

# Billings Downtown Circulator Study



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## Final Report

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# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

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The City of Billings contracted with LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc. to prepare a study for circulator service in downtown Billings, Montana. The project evaluates the public circulator service options within the core of the city, recommends alternatives for service, provides recommendations on service structure, and creates an implementation strategy for the study area.



### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze survey data and route alternatives, and recommend strategies for Billings with regard to circulator service in downtown Billings. Potential circulator service would be aimed at moving residents, employees, and visitors throughout the downtown area, which has some parking and congestion issues. The primary purpose of the study is to examine the feasibility of and support for the service, with recommendations stemming from the analysis of community need.

### REPORT CONTENTS

This final report includes an analysis of need and support for the service and the provision of the preferred service. In addition to the preferred service, implementation steps are provided, including the availability of vehicles and potential operators as well as a marketing plan and monitoring program.

Chapter II presents the results of the community survey. This section of the report analyzes data from the survey efforts, with an emphasis on the elements of service that potential riders would use.

Chapter III presents the preferred service alternative. A description of the service is presented along with a map, estimated costs, and schedules for the service.

Chapter IV provides a listing of potential available vehicles for leasing to be used for the service.

The fifth chapter of the report examines the potential operators of the downtown circulator service.

Chapter VI provides a marketing plan for circulator service aimed at providing information to downtown residents, employees, and visitors.

Lastly, Chapter VII provides a monitoring program. With any service, it is important to track data and monitor aspects of the service so that informed decisions may be made moving forward.





## CHAPTER II

# Survey Results

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### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the analysis of data collected through the community survey. Information is provided about respondents' demographics, fare considerations, and potential levels of ridership on a downtown circulator. This community survey was posted online and available at various locations within the city of Billings. For convenience, individuals were able to drop the hard-copy versions of the questionnaire off at any of four downtown locations. There were a total of 351 responses to the survey, although not all questions have this number of responses as not everyone answered every question. A copy of the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

### SURVEY FINDINGS

#### Employment Location

The first question asked of respondents was to report their work address or the intersection closest to their work location. These addresses were then geocoded so that they could be displayed in map form more readily. The majority of these locations were located downtown. Figure II-1 presents these data for the downtown area, displayed with graduated size by concentration of employment. These data were used to develop service alternatives presented later in the document.



## Demographic Characteristics

Questions were asked to determine demographic characteristics of survey respondents including gender, household income, and age.

### Gender and Age

In the survey, 36 percent of respondents were male and 64 percent were female. Respondents were also asked to report their age as part of the survey. The age cohorts can be seen in Table II-1. As shown in the table, the largest age cohort is individuals between 46 and 61, representing 37 percent of total respondents. An additional 24 percent reported being between 25 and 35. The average age of survey respondents was 45, and nobody responding was below the age of 18.

<b>Table II-1</b>		
<b>Age of Survey Respondents</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 18	0	0%
18-24	25	8%
25-35	79	24%
36-45	56	17%
46-61	122	37%
62-75	37	11%
Over 75	8	2%
<i>Source: LSC, 2012.</i>		

### Annual Household Income

The household income of respondents is shown in Table II-2. The largest proportion of respondents (35 percent) indicated an annual household income over \$75,000. Another 11 percent indicated an annual household income between \$25,000 and \$34,999. A total of 10.5 percent of survey respondents said their household income was less than \$15,000 annually. Overall, the survey respondents make up a wide spectrum of earnings ranges.

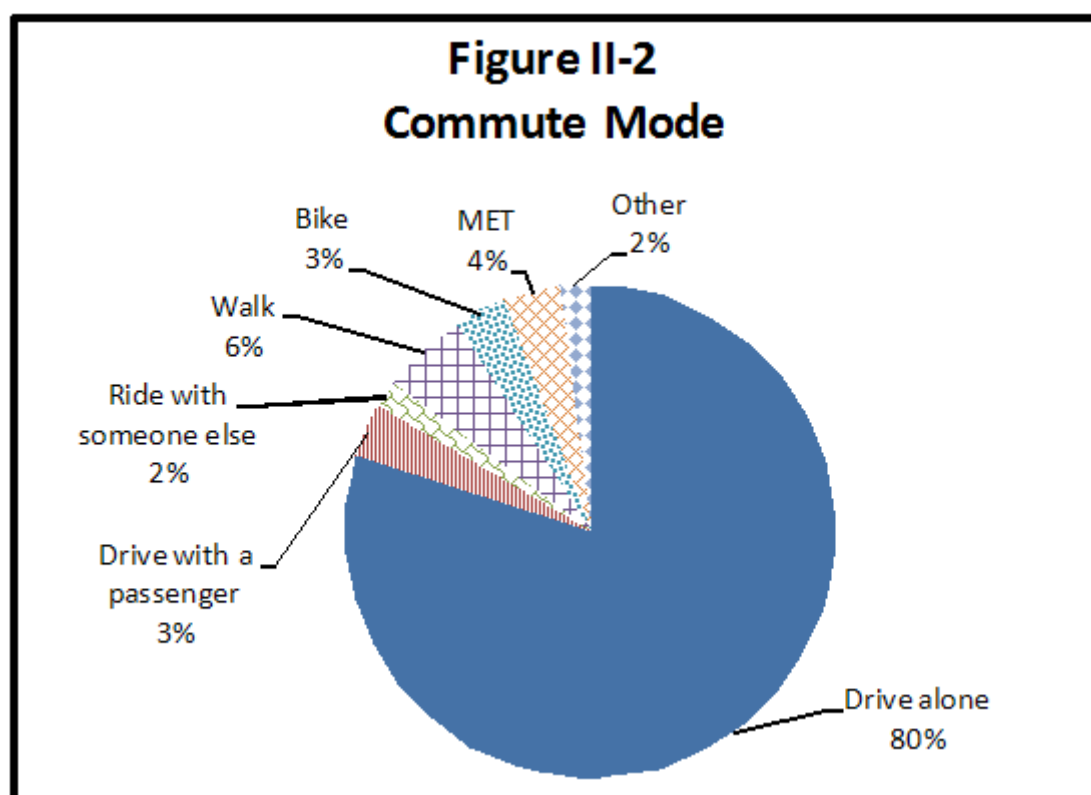
Table II-2 Annual Household Income		
Income Range	#	%
Less than \$15,000	34	10.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	23	7.1%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	35	10.8%
\$35,000 to \$44,999	39	12.0%
\$45,000 to \$54,999	22	6.8%
\$55,000 to \$64,999	25	7.7%
\$65,000 to \$74,999	32	9.9%
\$75,000 or Greater	114	35.2%
Source: LSC, 2012.		

## Travel Characteristics and Potential Use

This section of the chapter examines respondents' current travel preferences and their potential use of a circulator in Billings.

### Commute Mode

Respondents were asked to report how they currently get to work. As shown in Figure II-2, a great majority of people drive alone to work, representing 80 percent of the survey respondents. A small percentage of people reported walking (six percent), biking (three percent), and using MET (four percent).

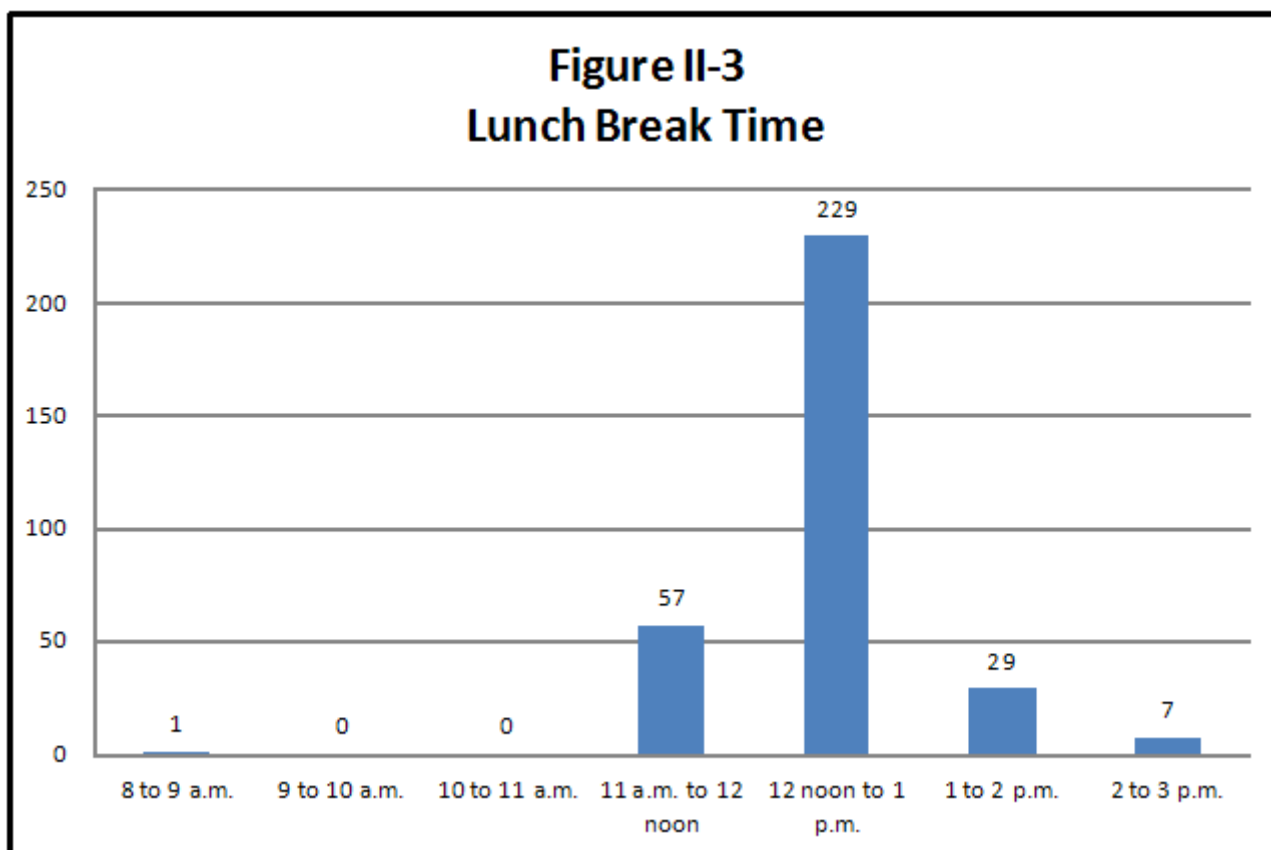


### Days of Week Worked

Individuals were asked to report what days of the week they are required to work. The majority of people work Monday through Friday, with between 89 and 93 percent of respondents working on those five days. Only 21 percent of respondents reported that they work on Saturday, while roughly nine percent of respondents reported that they work on Sunday.

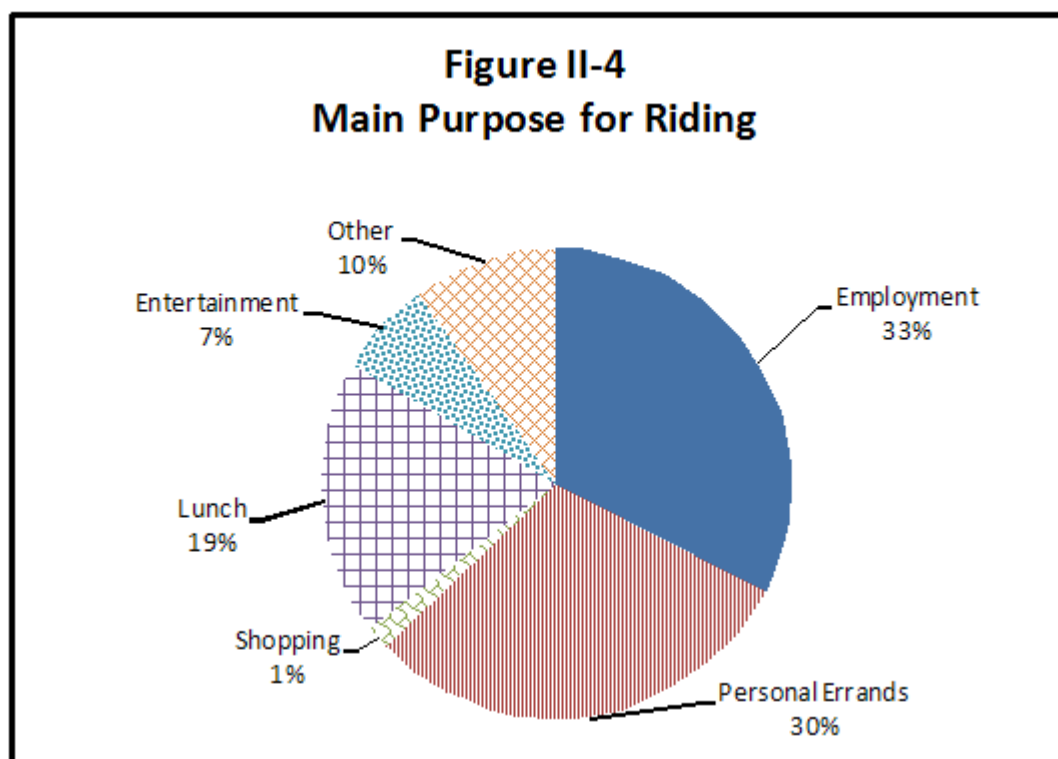
### Lunch Hour

Survey respondents were asked to report their lunch hour to provide data on the times individuals have work breaks during the day. As shown in Figure II-3, the most frequent answer was from individuals having their lunch break between 12:00 noon and 1:00 p.m., with 227 respondents. An additional 57 individuals reported that their lunch break is between 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon, while 29 reported that their break is between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. Very few respondents reported a lunch hour outside of these times.



### Purpose

Individuals were asked to report what their main purpose for using the circulator would be. The most frequent response was from users reporting that they would use the circulator mainly for employment-related purposes, with 33 percent of respondents. A large proportion of users, 30 percent, reported that their main purpose would be for personal business and errands. As shown in Figure II-4, shopping was the least frequent response.



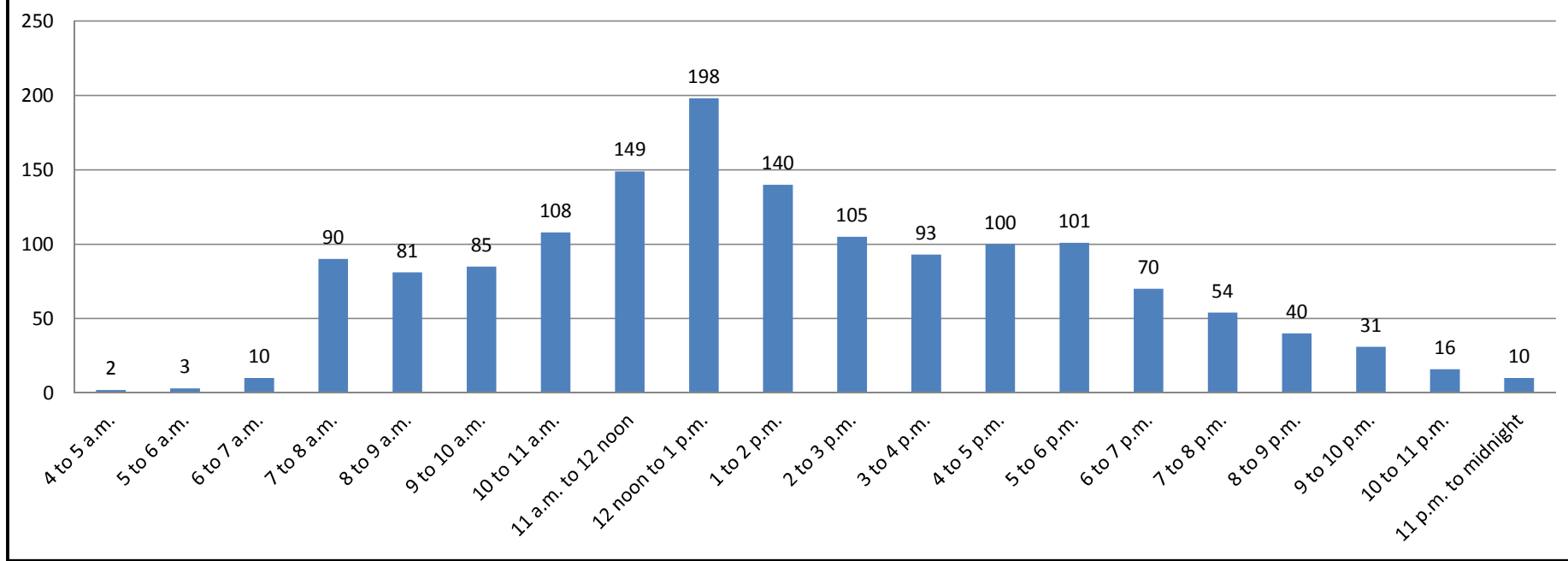
### Days of Use

Respondents were asked to report how often they might use the service. The average response for this question was that users would ride 2.5 days per week. The most frequent response, however, was from users who would ride zero times per week, representing 65 total respondents. The results of this question were spread out fairly evenly between frequent and non-frequent riders.

### What Hours Would You Use

Respondents were given the chance to report what hours they would use the service. Each survey respondent was able to input three different ranges so that they could report different time periods if they were likely to use the service at lunch and after work, for example. These data were computed to create a distribution chart of when individuals would use the service. These data, shown in Figure II-5, show that the most frequent time of use would be during lunch. They also show a high level of demand throughout the work day that tapers off in the evening.

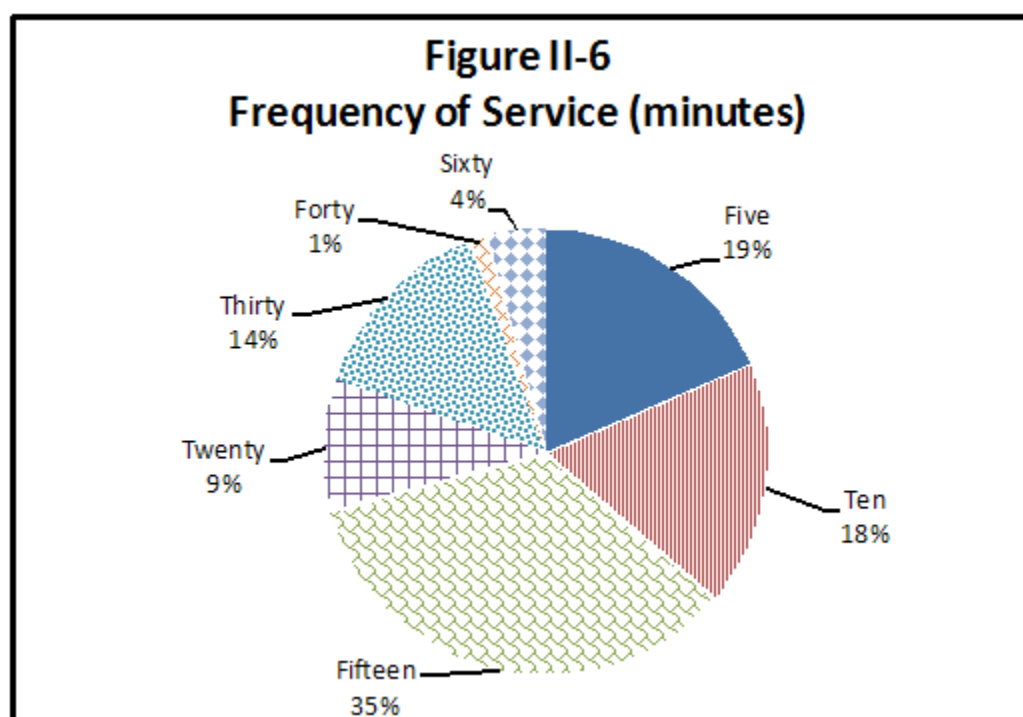
**Figure II-5  
Hours of Potential Use**





## Frequency

Users were asked to report the frequency of service they would like to see for a potential circulator service. The most common response, representing 34 percent of individuals, was 15-minute frequency. As shown in Figure II-6, many users also reported wanting to see a frequency of every ten or five minutes. A majority of 72 percent would like the frequency to be at least every 15 minutes. Only five percent of respondents selected a frequency greater than 30 minutes.



## Fare

The survey asked users to report what an appropriate fare for service might be. The overall average response regarding the fare for a one-way trip was \$1.17. The data were split into ranges, as shown in Table II-3. The most frequently reported range was \$1.00 to \$1.49 per one-way trip. A total of 21 percent reported that a fare between \$0.50 and \$0.99 was appropriate, while 16 percent reported that a fare below \$0.50 was fair.

Table II-3 One-Way Fare		
Fare Range	#	%
\$0.00 to \$0.49	47	16%
\$0.50 to \$0.99	60	21%
\$1.00 to \$1.49	103	36%
\$1.50 to \$1.99	10	3%
\$2.00 to \$2.49	51	18%
\$2.50 and Over	19	7%
Source: LSC, 2012.		

### Destinations

Respondents were asked what destinations they would like served. Many of the responses were vague and simply reported that “restaurants” and “pubs” should be served. These data were separated and the top locations identified. The locations were paired with the employment information to assist in the development of alternatives. These locations are listed below.

- MSU-B
- Hospitals
- Airport
- Pug Mahons
- Angry Hanks
- Metra Park
- Albertsons
- Court House
- City Hall
- Good Earth Market
- Library
- Jake’s
- Montana Ave
- Post Office
- YMCA

### **Ability to Use Service**

The last section of this chapter examines the ability of individuals to frequently use service. The analysis presented below relates to questions about individuals’ ability to drive and responsibilities relating to car use during the day. This information assists in determining the percentage of individuals who realistically may use transit service.

### License and Ability to Drive

Two questions were asked of survey respondents about their possession of a license and their ability to drive. Overall, there was an extremely high proportion of respondents who have a license and are able to drive. Only one percent of individuals reported that they either do not have a license or do not possess the ability to drive.

### Use of Vehicle During the Day

Respondents were asked to answer three questions relating to the need for their vehicle during the day. The first question was whether or not people need their car for work purposes. Approximately 48 percent of respondents reported that they need their vehicle for work purposes during the day. Secondly, respondents were asked to report if they needed their car for errands during the day, to which 69 percent reported that they do. Lastly, individuals were asked to report if they needed their car to drop off children during the day, with 19 percent reporting that they do.

These questions were filtered, which typically helps to determine potential riders, as individuals needing their car during the day do not typically ride transit. The resulting percentage of potential riders, when filtered, was 24 percent. However, circulator service is not traditional transit service. The design of this service is meant to move people throughout the downtown core over a short time span—for lunch, to run errands, and for work trips. While only a small percentage of people may be expected to ride frequently, others in the downtown area may also be expected to ride on a less frequent basis.

### Comments

The final question on the survey asked users for any additional comments. The responses ranged from fervent support of a circulator service in Billings to individuals who are vehemently opposed to the service. Overall, the comments were very measured and helpful in determining potential route structure, service span, and destinations. The full comments are presented in Appendix B.



## CHAPTER III

# Operations Plan

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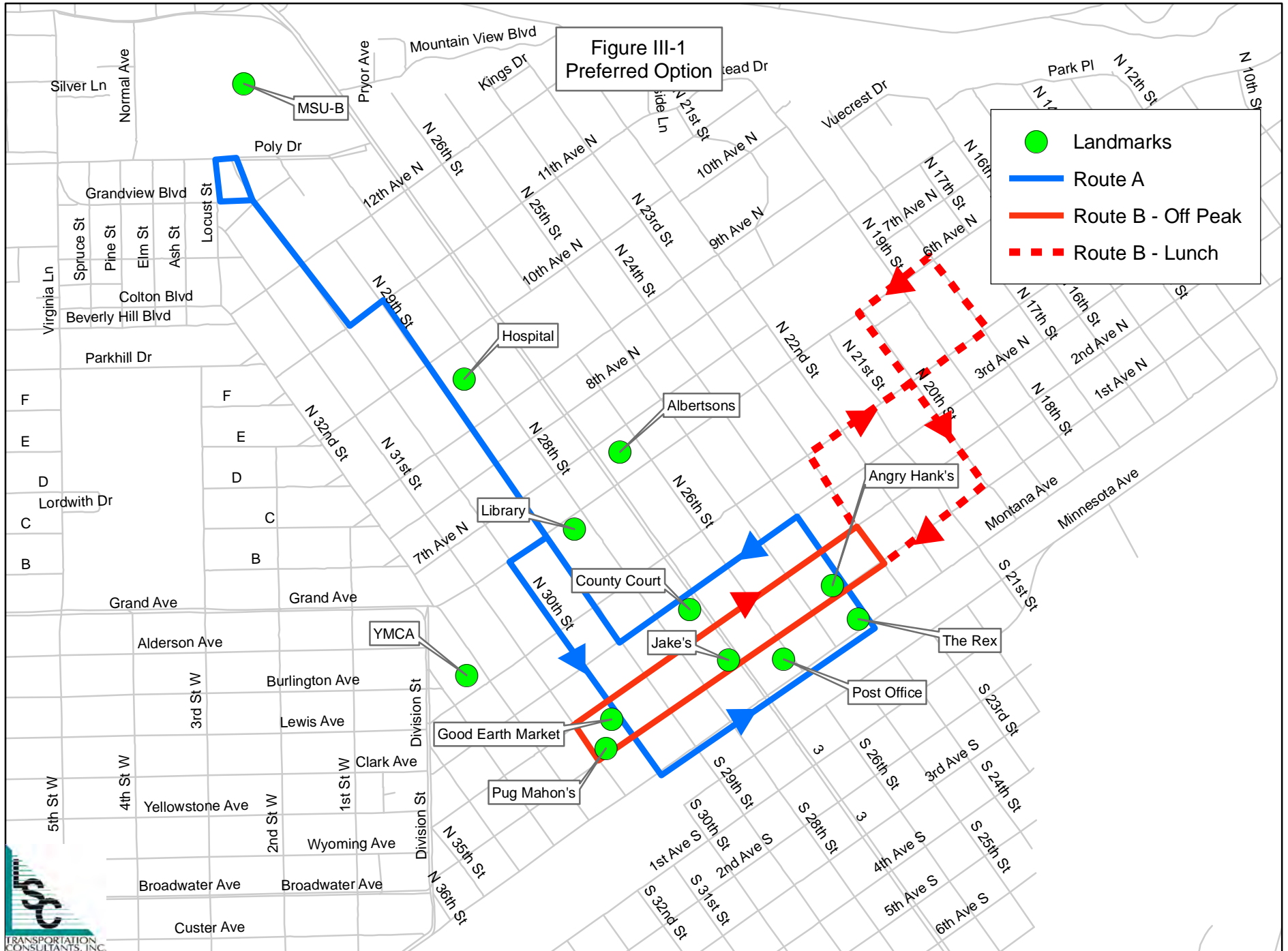
### INTRODUCTION

LSC has prepared the following operations plan that identifies the preferred service, costs, and proposed schedules. Many route options and service parameters were presented to the Working Group. Once the route options were selected, the span of service was determined so that schedules and costs could be developed for the preferred option.

### PREFERRED SERVICE

The preferred service plan has been chosen after multiple meetings with the Working Group. The service plan calls for two separate routes, operated simultaneously, as shown in Figure III-1. The route shown in blue serves the downtown area, the hospital, and MSU-Billings. This route will take approximately 20 minutes to complete one round-trip. The route would operate during the same service span as MET, which is approximately 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The route shown in red has two different service lengths. During lunch, the bus would serve the dotted portion of the route in addition to the downtown core. By serving this area during lunch, employees of major businesses downtown will be encouraged to use the shuttle. This route will operate until approximately 11:00 p.m. during the weekdays. An option has also been examined to provide service on this route for Saturdays.



## **COSTS**

The preferred service plan carries with it inherent operating and capital costs. The operating costs represent the estimated costs of contracting services. As shown in Table III-1, the costs are separated into route and service time to show the varying costs associated with each route. Operating both circulator routes Monday through Friday would cost an estimated \$677,000 annually. Adding Saturday service for the truncated version of the red route would cost an additional \$55,225 for the year.

In addition to the operating costs, there will also be some capital costs associated with a circulator service. This includes the costs for bus stop signs, amenities, and marketing materials, which are discussed further in Chapter VI. Vehicle costs will depend on the decision to buy, lease, or contract a vehicle for service.

### Table III-1

[illegible]



## **SCHEDULES**

The schedules for both of the proposed routes are seen in Tables III-2 and III-3. The blue route would operate from 6:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m. with 20-minute frequency throughout the day. The red route would operate from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. This route would operate with 10-minute frequencies during off-peak times while operating the extended route between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at a 20-minute frequency.

Table III-2 Blue Route Schedule				
3rd Ave & 25th St	Library	MSU-B	Library	3rd Ave & 24th St
6:00 AM	6:05 AM	6:10 AM	6:16 AM	6:20 AM
6:20 AM	6:25 AM	6:30 AM	6:36 AM	6:40 AM
6:40 AM	6:45 AM	6:50 AM	6:56 AM	7:00 AM
7:00 AM	7:05 AM	7:10 AM	7:16 AM	7:20 AM
7:20 AM	7:25 AM	7:30 AM	7:36 AM	7:40 AM
7:40 AM	7:45 AM	7:50 AM	7:56 AM	8:00 AM
8:00 AM	8:05 AM	8:10 AM	8:16 AM	8:20 AM
8:20 AM	8:25 AM	8:30 AM	8:36 AM	8:40 AM
8:40 AM	8:45 AM	8:50 AM	8:56 AM	9:00 AM
9:00 AM	9:05 AM	9:10 AM	9:16 AM	9:20 AM
9:20 AM	9:25 AM	9:30 AM	9:36 AM	9:40 AM
9:40 AM	9:45 AM	9:50 AM	9:56 AM	10:00 AM
10:00 AM	10:05 AM	10:10 AM	10:16 AM	10:20 AM
10:20 AM	10:25 AM	10:30 AM	10:36 AM	10:40 AM
10:40 AM	10:45 AM	10:50 AM	10:56 AM	11:00 AM
11:00 AM	11:05 AM	11:10 AM	11:16 AM	11:20 AM
11:20 AM	11:25 AM	11:30 AM	11:36 AM	11:40 AM
11:40 AM	11:45 AM	11:50 AM	11:56 AM	12:00 PM
12:00 PM	12:05 PM	12:10 PM	12:16 PM	12:20 PM
12:20 PM	12:25 PM	12:30 PM	12:36 PM	12:40 PM
12:40 PM	12:45 PM	12:50 PM	12:56 PM	1:00 PM
1:00 PM	1:05 PM	1:10 PM	1:16 PM	1:20 PM
1:20 PM	1:25 PM	1:30 PM	1:36 PM	1:40 PM
1:40 PM	1:45 PM	1:50 PM	1:56 PM	2:00 PM
2:00 PM	2:05 PM	2:10 PM	2:16 PM	2:20 PM
2:20 PM	2:25 PM	2:30 PM	2:36 PM	2:40 PM
2:40 PM	2:45 PM	2:50 PM	2:56 PM	3:00 PM
3:00 PM	3:05 PM	3:10 PM	3:16 PM	3:20 PM
3:20 PM	3:25 PM	3:30 PM	3:36 PM	3:40 PM
3:40 PM	3:45 PM	3:50 PM	3:56 PM	4:00 PM
4:00 PM	4:05 PM	4:10 PM	4:16 PM	4:20 PM
4:20 PM	4:25 PM	4:30 PM	4:36 PM	4:40 PM
4:40 PM	4:45 PM	4:50 PM	4:56 PM	5:00 PM
5:00 PM	5:05 PM	5:10 PM	5:16 PM	5:20 PM
5:20 PM	5:25 PM	5:30 PM	5:36 PM	5:40 PM
5:40 PM	5:45 PM	5:50 PM	5:56 PM	6:00 PM
6:00 PM	6:05 PM	6:10 PM	6:16 PM	6:20 PM
6:20 PM	6:25 PM	6:30 PM	6:36 PM	6:40 PM
6:40 PM	6:45 PM	6:50 PM	6:56 PM	7:00 PM
Source: LSC, 2012.				

Table III-3				
Red Route Schedule				
2nd Ave & 24th St	6th Ave & N 18th St	1st Ave & 24th St	Pug Mahon's	2nd Ave & 24th St
6:00 AM	-	-	6:05 AM	6:10 AM
6:10 AM	-	-	6:15 AM	6:20 AM
6:20 AM	-	-	6:25 AM	6:30 AM
6:30 AM	-	-	6:35 AM	6:40 AM
6:40 AM	-	-	6:45 AM	6:50 AM
6:50 AM	-	-	6:55 AM	7:00 AM
7:00 AM	-	-	7:05 AM	7:10 AM
7:10 AM	-	-	7:15 AM	7:20 AM
7:20 AM	-	-	7:25 AM	7:30 AM
7:30 AM	-	-	7:35 AM	7:40 AM
7:40 AM	-	-	7:45 AM	7:50 AM
7:50 AM	-	-	7:55 AM	8:00 AM
8:00 AM	-	-	8:05 AM	8:10 AM
8:10 AM	-	-	8:15 AM	8:20 AM
8:20 AM	-	-	8:25 AM	8:30 AM
8:30 AM	-	-	8:35 AM	8:40 AM
8:40 AM	-	-	8:45 AM	8:50 AM
8:50 AM	-	-	8:55 AM	9:00 AM
9:00 AM	-	-	9:05 AM	9:10 AM
9:10 AM	-	-	9:15 AM	9:20 AM
9:20 AM	-	-	9:25 AM	9:30 AM
9:30 AM	-	-	9:35 AM	9:40 AM
9:40 AM	-	-	9:45 AM	9:50 AM
9:50 AM	-	-	9:55 AM	10:00 AM
10:00 AM	-	-	10:05 AM	10:10 AM
10:20 AM	10:25 AM	10:30 AM	10:35 AM	10:40 AM
10:40 AM	10:45 AM	10:50 AM	10:55 AM	11:00 AM
11:00 AM	11:05 AM	11:10 AM	11:15 AM	11:20 AM
11:20 AM	11:25 AM	11:30 AM	11:35 AM	11:40 AM
11:40 AM	11:45 AM	11:50 AM	11:55 AM	12:00 PM
12:00 PM	12:05 PM	12:10 PM	12:15 PM	12:20 PM
12:20 PM	12:25 PM	12:30 PM	12:35 PM	12:40 PM
12:40 PM	12:45 PM	12:50 PM	12:55 PM	1:00 PM
1:00 PM	1:05 PM	1:10 PM	1:15 PM	1:20 PM
1:20 PM	1:25 PM	1:30 PM	1:35 PM	1:40 PM
1:40 PM	1:45 PM	1:50 PM	1:55 PM	2:00 PM
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2:10 PM	-	-	2:15 PM	2:20 PM
2:20 PM	-	-	2:25 PM	2:30 PM
2:30 PM	-	-	2:35 PM	2:40 PM
2:40 PM	-	-	2:45 PM	2:50 PM
2:50 PM	-	-	2:55 PM	3:00 PM
3:00 PM	-	-	3:05 PM	3:10 PM
3:10 PM	-	-	3:15 PM	3:20 PM
3:20 PM	-	-	3:25 PM	3:30 PM
3:30 PM	-	-	3:35 PM	3:40 PM
3:40 PM	-	-	3:45 PM	3:50 PM
3:50 PM	-	-	3:55 PM	4:00 PM
4:00 PM	-	-	4:05 PM	4:10 PM
4:10 PM	-	-	4:15 PM	4:20 PM
4:20 PM	-	-	4:25 PM	4:30 PM
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6:40 PM	-	-	6:45 PM	6:50 PM
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7:00 PM	-	-	7:05 PM	7:10 PM
7:10 PM	-	-	7:15 PM	7:20 PM
7:20 PM	-	-	7:25 PM	7:30 PM
7:30 PM	-	-	7:35 PM	7:40 PM
7:40 PM	-	-	7:45 PM	7:50 PM
7:50 PM	-	-	7:55 PM	8:00 PM
8:00 PM	-	-	8:05 PM	8:10 PM
8:10 PM	-	-	8:15 PM	8:20 PM
8:20 PM	-	-	8:25 PM	8:30 PM
8:30 PM	-	-	8:35 PM	8:40 PM
8:40 PM	-	-	8:45 PM	8:50 PM
8:50 PM	-	-	8:55 PM	9:00 PM
9:00 PM	-	-	9:05 PM	9:10 PM
9:10 PM	-	-	9:15 PM	9:20 PM
9:20 PM	-	-	9:25 PM	9:30 PM
9:30 PM	-	-	9:35 PM	9:40 PM
9:40 PM	-	-	9:45 PM	9:50 PM
9:50 PM	-	-	9:55 PM	10:00 PM
10:00 PM	-	-	10:05 PM	10:10 PM
10:10 PM	-	-	10:15 PM	10:20 PM
10:20 PM	-	-	10:25 PM	10:30 PM
10:30 PM	-	-	10:35 PM	10:40 PM
10:40 PM	-	-	10:45 PM	10:50 PM
10:50 PM	-	-	10:55 PM	11:00 PM
Source: LSC, 2012.				



## CHAPTER IV

# Vehicle Availability

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In order to start circulator service, at least two vehicles will need to be procured. Due to the type of service being recommended, a specific type of vehicle is more suited for use. Circulator service is designed to move people within congested spaces quickly. As such, the vehicle selected should allow users to board and alight easily, and be small enough to navigate tight spaces. Depending on costs, these vehicles may be either purchased or leased.

### VEHICLES AVAILABLE

Many different vehicles are available for sale or lease from multiple manufacturers and agencies. Table IV-1 is a list of vehicles (with available details) that may be available for lease. This list represents only a sampling of the vehicles that may be available for use to illustrate the options that exist with vehicle choice. Cost information could not be provided, as most sellers and leasers negotiate the costs based on a variety of factors. Purchasing a vehicle appropriate for circulator service is estimated to cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000, if the vehicle is new. Used transit vehicles will cost less to buy and lease, with an estimated cost between \$30,000 and \$60,000 for purchase.

**Table IV-1**  
**Available Vehicles**

From	Stock #	Year	Mileage	Capacity	Manufacturer	Model
Illinois Bus & Van Sales	11,757	2011	180	18	Glaval	Titan II
Illinois Bus & Van Sales	1,501	2009	3,130	14	Arboc	Spirit of Mobility
Illinois Bus & Van Sales	1,882	2006	49,865	14	StarTrans	3500
Integrity Group	-	2012	New	16	Universal	350
Integrity Group	-	2012	New	18	Glaval	Titan II
Integrity Group	-	2012	New	14	Glaval	Sport
Integrity Group	-	2012	New	16	Universal	Hybrid
Integrity Group	-	2012	New	14	Ford	Sport
Integrity Group	-	2012	New	33	Glaval	Entourage
Creative Bus Sales	32,453	2011	7,378	27	Federal	Coach
Creative Bus Sales	41,077	2011	1,582	30	Glaval	Entourage
Creative Bus Sales	31,019	2010	47,870	20	Goshen	GC25
Creative Bus Sales	31,041	2010	30,070	20	Goshen	GC25
Creative Bus Sales	31,049	2010	2,261	20	Goshen	GC25
Creative Bus Sales	31,050	2010	6,935	20	Goshen	GC25
Creative Bus Sales	31,051	2010	68	20	Goshen	GC25
National Bus Sales and Leasing	C34352	2003	91,873	25	Trolley	Bus
National Bus Sales and Leasing	GLV12216	2011	8,437	16	Glaval	Universal
National Bus Sales and Leasing	ENC25859	2008	22,936	24	El Dorado	Passport

Source: LSC, 2012.



*Arboc Spirit of Mobility*



*Blue Bird Charter Shuttle*



*El Dorado Passport*



*Glaval Entourage*



*Universal Hybrid*



*Star Trans 3500*



*Trolley*





## CHAPTER V

# Potential Operators

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This chapter examines potential operators for downtown circulator service. Typically, for services of this type, a request for proposals will be developed and distributed. Operators are then required to submit a proposal that details their approach and costs for providing the service. While it is not possible to determine if all of the operators listed in this chapter would respond to the bid, it is important to account for all of the local operators.

### **MET**

MET currently provides extensive local transit service within the city of Billings. Because of their size as an organization, they would be able to operate circulator service with minimal start-up time. As an established transit provider, they also have access to storage and maintenance facilities that other potential operators may not.

### **RODNEY WILLSON, LLC**

Rodney Willson—owner of City Cab and Billings Van and Shuttle—has expressed interest in acting as the operator of a downtown circulator service, depending on the scope of the RFP. Mr. Willson has experience in providing transportation services using 15-passenger vans through his company. One of the primary benefits of having Mr. Willson as an operator is that it supports a long-standing local business.

### **RIMROCK STAGES**

Rimrock Stages provides intercity service in Montana in partnership with Trailways and is based in Billings. The company currently employs approximately 50 people. They have not returned our correspondence regarding interest in providing circulator service in Billings at this time. Rimrock Stages provides similar advan-

### *Potential Operators*

tages to that of Rodney Willson, LLC in that they are a private local company, with many years of experience providing transportation services.



## CHAPTER VI

# Marketing Program

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This chapter outlines several effective marketing programs that could be used when promoting the downtown Billings circulator. These programs represent practices that are used and have been successful across the United States. Because the service will be offered free of charge, the primary goals of the marketing plan should be to inform individuals while highlighting the benefits of riding the circulator.

### OUTREACH PROGRAM

Great effort should be given to increasing the public awareness with both employees and employers and to attract ridership by creating an image that circulator service meets the needs of the community in the area, as well as increasing overall visibility of the transit system. The City could focus on branding its system to be seen as ecologically friendly by making people aware that by riding the circulator, less emissions are released into the air.

In addition, buses could use an attractive paint scheme or be draped with a simple bus wrap. This design should be distinctive so that users can easily associate the design with the free circulator. Efforts should be taken to ensure that the design is dissimilar to that of MET vehicles. For a circulator, simple bus stop signs that are attractive and easy to identify should be created and placed at all stops along both routes. These signs should indicate which route uses the stop to limit confusion among riders. Attractive ride guides with key elements of service provided in an easy-to-read document should also be designed.

Outreach should include development of financial partners. No single entity in downtown Billings has sufficient funds to implement and operate the downtown circulator. By forming a financial partnership among downtown businesses, the hospitals, and MSU-Billings, it may be possible to leverage local funds to seek grants and obtain funding to start the service.

## **PROMOTE SERVICE TO USERS**

Promotion of circulator service should be tailored by establishing an educational program that includes a simple one-page information sheet. This will help to educate employers and employees on the use of the system. Also, local businesses such as pubs, education centers, hospitals, and restaurants should be provided with informational brochures that can be posted at their places of business. Local businesses should be encouraged to advertise on the buses, thereby generating additional revenue and creating business partnerships.



To further increase public awareness, a booth that provides service information or showcases the service could be set up at local events such as festivals or fairs. Local schools, colleges, and social service agencies should be contacted to publicize, educate, and inform local agencies about the circulator service. An outreach program should be put into practice for these groups and agencies where they are regularly kept abreast of any changes.

Advertising should be placed in the local paper highlighting employees' or patrons' stories, promoting a special shopping tour for seniors/elderly/ disabled to numerous businesses and retailers. Flyers should be placed at common meeting places as advertising and information dissemination.

## **BRANDING THE SYSTEM**

The circulator should have its own branding, separate from MET service. This will allow for the circulator to be seen as an independent entity. This is an effective strategy when implementing service because it often gives potential riders the sense that there is a different service in place aside from MET fixed routes. The branding of a system should be done in a multitude of ways. It is possible to create a name, logo, and color scheme to be associated with the service during the branding process. This will allow for all associated materials and media to share a similar look so that patrons will be able to identify shuttle materials quickly.

The shuttle could invest in creative bus wraps that are economical while being extremely effective at reaching the target market. The high visibility and constant repetition of this medium means greater advertising impact for the dollars spent on these bus wraps. Among other branding implementation is the creation of a website (optional), schedules (design), bus wraps, and bus stop signs/shelters. New bus stop signs are relatively cheap, averaging around \$100 to \$200 depending on their design.

The bus fleet will need to have new bus wraps designed if branding is needed. These bus wraps costs around \$8,000 per bus. If three buses are leased, this would equal an initial investment of approximately \$24,000. This cost could be reduced somewhat by using partial wraps or decals for the initial pilot service.

## **ADVERTISING**

One aspect of a marketing program is to sell advertising. This may be done using internal placards on the bus, particularly for destinations served by the circulator and for upcoming events. Exterior advertising space may be sold which reaches a much larger market as the vehicles circulate through downtown. A circulator service offers an additional opportunity to sell destination announcements. Destinations in the vicinity of a stop are announced as the bus approaches the stop. A combination of advertising opportunities may be used to generate revenue and support the circulator service financially.



## CHAPTER VII

# Performance Monitoring

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Chapter VII presents performance monitoring and measures appropriate for circulator service. A monitoring program is important in terms of gauging whether the goals of the community are being accomplished and that the service is both effective and efficient. Without specific measures, success is difficult to measure from year to year. There are a few basic performance measures which help to address efficiency and effectiveness of any transit agency. The way to monitor service and apply and evaluate performance measures is discussed in this section.

### MONITORING PROGRAM

Monitoring of service should continue on a daily basis, with some recommendations for how to change specific data collection procedures. Data collection is essential to evaluate the service performance and to determine if changes should be made in the service delivery. This section provides information on data collection, databases, and standard reports which should be prepared. Data to be collected fall into three basic categories—ridership data, on-time performance, and financial.

#### Ridership

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

Passenger boardings should be recorded daily by route, fare category, and by trip. One goal all transit agencies should strive for is the implementation of Intelligent Transportation Systems, such as Mobile Data Terminals (MDTs). Mobile Data Terminals include features such as recording each passenger by fare category as they board. This capability should be programmed into the capability of the software as it is imple-



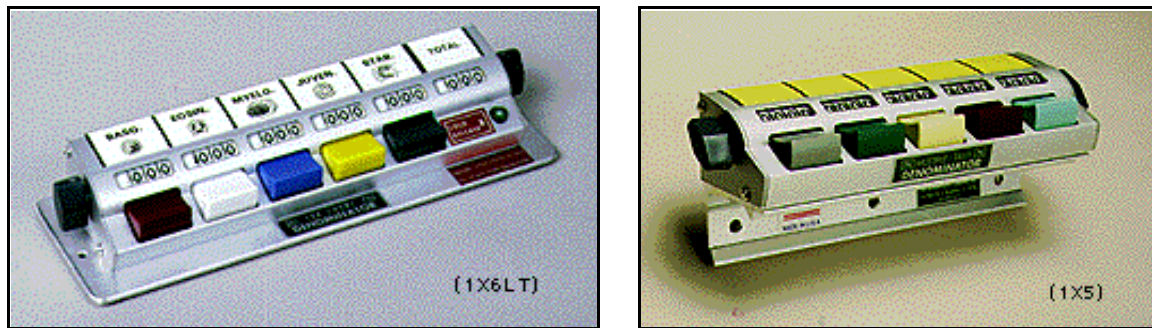
**MDTs in use**



mented. Mobile Data Terminals also allow both data and voice communication between operator and dispatcher. It is similar to having an alphanumeric pager on the dashboard.

Passenger boarding data can also be collected using tally boards on the buses. Two sample counters are shown in Figure VII-1. A driver's log sheet should then be used to record the passenger counts at the end of each trip. The drivers do not need to calculate the number of passengers for that trip, but record the running total of passengers. As data are entered, the calculation of passengers on each trip can be made. An effective approach is to prepare the driver's log sheet for each of the drivers' runs. This will provide preprinted route and trip information, and the driver will need only to record the date and the passenger count data.

**Figure VII-1**  
**Manual Passenger Boarding Counters**



- Twice each year, a full boarding and alighting count should be completed. If passenger boardings are counted using the MDTs and integrated with Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL), the data can be recorded automatically. If it must be done manually, this is a more intense effort and will require the use of additional personnel. Passenger counts are recorded for passengers boarding and alighting by stop for a full day. This information records the passenger activity at individual stops and is useful to determine if stops are appropriately placed and what amenities should be provided. If a stop has little or no activity, it would not warrant a bench or shelter and may not even be appropriate as a designated stop. Data collection forms should be prepared for each route showing the stops and providing space to record the passenger counts.
- An onboard passenger survey should be conducted periodically. We recommend that a survey be conducted six months after service has been imple-

mented. Following that, passenger surveys should be conducted at least every two years. These surveys should be aimed at obtaining information on passenger demographics, trip purpose and the overall perception of the quality of service that is being provided.

## **On-Time Performance**

With any transit service, it is important to monitor on-time performance. An on-time performance goal should be established. For instance, an attainable on-time goal of 95 percent for the service may be considered for system changes. Minor adjustments to the routes may be needed to ensure that schedules and headway adherence can be maintained.

To record on-time performance, drivers should report actual arrival and departure times at designated bus stops along the routes and at major stops. It should be emphasized that drivers should not leave prior to a scheduled stop time to make up time along a route. Leaving early could cause riders to miss a bus. Once frequency drops below 20 minutes per round-trip, on-time performance is less of a concern because frequency is high.

## **Financial Data**

Financial data should be carefully tracked when transit services are provided. Accounts should be kept so that separate costs can be tracked for each route. Financial data are required to evaluate performance measures such as the operating cost per hour of service and the cost per passenger-trip. These data are helpful when reporting back to board members or to the public on how money is being used.

## **Database Formats**

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

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

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

Staff should provide monthly performance reports, not just quarterly. The report should include performance data for the current month, the same month in the previous year, year-to-date performance, and the prior year-to-date performance. Information which should be reported includes passenger boardings by route, passengers per revenue-hour by route, total passengers by fare category, total passengers, and system passengers per revenue-hour. Financial information should be reported including the operating cost and the cost per passenger. The average fare should be calculated and reported based on operating costs and passenger counts.

Quarterly reports should be considered for providing recent trends and interim performance data to elected officials, the public, and other stakeholders. Additionally, an annual report should be compiled and presented. The information for these reports can be easily generated from the databases and the accounting system.

## **PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

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

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

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

Performance measure categories that should be used include:

- On-time Performance
- Missed/Late Trips
- Fleet Maintenance

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

**Passengers/Hour:** Number of total monthly and annual passengers divided by the corresponding revenue-hours.

**Passengers/Mile:** Number of total annual passengers divided by the annual revenue-miles.

**Cost/Trip:** Total expenses divided by total annual one-way trips.

**Subsidy/Trip:** Total expenses minus fare revenue divided by total annual one-way trips.

**Passenger-Miles:** Passenger-miles are one of the most difficult performance measures to calculate. Multiplying total system miles by one-way passenger-trips does not give a good measure of passenger-miles. This involves very detailed data collection to get average passenger-miles per route. One way is to take an average trip length multiplied by systemwide miles or sample passenger activity.

**Vehicle-Miles/Service Area:** A good measure of the level of service being provided. The service area must be realistically identified. As an example, a county system

may say they serve the entire county, but in fact, much of the county is very rural and service is never provided.

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

**Accidents/1,000 Miles:** Measure of driver safety. Accidents must be defined as a standard.

**Average Age of Fleet:** A good single indicator of vehicle replacement needs, although individual vehicle inventories, ages, and mileage should be tracked.

**Cost/Revenue-Hour:** An excellent indicator of efficiency is cost per revenue-hour of service. Costs per hour should be analyzed by route and compared to overall system averages.

# Appendix A: Community Survey

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## Can we give you a ride?

Billings is considering a local circulator bus service in the downtown area for residents, employees, and visitors. A small bus would operate in the downtown area and take passengers to destinations in downtown Billings. Funding is not available to start the service, but we are looking at the feasibility and support of this type of service. We need your help to determine the need for a downtown circulator and to design the service. Please take a few minutes to complete the questions below. Your input will help us design the best service to meet your needs. Your individual responses will be kept confidential.

**City of Billings Planning and Community Service Department**



To help us design a downtown circulator route that will serve the most people, we need to know generally where your bus trips would start.

### 1. What is your work address or nearest street intersection?

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### 2. How do you usually commute to work?

- |  |   |                               |
|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive alone                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ride with someone else | <input type="checkbox"/> Bike |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drive with a passenger        | <input type="checkbox"/> Walk                   | <input type="checkbox"/> MET  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____ |   |                               |

### 3. What time is your lunch hour? \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

### 4. What would be your MAIN purpose on this proposed circulator service? Check only one.

- |  |                                   |  |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment-related      | <input type="checkbox"/> Shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person errands/business | <input type="checkbox"/> Lunch    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other         |

### 5. Which days of the week do you work? (check all that apply)

- |                                   |                                  |                                    |                                   |                                 |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Monday   | <input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday | <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday | <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday | <input type="checkbox"/> Friday |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday  |                                    |                                   |                                 |

### 6. How many days a week would you use the downtown circulator? \_\_\_\_\_ days

### 7. What are the hours that you are most likely to use such a service?

\_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.  
\_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.  
\_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ a.m./p.m.

### 8. What are some of the destinations where you would like to go with this circulator service?

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**9. How frequently should this type of service operate?**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every 5 minutes  | <input type="checkbox"/> Every 15 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Every 30 minutes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every 10 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Every 20 minutes | <input type="checkbox"/> Every 40 minutes |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> Once an hour     |

**10. How much are you willing to pay for a one-way trip on this service? \$\_\_\_\_\_**

**11. Do you have a driver's license?**      ☐ Yes      ☐ No

**12. Are you able to drive?**      ☐ Yes      ☐ No

**13. Do you need your personal car for work during the day?**      ☐ Yes      ☐ No

**14. Do you need your car to run personal errands during the day?**      ☐ Yes      ☐ No

**15. Do you pick up or drop off children on your way to or from work?**      ☐ Yes      ☐ No

**16. What is your gender?**      ☐ Male      ☐ Female

**17. What is your annual household income?**

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$15,000   | <input type="checkbox"/> \$35,000 to \$44,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$65,000 to \$74,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,000 to \$24,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$45,000 to \$54,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75,000 or greater  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25,000 to \$34,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$55,000 to \$64,999 |   |

**18. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_**

**19. Please provide any additional comments.**

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This survey can be dropped off at any of the following locations:

Planning Division  
4<sup>th</sup> Floor Parmly Billings Library  
510 North Broadway

Downtown Billings Office  
2815 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North

Babcock Theatre Ticket Booth  
2812 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue North

Pug Mahon's Irish Pub  
311 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue North

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**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!**



## Appendix B: Survey Comments

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# Survey Comments

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## Question 19. Please provide any additional comments.

- A circular route that moves people throughout the downtown would be very helpful and alleviate parking problems in the core of downtown during lunch times primarily, as well as other times. There should be an option for a reasonable annual fee pass as well as single ride pricing.
- A convient, safe and entertaining form of transportation within the the core of Billings is a great idea. To be scussful it needs to be bright, vibrant and fun. A short bus will not cut it. The journey is as impotant as the destination.
- A downtown shuttle would be an amazing contribution to Billings and if marketed well to the right crowd (students, professionals—particularly young professionals) as there is a severe lack of reliable public transportation in town.
- A shuttle from South Park senior center, through downtown, through the hospitals, all the way to MSU-B. It should run often...2 shuttles if needed. If it ran often, I say every 15 minutes, then everybody would use it.
- Again, we don't need this! There are plenty of other things in this town that already exist that need to be maintained.
- Although I can see the benefit for this type of service, I don't see the downtown area as being so large that this would be a benefit to me personally. I do think there are several people who would benefit, though. I could see this as useful if I had a doctor's appointment or on the weekend for shopping, but those are occasional uses and not the day-to-day that would be required to make this work.
- Although I like the idea and most of my clients do not have cars, I probably could not stay on a schedule enough to always use the buses, so for convenience, I would probably drive.
- Although I ride my bike almost every day to work, there are some days on which I do not. These days it would be very helpful to have the option of the downtown circulator to get to various downtown destinations. It would also be very helpful to get to/from the airport, events at MSU-B, or if visiting a friend at the hospital. I do believe that there are many others who work downtown that would find similar uses, especially visitors. Hopefully the needs of this demographic will be assessed as well.
- Another service we do not need and cannot afford unless you do a backdoor screw job like the park district.
- Another worthless expense by the city.
- As much as I hate to suggest more dues/fees to do business, I wonder if - IF ONLY IN THE BEGINNING - the fare for the circulator service couldn't be at least partially subsidized by fees paid by all businesses within at least a few blocks of the proposed route. Whether you are receiving customers from their voyage across downtown or providing transportation for your employees to come to work and/or travel more conveniently around downtown, everybody wins.

Offhand I can't think of a business that could/should be exempt. Chamber of Commerce, etc. should also help. In the beginning, in order to promote the service, the payments for the service could be more heavily subsidized by businesses (and Chamber of Commerce, etc.) and less by public. In time, the inverse of this should become true.

- Big waste of tax payers dollars!
- Build it and they will come.
- Build the route so that it can be expanded to include west end and heights dropoff/pickup areas. Co-op with businesses to provide locations with good shelter, parking and services to the riders while they wait, or when they begin or end their shuttle ride. Use propane or hybrid shuttles.
- Charge should be 50 cents each way.
- Commuter service would be valuable and would make the daytime inner city more popular.
- Currently no public transportation routinely stops at the Riverstone health clinic, making it hard for people who can't afford to drive to get there directly. Some more disabled and can't walk from nearby stop across train tracks. Use of the health organizations back and forth is hard, getting around south side is hard. This would have to be frequent to be of any use at all.
- Don't foresee using this service.
- Even more than for me, the shuttle would be a great boon to some of our clients who do not have transportation to medical appointments and to grocery stores. This would be wonderful for them. And because of the income level of our clients, I would hope there would be the ability to ride for free or very low cost for those who are deemed eligible (like anyone with a household income of 200% below the poverty level).
- Good idea.
- Good idea. With more people moving downtown for both work and living, such a plan is wise. I do believe the mentality for bike or bus transportation is slower to catch on than other more urban communities. Still, rock on with your plans.
- Great idea.
- Great idea - glad to see it proposed.
- Great idea to start with.
- Great idea!
- Great idea! I am pretty visual so an understanding of this in some sort of map form would be awesome.
- Honestly this shuttle service will be completely worthless and cost too much money unless you run the service until 3:00 AM to try and get bar patrons to hotels in the area or back up to the college. On my lunch hour I have enough time to walk 8 blocks, get lunch, and walk back in plenty of time. I just don't see much value in it and would rather see our transportation budget being used to extend the hours of the current bus system.
- I am a resident near downtown and would use the shuttle for work and personal use.

- I am not sure what this would look like or whether I would personally use it a lot, but I think anything you do to make it easier for people to run downtown errands without worrying about driving/parking is great!
- I am so happy to see the City of Billings take an interest in offering trolley services downtown. This would do so much to alleviate traffic, greenhouse gas emissions, and the stress of driving around like mad trying to accomplish everything that must be done during the lunch hour. Kudos!
- I am writing this to advocate for students who use MET transportation to attend Adult Ed. If there were a shuttle leaving on a regular basis our students would be able to attend more classes each day and would avoid the 4-6 block walk between the transfer center and Lincoln Center. This would be especially helpful for MET users from the heights. Further I believe the service should be free – the advantages outweigh the costs. Similar service is available in Portland and Seattle. It cuts down on traffic and congestion. Thank you.
- I believe this is a waste of time and money. Maybe look at updating the MET busses and putting more short routes downtown and utilize what we already have instead of spending more of the tax payers money on useless things.
- I believe this system would greatly enhance the number of downtown visitors and result in added parking availability for those who need to drive. Go for it!
- I can walk anywhere in downtown Billings faster than a circulator bus can. By the time it works its way thru traffic, waits for the stop lights and picks up and drops off passengers I could have lunch and be back to work. Billings isn't big enough to justify a circulator bus and we need the exercise.
- I do the marketing for the Western Heritage Center. I think this circulator would be excellent for Billings—people stuck at the hospital or university students without cars or intimidated by driving downtown could come downtown for lunch/shopping/entertainment. We would encourage our patrons to utilize the service, and would help to promote it otherwise as well.
- I don't know if I would be able to use the circulator, but when the weather is bad it would be nice to get out without worrying about parking or icy streets.
- I don't own a car so I always get around by bicycle or foot. If a service like this were to be implemented, I would much rather pay for a pass of some kind (like the MET) rather than a one-way, one-time fee. I work at the library so my work hours are very sporadic.
- I don't think this bus system would cover its own costs.
- I drive to work in cold weather and ride a bike in warm weather. I'd be more likely to use a shuttle when I have the car with me so I wouldn't have to deal with parking downtown.
- I have just spent several months traveling from my office to the Clinic. I would have much preferred to use a convenient downtown circulator rather than my car each time. Also we travel to the city offices in the library often and would use it for that purpose as well. Other trips depend on the routing.
- I have used the community buses in Bozeman and Missoula to get around town. An excellent addition to any city.

- I hope something like the circulator could be implemented in Billings, including MSU Billings campus, the hospital-clinic complex, downtown.
- I like walking downtown. I think a circulatory bus would take away from the atmosphere.
- I live on the west end but work towards the Metra (by North Park). The MET doesn't work too good for my 8-5 schedule. Having the MET bus depot between my house and my work place doesn't work. In the winter time I don't want to walk from the depot to work. Thanks.
- I often walk to downtown, but if I'm in a hurry, a quick shuttle, I would use it. It should be often, so you don't have to depend on a schedule. If I started walking, then in 5 to 10 minutes a shuttle would drive by, I could just hop on a shuttle bus.
- I only work part time. I run some errands during the day for YAP, but not every day. Most all of the places for errands are within walking distance and we do have a company van if needed. Thanks for thinking about it though.
- I own the 6th Ave apartments. I have 21 units, and some 40 people living on my property. Also, the B&B is next to me with 23 units. With the improvements that I have done over the last 5 years my rents have more than doubled, and I expect that after I am done with all my renovations, that I will have a much higher end clientele. I am trying to attract singles and couples that would like to use local transit for the purpose of commuting to downtown and the hospital.
- I personally don't have a need such a service but I am confident that there are some who could leverage the service.
- I probably wouldn't use this service. But I do think there are a lot people in the downtown area that would. Especially to go up to the hospital areas.
- I really wouldn't need it at my present lifetime but there was a time when I had no car and had kids and needed to be places. Especially if you are in the poverty level. This city needs to care about the poverty not the rich.
- I see this as a poor waste of investment funds in a community that could benefit from more focus on building tourism. Billings as a rural resident destination and local community support for Montana based businesses and its residents. I see no real value to the community, businesses or personal welfare.
- I think I understand this as a bus route that would circle on downtown streets and up to the college? Doesn't Billings already have a bus route that handles downtown to the college? Downtown Billings is small! You can probably walk faster from one end to the other than it would take to wait for a bus, etc. People that only have an hour for something are not going to stand on a corner for 15 minutes or longer until a bus finally comes. I don't see Billings having the resources to operate such a service in a timely manner to make the service useful.
- I think it would be a great idea. If you couldn't include South 27th Street I would ride the commuter to the nearest intersection and walk the rest of the way. Also, would be good if there were some way to bring a bike along.

- I think it would be good to have the shuttle pick up at a few different locations on the southside to transport people in need to their doctor appointments or close to grocery stores. As a lot of the clients I work with have trouble getting to and from locations.
- I think it would be great to have a type of trolley service. No seats, just stand and jump off where needed. I don't see people paying for individual trips. I would, however, pay a modest yearly fee. I probably wouldn't use it much unless the weather was bad or I wanted to travel a long distance.
- I think it's a great idea. My use of the service would not be that often but there are occasions when I need such a service. However, our client base would likely utilize the service regularly and would be of great benefit to them. Especially, from our organization, RiverStone Health, to the hospitals, the HUB, and other downtown locations. Thank you for doing this feasibility study and I hope it will come to fruition.
- I think it's very much worth an experimental trial period and will need to be very well promoted.
- I think the circulator service is a good concept. For me, the time it would take to get to a bus, ride on the bus to an area "close" to my destination, walk the remaining distance to my destination, perform an errand, walk back to a pick-up point for the bus, get back on the bus, and get back to work, all during lunch, is pretty stressful. Most services, including the hospital and clinics are within walking distance of the downtown corridor. Good luck.
- I think the more public transportation is offered and promoted, it will be a more positive and attractive option for folks. You should get that Green Smarts with the Green Man guy from TV to promote it!
- I think this definitely needs to be a fee program and not something that should ever be included into a tax bill or have people be taxed on it.
- I think this idea has almost NO merit for the Billings community.
- I think this is a great idea, especially if service to/from the airport from downtown is available. I think, however, that focusing on making transportation available to commuters is a more important issue here in Billings. The busses run so infrequently and in limited locations, and it is not an attractive option for commuters. We need to reduce downtown traffic and encourage mass transit, if walking/biking is not an option (this is a whole other issue. At present, Billings is NOT a pedestrian or bike friendly town, but many of us work daily to change this). I am concerned that the proposed downtown circulator will only provide transportation for distances that could be easily walked, rather than provide viable transportation for folks who really just want to leave their cars at home). Looking to what other communities have done, consider the portion of light rail that services downtown Seattle. While the light rail system to/from SEATAC airport is fabulous, the little downtown portion is sort of a waste of time for commuters, as the distances it covers are more readily walked (it is, however, used by tourists to some degree). I know you are not proposing a light rail, but this may be a good model.
- I think this service would be good & used by people working in this area but needs to be funded by user fees or donations.
- I think this service would be very beneficial for patients at medical centers and hospitals for reliable transportation. Many of them are elderly or disabled and have no one to rely on for appts.

- I think this would be a good service for the low income, homeless, mental health patients to be able to get around to all the helping agencies that are located downtown. It would be nice to have job service located downtown as well.
- I think this would be a great idea. However, it would not apply to me as I am the oncall nurse for Hospice nights M-TH. But for those who do not have transportation, this would benefit them.
- I think this would be a great thing! I live close to downtown, but sometimes I take my car within downtown because of certain errands, or I simply don't have the time to walk to where I need to go. This goes for doctor's appointments and trips to the grocery store or library. However, if I knew there was a circulator, I could plan on that coming. Also during the winter months, I don't like walking after dark so much and having a circulator to hop on to go home would be nice and safer for me as well. I would also use it late nights on Friday and Saturday seeing as how cabs in this town are few and far between and silly. Also with concerts at Metra it would be nice to just be able to catch one to get there and then get back downtown and avoid parking there and dealing with the hideous parking lot traffic.
- I think this would be a HUGE waste of money! Downtown traffic would be further impeded by the circulator stopping to pick-up/drop-off people. I vote NO, NO, NO!!
- I think this would be great for weekends, so you could park and then travel around seeing different places. This would especially be true when out of town people are visiting. Running errands on lunch breaks would be really great as well. Sometimes it is pretty hectic trying to run around on my lunch hour.
- I think this would be great, and if it ran to the mission and/or Riverstone health, it could be very useful for patients being discharged from the hospital.
- I usually walk to where I like to go on my lunch break. That or I drive home for lunch if I need to.
- I work full time and I am a full time student up at MSU Billings Main Campus. Many questions above depend on what areas the route covered. For instance, I use my car to go back and forth to classes during the day but I would use a bus service if it worked with my schedule to go to class. It would also be a service I would use for doctor appointment. Otherwise, most of the areas/stores/restaurants I go to downtown are within easy walking distance (2-5 blocks one way) and I wouldn't pay/wait to go on a bus. I would instead just walk. If I did use this service, I would rather have a monthly/weekly pass than pay per one-way trip. It is hard to always have change available. I could also see this service useful to people who park far away from their jobs, but we have a lot that is just 2 blocks away.
- I work with people with developmental disabilities. We are not permitted to transport them in our private vehicles. Often it is difficult for a family to meet me in more than one place in a given day due to the family or child's needs and limitation. Also, though the community offers many free events, our clients are unable to access them after 6 p.m. because the buses do not run. Also, I do not drink and drive and this transportation would get me closer to my home. I am counting pennies as I get closer to retirement, if that ever happens, and would love to not have to drive. I would feel safer downtown riding a shuttle than riding my bike due to the amount of traffic and parking visibility at night.

- I would encourage our staff to use it to run errands in the downtown area.
- I would hope this could also run after 5:00 p.m. for events, performances, etc. that happen downtown. It would be great to park and shuttle to dinner and then events at ABT, Babcock, Venture, BST, etc.
- I would love to see a downtown shuttle that runs both during the day and in the evenings until 10 or 11 p.m. The ability to buy a bus pass to pay for use of the shuttle would be essential.
- I would not use a circulator. I work in the downtown core and most things that I need during the day are within walking distance. The only exception is when I have to leave downtown for business purposes and a circulator is not going to go where I need to travel. The only exception might be a medical appointment if the weather was really bad, but that's not going to happen often.
- I would not use the service as I am a home care provider. It would be a great thing for many of my low income patients which means the price would have to be low. My question is what about the bus system?
- I would not use this service.
- I would pay \$5 one way for non-peak hours service (ex: 7 p.m. - midnight/2:00 a.m. or anytime Sundays). Wouldn't need my car during the day at work if I could ride this. If it went to a few key intersections just outside of downtown I would also use it (ex: 11th Ave & N 27th St). We have many people come in from out-of-town all of the time for work and we always wish there was a trolley system we could put them on, especially in the winter.
- I would pay more at first to get the program started if I knew that the goal was to eventually even out cost.
- I would relish the idea of being able to get downtown on the MET, with ability to get around -- once there -- with a short bus ride or two. As it is, only "peak hours" service comes by my apartment, making a long day stuck downtown before "peak hours" service to get back home. A 'circulator' service would make possible a plan to meet friends for lunch, with time -- before and after -- for errands and enrichment (museum, library, etc.) in town.
- I would take the bus to work in the winters but there are no stops located close to the building I work at. If I had the shuttle I would take the bus all year.
- I would use a bus to get to doctor appts. I have seen many people who need a bus for transport to and from the doctor's office and from hospital to and from.
- I would use the commuter sporadically as I live/work in the same area. But five of the eight tenants in my upscale apartment building travel here for 1-5 month extended stays to work in the Billings area. I believe that this is a service that they would use especially to get to the hospital.
- I would use the shuttle service more during inclement weather. I enjoy walking to errands, lunch, meetings, etc. when the weather is favorable.
- I would use this service on weekends as well.
- I would venture to guess that the major downtown business region is within a 4 square mile area. I can walk pretty much anywhere in the same amount of time it would take me to get my car,



drive there, and find parking (including the hospitals). The city should be putting more time, money, and effort into the parks and pedestrian/biking routes that promote good health, rather than encouraging laziness and obesity. Want people to walk/drive less? Then make sidewalks safer and more appealing (look to the small section of sidewalk in front of the Wells Fargo building for guidance - trees, flowers, barrier between sidewalk & street = BEAUTIFUL! And safe!). Shut down 28th/Broadway and turn it into a pedestrian mall. Promote healthy habits!

- I'd be more likely to ride the bus at all if it ran after I got off work (later than 5:30 p.m.) to the Heights.
- **IF THERE IS NO FUNDING AVAILABLE, AND IT IS NOT A PRIVATE COMPANY PROVIDING THE SERVICE, THE CITY OF BILLINGS SHOULD STAY OUT OF IT!**
- If this could double as a bus service to the Airport, it could be of real value to some people. There is a trolley service in downtown Denver, it is popular, it is the cool thing to do.
- I'm not sure I would use the shuttle, but I might if it was available. I rarely use my car except to commute, but occasionally I do drive to a farther afield lunch spot. Most of the things I do downtown I reach by walking.
- In addition to using this as an alternate mode of transportation in the downtown district, I would like to see it programmed for special events downtown, and possibly expand it for nightlife in downtown.
- Interesting concept that could be pretty cool!
- It has to run late enough in the evening for entertainment purposes and at least every 15-30 minutes. Once an hour does not work.
- It is time that the BOZOS who manage our city, our surroundings, and our tax dollars realize that this isn't Californica, and learn to live within OUR means - not the cost of the empires which they wish to build! **YOU STATE IN YOUR HEADER PARAGRAPH THAT THERE IS NO FUNDING FOR THIS. THAT MEANS WE DON'T NEED IT!!!!!!!!!!**
- It is too bad that this survey is entirely focused on working people because many others need to get around downtown as well, and would appreciate being able to do so without producing more carbon.
- It would be a great idea for the people.
- It would be good to have a service so you did not have to take your car out of the parking garage all the time. Finding parking downtown is very difficult.
- Long overdue, would be a wonderful addition to downtown. If we could find surface parking away from downtown and north of the tracks to include in the route, even better.
- Must run late at night Thursday through Saturday or don't bother. Most downtown commuters have bikes that don't drive already.
- My only concern here would be access to the downtown area to begin with. I live just past 24th West and would likely need to catch the MET just to put myself in a position to utilize the service you're proposing. This isn't a huge problem but it likely omits me from your target demographic. As mentioned earlier, however, I would certainly use it if available, especially if

I could make a brewery tour during their four-hour windows. Driving my own vehicle for this isn't an option. I do think this is an exciting idea, though, and hope to see it up and running in the near future. Billings is growing fast and a thriving downtown is crucial to its development. I'd not mind my taxes going towards this at all.

- My problem for really using it is I like to walk too much or have my bike in car to ride. The truth is I would rarely use it. I want it more for less cars downtown. Cars bad for walking and cycling. Maybe I like idea for future when I'm no longer a very mobile senior citizen.
- Not entirely sure what you mean by a circulator, or what areas would be in service. I'm not sure that I would use it and would not want any tax money to pay for it, but if it was put in place by other means I might use it.
- Not having to worry about parking during the week would be awesome.
- Obviously, my use would depend upon routes and convenience (timing).
- Once downtown it would be wonderful to have a circular transit for use and even if I drove down, I could park the car and just go from place to place on the small bus/van.
- Our downtown is not nearly large enough to consider this service.
- Personally wouldn't likely use the service. Downtown is very walkable, could be more bikeable, but overall I don't often run into the need for a vehicle to get around downtown. Now getting to and from downtown is far more important.
- Run the shuttle service from an outlying radius of downtown to the heart of downtown. Some businesses may even be willing to help subsidize this service. First Interstate Bank Operations Center may be willing to buy passes in bulk at a discounted price.
- Seems in such a small area it would not necessarily be an enhancement.
- Shuttle to college hospitals.
- The airport shuttle is a key deficit for the area.
- The biggest benefit for me and other county employees would probably be a safe ride from the courthouse to the parking lot at 25th and second after 5:00. It's only a couple of blocks but scary in winter when it's dark by 5:00 p.m. and you have to work late!
- The bus charges county employees \$10/month. The cost should be around the same as what we, as employees, already pay or it would not be feasible to use.
- The cost would have to be reasonable so that low income people, who may be most likely to use this service, would be able to afford to use the shuttle. This is a great idea for the downtown area since parking is so difficult.
- The downtown businesses want it, let them pay for it!!
- The first question: what is it going to cost us, the taxpayer.
- The free option - like in Denver - is really nice and would probably encourage much more use. Sell sponsorships on the bus to cover the expense?

- The library will be short on parking while the new library is being built. I believe that the staff and patrons need options other than those currently available.
- The more public transportation the better!
- The new Federal building at N. 21st St. and the 1st Interstate facility across from North Park create a need for workers to get from that area to downtown for lunch, errands, etc.
- The only reason I don't ride the MET to and from work is they only run once an hour and that is not conducive to going home at lunch. If any kind of bus or shuttle service ran every 10-15 minutes it would be way more convenient for travel. Most lunch breaks are 1 hour, therefore the buses/shuttles should run more frequently than once an hour. Thanks! I only want to go from MSU Billings to 25th and Montana Ave several times a day.
- The streamline bus service in Bozeman is very successful and does not charge any fare to ride. Looking to their approach may be a good case study. They do run city wide but other aspects of their model can be examined.
- There are a number of cities that make a limited run downtown commuter trolley or bus available free of charge. Perhaps if we had enhanced transport of this nature we can leverage more business development in the downtown area. We seriously need more retail and restaurant growth. Our vital downtown is limited to just a few blocks.
- There are certain days that I have lunch from 2-3 p.m. However during this time it is not as busy and when it is nice I like to walk around downtown.
- They would need to be nice busses. Like Bozeman's. A light rail would be amazing!
- This circulator bus is a great addition to downtown. It will do amazing things for our economy and community. Thank you!
- This city has a horrible public transportation system and the downtown area had a wonderful night life and shopping. Parking is horrible at times and you can't find a taxi to get you anywhere after you've had a few drinks. I think this would be a great idea and awesome addition to the downtown.
- This could be a great service for transporting downtown and south side residents to medical appointments and should include not only the hospitals but RiverStone Health Clinic as a stop.
- This could potentially be used to cut down on drunk driving in the downtown area when people are going between bars that aren't within walking distance in the downtown area.
- This is a great idea! I hope that a pilot project is found to be feasible. Thanks.
- This is a great idea, but the less expensive the better; maybe a goodwill offering would be the best policy.
- This is a great idea. Visitors not familiar with Billings could park in the parking garages and then be shuttled to businesses, hospitals, etc.
- This is a great opportunity to decrease traffic and its impact on downtown and the environment. In addition, if people start to use this shuttle, they may consider using alternative means of transportation to and from work, including the MTA system.

- This is a huge boondoggle. There is no need for this. People should WALK DOWNTOWN. Such a program would contribute to the obesity in Montana. I cannot even believe such a survey is being taken. Anyone who believes this is viable should become an engineer to plan the next rebuild of Billings roads so they can bury all of the water main shutoffs.
- This is a silly proposal as it current competes with the MET bus service, serving the hospital, MSU and downtown araa. The bus stops just on the edge of the downtown area and serves all the way through the hospital corridor and MSU. Our downtown is not so large that if you walked from 1st to 6th and from 27th to the YMCA it would not take more then 10-15 minutes to walk. Another project to waste taxpayer money.
- This is a super idea! I may not use it so much myself, but my customers certainly would.
- This is a waste of money I'm afraid. Town is not that large.
- This is a waste of money. It doesn't appear that Met Transit is used very much or efficiently and I do not see the benefit to this service.
- This is another foolish idea put out by the city officials with no private business experience. Fools, fools and more fools.
- This is outrageous. We have the MET. Why waste money for something that we already have? You guys are a joke.
- This is type of service is needed to change the paradigm of people and their cars. I doubt it will be used extensively but I think the city should try it for a couple of years.
- This seems like a waste of taxpayer money.
- This service is a long time coming. It should help people get around the downtown area quickly and in all weather. This service would be a major stepping (or rather riding) stone in the revitalization of Downtown.
- This service would likely increase the revenue of local businesses, especially if it ran in the evenings so that folks could tour the eateries and tap rooms responsibly.
- This sounds like a good idea that I would like to support, however I am really unsure of how much I would use it.
- This survey makes me a bit uncomfortable as you're soliciting responses to questions like "How many day a week would you use the downtown circulator?" without giving info on where that circulator might go. So I could say I'd use it five days a week because that's how often I work but if it doesn't go anywhere near where I need I might never use it but you'd have another "5 Days" for an answer furthering your project when in fact that answer might not be true. Your survey doesn't allow for half hours so I guess maybe my lunch doesn't really count? You ask how often it should run and every half hour is a choice but marking my lunch on the half hour is not. I can't answer how much I'd pay without seeing the quality of bus, the schedule, and the stops. Frankly, it seems to me that you have the cart a bit ahead of the horse, or bus, if you will. If you're only looking for preliminary information you should only be asking about a few of these questions because anyone who can answer all of them can't be telling the truth. Really, how could anyone truthfully answer how much they would pay for and use a service that they know almost nothing about? This all being said, I answered all the questions that I could to the best of my ability and

as truthfully as possible. I hope further public comment is sought on this if you continue moving forward with it.

- This would be a fantastic addition to downtown Billings. I just returned from Denver and we used the 16th Street Mall bus service every day we were there. We used it for accessing shopping, dining, hotel accommodations, and entertainment. It easily coordinated with the RTD for getting to nearby neighborhood areas. It was obvious that both local residents and visitors used the service. It was clean, convenient and a nice service to have considering the winter weather. Everywhere else I've ever lived - Walla Walla, Seattle, Salt Lake, Steamboat Springs, London, San Francisco Bay Area - all had various forms of public transportation that was an essential service for local residents and visitors alike!
- This would be a great service for the people who frequent the downtown area. It would help eliminate a lot of traffic and parking issues. It would also benefit those who do not have their own transportation.
- This would be a great transportation service for employees of downtown to get up to the Hospitals or MSU-B either before work, during the lunch hour, or after work. It saves money to drive up and down 27th and it would allow the employee a little time to walk to the nearest stop and get some fresh air.
- This would help with travel especially in the winter since the city doesn't run snow removal. Plus it would be attractive to those that visit because they won't worry about parking or driving and it would help the elderly since they slow traffic and cause accidents because they can't drive well. And I think teenagers would be able to use it also. This is a much better idea than the new library. People will actually use it. Good idea!
- This would only be preferable to me (over driving) if it cost less than parking downtown and if the opportunities to pick up the circulator were frequent, predictable and reliable.
- Though I would probably not use the service myself, my publication reaches people staying in Billings. I hear comments that driving and finding parking in downtown and around the medical corridor is a challenge. I would be delighted to let them know that there is a service available that will get them back and forth to the downtown area and be able to return to keep vigil with patients and to their hotel rooms.
- Though this wasn't a question on your survey (and it should have been), I don't think the downtown is big enough to need the service.
- Very much needed.
- We live and work downtown, so a service like this would be awesome!
- What a wonderful service that would be. It is too time consuming to park downtown so I just don't go. My lunch hour is perfect to do a little shopping, get my car tags, pay a ticket, go to the post office, and of course have lunch! I have lived here 9 years and I couldn't tell you most of the businesses that are there.
- What are the proposed routes?
- When downtown I typically walk, but I would like the option of taking the bus. Better bus linkage to the heights would also be great.

- Where I would go on it and how often I would use it really depends on the route the bus takes and how often it comes around. I feel that a fare should cover not only the route of this new bus but include a transfer to catch another bus (if needed) to complete your destination. So, even though it is a 'one way' fare, not every fare will just be riding around downtown. People may need to travel further so the one fare should cover that transit as well.
- While I personally would not use the service very often, I do think it would be a nice addition to connect Downtown to events at the Metra and connect folks in town for health care needs to downtown.
- Why would you compete with the city bus service?
- With my profession I am in constant contact with our community's low income residents and families, and can see a huge benefit for them and all other walks of life to have such a service here in Billings, especially during the winter weather months. What an amazing and innovative idea for our rural-like community.
- With the economy that we are experiencing, a shuttle system downtown would help extremely. It is cheaper than paying for gas for those that can afford a car, and for those that can't it is a cheap and efficient way to get around. With the way our city is growing, I feel that is a necessity that we would have to implement sooner or later. With Alpha House being right there as well, it is a way for these men to get around downtown and help them find jobs or get to work and become productive members of society again.
- Would definitely help with parking for those who come downtown from other areas.