

**Yellowstone-Teton Regional Transportation Cooperative
Steering Committee Workshop
July 9, 2009, West Yellowstone**

Recreation/Tourism Team

Participants:

Patricia Grabow, Tour Livingston Downtown, MT, thegrabow@imt.net
Carolyn Hauxhurst, Jackson Hole Chamber, WY, Carolyn@jacksonholechamber.com
Gina MacIlwraith, Grand Teton Lodge Company, Moran, WY, gmacilwraith@gtlc.com
Bob Richard, Grub Steak Tours, Cody Chamber, WY, griz@bresnan.net
George Sporn, Four Star Properties, Bozeman, gsporn@lightnex.net
Christina Thomure, Grand Targhee Resort, Alta, WY, cthomure@grandtarghee.com
Brian Gion, Montana Co-op Development Center, Great Falls, MT, brian@mcdc.coop
Lorraine Hingston Roach, Facilitator, Grangeville, ID, lroach@thrgroup.com

Interests/Expertise Represented:

- ◆ Grand Teton National Park concession
- ◆ Chambers of Commerce (Cody, Jackson, Livingston)
- ◆ Gateway visitor center (Jackson): multi-agency partnership with Chamber, NPS, USFS, USFWS, Grand Teton Association, Wyoming Dept. of Fish & Game, serves 1,500-2,000 people per day in peak season
- ◆ Scenic byways
- ◆ Hotel/resort management and consulting (expertise with initiation of airline guarantees)
- ◆ Ski resort business
- ◆ Tour company: private/charter tours, step-on guide service
- ◆ YBP Uncommon Sense program graduates

Team Tasks:

1. Clarify desired outcomes for team and project
2. Generate preliminary list of key issues/challenges and opportunities
3. Identify data needs and potential sources to quantify demand
4. Identify potentially affected interests and how to involve them
5. Determine team work plan and schedule

1. Desired Outcomes:

- ◆ Build awareness regarding need for transit system, especially among leadership of Grand Teton National Park (“no traffic problem”)
- ◆ Get people to talk to each other, especially among transportation providers
- ◆ Return of rail to YNP/GTNP – most sustainable mode of transportation
- ◆ Seamless public transportation system
- ◆ Better communication and cross-pollination among VIC staff around the parks (e.g., fam tours to each other’s gateway communities via transit)
 - “WyDahoTana” concept
- ◆ Increase sustainability (outgrowth of UnCommon Sense), particularly among small high-end properties
- ◆ Make transit a “trend” – the way to travel in the Greater Yellowstone/Grand Teton area
- ◆ Quantify, then reduce, carbon footprint of visitors/vehicles in parks
 - GYC and agencies working to establish baseline, but will take 2-3 years
- ◆ Involve rental car companies, perhaps via “zip car rental” service in/around parks (hourly rentals)

2a. Key Issues/Challenges for Transit System

- ◆ Fewer young families visiting the parks (although agencies promoting kids and nature programs)
- ◆ Difficult to travel via transit with young kids (strollers, bags, toys, etc.)
- ◆ Seasonality of visitation
- ◆ Road closures in winter (unless roads are plowed, i.e., Mammoth to West Yellowstone, Cody to Cooke City, etc.)
- ◆ Acceptance of transit is a cultural shift – people have to let go of cars, give up freedom
- ◆ Need to be inclusive (cars allowed also, not prohibited)
- ◆ Affordability
- ◆ Mixed ridership (guests and employees)
- ◆ Employee griping while riding transit system
- ◆ Create an image of eco-friendly region
- ◆ Invest in technology
- ◆ Some businesses may lose, e.g. car rental agencies
 - Turn into opportunities to visit other places outside the parks
- ◆ Promoting rail travel
- ◆ Collecting fees
- ◆ Snowmobile industry opposition to plowing roads
- ◆ November and April (slowest months, communities need break from tourists)

2b. Opportunities for Transit System

- ◆ Mature demographic in shoulder season – demand for transit
 - “Newly Wed and Nearly Dead” season
- ◆ Grand Teton Lodge Company could stay open longer in fall if demand increased
- ◆ Conferences
- ◆ More marketing of winter in the parks (plowed roads)
- ◆ Cooperative marketing through a regional co-op organization
- ◆ Packaging and pre-orders for tickets (tour operators, etc.) to help project demand
- ◆ Special event support (and demand generation)
- ◆ Review opportunities identified in Turning On the Off Season report

3. Data Needs and Potential Sources

DATA NEED	SOURCES
Visitor origins	Gateway VICs (i.e., Jackson, West Yellowstone, Cody)
Air traveler origins (domestic, international)	Airport authorities (Jackson, Bozeman, SLC, Billings, Driggs, Riverton, Cody, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, West Yellowstone)
Visitor demographics	State Tourism Offices, Chambers/CVBs/Regional Tourism Orgns
Visitor willingness to use transit	Guest comment forms (perhaps could add questions right away): Xanterra, Grand Teton Lodge Company, ski resorts, RV parks
Employee use of transit	Employers (survey of workers), housing authorities – data on workforce transportation
Rail passenger demand	Amtrak
Current data re. visitor and employee interest	Survey via SurveyMonkey – businesses/chambers/VICs send link to employees and guests, 5-8 questions, offer trip packages as incentive
Park visitors	NPS data collection at gates?, YBP – TOTOS report, Clean Cities Coalition, YellowstonePark.com
Tour operator demand for transit	Rocky Mountain International, suppliers, State Tourism Offices
Current transit ridership	Providers (e.g. Gallivan in Bozeman, etc.), Teton Area Advisory Forum (TAAF) – Basil, cities, counties, states

4. Potential Interests (Who Should Be Here)

- ◆ Businesses and Business Organizations:
 - Ski resorts
 - Dude ranches and outfitters
 - Xanterra
 - Resorts (Chico Hot Springs, etc.)
 - Restaurant and Lodging Associations
 - Chambers of Commerce, CVBs, Tourism Regions
 - Economic Development Councils
- ◆ Transportation Providers and Related Organizations:
 - Transit providers
 - Airports/Airport Authorities, Airlines
 - Amtrak
 - Car rental agencies
 - National Rail Passenger Association
 - AAA
- ◆ Attractions: museums, etc.
- ◆ State/Federal Agencies:
 - National Park Service
 - State DOTs
 - State Depts of Commerce
 - State Tourism Offices
 - USFWS
 - USFS
 - BLM
- ◆ Elected Officials:
 - City and County (gateway areas)
 - Legislators from gateway districts
 - Congressional Office staff
- ◆ Conservation Organizations: GYC, NPCA, National Geographic, Stewardship Council, etc.
- ◆ Media: local/regional, NPR

5. Team Work Plan and Schedule

- a. Recommend online survey to gather data:
 - Formulate questions (review transit survey for Glacier National Park; see next page)
 - Program and craft email invitations (different for employees/residents, visitors)
 - Conduct survey in August-September
 - Distribute survey ASAP, leave open until late September to capture fall info?
- b. Provide meeting notes re. data needs/contacts to YBP Project Manager (Jeff)
- c. Contact peers to get involved (assignments during first team conference call)
- d. Bring together groups working on sustainability and tourism, do a regional marketing plan
 - Include branding of Greater Yellowstone-Teton transit system
- e. Team meetings: monthly conference calls on Wednesday mornings
 - First call is August 12, 9:00 a.m. (may want to move earlier with accelerated contract signing)
- f. Provide team meeting notes and member contact info to team (Lorraine)

Potential Survey Questions:

- ◆ Origin: resident or visitor, seasonal or year-round, zip/postal code
- ◆ Current transportation mode(s) used
- ◆ Interest in using transit: seasons, inside vs. outside parks
- ◆ Amount willing to pay for transit, cost vs. driving
- ◆ Age, travel party size, kids
- ◆ Importance of green tourism