

Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook®

Supplement and Update

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The *Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook*® is available for download in Word or PDF formats at <http://www.mtcdd.org/trcordn/contents.php>

The *Handbook*® can also be requested by calling the Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities at 406-443-4332 or toll-free in Montana at 866-443-4332

Questions and additional information can be directed to Montana Council on Development Disabilities at 406-443-4332 or toll-free in Montana at 866-443-4332

Supporting and explanatory information for coordination can be found in FTA Circulars. FTA issues guidance, often in the form of circulars, to provide grantees with direction on program specific issues and statutory requirements.

Additional links to information on the Internet can be found in Chapter 12 of the Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook[©].

Legislation, Regulations & Circulars/Guidance

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/leg_reg_circulars_guidance.html

Urbanized Area Formula Program (5307): Grant Application Instructions

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_4125.html

Nonurbanized Area Formula Program (5311) Guidance and Grant Application Instructions

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6519.html

Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities Program (5310) Guidance and Application Instructions

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6622.html

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (5316) Guidance and Application Instructions.

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html

New Freedom Program Guidance (5317) and Application Instructions

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html

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Updates At A Glance

This section highlights the topics/issues that are described within this Supplement to the Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook[©]. Individuals using this Supplement should have a copy (hardcopy or electronic version) of the Handbook. For maximum efficiency and benefit in developing your systems, we ask that you place the supplement pages by Chapter into the existing Handbook Chapters.

- In 2005, the Federal government passed SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-a Legacy for Users), the Federal Surface Transportation Bill. This legislation has directly impacted the business of transit and coordination in that it requires that public transportation projects are derived from locally developed, coordinated transportation plans, created through a process that involves stakeholder representatives, as well as participation by the general public. (To download the bill, please visit <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/legis.htm> or http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/leg_reg_legislation.html.)
- Federal legislation, through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), requires that Section 5310, 5316, and 5317 projects must be derived from a locally developed, public transit-human services transportation plan. (See Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (5310) FTA Circular 9070.1F Chapter 5-Coordinated Planning; JARC (5316) FTA Circular 9050.1 Chapter 5-Coordinated Planning; New Freedom (5317) FTA Circular 9045.1 Chapter 5-Coordinated Planning.)
- The FTA expects public transit systems funded under both Sections 5307 and 5311 formula programs to participate in the local planning process for coordinated public transit-human service transportation in those areas applying for funds under Sections 5310, 5316, or 5317. Some reference materials and websites:
 - Federal Register – Department of Transportation – http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/leg_reg_federal_register.html - 72FR 14851
 - FTA Non-urbanized areas under 49 U.S.C. 5311 Circular 9040.F1 Chapter 5 – Locally Developed Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan – <http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/>
 - FTA Circular 5310 Appendix A & G – JARC New Freedom Coordinated. <http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars>
- **The coordination process should be developed and maintained through the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)** within the area, represented by a broad range of community members, including participation by consumers of the various transportation systems and private transportation providers, such as taxi companies. (See pages S-3-5 and S-3-6 for more information on TAC membership.)
- Coordination can be achieved through agencies contracting, brokering, or bartering for services with the public transportation agency in their area (known as an FTA Section 5311 provider in rural areas, or an FTA Section 5307 provider in small urban areas, and/or an FTA 5310, 5316, or 5317 provider in urban and rural areas).

- Contracts for services should be developed through a **negotiation** process, and take into account the transportation costs of all the various agencies. All costs need to be accounted for and analyzed, and include “hidden,” “fixed,” “variable,” “local,” “Federal,” and “in-kind” costs/funds. (See Handbook Chapter 6 - Planning for Consolidation.)
- States shall certify that the locally developed public transit-human services transportation plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and participation by members of the public including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes who can provide insights into local transportation needs. This group is known as a Transportation Advisory Committee (or TAC) in Montana.
- To provide the most transportation options available, we recommend that communities review all the coordination options, which are communication, collaboration or consolidation of public and specialized transportation systems (explained further in Chapters 2-6 in the Handbook).
- There is no one “right” way to coordinate a transportation system; however, the FTA provides specific direction for what a coordinated plan should include. It is important that every community (or area) goes through a process that includes: data collection and analysis, establishing goals, developing and selecting the best alternative(s) to meet the goals, implementation, and evaluation. This process should lead to the implementation of coordination plan that works best for the community’s needs/situation.
- Coordination through collaboration or consolidation can be achieved through contract for services with the lead transit providers or other local agencies. The contract should be for an established term (timeframe) and should include performance measures, and the ability to terminate the contract if the measures are not being met.
- Coordinating through consolidation through a lead transit provider may lead to an increase in transportation services in an area, by leveraging “local” monies to obtain more Federal funding.
- Through all levels of coordination – communication, collaboration, and consolidation - planning should take into account issues such as driver requirements (Commercial Drivers License or CDL); drug & alcohol testing, and insurance requirements. (See the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration website: <http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/topics/drug/drug.htm>, and http://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/rules-regulations/administration/fmcsr/fmcsrguidedetails.asp?rule_toc=752§ion_toc=752.)

Coordination through communication, collaboration, and consolidation is discussed in Chapters 4 through 5.

The Department of Transportation, Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities (MCDD), Montana Transportation Partnership (MTP), the Department of Public Health and Human Services Transportation Program Coordinator, and Montana Transit Association can provide transportation coordination resources and technical assistance. Two national organizations involved in coordination efforts are United We Ride, a Federal effort to increase coordination, and the Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA), which focuses on smaller transportation systems. (See the supplement to Chapter 12 for resource contact information).

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

(Please insert this page in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 1)

The *Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook*®, completed in 2003, was created by the MCDD Transportation Partnership to be both a reference guide and a step-by-step plan for coordinating transportation services. While the majority of information within the Handbook is still current, events have occurred that lead to the need for this supplement (update).

In August 2005, the Federal government passed SAFETEA-LU, (Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-a Legacy for Users), the Federal Surface Transportation Bill (or “highway bill”). **This legislation was significant and required that: “the state recipient must certify that: the projects selected were derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan; and, the plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers and participation by the public” and “under three FTA formula programs (5310, 5316, 5217), there is a requirement that the designated recipient (MDT) competitively selects projects,” and, that the process must “certify that allocations of the grant are distributed on a fair and equitable basis.”** In Montana, those plans should be developed through the TACs.

TACs have been the long-established designated mechanism to support community coordination, and will be the group leading the coordination/planning process.

SAFETEA-LU strengthened coordination requirements. This Supplement to the Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook will present state program changes, funding information, and the information on how to implement the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The Supplement also provides resources and updates on coordination, analysis of transportation costs, and contracts for services.

MDT also made a strategic decision to emphasize coordination through consolidation of transportation services, with the support of a community transit coordinator, in some cases, and designation of a primary lead agency to apply for and receive FTA funding. See Chapter 6.

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Chapter 2 - What and Why

(Please insert this page in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 2)

What is coordination? As defined in Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Tenth Edition), coordination is "the harmonious functioning of parts for (the) most effective results." As applied to transportation, this would basically mean that all the entities providing transportation, both public and private, would work in harmony with each other, as well as with all of the various individuals, groups and agencies/organizations that need transportation as part of their daily lives.

Transportation coordination, as specifically defined by the Coordination Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM), is,

"A process through which representatives of different agencies and client groups work together to achieve any one or all of the following goals:

- More cost effective service delivery
- Increased capacity to serve unmet needs
- Improved quality of service
- Services which are more easily understood and accessed by riders"

There are three main "levels" of coordination - communication, collaboration, and consolidation - and they are detailed in Chapter 2 through Chapter 6 of this Handbook.

When deciding how your community, through your local TAC, will coordinate, it is very crucial that each agency providing transportation services must know the true costs of providing the services. This is important for both collaboration and consolidation. The Handbook has a spreadsheet for the various public and specialized transportation programs that helps identify all the various costs that may be associated with providing transportation services. The spreadsheet is included in **Chapter 3**. Each agency/organization knowing its true costs of providing transportation services is very important when implementing a coordinated system through coordination or collaboration and **imperative** when implementing a coordinated system through consolidation.

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Chapter 3 – Initial Planning and Data Gathering

(Please insert the following pages in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 3)

There is no one “right” way to coordinate a transportation system; however, the FTA provides specific direction for what a coordinated plan should include. Any coordination process, including the process leading to a consolidated transportation system takes certain steps, and requires that all parties participating in the process have all the information necessary see Table 1 on page S-3-2. **Step one** is to determine if your area has a TAC. If not, then a TAC should be developed or established.

3.1 Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs)

Federal transit law, as amended by SAFETEA–LU, requires that projects selected for funding under the Section 5310 – Transit Assistance Program for Elderly Individuals and Individuals With Disabilities, 5316 – Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and 5317 - New Freedom programs be “derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan,” that the plan be “developed through a process that includes representatives of public, and private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and participation by members of the public,” and that the funding be “distributed on a fair and equitable basis.” Members of the public will include representatives of the targeted population(s) including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes.” (FTA Circular 9070.1F- Chapter 5). The FTA funds are allocated to states “according to a formula based on the number of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities in each state using census 2000 data.” **See Chapter 6.**

In Montana, Transportation Advisory Committees (TACs) are the organization (or groups) that are the focal point for the coordination process. Because TACs are the foundation of the coordination process, some critical information is included in this section. Building and maintaining a strong and vital TAC is essential to the coordination process in all communities. The TAC should meet at least quarterly, but monthly meetings help maintain momentum.

The following activities, responsibilities, guidelines, and recommendations for the TACs are provided by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

(1) Community Planning Session. The planning session would be intended to identify needs based on personal and professional experiences, identify strategies to address the needs, and set priorities based on time, resources, and feasibility for implementation. This process can be done in one meeting or over several sessions with the same group. It is often helpful to identify a facilitator to lead this process. Also, as a means to leverage limited resources and to ensure broad exposure, this could be conducted in cooperation, or coordination, with the applicable metropolitan planning process. The TAC should be represented by at least (1) member on the Metropolitan Planning Board.

(2) Conduct, Community, and Rider Assessment. The Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook and the United We Ride (UWR) Self Assessment Tool included in *The Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System*, developed by FTA are good resources for a community assessment process. A PDF file of the UWR Tool is also available at

<http://www.unitedweride.gov/FFA-Communities.pdf> . The UWR Self Assessment Tool focuses on a series of core elements that are represented in categories of simple diagnostic questions to help groups in states and communities assess their progress towards transportation coordination based on standards of excellence. A *Facilitator's Guide* that offers detailed advice on how to choose an existing group or construct an ad hoc group is also available. Additionally, these tools describe how to develop elements of a plan, such as identifying the needs of targeted populations, assessing gaps and duplication in services, and developing strategies to meet the needs of riders and coordinate services.

(3) Facilitating Focus Groups. This activity is to provide opportunity for greater input from a greater number of representatives, including transportation agencies, human service providers, and passengers. This information can be used to inform the needs analysis in the community. Focus groups also create an opportunity to begin an ongoing dialog with the community representatives on key issues, strategies, and plans for implementation.

(4) Facilitating and Utilizing Surveys. The community may choose to conduct a survey to evaluate the unmet transportation needs within a community. Surveys can be conducted through mail, email, or in-person interviews. Survey design should consider sampling, data collection strategies, analysis, and projected return rates. Surveys should be designed taking accessibility considerations into account, including alternative formats, access to the Internet, literacy levels, and limited English proficiency.

(5) Facilitating and Overseeing Required or Desired Detailed Transit Studies And Analysis. A community may decide to conduct a complex analysis using inventories, interviews, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping, and other types of research strategies. A decision to conduct this type of analysis should take into account the amount of time and funding resources available, and communities should considering leveraging state and Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) resources for these undertakings.

(6) Conducting and Overseeing the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Planning Process. The TAC will ensure that complete and sufficient information is provided to allow the state to certify that the coordinated plan was developed through a process that included representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, and participation by members of the public. Note that that required participants include not only transportation providers, but also providers of human services, and members of the public (e.g., individuals with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with lower incomes) who can provide insights into local transportation needs. It is important that stakeholders be included in the develop and implementation of the local coordinated public transit human services transportation plan. **A planning process in which stakeholders provide their opinions but have no assurance that those opinions will be considered in the outcome does not meet the requirement of “participation.”** Explicit consideration and response should be provided to public input received during the development of the coordinated plan. Stakeholders should have reasonable opportunities to be actively involved in the decision-making process at key decision point, including, but not limited to, development of the proposed coordinated plan document.

(7) The TAC will Develop, Approve, and Provide On-Going Oversight to the Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan. The TAC will consider other transportation planning processes such as with the MPO or other Transportation Improvement Planning (TIP). The TAC will ensure coordination and consistency between the public human services plan, a TIP, and the MPO.

A TAC representative will serve on the community metropolitan planning organization and will liaison appropriate activities with the TAC. Activities can include needs assessment based on the distribution of targeted populations and locations of employment centers, employment-related activities, community services and activities, medical centers, housing, and other destinations; inventories of transportation providers/resources, levels of utilization, duplication of service and unused capacity; gap analysis; any eligibility restrictions, and opportunities for increased coordination of transportation services.

(8) The TAC will Consistently Engage in Outreach Efforts. This activity can enhance the coordination process to ensure that all stakeholders are able to identify the opportunities that are available in building a coordinated system. To increase participation at the local levels from human services partners, State Department of Transportation offices are encouraged to work with their partner agencies at the state level to provide information to their constituencies about the importance of partnering with human service transportation programs and the opportunities that are available through building a coordinated system.

Outreach strategies and potential participants will vary from area to area. Potential outreach strategies could include notices or fliers in centers of community activity, newspaper or radio, announcements, email lists, website postings, and invitation letters to other government agencies, transportation providers, human services providers, and advocacy groups.

Conveners should note that not all potential participants have access to the Internet, and they should not rely exclusively on electronic communication. It is useful to allow many ways to participate, including in-person testimony mail, e-mail, and teleconference. Any public meetings regarding the plan should be held in a location and during a time where accessible transportation services can be made available and adequately advertised to the general public using techniques such as those listed above. Additionally, interpreters for individuals with hearing impairments and English as a second language, as well as accessible formats (e.g., large print Braille, electronic versions) should be provided as required by law.

Metropolitan and statewide planning under 49 U.S.C. 5303 and 5304 require consultation with an expansive list of stakeholders. There is significant overlap between the list of stakeholders identified under those provisions (e.g., private providers of transportation, representatives of transit users, and representatives of individuals with disabilities) and the organizations that should be involved in preparation of the coordinated plan.

TAC Stakeholders

While there are many people who can, and should be on a TAC, it is important to take into account that passengers, potential passengers, persons with disabilities, of low income, and senior citizens are on the TAC. The primary role for all participants on the TAC is to represent the perspectives of persons who use the various transportation services in the area (or communities). Some of the participants may be described as being “transportation dependent” or “transportation disadvantaged.” These terms are typically given to persons with disabilities, elderly, and low income individuals who often do not have dependable private transportation or who cannot drive their own vehicle. No matter the status of the participant representatives on the TAC, they must do the best they can to be aware of the various issues all participants have with the transportation system(s). Examples of some of these issues include:

- Wheelchair users concerned about physical barriers in the path of getting to the transportation services.
- Visually impaired persons concerned if drivers call out stops on transit systems.
- Persons with developmental delays concerned with the ease of reading schedules.
- Requirements for disability to qualify for paratransit services (sometimes referred to origin-to-destination, or door-to-door).
- Concerns regarding the times and days transportation services are available.

It is not possible to list all the various issues that may exist in a community, therefore, the passenger or transportation disadvantaged representatives should have a network of other advocated to keep apprised of the issues in their community. The TAC should strive to include participation from a variety of passengers, advocates, and all interested in community transportation.

Passengers bring a personal perspective to the transportation system. For some individuals, they are only able to access the community through the transportation system. Therefore, these personal stories should be important when the TAC is planning how to improve (through coordination) the transportation system.

According to the Federal Transportation Administration guidelines, consideration should be given to include the following groups and organizations in the coordination process.

1. Transportation Partners:

- a. Area Transportation Agencies Including MPOs, Councils of Government Rural Planning Organizations (RPOs), Regional Councils, Associations of Governments, State Departments of Transportation, and local governments;
- b. Public transportation providers (including Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) paratransit providers and agencies administering the projects under FTA urbanized and nonurbanized programs);

- c. Private transportation providers, including private transportation brokers, taxi operators, van pool providers, and intercity bus operators;
 - (a) Non-profit transportation providers;
 - (b) Past or current organizations funded under the Section 5310, JARC, and/or the New Freedom programs; and
 - (c) Human service agencies funding, operating, and/or providing access to transportation services.
- 2. Passengers and advocates;
- 3. Existing and potential riders, including both general and targeted population passengers (individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes);
- 4. Protection and advocacy organizations;
- 5. Representatives from independent living centers; and
- 6. Advocacy organizations working on behalf of targeted populations.
- 7. Human service partners:
 - a. Agencies that administer health, employment, or other support programs for targeted populations. Examples of such agencies include, but are not limited to, Departments of Social/Human Services, Employment One-Stop Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Workforce Investment Boards, Medicaid, Community Action Programs (CAP), Agency on Aging (AoA); Developmental Disability Council, Community Services Board;
 - b. Non-profit human service provider organizations that serve the targeted populations;
 - c. Job training and placement agencies;
 - d. Housing agencies;
 - e. Health care facilities; and
 - f. Mental health agencies
- 8. Other
 - a. Security and emergency management agencies;
 - b. Tribes and tribal representatives;
 - c. Economic development organizations;

- d. Faith-based and community-based organizations;
- e. Representatives of the business community (e.g., employers);
- f. Appropriate local or state officials and elected officials;
- g. School districts
- h. Policy analysts or experts

Note: Participation in the planning process will not bar providers (public or private) from bidding to provide services identified in the coordinated planning process.

Transportation Partners may include the following agencies in your community:

- Alcohol, Drug, and Mental Health services
- Agency on Aging
- Boys and Girls club
- Cancer Society
- Care Facilities
- Children and Family Services
- County Commissioners
- Council for the Blind
- Community Action Agency
- Developmental Disabilities Centers
- Disability Services
- Easter Seals
- Head Start
- Health and Human Services Department
- Hospitals
- Job Placement and Job Training
- Local Colleges or Universities
- Local Elected Officials
- Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
- Nursing Homes
- Public Assistance Bureau
- Public Transportation
- Private Transportation Providers
- Red Cross
- Regional Planning Organization (RPO)
- Religious Organizations
- Salvation Army
- Senior Centers
- School Boards
- Special Education Programs
- Taxi Operators
- Tribal Council
- United Way
- Veteran's Administration
- Vocational Education Programs
- YMCA and YWCA

All TAC members must remember that there are not unlimited resources within the community for transportation services. Therefore, while it is anticipated that the transportation system should improve through coordination, it may not be possible to address all issues within a certain timeframe. However, with the establishment of a strong coordination plan, with timelines, goals and evaluation components, it is likely that the transportation system should continue to improve over time, to meet the needs of the community.

A few other key points for the TAC include:

1) Information is power - keep seeking and reviewing data in regards to transportation needs and services. Remember, information is always changing. Examples of changing data include adjustments in demand for specific transportation services or updates in transportation agencies' internal policies.

2) Recruit and retain TAC members - A diverse TAC that represents a broad community perspective is important in achieving a coordinated, effective and efficient transportation system. Consumers of the transportation system should be included on the TAC. For more information on the role of the consumer on a TAC, see section 3.5 below.

3) Develop a strong vision - A strong vision tied to the mission (action) plan will help keep the TAC focused on long range goals. Coordination is an on-going process, so a strong vision will help maintain the process from year to year.

4) Organizational structures need to be defined - There may be many different individuals and agencies involved in the TAC and coordination process. Consensus should be reached on issues including the following:

- Mission and purpose
- Membership and leadership
- Decision-making procedures and processes
- Policies and procedures
- Frequency of meeting

5) Consistency is very important, and includes issues such as:

- Sending out agendas prior to meetings
- Prepare and distribute minutes of meetings
- Communication of information to all members
- Location and schedule of meetings
- Value the input of each member

6) Leadership is important - A strong champion or champions will keep the TAC focused on its mission and keep the group moving forward.

7) Follow the principles of KISS & CASE:

- Keep It Simple, Sweetheart (don't overcomplicate the issues and what needs to be done)
- Copy and Steal Everything (don't reinvent the wheel, use existing resources to make the TAC's job easier by learning from others who have gone through a similar process)

8) Coordination is an on-going process. It is helpful for TAC members to remember that celebrating small successes and to evaluate (reevaluate) the processes and direction on a periodical basis is important. As noted, step one is to ensure your TAC is an inclusive, organized and working entity.

Table 1: Coordination Process

Step	Tools/Process
#1 - Establish the TAC and train members on responsibilities.	The Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook provides information on development and training.
#2 - Assess Community Needs	Collect data. Utilize census data – number of elderly, persons of low income, and individuals with disabilities. Utilize community resources - private transit providers, human service agencies, and others. Reference United We Ride Self-Assessment Tools for Communities.
#3 - Evaluate Information, Establish & Prioritize Goals	Use focus groups, transit studies, and survey tools within the Handbook and other resources to determine unmet transportation needs in the community. Delineate resources within the community. Write down and prioritize goals that will begin to fulfill identified needs.
#4 – Implementation	Coordinate through communication, collaboration, and consolidation. Negotiate and implement contracts for services, begin implementing coordination efforts based on priorities from Step #3.
#5 - Evaluation – Take Stock of Where You Are and What You Have Accomplished	Track data; costs, rides, etc., to determine success of implementation. Indicates needs for adjustments/modifications as necessary.
#6 - Ongoing Responsibilities	Consistent outreach to all stakeholders. Oversight to the transit coordination plan.

Figure 1 below shows the relationship of the various steps in the coordination process. Note that the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) is at the center of the coordination process. These processes may take some time, but the diligence and effort put into the coordination process will pay off in an efficient and harmonious system when complete. The key is every party involved must be validated and have a part in the process.

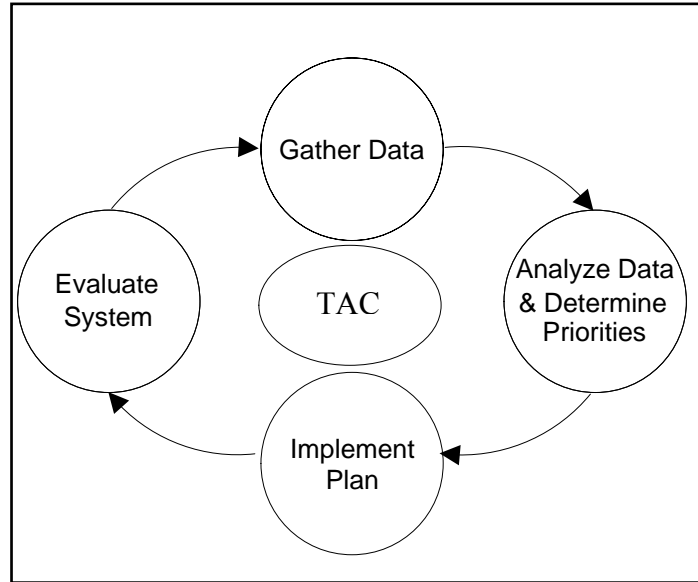


Figure 1: Coordination Process Steps

While the process noted above appears simplistic, each step requires its own specific efforts, and there are typically many different stakeholders (individuals, groups, agencies, etc.) involved in the process, which may have different views. Chapter 10 of the Handbook provides additional resources for all aspects of the coordination effort.

3.2 Gathering Information

To determine the transportation resources in the community, the local TAC should have all agencies in the area that provide transportation complete the survey which is included in this document as Appendix A (pages 10-11 through 10-20 in the Handbook). By having each agency (either public or private) complete the survey, the outcome will be a comprehensive listing of all available transportation resources in the area. In some instances, private services such as taxi companies may be able to provide cost-effective transportation solutions, and therefore should be included in the coordination process (and on the TAC). Although applications may require less survey information, having more comprehensive data will better identify needs or gaps in your community.

As part of the gathering information process, and when participating in community coordination, it is crucial that each agency providing transportation services must know the true costs of providing these services. The Handbook has a spreadsheet for the various public and specialized transportation programs that helps identify all the various costs that may be associated with providing transportation services. **The spreadsheet is included in Chapter 3 of the Handbook. Each agency/organization knowing its true costs of providing transportation services is very important when implementing a coordinated system and imperative when implementing a coordinated system through collaboration or consolidation.**

In addition to knowing what resources are available, the transportation “needs” should be identified by the TAC. Identifying the needs of the community is as simple as listing what each individual, group or agency feels is necessary, such as, “we need transportation that operates during weeknights until at least 9:00 pm.” During the planning process, these needs can be prioritized. Consumer surveys should also be completed to identify needs or gaps in service. See Appendix C for an example of a rider survey.

3.3 Evaluating & Prioritizing Information

Once the information has been gathered, it should be analyzed to highlight the transportation resources in the community. This is as simple as having some tables that show the vehicles available, funding being spent, and other resources, such as individuals who have specific knowledge about transportation. The *Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook*, pages 10-25 through 10-33, provides a template that could be used when evaluating the data gathered in Step 1. The template is included in Chapter 3.

As previously noted, it is important that the agencies involved in the coordination process know the true cost of providing their transportation services. This process can be accomplished by having each agency that provides transportation fill out the Spreadsheet included in Chapter 10 of the Handbook, pages 10-21 through 10-23.

3.4 FTA Information on Coordination Plans

The Federal Transit Administration has provided guidance for how to put together a coordination plan, as well as who should be included in putting the plan together. The majority of the information can be found in FTA Circular 9070.1F, Chapter V (see <http://www.fta.dot.gov/documents/C9070.1F.doc> for more information). As noted in the Circular, the “required elements” of a coordination plan include:

- (1) An assessment of available services that identifies current transportation providers (public, private, and non-profit);
- (2) An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes. This assessment can be based on the experiences and perceptions of the planning partners or on more sophisticated data collection efforts, and gaps in service
- (3) Strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery; and
- (4) Priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple program sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

As noted in the Handbook and this supplement, the TACs are the group responsible for the coordination plans are the TACs. The Montana Department of Transportation requires each local transportation service area must have a TAC – there must be one TAC per service area.

A TAC is different than a transit agency's transportation board. The transportation or transit board is a governing body for a transit agency and although participates in the development of a community coordination plan it is not responsible for approval of the plan. The TAC is not a governing body, but rather, an advisory group that cooperatively participates with the local transit operator in assessing and prioritizing local needs, and developing and approving the local coordination plan.

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Chapter 6 – Planning for Consolidation

(Please insert the following pages in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 6. It is important to review all of the information in Chapter 6 prior to developing your community coordination plan.)

The “consolidation” emphasis is highlighted in the following information from the Montana Department of Transportation for communities making requests for funds (FTA Section 5310, 5311, 5316 - Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and 5317 - New Freedom).

1) MDT is requiring one application per community. The application may include more than one funding project, i.e. 5311, 5310. **To comply with FTA regulations the application should identify projects by funding source.**

2) Funding for capital (5310) will come through the lead agencies application, but approved capital for subrecipients/requestors will be titled in the subrecipient/requestor’s name. The subrecipient/requestor of capital resources will be responsible to provide the local match for the requested capital.

3) Operating dollars will only be provided to the lead agency in the community. If a subrecipient needs operating money to provide a service as part of the coordination plan, then they must receive the funding through the lead agency and provide the supporting local match for the operating dollars. The lead agency will contract with the subrecipient for specific specialized services.

The lead agency will be responsible for submitting the application and coordination plan for additional funding to be contracted back to the subrecipient. All subrecipients must meet grant funding requirements of FTA Section 5311 – Reference 49 CFR Part 19 below; Circular 5010 and all appropriate subsections. This process would occur through the Transportation Advisory Committees. The TAC would approve the coordination plan prior to submitting the application.

Title 49 -Transportation Part 19 Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Agreements § 19.5 Subawards. *Unless sections of this part specifically exclude subrecipients from coverage, the provisions of this part shall be applied to subrecipients performing work under awards if such subrecipients are institutions of higher education, hospitals or other non-profit organizations. State and local government subrecipients are subject to the provisions of 49 CFR part 18, “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments.”*

4) All agencies receiving operating or capital funding (i.e. Lead agency, subrecipients, etc.) must sign separate certifications (certs) and assurances and submit them with the one application to MDT.

When planning for a consolidated application, there are a couple of key issues to remember.

1) Local Match – Although a consolidated application is made, the various agencies are expected to be part of the TAC and are responsible (accountable) for the local match for the operating and/or capital assistance they received.

A Memorandum of Understanding, Letter of Agreement, or Contract for Services must be in place to memorialize or legalize how the agencies will work together, and how much local match is provided. A Memorandum of Understanding (or MOU) generally focuses on global issues, such as "organization A and B agree to coordinate to the extent possible." A Letter of Agreement would be more specific, such as, "organization A agrees to bid maintenance of its vehicles along with Organization B, so as to obtain a better rate." A Letter of Agreement may also put specific coordination details in a "letter" such as, "organization A agrees to pay organization B a rate of \$35 per hour for maintenance on Organization A's vehicles." A Contract for Services would have specific details about one organization contracting for transportation services from another. The details would include costs, pick-up times, routes (if a fixed route is developed), dates of service, etc.

For example, if a program such as Head Start or a health and human services agency contract with a public transportation provider for services, the amount of that contract can be used as local match by the public transportation provider. This should increase the amount of Federal funding the public transportation provider can receive. Section 6.1 provides additional information on funding.

A transit provider determines how much is needed for local match through Net Operating Expenses. FTA definition of Operating Expenses is : “those expenses that remain after the provider subtracts operating revenues from eligible operating expenses.” Operating revenues include farebox revenues. **Farebox revenues are revenue ‘tied’ to an individual.** Farebox revenues include fares paid by riders who are later reimbursed by a human service agency, such as Medicaid, or other user-side subsidy arrangement. “User-side subsidy” means a program whereby users of the transit service are permitted to purchase transportation vouchers at prices substantially below the fares charged by the transit providers. The users can exchange these vouchers for transportation services, and the providers can then redeem them for full fare. Purchase of transit passes, potentially through the TANF program, or other fare media for clients would be considered farebox revenue. Farebox revenues do not include payments made directly to the transit provider by human services agencies through purchase of service, i.e. service that is not tied to an individual, but tied to a service. Area Agencies on Aging contracts to provide rides to the senior program or other services would constitute a ‘purchase of service.’ Farebox revenues are **not** used to compute match.

2) Program Funding – Depending upon the funding received (Section 5310, 5311, etc.) there may be different program requirements (Commercial Drivers License, Drug & Alcohol Testing). It is likely that a human service agency contracting with a 5311 general public transit provider would be required to comply with 5311 program requirements. Reference Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – Part 383 – 49 CFR Part 40 – Drug Alcohol Testing. **It is important to understand federal requirements.** MDT has three regional transit planners available for

assistance. These planners can provide technical assistance to make sure your transportation system is meeting all the requirements. The Montana Department of Transportation application the MDT Application is available online at

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/forms/transit/coordplan_appbook.pdf and the

Guidance Booklet is available at

http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/manuals/transit_guidebook.pdf.

3) **As previously noted**, the TAC should be the organization (group) managing the developed plan. Developing and modifying a coordination plan can be difficult at times. Therefore, the TAC should take advantage of all of the resources available to them including use of the Montana Coordinated Transportation Handbook and this supplement, using Federal resources such as the United We Ride program, and attending training sessions provided by the Montana Department of Transportation.

6.1 Transportation Costs and Analysis

It is very important that all agencies involved in the coordination planning process be aware of their costs for providing transportation services. This section provides a review of costs, and analyzes the various components of these costs.

6.1.1 Public Transportation Funding

There are five funding programs within Montana that provide money for public and specialized transportation services (see Chapter 12 for links that provide further information). All of the funding programs, except the FTA Section 5309 program, are administered by the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT).

Currently, FTA Section 5311 (rural general public transportation) providers have approximately 54 percent of their service costs paid for through the Federal Transit Administration. Note: Information from FTA Circular C 9040, IF, Chapter III, provides more detailed information on 5311 apportionments, transfer of other FTA funds (5310) to Section 5311, eligible expenses and match requirements. Federal funds come into the state through MDT and applications are made by providers for these funds on an annual basis.

While Federal programs can provide a substantial funding there is still a requirement that the local general public transportation providers find roughly 46 percent of their funding from “local” sources. Another way to look at this is that for every \$1.00 of contract funds from a DPHHS service provider the public transportation system can access an additional \$1.17 in FTA funds for a total of \$2.17. It is most important that when a DPHHS or similar agency enters into negotiations for a contract for services that they clearly understand the FTA Section 5311 program, and as important, their own costs for providing transportation services. These funds are administered through the Montana Department of Transportation, and applications are made by providers for these funds on an annual basis.

For example, a public transportation system in a community may cost approximately \$500,000 per year to operate (all costs included). In general, the FTA Section 5311 program will pay 54% or \$270,000 of the costs of the system. The provider, therefore, must find \$230,000 of local

funds (the balance). Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the various cost categories, and the amount of these costs that are paid through the FTA Section 5311 program.

Table 2: FTA Section 5311 Operating Costs

	Direct Cost	In-Kind
1. Labor		
a. Driver Wages	_____	_____
b. Mechanics Wages	_____	_____
c. Dispatcher Wages	_____	_____
2. Fringe Benefits		
a. Driver/Mechanic/Dispatcher Fringe Benefits Distribution	_____	_____
3. Services		
a. Professional and Technical Services (itemize)	_____	_____
b. Advertising Fees	_____	_____
c. Custodial Services (transportation-related only)	_____	_____
d. Other Services (itemize)	_____	_____
4. Materials and Supplies Consumed		
a. Fuel and Lubricants	_____	_____
b. Other Materials and Supplies	_____	_____
5. Purchased Transportation Service		
a. Purchased Transportation Service	_____	_____
6. Taxes		
a. Vehicle licensing and registration fees	_____	_____
7. Other Operating Expenses		
a. Other Expenses (itemize)	_____	_____
TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ _____	\$ _____

Table 3: FTA Section 5311 Administrative Costs

	Direct Cost	In-Kind
1. Labor		
a. Manager/Coordinator, Administrative Personnel (itemize)	_____	_____
2. Fringe Benefits		
a. Manager/Coordinator, Administrative Personnel Fringe Benefits Distribution	_____	_____
3. Materials and Supplies		
a. Office Supplies	_____	_____
4. Casualty & Liability Costs		
a. Casualty and Liability Costs	_____	_____
5. Utilities		
a. Utilities (Gas, Electric, Sewer, Phone and Internet)	_____	_____
6. Taxes		
a. Property Tax	_____	_____
7. Leases and Rentals		
a. Vehicle (itemize)	_____	_____
b. Facilities (itemize)	_____	_____
8. Miscellaneous Expense		
a. Dues and Subscriptions (transit-related only)	_____	_____
b. Travel and Meetings (transit-related only)	_____	_____
c. Drug Testing	_____	_____
d. Promotional/Coordination & Ridesharing	_____	_____
e. Indirect Cost (prior approval required from MDT, Attach plan)	_____	_____
9. Other Administrative Expenses		
a. Other administrative expenses (itemize)	_____	_____
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$ _____	\$ _____

Table 4: FTA Section 5311 Maintenance Costs

	Direct Cost	In-Kind
1. Maintenance		
a. Vehicle Maintenance Parts and Service (itemize)	_____	_____
b. Tire and Tubes	_____	_____
TOTAL MAINTENANCE EXPENSES	\$ _____	\$ _____

Table 5: FTA Section 5311 Reimbursement Calculations

1. Total Operating Expenses	\$ _____	
2. Total Amount of Fares/Donations	\$ _____	
3. Net Operating Deficit (line 1 minus line 2)	\$ _____	
4. Eligible Operating Reimbursement at 54%		\$ _____
5. Total Administrative Expenses	\$ _____	
6. Eligible Administrative Reimbursement at 70%		\$ _____
7. Total Maintenance Expenses	\$ _____	
8. Eligible Maintenance Reimbursement at 80%		\$ _____
9. Add lines 4, 6 and 8		
TOTAL OPERATING GRANT REQUEST		\$ _____
Eligible In-Kind @ 15% of Total Operating Grant Request	\$ _____	

It is important that when a human service agency or community enters into negotiations for a contract for services that they **understand the FTA Section 5311 program, their own costs for providing transportation services and federal common grant rule requirements**. The following section provides more information on the costs of human service agencies.

6.1.2 Human Service Transportation Costs

Preface: In addition to understanding their own costs of providing transportation, human service agencies should be aware that if they want to contract with a public transportation agency to provide some or all of their transportation services, **they have the right and obligation for their own protection** to negotiate a contract, including such items as service parameters, costs, etc. The contract should be for a set term (timeframe) and should allow for the contract to be cancelled if certain performance measures are not met (such as a high number of late arrivals of the vehicles).

The costs itemized in Tables 2-4 are some of the same costs that a human services agency will incur when providing transportation. However, sometimes these costs are “hidden” based on the nature of the services provided by the human service agency.

For example, an agency that provides group home living facilities, as well as other services such as employment opportunities, or a sheltered workshop, may have the need to transport their clients between locations. In this instance, a group home manager may spend a portion of their time transporting clients between the group home and other activities. However, it may be the

case that the time the group home manager spends driving clients is not itemized or classified as a transportation expense. This would then be a “hidden” cost of providing transportation. Therefore, when a human service or similar agency analyzes its transportation costs prior to entering into negotiations for a contract for services, they must make sure they account for these “hidden” costs. In order to fully account for all transportation related costs, all agencies should use the form in Appendix B to determine all costs related to their transportation services. Agencies also need to ensure that all of the time that staff may spend working on transportation issues, including driving, planning schedules, maintenance activities, etc., is accounted for.

This issue of accounting for costs is a complex process. For instance, some clients may need an attendant for some or all activities, such as medical or social service appointments. In this case the driver may also act as the attendant. It may not be cost effective to contract for rides where the driver also acts as the attendant, especially in the case of trips that cover longer distances. Unfortunately, there are typically no “hard and fast” rules in these processes and analyses. Agencies must be aware of all aspects of their costs related to transportation and other services. However, it is only through the analysis and planning process that decisions (choices) can be made that may lead to a more coordinated (consolidated) and likely efficient transportation system.

6.2 Standard Measurements (Metrics) – Cost per ride, per mile, per hour

When entering into the process that may lead to a contract for transportation services, it is important to know the overall costs associated with providing transportation, as well as the number of rides that are provided for that cost. It is also important to know the mileage and hours expended in providing transportation services.

The standard measurements typically looked at by transportation agencies are the cost per ride, cost per mile, and cost per hour. Therefore, it is important that the human services or similar agency also knows its transportation expenses based on similar parameters. This is because when contracting for services, the human services agency will typically contract for services based on the number of rides, miles, or hours that will be necessary to provide a certain level of transportation services.

It is also important when negotiating a contract for services that all agencies are using the same basis when using these terms (measures). For example, public transportation agencies typically consider a “ride” as a one-way ride on one vehicle. Therefore, if a rider must transfer buses between their origin and destination, they have taken two rides (Figure 2).

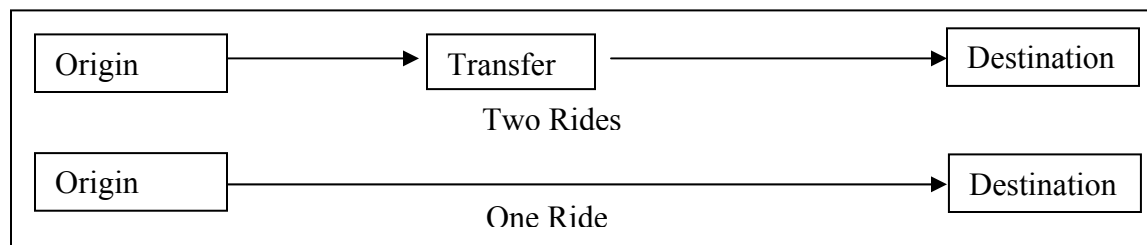


Figure 2: “Ride” Example

Further, “miles” may be total vehicle miles or service miles. “Hours” may be total hours or service hours. These terms are described in Appendix D. It is important, therefore, when planning for coordination and negotiating for a contract for services that both (or all) agencies in the process are using the same measures (terms).

6.3 Cost Analysis Example

An example is provided herein to show how contracting for services can be beneficial to a human service, and public transportation agency, as well as the community in general. The example, although somewhat simplified, highlights how to look at the cost of providing services for each agency, and how negotiations may progress. For the example, we will use the data from Table 6. See Appendix B for the various items that may be included in these costs.

The Human Service Agency in the example is an agency with five (5) group homes and a sheltered workshop. Each group home has a mini-van for transportation, driven by the group home managers, as well as two larger 15-passenger vehicles, driven by a full-time and a three-quarter time driver. The public transit agency has one (1) fixed route, and three (3) vehicles for demand-responsive service, and two (2) spare vehicles.

Table 6: Transportation Cost Items

	Human Service Agency	Public Transit Agency
Cost Categories		
Operating Costs	\$142,750	\$513,000
Administration Costs	\$41,000	\$148,500
Maintenance Costs	\$3,750	\$13,500
Total Costs	\$187,500	\$675,000
Service Parameters		
Total number of vehicles	7	6
Total number of rides	40,000	72,000
Total number of miles	126,400	190,000
Total hours of service	7,813	12,980
Service Performance		
Cost per ride	\$4.69	\$9.38
Cost per mile	\$1.48	\$3.55
Cost per hour	\$24.00	\$52.00

The transportation costs for the Human Service Agency are shown in Table 7. All “hidden” costs have been accounted for.

Table 7: Human Service Agency Transportation Costs

Cost Items	Annual Cost
Operational Costs	
Driving (including Group Home managers time)**	\$113,200
Fuel & Oil	\$27,800
Other operating expenses	\$1,750
Administration Costs	
Manager/Director**	\$29,500
Insurance	\$10,700
Other Admin Costs	\$800
Maintenance Costs	
	\$3,750
Total Costs	\$187,500

**These costs should be included as transportation costs for comparative purposes. However, these costs may not be “saved” or reduced through the coordination/consolidation process.

We see in this example that the Human Service Agency tends to be more efficient, having a lower cost per ride, cost per mile, and cost per hour. This tends to be true because such agencies typically “group” rides more than a public transportation agency. For example, a vehicle from the Human Service Agency may pick-up 3 to 5 people at a group home, and then pick-up another group of 3 to 5 people at another group home, and then drive to the sheltered workshop. A public transportation agency may pick-up 1 or 2 riders at a location, travel a distance to pick-up another rider, then drop-off a rider or two, before picking-up anyone else. The public transportation agency typically deals with individual riders, rather than “groups” of riders. The public transportation agency can therefore become more efficient with its resources, if it can provide rides to “groups” of individuals, through a contract for services with a human service agency.

6.4 Contract for Services - Costs

Again, it is important to note that in addition to understanding their own costs of providing transportation, human service agencies should be aware that if they want to contract with a public transportation agency to provide some or all of their transportation services, they have the right (and obligation for their protection) to negotiate a contract, including such items as service parameters, costs, etc. The contract should be for a set term (timeframe) and should allow for the contract to be cancelled if certain performance measures are not met (such as a high number of late arrivals of the vehicles).

As the Human Service Agency and the Public Transportation Agency discuss their coordination/consolidation efforts, it is important that they know their costs (Table 1). It is with this information, that they can begin a collaborative effort that will hopefully lead to a contract for services.

The basis for negotiations should be on a cost per hour or cost per mile basis. This is because as the public transportation agency becomes more efficient, its cost per ride should decrease, while the cost per mile or per hour will likely stay the same, or be reduced at a lower rate. The basis for negotiation also depends, to an extent, on the type of service, or services that may be included (e.g., fixed route, demand-responsive, or paratransit type services). The type and distance of the rides also needs to be considered.

For simplicity sake, assume the Public Transportation Agency in Table 1 is able to double its ridership, with all costs, hours of service and mileage; remaining the same (typical of fixed-route service). The cost per ride would be cut in half, from \$9.38 per ride to \$4.69 per ride (see below).

$$\begin{aligned} \$675,000 / 72,000 \text{ rides} &= \$9.38 \text{ per ride} \\ \$675,000 / 144,000 \text{ rides} &= \$4.69 \text{ per ride} \end{aligned}$$

In this example, the cost per hour and cost per mile would stay the same, but because twice as many people are using the public transportation service, only the cost per ride decreases. From the Public Transportation Agency's standpoint, the cost of providing the service remains close to the same, whether one, five, or eight people get on the vehicle. Therefore, when contracting for services, a charge based on mileage or hours of service may make the most sense. This only is true if the service of the Public Transportation Agency does not increase significantly. This is highlighted later in the document when fixed versus variable costs are discussed.

From the information in Table 1, we see that the maximum that the Human Service Agency can offer is \$1.48 per mile, given its existing budget. This is roughly 42 percent of the cost per mile of the Public Transportation Agency. This is not the end of the negotiations, however. As previously discussed, public transportation agencies receive Federal funds to assist with providing their service, which affects the various costs, as shown in the next section.

6.5 Cost Analysis

This section looks at the costs from the perspective of a rural general public transportation provider, known as a FTA Section 5311 provider. This section analyzes which costs are paid for through the Federal program, and which need to be covered by "local" sources. Further, we analyze fixed versus variable costs.

6.5.1 Cost Analysis – Federal vs. Local

When analyzing all the costs, and negotiating for a contract for services, it is important to know the costs in terms of full (total) costs, fixed costs, variable costs, and local costs (match). As shown in Appendix B, and highlighted herein, public transportation agencies, specifically those in rural areas (FTA Section 5311 providers) have certain percentages of their costs reimbursed through the Montana Department of Transportation, which receives funding from the Federal Transit Administration. Table 8 shows these various costs. For this example, it is assumed that the Public Transportation Agency collects \$54,000 in fare revenue.

Table 8: Cost Analysis (Federal vs. Local)

Cost Category	Full (Total)Cost	Federal Subsidy	Local Cost (Match)
Operating Costs	\$513,000	\$247,860	\$265,140
Administration Costs	\$148,500	\$118,800	\$29,700
Maintenance Costs	\$13,500	\$10,800	\$2,700
Totals	\$675,000	\$377,460	\$297,540

As shown in Appendix B, the fare revenue reduces the amount of Federal match (subsidy) received for the operating costs, which reduces the overall Federal match of the Public Transportation Agency. If no fares were collected, the Federal Subsidy and Local Match for operating costs would be \$277,020 and \$235,980, respectively. Therefore, by collecting \$54,000 in fares, the Public Transportation Agency reduces its need for Local Match for operating costs by \$29,160 [\$264,140 - \$235,980]. Based on the information in Table 8, the local cost per mile for the Public Transportation Agency is calculated to be \$1.57 per mile [$\$297,540 / 190,000$ miles].

The Montana Department of Transportation allows up to 15 percent of the local match to be “in-kind.” In-kind costs are costs associated with supplies or services that would normally incur a charge (have to be paid), but have been “donated” to the transportation provider. In-kind costs may include office space for the transportation provider, or donated services, such as advertising work or advertising space in a newspaper. These in-kind costs can reduce the amount of funds (cash) that are needed to operate the public transportation system, and can be used to stretch local funds.

The Montana Department of Transportation must approve a public transportation agencies in-kind match plan, so agencies are encouraged to contact MDT prior to the final submittal of their annual request for funding (which includes their coordination plan). By utilizing allowable in-kind match, public transportation agencies should be able to increase the amount of Federal funding they can receive (match). When analyzing costs, it is important to differentiate between Federal and local costs, including in-kind costs.

6.5.2 Cost Analysis – Fixed vs. Variable

Fixed costs remain constant over a range of activity, while variable costs change when the level of activity changes. For example, the cost to insure a vehicle will remain fixed, whether the vehicle is driven for 10,000 miles or 50,000 miles. Insurance is typically viewed as a fixed cost. However, the cost of fuel (gasoline or diesel) used by a vehicle is dependent upon how many miles the vehicle is driven. Therefore, fuel is a variable cost. In general, the administrative costs of a public transportation agency are typically viewed as fixed costs. Administrative costs typically remain set within a range of service (number of buses operated). However, if services are significantly expanded, administrative costs could, and probably will, increase.

Therefore, if a Public Transportation Agency were to contract for services, and those services did not significantly burden the Public Transportation Agency; it is likely that only their variable costs would increase. Table 9 shows the analysis of fixed versus variable costs.

Table 9: Fixed vs. Variable Costs

Cost Category	Total Cost	Fixed Component	Variable Component
Operating Costs	\$513,000	\$0	\$513,000
Administrative Costs	\$148,500	\$148,500	\$0
Maintenance Costs	\$13,500	\$0	\$13,500
Totals	\$675,000	\$148,500	\$526,500

Based on this cost analysis, the Public Transportation Agency would have a variable cost rate of \$2.77 per mile ($\$526,500 / 190,000$ miles) on a full-cost basis. However, given the analysis in Table 8, we know that the operating and maintenance costs are subsidized (reimbursed) through a Federal program. Given the information in Table 3 and Table 4, we can calculate the “local” variable costs to be a total of \$267,840 [$\$265,140 + \$2,700$], which is the “local” portion of the variable costs, which are the operating and maintenance costs.

Taken one step further, the local variable cost on a per-mile basis can be calculated as \$1.41 per mile [$\$267,840 / 190,000$ miles]. This is an important figure as will be discussed in the following section.

6.6 Cost Analysis Summary

It is important to remember that the cost analysis presented herein is for illustrative purposes only. Only a proper analysis of costs for each agency will yield the data necessary for negotiating a contract for services.

Table 10 shows the various types of costs that were used as part of this example, including full (total); Federal; local; fixed and variable. Table 11 shows these various costs on a per-mile basis.

Table 10: Public Transportation Agency Cost Analysis Summary

Cost Category	Full (Total) Cost	Fixed Amount	Variable Amount	Federal Cost (Match)	Local Cost (Match)
Operational Costs	\$513,000	\$0	\$513,000	\$247,860	\$265,140
Administrative Costs	\$148,500	\$148,500	\$0	\$118,800	\$29,700
Maintenance Costs	\$13,500	\$0	\$13,500	\$10,800	\$2,700
Totals	\$675,000	\$148,500	\$526,500	\$377,460	\$297,540

The Public Transportation Agency operated a total of 190,000 miles. Therefore, the costs noted in Table 10, can be shown on a per mile basis. Table 11 shows this data.

Table 11: Cost Analysis Summary on a Per Mile Basis

Cost Category	Full (Total) Cost	Fixed Amount	Variable Amount	Federal Cost (Match)	Local Cost (Match)
Operational Costs	\$2.70	N/A	\$2.70	\$1.30	\$1.40
Administrative Costs	\$0.78	\$0.78	N/A	\$0.63	\$0.16
Maintenance Costs	\$0.07	N/A	\$0.07	\$0.06	\$0.01
Totals	\$3.55	\$0.78	\$2.77	\$1.99	\$1.57

The variable costs, on a local basis, are \$1.41 per mile (\$1.40 + \$0.01).

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Based on the example herein, the Public Transportation Agency would need to collect a minimum of \$1.41 per mile, or else it would lose money. The Human Service Agency can provide no more than \$1.48 per mile, or it will spend more on transportation than its current costs (Table 6). Therefore there is a negotiation range of 7 cents (\$0.07) per mile.

Any funding that the Human Service Agency provides over the \$1.41 per mile rate to the Public Transportation Agency, should be able to be leveraged to secure more Federal funding, and to provide more service within the community. Suppose the Human Service Agency and Public Transportation Agency agreed on a rate of \$1.45 per mile. Based on the Human Service Agency's mileage of 126,400 (Table 6), the Public Transportation Agency would receive an additional \$5,056 of funds [$\$0.04/\text{mile} \times 126,400 \text{ miles}$]. This additional funding of \$5,056 should leverage an additional \$6,409 of Federal funding. This is due to the fact that the Federal funds pay approximately 55.9 percent of the cost of the public transportation service [$\$377,460 / \$675,000$]. Therefore, every local dollar invested in the public transportation system leverages approximately \$1.27 of Federal funds [$\$377,460 / \$297,540$].

While this example illustrates the various cost analysis that are necessary when negotiating a contract for transportation services, it does not cover other issues that may be part of the negotiation process. For example, it may be the case that a vehicle or vehicles may be transferred from the Human Service Agency to the Public Transportation Agency. If such a transfer were to take place, there would be a value to the vehicles. This value may be used to reduce the overall cost of the contract for services in the first year, or the value may be amortized over the term of the contract.

As illustrated within this document, there are many factors to consider when entering into coordination planning or negotiating for a contract for transportation services. It is important that all agencies, departments, or organization understand the costs associated with providing transportation. These costs must also be analyzed to determine not only the full costs, but the fixed, variable, and local costs as well.

Human service or similar agencies must recognize that some of their transportation costs may be "hidden." These hidden costs may include the time that staff may spend on transportation issues, including driving, that are not itemized or calculated as transportation costs. It is very important that all the costs, the true costs of providing transportation, are analyzed when entering into negotiations for a contract for services. It is also important to take into consideration those transportation related costs for human service agencies that may not be reduced by contracting for transportation services. For example, will an attendant still need to be sent that formerly served as the driver? In addition, human service and similar agencies need to analyze the time demand placed on certain staff due to driving (or other transportation related activities). A group home manager or similar staff may now have more time to accomplish other tasks if they are not burdened with driving.

It is also important that agencies realize the portion of costs paid for through the Federal Transit Administration, primarily through the FTA Section 5311 program. By contracting for services at a value above the local variable cost of the public transportation agency, additional funds should be available for more public transportation service within the community.

The coordination plan developed within each community should be the foundation for how contracts for services can lead to a consolidated transportation system, and how the leveraged (additional) funds within the community should be spent (see page 10-47 in the Handbook for elements of a coordination plan). It is also important to remember that once a contract for service, or other coordination/consolidation measures are in place, it is important to monitor the transportation system to determine if changes need to be made so that the transportation system delivers on its promise of being a more effective, efficient solution than the previous (supposedly uncoordinated) system.

In the end, the only real solution to developing a contract for services is for all of the various agencies to sit at a table, knowing their full costs for transportation service, analyzing the various cost factors (Handbook Chapter 10, pages 10-21 through 10-23, and Tables 2-4 in this supplement), and developing a coordination plan that should maximize current transportation resources. A consolidated transportation system, achieved through one or more contracts for transportation services, should be an important consideration in this process.

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Chapter 7 – Implementation

(Please insert the following pages in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 7)

Once the information has been gathered, evaluated, and prioritized, it is time to move from the planning phase (Steps 1 & 2) to the implementation phase (Step 3). It is during this time that agencies would enter into negotiations for contracts for transportation services, which should lead to a coordinated transportation service. Other aspects of the coordination plan, including any new technologies, etc., would also be implemented at this time.

Implementation of certain aspects of the coordination plan may be phased in over time, or may be done all at once. Numerous parties may need to be involved, as coordinating a transportation system may lead to the transfer of vehicles, etc.

When implementing a contract for services, agencies should include language in the contract so that the performance of the system can be measured (see Section 8). In addition, the contract should be for a specified term (time) and may include the right to terminate the contract if performance of the transportation system (or agency) is not satisfactory. The State of Montana typically does not allow any contract for a period longer than seven years, but a contract may be established for a period of two or three years, with the right to extend the contract for additional periods of one or two years, with a maximum length of seven years. **It is expected that any negotiated contract be developed to increase ridership – transfer of dollars for the strict purpose of leverage is not the expectation of any coordination or coordination through consolidation process.** Contracts will likely be based on the local jurisdiction (city, county, etc.). **Agencies/organizations likely have existing contracts that can be used as a basis for contracts for services, or other contracts that may be necessary as part of the Coordination Plan.** Remember, when coordinating through consolidation, agencies matching or leveraging dollars through a grant (i.e. 5311) program, the agency matching or leveraging dollars must comply with the grant requirements of those program dollars. (Human service providers, whether 5310 or not, that choose to match 5311 dollars must comply with 5311 program/grant requirements).

During the implementation phase, it is important to make sure all aspects of the coordination effort are addressed. For example, some agencies may require drivers to have a CDL, while others may not. A CDL is required for any vehicle that can carry 15 people (including the driver), regardless of how many people are actually on the vehicle. Also, some insurance carriers may require, or will give a discount, to agencies whose drivers have a CDL.

Further, all agencies receiving FTA Section 5311 or 5307 funds, must have a drug & alcohol testing program in place. Therefore, depending upon the various elements of a coordination plan, it may be necessary that contracting agency staff is added into the drug & alcohol testing program. **Generally, if an agency receives any funds that are tied to a Section 5307 or 5311 program, they must be part of the drug & alcohol testing program.** Also, some programs may use volunteers as drivers or other staff to help with transportation services. In general, MDT does not require volunteers to be tested. However, an agency can include volunteers in their testing program (see the supplement to Chapter 12 for links to additional information on drug & alcohol testing).

There are many issues/requirements that may have to be addressed when planning and implementing a coordinated transportation program. While it may seem overwhelming or tedious at times to account for these various issues, keep in mind that the goal is to implement (create) a transportation system within the community that provides additional mobility. It is also important to have a system in place to track the transportation system, so its performance can be evaluated.

While not directly tied to coordination issues, it is important to note that in 2005, House Bill 273 was passed by the Montana Legislature and signed into law by the Governor. This law exempts all FTA Section 5311 and 5310 providers (rural, general public transportation and specialized providers) from Public Service Commission requirements and oversight. This means that Section 5311 and 5310 providers no longer need to go through the PSC to set or change rates. This legislation eliminated the ability of private providers (taxi companies, etc.) to protest rate and/or schedule changes. The changes brought about by HB 273 make the coordination process easier.

Chapter 8 - Evaluation

(Please insert the following page in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 8)

Once the coordination plans, or portions of the plan, have been implemented, it is important to measure the performance of the new transportation system to make sure it is operating (running) as it should. By tracking the progress of the system, the coordination plan can be adjusted as necessary to ensure that the transportation assets in the community are being used as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The agencies that contract for services (human service agencies and others) will want to review the coordinated system from the stand-point of whether or not the rides are being provided as scheduled (timeliness of the service) and whether or not they are truly saving time and money. The transportation provider (agency) will want to see if its costs have been reduced, or at least stayed the same. The community will want to review the coordinated system in terms of whether or not there are more transportation options within the community (more hours of service, more geographic options, etc.)

This evaluation process will provide a “feed-back” loop that should flow into the planning process, so that subsequent coordination plans are based on current data. As with any transportation system, the planning, implementing, and evaluation process is a continual loop. Therefore, after an initial coordination plan is developed and implemented, the evaluation process will be used to adjust the plan, and implement any changes that may be necessary.

Examples of statistics that are typically used to measure transportation systems include the cost per ride, cost per hour and cost per mile. Rural general public transportation providers (FTA Section 5311) are required to provide quarterly reports to MDT that records some of these factors. As with the initial development of the coordination plan, it is important to review the transportation needs, resources, and performance when revising and/or updating the community’s transportation coordination plan.

Fixed-routes are typically evaluated based on a cost per mile, cost per hour, cost per ride, rides per mile and rides per hour basis. Peer group information helps determine if a service is "in the ballpark" or a "range" of similar services. The Montana Department of Transportation can provide information on data/statistics from other providers within the State.

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Chapter 12 – Internet Links

(Please insert the following pages in the Handbook at the beginning of Chapter 12)

Toolkit For Operating A Rural Voucher Program, Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), <http://www.april-rural.org/transportation.html>

Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA)

Coordination Resources: http://www.ctaa.org/ntrc/resource_alert1.asp

Drug & Alcohol Testing Information: <http://transit-safety.volpe.dot.gov/Safety/DATesting.asp>

Additional information on drug & alcohol testing can be obtained by contacting Steven Potuzak with the Montana Department of Transportation (spotuzak@mt.gov)

Easter Seals Project ACTION (accessible transportation information)

<http://www.projectaction.org/>

Federal Transit Administration

Section 5307 program: http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3561.html

Section 5310 program: http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3556.html

Section 5311 program: http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3555.html

Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) program (Section 5316):

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3550.html

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6624.html

New Freedom program (Section 5317):

http://www.fta.dot.gov/funding/grants/grants_financing_3549.html

http://www.fta.dot.gov/laws/circulars/leg_reg_6623.html

Montana Council on Developmental Disabilities/Montana Coordinated Transportation

Handbook[©]: <http://www.mtcdd.org/trcordn/>

Montana Department of Transportation – Coordination Plan and Application Booklet, Guidance Booklet, and Operating Assistance Quarterly Report:

<http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/forms.shtml> (scroll down to the “Transit” heading)

Montana Transit Association: <http://www.mttransit.com/index.htm>

Montana Transportation Partnership:

http://www.mtcdd.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=69&Itemid=43

United We Ride (coordination information): <http://www.unitedweride.gov>

An Evaluation of the Transportation Component of the Real Choices Systems Change Grant in Montana. This report highlights coordination efforts in Hamilton (Ravalli County) and Helena, and includes information about the role of TACs.

http://www.coe.montana.edu/wti/wti/pdf/426921_Systems_Change_Final_Report.pdf

Appendix A: Abbreviations & Definitions

(Insert this information at the beginning of Appendix A in the Handbook)

Brokering/Bartering - Brokers act as administrators of transportation programs, ensuring that clients receive efficient transportation that meets their needs and that agency costs are reduced. Some common broker responsibilities include contracting for transportation with private operators, handling reservations, scheduling, dispatching, driver training and equipment procurement and maintenance, providing risk management and quality assurance, agency billing and record keeping, and maintaining insurance.

Deadhead Hours - Hours vehicles are operated without revenue passengers onboard

Deadhead Miles - Mileage vehicles are operated without revenue passengers onboard

Demand Response Service – Transportation service that requires a prior reservation. This service may be open to the general public, or restricted to certain segments of the population such as senior citizens or persons with disabilities (see Paratransit Service).

DPHHS – Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

Farebox Revenue - The cash collected in fares on transit revenue trips. Transfers, tokens, passes, and other non-currency forms of payment should not be counted as farebox revenue (see Fare Revenues below).

Fare Revenue - All income received directly from passengers, either paid in cash or through pre-paid tickets, passes, etc. It includes donations from those passengers who donate money on the vehicle. It includes the reduced fares paid by passengers in a user-side subsidy arrangement. Fare revenue is subtracted from the total operating costs to calculate the “net operating deficit.”

Fixed Route Service – Transportation service whereby vehicles (buses) operate on a fixed route with a fixed schedule.

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

MDT – Montana Department of Transportation

Paratransit Service – Transportation service required under Federal law for transportation systems which operated fixed route services. This service is required for persons who cannot use the fixed route service, generally persons with disabilities. Transportation agencies can implement a process to “qualify” people for paratransit services.

Revenue (or Service) Hours – Hours when at least one passenger is onboard the vehicle.

Revenue (or Service) Miles – Mileage when at least one passenger is onboard the vehicle.

Section 5307 Program - A program of the Federal Transit Administration that provides funding for small urban public transportation services. Small urban is an area with a population between 50,000 and 200,000. Most of the money in this program is spent on operating costs. The agency that receives this funding deals directly with the FTA.

Section 5310 Program – A program of the Federal Transit Administration that provides funding for transportation systems that serve senior citizens and persons with disabilities. Funding is passed from FTA to each State, which administers the funding. Depending upon the state that administers this program, much of this funding is used to purchase capital equipment (vehicles) for agencies.

Section 5311 Program – A program of the Federal Transit Administration that provides funding for rural general public transportation services. Funding is passed from FTA to the States. Funds can be spent for capital or operating purposes, and most states fund operating costs first, with the balance spent on capital needs. Rural is an area with a population of 50,000 or less.

Section 5316 Program – A program of the Federal Transit Administration that provides funding for Job Access and Reverse Commute programs. These funds are primarily for operating costs, and can be used to enhance transit services that increase peoples’ access to employers or job training programs.

Section 5317 Program – A program of the Federal Transit Administration that provides funding for “beyond ADA” projects and services. Also known as the New Freedom program, the funds from this program are to provide additional services that go beyond the minimums required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Sub Recipient - An individual and/or organization that receives Federal financial assistance from the direct recipient of Federal funds. This may include entities receiving funds as a result of block or formula awards.

Total Hours – All hours when the vehicle is in service, whether a passenger is on-board or not. Service Hours plus Deadhead Hours equals Total Hours.

Total Miles – All miles vehicles are operated, whether there are passengers on the vehicle or not. Service miles plus Deadhead miles equals Total Miles.

User-side Subsidy – A means for making low-cost transportation services available to targeted groups of individuals. The targeted groups are allowed to purchase trips from a transportation service provider at discounted fares by presenting special tickets or vouchers. Those tickets are then redeemed by the provider for a certain value, usually the full-price fare value.

Appendix C: Rider Survey

(Insert this Appendix into the Handbook after Appendix B)

The following survey has been used by the Gallatin County Big Sky Transportation District to survey riders for the past five years. It can be modified to determine what additional services riders may want from a transportation system in their local community, and how the current transportation system is meeting their needs.



☐ Skyline Survey ☐



This survey is being conducted to determine how Skyline may better serve your transportation needs. Participation in the survey is strictly voluntary.

1. What is your primary reason for being in, or traveling to, Big Sky today? (check only one)

- Work School
 Skiing/outdoor recreation Shopping
 Other (specify) _____

2. How do you normally travel in Big Sky? (check only one)

- Owned vehicle Rented vehicle Carpool
 Skyline Other (specify) _____

3. I typically ride Skyline (in Big Sky) ___?___ days a week: (check only one)

- One Two Three Four
 Five Six-seven This is my first time Less than once a month
 I do not ride Skyline in Big Sky

4. How frequently would a bus need to pass by a pick-up point for you to consider using the service? (check only one)

- Every hour (60 minutes) Every 45 minutes Every 30 minutes
 Every 20 minutes Every 15 minutes Every 10 minutes
 I would not use a bus, regardless of the frequency

5. How much you would you be willing to pay for a one-way bus ride within Big Sky?

\$_____ per ride

6. If there was one thing you could change about Skyline, what would it be?

7. To what level do you agree or disagree with the following statements about Skyline? (mark only one response per item)

	Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree
a) The buses are attractive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The drivers are courteous	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) The vehicles are comfortable	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) The vehicles appear clean and well maintained	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) There is adequate information about the service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) The schedule is easy to understand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. How important are the following features when choosing to ride a public bus system in the Big Sky area? (mark only one response per item)

	Very Important		Neutral		Not Important
a) An attractive bus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) A smooth ride	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Friendly drivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Easy to read schedules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Frequent service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Service from the Bozeman Airport to Big Sky	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Service from the City of Bozeman to Big Sky	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. Are you a visitor or resident of Big Sky? (check only one)

- Visitor / Tourist Seasonal Resident
 Year-round Resident Second Homeowner

10. What is the zip code of your primary residence? _____

11. How old are you? _____

12. Gender:

- Male Female

13. Did you have a vehicle available to make this trip?

- Yes No

Please provide any other comments you may have about transit/bus/transportation issues in the Big Sky area.

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Appendix D: General Timelines

(Insert this Appendix into the Handbook after Appendix C)

As part of the coordination planning process, it is helpful if the TAC, which should be managing the coordination effort, uses a general calendar, so that TAC members know what is involved in the process, and when information or analysis are due, or when decisions need to be made.

For FTA Section 5311 providers, the Fiscal Year runs July 1-June 30. Some programs run on a Federal Fiscal year, which runs from October 1-September 30. Some programs may have other Fiscal Years (or calendar). Coordinating calendars and fiscal years is just one more step in the coordination process.

Based on the fact that applications for Section 5310, Section 5311, New Freedom and Job Access and Reverse Commute funds are regularly due to MDT on February 1 (or there about), we will use the end of January as the “end” of the process.

February – Celebrate your success! In early February you have submitted your application to MDT. Take a moment to celebrate the work you did in completing the application and the work you did on the coordination plan. Because coordination is an on-going process, remember to take time to acknowledge everyone’s hard work and effort.

MDT may have questions that need to be answered about the application that was submitted. Also, existing transportation systems need to be managed, and day-to-day issues dealt with. Coordination efforts from previous plans may be implemented.

March – This month is the last month in the 3rd quarter of the fiscal year. It is time to be looking ahead to what new services may be offered in the next year. In addition to managing the current services, the TAC should be reviewing the coordination plan submitted to MDT and work on details of what changes will need to occur between the existing transportation system, and the new (coordinated) system.

April – The quarterly report for the 3rd quarter of the Fiscal Year is due to MDT. Look at trends in the data. Are more rides being provided with existing funds, are new services being implemented. Systems may hear from MDT toward the end of this month about their funding requests.

May – Review the vehicles within the transportation system. Do they need to be replaced, and if so, how soon? If a vehicle was not granted through the MDT process (most grantees should hear from MDT by now), how does that affect the plan? Based on the funding received from MDT can all aspects of the coordination effort be implemented? If not all funding/vehicles were granted, what changes need to be made to the plan? If new brochures, schedules, route maps, etc. need to be distributed as part of the coordination effort, is this new information being completed? If possible try to give customers/clients at least 30 days notice of new services.

June – If new services are going to be implemented in the new fiscal year (beginning July 1) do clients/customers need training? Has the media been contacted so the TAC can discuss what new, coordinated services people can expect? Have ads been placed so that individuals know what is happening?

July – For Section 5311 providers the new Fiscal Year begins. This is most likely when new (coordinated) services will likely be implemented. Also, for Section 5311 providers a quarterly report for the final quarter of the Fiscal Year will be prepared. This is the perfect time to review the performance of the transportation system, look at trends, and discuss what changes may be expected from the past (previous) system to the new (coordinated) system.

August – The new coordinated system is in operation. Are things operating as they should? Do clients/customers need additional training to understand the new coordinated transportation system? Are there any adjustments that need to be made to the system?

September – Is the coordinated system working as planned? If not, are there only minor changes that need to be made, or are there larger issues? If the coordination plan established multiple goals, it may be time to determine whether or not additional goals (changes) can be implemented, or if the plan needs to be modified for the next (fiscal) year.

October – The report for the first quarter of the fiscal year is due to MDT (for those receiving FTA Section 5311 funds). This may be the first time to review data on the performance of the transportation system. Is all going as planned? If not, decisions must be made about changes to the system. This is a good time to review the coordination plan and its goals. What goals are planned to be implemented in the next year? Begin planning for the next year's coordination goals as the application and coordination plan are due in four months.

November – This month should focus on the progress of the current year's coordination efforts, as well as what the goals are for the next year's plan. An evaluation of the current efforts will help to determine if even more efforts can be made in the following year, or if more time is needed to implement and stabilize the current system. A consensus should occur as to what issues should be included in the next year's plan.

December – Stop and take another minute to celebrate successes. By this time, the coordination efforts are six months along. Celebrate what might seem like even small successes, such as new clients, service to new stops, etc. While celebrating, discuss what still can be improved and what additional services can be coordinated. This discussion will help to finalize the coordination plan included with the next fiscal year’s application.

January – The application for funding and coordination plan is finalized. The TAC and any other transportation-related boards should have reviewed and approved the Coordination Plan. Minutes of meetings where the plan was approved need to be included in the application. Minutes of all TAC and coordination meetings should be kept on file for reference. For transportation systems receiving FTA Section 5311 funds, they will compile the data necessary to complete a quarterly report to MDT. This is a good time to review statistics from the coordinated transportation system to see if it is meeting goals established from previous coordination efforts.

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Appendix E: Coordination Examples

(Insert this Appendix into the Handbook after Appendix D)

There are four coordination examples provided in this section. It is important to remember that coordination and consolidation are processes. Also, there is not one right answer. The TAC needs to determine a plan based on local resources and needs. Further examples of coordination efforts and tools can be found when looking at the Internet Resources. Look specifically at the United We Ride and CTAA websites for coordination examples.

Bozeman – Bozeman is an example of the coordination of funding, as well as services. The new public transportation service in Bozeman, Streamline, came about by putting together approximately eight different funding sources to leverage out local dollars with Federal funds. \$380,000 of local money was used to obtain approximately \$548,000 of Section 5311 funds, which was used to start a new fixed route system in Bozeman. In addition to the coordination of funding, services have been, and are being coordinated, as well.

GALAVAN, the paratransit provider in Bozeman has been providing the Head Start transportation in the area for more than three years. Through a contract for services between Head Start and GALAVAN, vehicles are used more efficiently, and the Head Start funds can be leveraged. Further, GALAVAN and Reach, Inc. have entered into an agreement whereby GALAVAN will provide the “Sheltered Workshop Shuttle” and “Supportive Employment Transportation” services for Reach. Through a contract for service, GALAVAN will provide this specialized service to Reach and will be able to leverage the contract funds. The system should be more efficient, as it is possible put GALAVAN clients on Reach vehicles. Finally, Reach benefits, as GALAVAN will provide passes (ten-ride punch cards) to Reach clients who currently do not have funding for transportation services.

One other aspect of the coordination effort in Bozeman includes a partnership between Streamline and All Valley Cab, the local taxi company. Streamline will begin a new late night service in conjunction with the students at Montana State University. In an effort to increase the service area, Streamline will contract with the local taxi company to provide additional services. The details of this service are being finalized, which include the need for drug & alcohol testing of the taxi services employees.

Helena – The full details of this effort are available by reading *An Evaluation of the Transportation Component of the Real Choices Systems Change Grant in Montana* (see Appendix E). In general, the TAC decided to begin a new route from East Helena into Helena, to connect with the Helena Area Transit System (HATS). This effort involved the coordination of funding, vehicles and communication, primarily between HATS and the Rocky Mountain Development Council (RMDC).

The new East Helena Service began in July of 2003, with only 15 riders. While the TAC was a little discouraged, the service continued and ridership grew. Marketing and advertising efforts were increased, and service hours were expanded from 9:00 am - noon & 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm to a

system that operated from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. Ridership continued to increase and now averages approximately 1,200 rides per month. As the East Helena service matured, the TAC began addressing other issues, such as service to outlying areas such as Lincoln and Townsend. Funding is a key element to achieve some of these goals, and the TAC has been investigating how to leverage local funds with the Section 5311 funds received by the Helena Area Transit System.

The coordination process also looked at how West Mont and Spring Meadow Resources could be involved in the effort. These two agencies each operate a number of group homes in the Helena area, and the TAC investigated how these agencies could coordinate their services, and pool resources. This coordination effort could include such issues as bulk fuel and tire purchases, and a combined bid for maintenance services. These agencies had been sharing vehicles when necessary, which is another type (or form) of coordination.

One key lesson to this project is that ridership takes time to develop. If the TAC had evaluated the service after the first three months, the East Helena Route would have probably been discontinued. It can take a year or more for a new service (route) to catch on. Patience is important.

Missoula – The coordination efforts in Missoula have been going on for a long time and are a testament to the TAC in that area. The main agencies involved in the effort include Mountain Line (a Section 5307 provider); the Missoula-Ravalli Transportation Management Association (MR TMA); Opportunity Resources Inc. (ORI); and the Community Medical Center. A couple of the coordination efforts of the Missoula area TAC are noted herein.

CNVS, the Community Needs Van Service leverages the vehicle assets in the community. The majority of CNVS vehicles are the vans used by the van pool service, managed by MR TMA. These vans would typically be parked during the majority of the day, but through CNVS, drivers now pick up these vans, and use them to provide additional transportation in the Missoula area. If accessible vehicles are needed, ORI and Community Medical Center allow the CNVS drivers to use their vehicles. This effort focused on the need for drivers to be insured by the various agencies. These efforts also highlighted the need for improved communications.

Several providers in the Missoula area use the TransitCal software, which allows agencies to view each others transportation schedules. Therefore, if a customer calls to schedule a ride on Mountain Line, and their schedule is full, the Mountain Line dispatcher can look at the CNVS schedule, and may be able to offer a ride on that service. A key to any coordination effort is communication, and technology, including software, can be a valuable tool. Technology can also be used to track ridership, and aid in the evaluation of a coordinated transportation system.

Vouchers & Volunteers – (the following information is from the *Toolkit For Operating A Rural Transportation Voucher Program*, see Appendix E for more information).

It is important to start with volunteers because they provide the baseline for a lot of rural transportation. Volunteer drivers can be reimbursed up to the federal maximum rate for mileage reimbursement (the current rate in January of 2006 was 44.5 cents per mile). If volunteers are

reimbursed at a higher rate, then they are seen as earning a “profit” by providing transportation because the reimbursement exceeds established costs. If they make a “profit,” they fall into a category of transportation provider that may require them to get special licenses, permits, insurance, and meet other standards. Obviously most volunteers don't want to do that.

A voucher model can complement any existing public or private transportation system. To make the voucher program work with these systems, first identify the transportation providers and then negotiate with them to accept vouchers as payment for rides.

While many rural areas have no public or private (e.g. taxi) transportation, many have at least some means of transport that may be of use in a voucher program. These may include a private taxi that operates in one or more communities in the area, an intercity bus system that runs through one or more communities, or human service agencies (e.g., Councils on Aging and Centers for Independent Living) that operate vehicles or even van services. Other options may include a church or other faith-based organization that provides rides, a medical service or Medicaid transportation provider, and employment program that provides rides, a large employer that provides some form of group transportation, or even a para-transit, dial-a-ride, or coordinated system. There may be others, as well, such as hospital or a guide service.

As can be seen from these examples, there are many options to consider. Again, it is important that the TAC or other coordination group go through the coordination process to gather and analyze information, establish and prioritize goals, and then implement and evaluate the coordinated plan.