II-27
	Elderly Population .....	II-33
	Mobility-Limited Population .....	II-33
	Low-Income Population .....	II-39
	Zero-Vehicle Households .....	II-39
	Youth .....	II-39
	Unemployment .....	II-47
	Travel Patterns .....	II-47
	Work Transportation Mode .....	II-47
	Summary .....	II-51
	III	EXISTING TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS .....
III	Introduction .....	III-1
	Blaine County .....	III-1
	New Horizons Unlimited, Inc. ....	III-1
	Blaine/Phillips County .....	III-2
	Fort Belknap Senior Citizens Program .....	III-2
	Cascade County .....	III-3
	Great Falls Transit District .....	III-3
	Easter Seals Goodwill Northern Rocky Mountain .....	III-3
	Center for Mental Health .....	III-4
	Great Falls Senior Citizens Center .....	III-4
	Quality Life Concepts .....	III-4
	Chouteau County .....	III-5
	Big Sandy Activities .....	III-5
	Chouteau County Health Care Foundation .....	III-5
	Stone Child College .....	III-6
	Hill County .....	III-7
	Havre Day Activity Center, Inc. ....	III-7
	Hill County Area on Agency on Aging .....	III-7

	Phillips County . . . . .	III-7
	Phillips County Transit Authority . . . . .	III-7
	Phillips County Council on Aging . . . . .	III-8
	Malta Opportunities . . . . .	III-8
	Teton County . . . . .	III-8
	Teton Memorial Hospital Association . . . . .	III-8
	Other Transportation Providers . . . . .	III-9
	Area II Agency on Aging . . . . .	III-9
	Intercity Providers . . . . .	III-9
	Greyhound Bus Lines . . . . .	III-9
	Rimrock Trailways . . . . .	III-9
	Summary . . . . .	III-9
IV	TRANSIT DEMAND ASSESSMENT . . . . .	IV-1
	Introduction . . . . .	IV-1
	Rural Transit Demand Methodology . . . . .	IV-2
	Non-Program Demand . . . . .	IV-2
	2005 Existing Demand Estimates . . . . .	IV-3
	Regional Demand . . . . .	IV-7
	2010 Demand Estimates . . . . .	IV-7
	2015 Demand Estimates . . . . .	IV-8
	Summary of TCRP Methodology . . . . .	IV-8
	Mobility Gap Demand Model Methodology . . . . .	IV-13
	Greatest Transit Need Index . . . . .	IV-15
	Origin and Destination Analysis . . . . .	IV-23
	Mode Split Analysis . . . . .	IV-23
	Summary . . . . .	IV-26
V	PEER COMMUNITY ANALYSIS . . . . .	V-1
	Introduction . . . . .	V-1
	Peer Statistics . . . . .	V-2
	Summary . . . . .	V-4
VI	GOALS AND OBJECTIVES . . . . .	VI-1
	Transit Vision . . . . .	VI-1
	Mission Statement . . . . .	VI-2
	Goals and Objectives . . . . .	VI-2
	Goal #1: Develop Regional Transit Service That Aids the Region’s Economic Development . . . . .	VI-2
	Goal #2: Create Financial Sustainability of the Transit Service . . . . .	VI-3
	Goal #3: Coordinate and Integrate the Transit Service With the Existing Human Service Agencies/Programs . . . . .	VI-3
	Goal #4: Create Cost-Effective and Cost-Efficient Transit Service . . . . .	VI-4
VII	TRANSIT SERVICE TYPES . . . . .	VII-1
	Introduction . . . . .	VII-1
	Types of Transit Service . . . . .	VII-1
	Regional and Commuter Service . . . . .	VII-1
	Fixed-Route Service . . . . .	VII-2
	Service Routes . . . . .	VII-3
	Demand-Response Service . . . . .	VII-3
	Flexible Routes . . . . .	VII-4
	Route Deviation . . . . .	VII-4

	Checkpoint Service . . . . .	VII-5
	Vanpool Service . . . . .	VII-5
	Summary . . . . .	VII-6
VIII	VEHICLE TYPES . . . . .	VIII-1
	Introduction . . . . .	VIII-1
	Vehicle Characteristics . . . . .	VIII-1
	Vehicle Overview . . . . .	VIII-1
	Standard Vans . . . . .	VIII-2
	Modified Vans . . . . .	VIII-3
	Body-on-Chassis . . . . .	VIII-4
	Small Buses . . . . .	VIII-5
	Impact of Using Smaller Vehicles . . . . .	VIII-6
	Vehicle Selection . . . . .	VIII-8
	Service Type . . . . .	VIII-8
	Service Demand . . . . .	VIII-8
	Passenger Needs . . . . .	VIII-8
	Costs . . . . .	VIII-9
	Maintenance and Storage Requirements . . . . .	VIII-9
	Operating Environment . . . . .	VIII-10
	Other Factors . . . . .	VIII-10
	Uniformity of Fleet . . . . .	VIII-10
	Driver Considerations . . . . .	VIII-11
	Community Acceptance . . . . .	VIII-11
	Summary . . . . .	VIII-11
IX	COORDINATION STRATEGIES . . . . .	IX-1
	Introduction . . . . .	IX-1
	Federal Requirement and Support for Coordination . . . . .	IX-1
	MDT Coordination Requirement . . . . .	IX-2
	Coordination Strategies . . . . .	IX-2
	Joint Procurement . . . . .	IX-2
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-3
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-3
	Shared Vehicle Storage and Maintenance Facilities . . . . .	IX-3
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-3
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-4
	Joint Grant Applications . . . . .	IX-4
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-4
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-4
	Joint Training Programs . . . . .	IX-4
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-5
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-5
	Sharing Expertise . . . . .	IX-5
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-5
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-5
	Coordinating Council . . . . .	IX-6
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-6
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-6
	Joint Planning and Decision Making . . . . .	IX-6
	Benefits . . . . .	IX-7
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	IX-7
	Coalitions . . . . .	IX-7

	Benefits .....	IX-7
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-7
	Vehicle Sharing .....	IX-8
	Benefits .....	IX-8
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-8
	Contracts for Service .....	IX-8
	Benefits .....	IX-8
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-9
	Provide Vehicles .....	IX-9
	Benefits .....	IX-9
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-9
	One-Call Center .....	IX-9
	Benefits .....	IX-9
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-10
	Centralized Functions (Reservations, Scheduling, Dispatching) .....	IX-10
	Benefits .....	IX-10
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-10
	Transportation Broker .....	IX-10
	Benefits .....	IX-11
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-11
	Consolidated Transportation Program .....	IX-11
	Benefits .....	IX-11
	Implementation Steps .....	IX-11
	Outreach to Allow for Participation .....	IX-12
	Initial Coordination Strategies .....	IX-13
X	FINANCIAL ALTERNATIVES .....	X-1
	Introduction .....	X-1
	Funding Sources .....	X-1
	Capital Funding .....	X-1
	Operations and Maintenance Funding .....	X-2
	Overall Service Considerations .....	X-3
	Local and Regional Funding .....	X-4
	General Fund Appropriations .....	X-4
	Sales Tax .....	X-4
	Property Tax for Special Transportation .....	X-5
	Transportation Improvement Authority .....	X-5
	Urban Transportation District .....	X-5
	Service Districts .....	X-6
	Local Option Gas Tax .....	X-6
	Private Support .....	X-6
	TransADE Program .....	X-6
	Advertising .....	X-7
	Voluntary Assessments .....	X-7
	Conclusions .....	X-7
	Federal Transit Funding .....	X-7
	FTA Section 5309 - Capital Improvement Grants .....	X-8
	FTA Section 5310 - Capital for Elderly and Disabled Transportation .....	X-8
	FTA Section 5311 - Public Transportation for Rural Areas .....	X-8
	FTA Section 5311(a) - Public Transportation on Indian Reservations .....	X-8
	FTA Section 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute Program .....	X-9

	FTA Section 5317 - New Freedom . . . . .	X-9
	Transit Benefit Program . . . . .	X-9
	Transportation and Community System Preservation Program . . .	X-10
	Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Transportation Funding . . . . .	X-10
	Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) Program . . . . .	X-10
	Indian Reservation Roads (IRR) Transportation Planning . . . .	X-11
	Native American Housing Block Grant/Native American Housing	
	Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA) of 1966 . .	X-11
	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) . . . . .	X-11
	Head Start Program . . . . .	X-11
	Other Federal Funds . . . . .	X-12
	Funding Summary . . . . .	X-12
XI	ORGANIZATIONAL ALTERNATIVES . . . . .	XI-1
	Introduction . . . . .	XI-1
	Organizational Structures . . . . .	XI-1
	Criteria . . . . .	XI-2
	Alternatives . . . . .	XI-2
	Government Department . . . . .	XI-2
	Urban Transportation District . . . . .	XI-3
	Transportation Improvement Authority . . . . .	XI-3
	Intergovernmental Transit Agency . . . . .	XI-4
	Summary . . . . .	XI-4
XII	SERVICE ALTERNATIVES . . . . .	XII-1
	Introduction . . . . .	XII-1
	Transit Service Alternatives . . . . .	XII-2
	Maintain Status Quo . . . . .	XII-2
	Services . . . . .	XII-2
	Advantages . . . . .	XII-2
	Disadvantages . . . . .	XII-2
	Alternative I . . . . .	XII-3
	Services . . . . .	XII-3
	Advantages . . . . .	XII-5
	Disadvantages . . . . .	XII-5
	Capital . . . . .	XII-5
	Alternative II . . . . .	XII-6
	Services . . . . .	XII-6
	Advantages . . . . .	XII-8
	Disadvantages . . . . .	XII-8
	Capital . . . . .	XII-8
	Alternative III . . . . .	XII-9
	Services . . . . .	XII-9
	Advantages . . . . .	XII-10
	Disadvantages . . . . .	XII-10
	Capital . . . . .	XII-10
	Alternative IV . . . . .	XII-11
	Services . . . . .	XII-11
	Advantages . . . . .	XII-13
	Disadvantages . . . . .	XII-14
	Capital . . . . .	XII-14
	Alternative V . . . . .	XII-14
	Services . . . . .	XII-14

	Advantages . . . . .	XII-17
	Disadvantages . . . . .	XII-18
	Capital . . . . .	XII-18
	Summary . . . . .	XII-18
XIII	PREFERRED TRANSIT SERVICE ALTERNATIVE . . . . .	XIII-1
	Introduction . . . . .	XIII-1
	Preferred Transit Service Alternative . . . . .	XIII-1
	Phase 1 (2009-2011) . . . . .	XIII-1
	Regional Route Service . . . . .	XIII-4
	Commuter Route Service . . . . .	XIII-4
	Vanpool Program . . . . .	XIII-5
	Summary . . . . .	XIII-5
	Draft Schedules . . . . .	XIII-5
	Phase II (2012-2013) . . . . .	XIII-5
	Regional Route Service . . . . .	XIII-6
	Commuter Route Service . . . . .	XIII-8
	Vanpool Program . . . . .	XIII-8
	Summary . . . . .	XIII-8
	Draft Schedules . . . . .	XIII-9
	Phase III (2014) . . . . .	XIII-9
	Regional Route Service . . . . .	XIII-11
	Commuter Route Service . . . . .	XIII-11
	Vanpool Program . . . . .	XIII-11
	Summary . . . . .	XIII-12
	Draft Schedules . . . . .	XIII-12
	Capital Costs and Needs . . . . .	XIII-14
XIV	TRANSIT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2009 - 2014) . . . . .	XIV-1
	Introduction . . . . .	XIV-1
	Organizational Plan . . . . .	XIV-1
	Implementation Plan . . . . .	XIV-1
	Timing . . . . .	XIV-2
	Responsibility . . . . .	XIV-2
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	XIV-3
	Capital Plan . . . . .	XIV-3
	Bus Stops and Shelters . . . . .	XIV-3
	Vehicle Purchase . . . . .	XIV-4
	New Transit Facilities . . . . .	XIV-4
	Administrative and Maintenance . . . . .	XIV-5
	Funding Plan . . . . .	XIV-5
	Federal Funding . . . . .	XIV-5
	Local Funding . . . . .	XIV-6
	Management Plans . . . . .	XIV-7
	Organizational Management . . . . .	XIV-7
	Implementation Steps . . . . .	XIV-7
	Marketing Programs . . . . .	XIV-8
	Promotional Activities . . . . .	XIV-9
	Service Evaluations . . . . .	XIV-10
	Marketing Strategy . . . . .	XIV-10
	Support and Improve Service Quality . . . . .	XIV-12
	Enhance the Public Education Programs . . . . .	XIV-12
	Service Monitoring . . . . .	XIV-12

System Performance Measurement . . . . .	XIV-12
Provide Comment Cards and Boxes . . . . .	XIV-13
Implementation Timeline . . . . .	XIV-14

APPENDIX A: Coordination Effort

APPENDIX B: Transportation Improvement Authority

APPENDIX C: TCRP Methodology

APPENDIX D: Transit Demand Model

APPENDIX E: Bus Stop and Facility Diagrams

APPENDIX F: Sample Brochure

## LIST OF TABULATIONS

Table	Title	Page
II-1	Major Employers in the Study Area . . . . .	II-9
II-2	2005 Estimated General Population – Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Hill, Judith Basin, Phillips, and Teton Counties . . . . .	II-13
II-3	Population Projections by County . . . . .	II-21
II-4	2005 Estimated General Population Characteristics – Blaine, Cascade, Chouteau, Hill, Judith Basin, Phillips, and Teton Counties . . . . .	II-29
II-5	2005 Unemployment Rates . . . . .	II-47
II-6	2000 Mode of Transportation to Work . . . . .	II-49
II-7	County-to-County Worker Flow Patterns . . . . .	II-49
III-1	Fort Belknap Senior Citizens Vehicle Fleet Inventory . . . . .	III-2
III-2	Transportation Providers in the Seven-County Area . . . . .	III-11
IV-1	2005 Estimated Non-Program Demand Using the TCRP Method . . . . .	IV-5
IV-2	Regional Transit Demand . . . . .	IV-7
IV-3	2010 Estimated Non-Program Transit Demand Using TCRP Method . . . . .	IV-9
IV-4	2015 Estimated Non-Program Transit Demand Using TCRP Method . . . . .	IV-11
IV-5	Daily Transit Need for General Public in the Study Area . . . . .	IV-14
IV-6	2005 Greatest Transit Need Scores by Census Tracts – General Population . . . . .	IV-17
IV-7	Highest Ranked Block Groups . . . . .	IV-19
V-1	Peer Community Analysis: Performance Measures . . . . .	V-5
VIII-1	Vehicle Type Comparison . . . . .	VIII-7
VIII-2	Vehicle Information for North-Central Montana . . . . .	VIII-13
XI-1	Organizational Alternatives Comparison Matrix . . . . .	XI-5
XII-1	Service Alternatives - Cost Estimates . . . . .	XII-20
XII-2	Draft Service Alternatives Capital - Cost Estimates . . . . .	XII-21
XIII-1	Phase I (2009-2011) . . . . .	XIII-2
XIII-2	Phase II (2012-2013) . . . . .	XIII-7
XIII-3	Phase III (2014-future) . . . . .	XIII-10
XIII-4	Draft Regional Service Schedules . . . . .	XIII-13
XIV-1	Vehicle Purchases (6-Year Plan) . . . . .	XIV-4
XIV-2	Local Match Allocation Share . . . . .	XIV-6
XIV-3	Transit Plan, 2009-2014 . . . . .	XIV-15

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure	Title	Page
II-1	Study Area . . . . .	II-2
II-2	Major Employers and Activity Centers . . . . .	II-5
II-3	2000 US Census Block Groups . . . . .	II-15
II-4	2005 Estimated Population Density . . . . .	II-19
II-5	Population Projections of the Study Area . . . . .	II-22
II-6	2030 Projected Population Density . . . . .	II-25
II-7	Density of Elderly Persons (60 years and Older) . . . . .	II-35
II-8	Density of Mobility-Limited Persons . . . . .	II-37
II-9	Density of Low-Income Persons . . . . .	II-41
II-10	Density of Zero-Vehicle Households . . . . .	II-43
II-11	Density of Youths . . . . .	II-45
III-1	Existing and Planned Transportation Service Area . . . . .	III-12
IV-1	Greatest Transit Needs . . . . .	IV-21
IV-2	Commuter Desire Lines . . . . .	IV-24
IV-3	Mode Split Volumes . . . . .	IV-25
V-1	Annual Passenger-Trips . . . . .	V-3
V-2	Cost per Passenger . . . . .	V-3
VIII-1	Vehicle Groups . . . . .	VIII-2
XII-1	Alternative I . . . . .	XII-4
XII-2	Alternative II . . . . .	XII-7
XII-3	Alternative IV . . . . .	XII-12
XII-4	Alternative V . . . . .	XII-16
XIII-1	Preferred Service Plan . . . . .	XIII-3
XIV-1	Short-Term Plan Timeline . . . . .	XIV-16