

Title: Connecting Existing Systems, as an example transportation for Paradise Valley-Livingston-Bozeman

Human Need: Employees, people with limited mobility, visitors, and residents need to move around the region, and many cannot drive themselves or would prefer not to drive. Pieces of the transportation network to support the community's needs are in place, but for the most part, the needs outstrip the services. Often, the existing services are islands of services, and the links between these islands are very limited. We will look at the situation in Montana between Bozeman, Livingston, and the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park as an example of this problem that exists across the region.

Description of Service:

Imagine a transportation network that allows people to get around and reduces the amount of vehicles on our roads:

- Available, accessible, and affordable transportation allows Livingston seniors and residents with disabilities to go to Bozeman any day of the week to see a specialist at the hospital or go shopping at Walmart; transportation also allows them to have dinner with a friend in town or go to an evening event at the high school.
- People with limited mobility living in Clyde Park or other outlying communities can access services in Livingston.
- Printing for Less employees and other people who work in Livingston take a bus from their home in Bozeman to their job in Livingston 30 miles away.
- Livingston residents take a bus to their jobs in Bozeman.
- Employees from Yellowstone, Xanterra, and Chico share a bus with visitors and customers from Livingston to Emmigrant (30 miles) and Mammoth Hot Springs (60 miles).
- Seasonal employees and hikers in Yellowstone no longer have to hitchhike but rather can take a shuttle; bicyclists can bus one way and bike the other way.
- Guided bus and snow coach tours give visitors more quality information about Yellowstone than they can get from their individualized car trip.
- A family lands at the Bozeman airport for their vacation to Yellowstone and has their vacation without having to rent a car.
- People who want to drive their own car can do so.
- A fleet of accessible vehicles and a database of residents who need transportation is available in case of emergency evacuation.

We have some transportation resources already in place. In 2006, the Streamline bus system started in Bozeman. Angel Line, a program of the Park County Senior Center, provides dial-a-ride transportation to seniors and people with disabilities in Livingston and across the county. Livingston Taxi offers taxi services, while Park County Transportation provides transportation to Gallatin Field. Karst Stage and First Group (formerly Laidlaw) provide charter services. Rimrock and Greyhound offer intercity services along I-90. Some human service and medical facilities offer transportation to their clients, including the program for adults with disabilities and the assisted living facilities. Yellowstone runs an employee shuttle four days a week that carries people from Livingston into the park. In total, between 15 and 20 vans and buses are available in Park County for public agencies and social service agencies, not including school buses. In addition are the vehicles operated by the private transportation businesses.

But the services offered in these vehicles are usually sporadic, sometimes unreliable, sometimes costly, and mostly do not serve the transportation need at the time of need. As a result, too often people drive their car, hitch-hike, or do without. As a final possibility, some people with disabilities use costly ambulances, sometimes the only accessible mode, as a mode of transportation to accomplish non-emergency medical transportation.

If existing services can be effectively networked and improved, if we can overcome tourism and

consider the needs of everyone instead of the individual constituency, we can fill some of the gaps. We will need to find additional ways to pay for transportation to fill more or the gaps.

We need a more robust network of private and public services that are linked as a regional system. We need it to be easy for a person to figure out what resources are available, how much it costs, and when it runs. We need to put people who need transportation onto vehicles with empty seats. We need the service to be attractive.

This leaves some questions for discussion:

- What services need to be included?
- What can we do to help key players work together to make this happen?
- How do we make it attractive?
- What do we do to build awareness and make it easy to understand?
- How do we pay for it?