

Flathead County Eagle Transit

Five Year Transportation Planning



The Decision to Plan

- Last plan completed November 2013
- May 2016 audit
- Rising costs and falling ridership
- Leadership change
- All community assessments and planning efforts highlight need for more and better public transportation!
 - Area Plan on Aging, October 2015-September 2019
 - Community Health Assessment and Improvement Plan, 2016-2019
 - Kalispell Growth Plan 2035
 - Age-Friendly Flathead

Applying for an MDT Planning Grant

- Good planning costs more money than we have
- Planning grants stretch local funds, 20% match
- \$40,000 total



Putting out a Request for Proposals

- One way to approach comprehensive planning is to hire a consultant.
- We did that with our last plan, so we thought we would do that again.
- We put out a request for proposals in March 2017.

RFP SUMMARY: The scope of work includes assessing current and future transit needs in Flathead County; determining options to achieve a **best-fit mix of routes and services given the assessed needs and likely available resources**; identifying management, procedural, operational and personnel changes needed to implement recommendations and ensure overall effective, efficient service delivery; and providing guidance regarding future capital purchases. The end product is a **comprehensive plan written in layman's terms** that addresses each of the above elements, defines clear goals and objectives with action steps to achieve them, and provides detailed cost projections. Rather than focusing on additions or adjustments to current routes and services, **the planner should take a "fresh eyes" approach** within certain parameters, including: available revenue, considering funding source requirements and restrictions; existing fleet, taking into account liens and resources available for replacement or expansion; current contractual obligations with respect to scope, duration and potential for renegotiation; and ability to transition from current to recommended model(s) of service delivery given resource constraints.

Plan B: Bringing it “In-House”

- Received a proposal but review committee decided a locally produced plan would better fit our needs
- Created a Planning Committee
 - Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Chair, also serving as Chair of Planning Committee
 - TAC member with city planning experience
 - Glacier National Park TAC Liaison (on committee as a private community member)
 - Steven Potuzak, MDT
 - Lisa Sheppard, AOA Director
 - Dale Novak, Transportation Manager
- The Committee met in July to develop a new workplan, timeline and budget.



Workplan, Timeline and Budget

Workplan

- Identify stakeholders and invite them to the planning table: Staff, riders, general public, chambers and business community leaders, health and service providers, community college, city planners and staff, elected officials, etc.
- Identify and research transit successes in similar communities
- Engage consultants with needed expertise for specific tasks: Route development, ride-share options, marketing/rebranding
- Collect, organize and analyze input
- Develop scenarios and prioritize recommendations
- Complete and distribute report

Budget

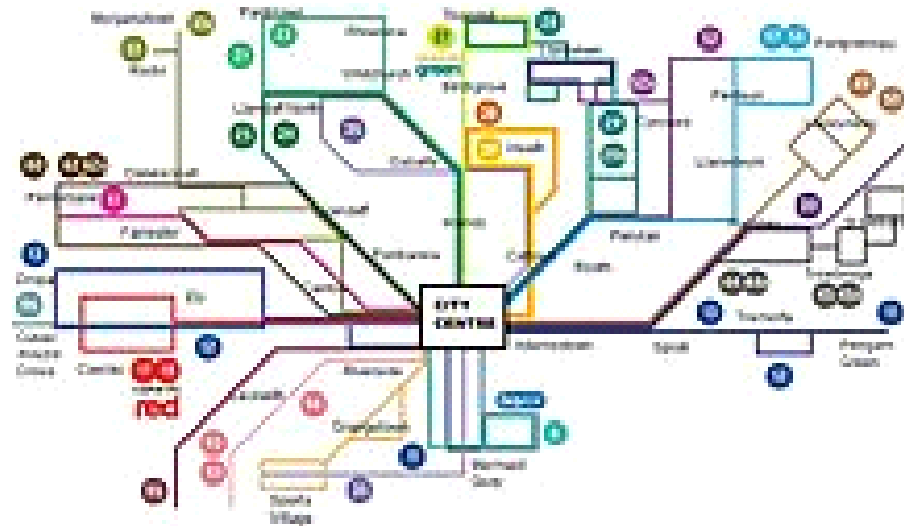
- Consultants
- Meetings and Travel
- Materials and Supplies

Timeline

- 18 months

Current Efforts: Engaging Consultants

- Starting with route/service alternatives
- David Kack, Western transportation Institute, will work with staff and Planning committee to develop options



Current Efforts: Stakeholder Input

- Started with staff to promote ownership of the plan
- Saturday retreat so all could participate – with food of course!
- Provided “Guiding Questions” beforehand
- Focus on ideas and solutions instead of complaints
- Everyone contributed and seemed excited to be part of the process



No ideas were too big or too small

WORK WITH KAUSPELL CITY ON NEW
DOWNTOWN PLAN

"WANT TO" / "NEED TO" RIDE

GAS PRICES AFFECT RIDERSHIP

14¢ UNDER FREE?

CHILDREN ON BUS - AFFECT?

WAL-MART PARTY BUS - SWEEP

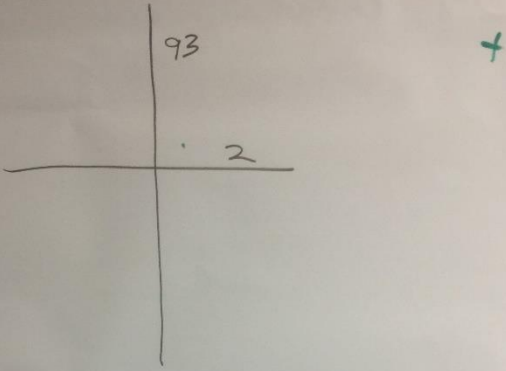
AIRPORT - SCHEDULES OF FLIGHTS

RE-BRANDING:

KEEP EAGLE TRANSIT IN NAME?

UPDATE VISUALS?

18 MONTH DEADLINE



WF, CFAUS MEET DURING DAY & TRANSFER - HWY 40

5 F/D Routes: 4 QUADRANTS & EVERGREEN

w/ ONE NORTH/SOUTH CITY BUS

RE-VISIT Route TIMES / SCHEDULES

WHO ARE OUR CUSTOMERS?

PEOPLE NEED TO DEPEND ON OUR SCHEDULE

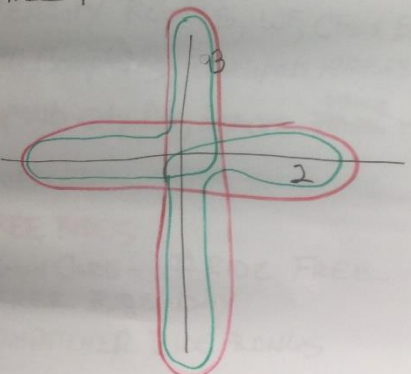
CAN WE SERVICE THE HIGH SCHOOLS? - ALL SCHOOLS?

BIGFORK, LAKESIDE

from route reconfiguration to marketing

KALISPELL FIXED Route: People
TRAVEL TIME
3 CITY BUSES - DEPOT PARK TRANSFER
FIGURE '8' - SEPARATE EVERGREEN RTE
EVERGREEN - FIXED/DEVIATED
FOUR DIRECTIONS: NSEW
TWO DIRECTIONS: N,S OR NW & SE
MULTIPLE TRANSFER PTS

MARKET PLACE ON STREET



ADVERTISING - PEOPLE
NEED TO KNOW WHO WE ARE
FACEBOOK, TWITTER? MORE RADIO STATIONS
SIMPLE FLYERS
PARTNERSHIPS - FVCC, KRMC, GNP

BUS STOP SIGNS

WEEKEND SERVICE
INTERCITY ROUTES, WF, CFALLS, EVERGREEN/KAL.
APT. COMPLEXES, DEVELOPED AREAS
EXPAND CITY RTS, REDUCE TRAVEL TIME 20 mins max

EVERGREEN - DAR SOLUTIONS

FREE RIDES
PUNCH CARD - 11th RIDE FREE
FREE RIDE DAY
DISPATCHER RIDE ALONGS

Guiding Questions

1. Increasing General Ridership

- What can we do to make people “*want*” to ride who don’t “*need*” to ride?
- Are there geographic areas, groups of people, businesses, etc. we should target to increase ridership?
- Are there incentives we could offer?

Guiding Questions

2. Improving Fixed and Commuter Routes/Schedules

- How can we improve fixed and commuter routes, especially in Kalispell? Should we change existing routes in some way?
- What changes could we make to increase ridership, improve customer service and serve more people?
- How can we reduce the time people spend on the bus?

Guiding Questions

3. Enhancing Customer Service

- What are the most important elements of customer service?
- What can we do to improve customer service in our dispatch center and in our buses?
- How can we better support our city bus and Dial-A-Ride passengers to make full use of the service?

Guiding Questions

4. Ensuring Efficient Operations

- How can we get the most/best use out of our resources? (Staff, buses and hours in the day)
- Are there ways to use what we have in a different way to save money or time, cover more area and serve more people?
- Are there ways we could improve efficiencies in daily operations like staff scheduling, maintenance/repairs, pre-trips, manifest development, data collection and reporting?

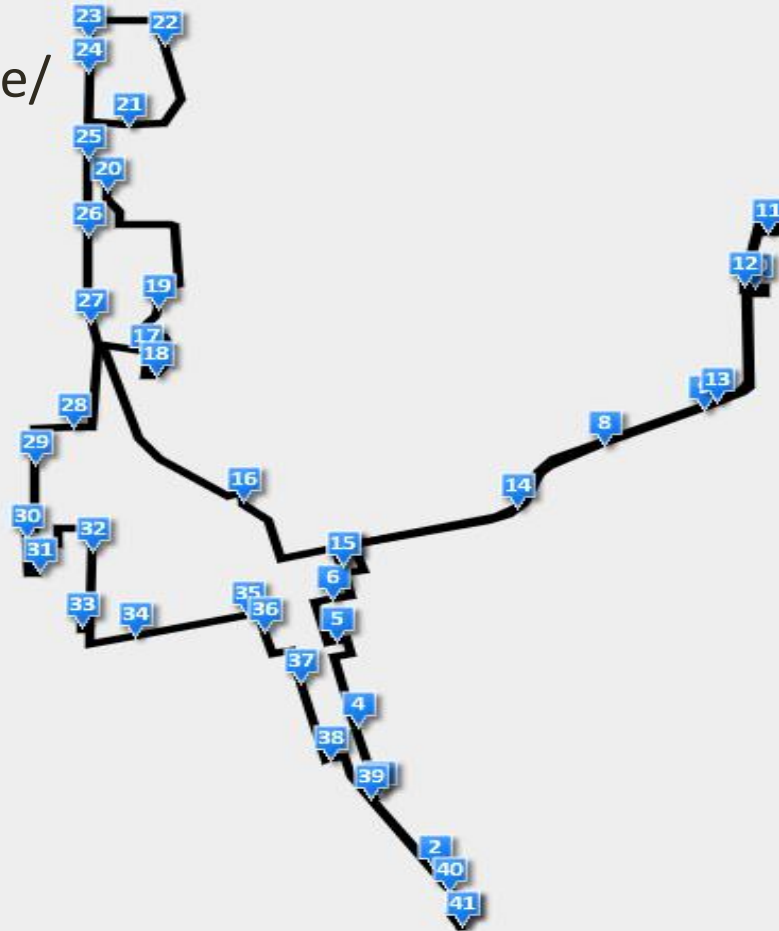
Guiding Questions

5. Branding and Marketing

- We're considering a name change that would more clearly identify us as a public transportation provider. Ideas?
- What could we do better to get the word out about our service?

Making Changes as We Go

- Interactive Web Maps
- <https://flathead.mt.gov/eagle/>



Next Steps

Convene Planning
Committee in
October

Develop detailed
“to do” list for
next 6 months

Meet monthly to
monitor progress
and adjust process
as needed

Contact

Dale Novak

Transportation Manager

Eagle Transit

40 11th St. West, #100

Kalispell, MT 59901

406-758-2427

dnovak@flathead.mt.gov