

**Final Report of the 2006 Gunnison Valley Ground Transportation Task Force
Recommendations to the RTA and
Gunnison Valley RTA Strategic Plan**

*Gunnison Valley Rural Transportation Authority
Ground Transportation Task Force
Purpose Statement*

A task force comprised of citizens, private transit business owners, retail/service business representatives and government representatives shall be formed for the purpose of addressing and making recommendations about publicly funded ground transportation services between the City of Gunnison and the Town of Mt. Crested Butte – This task force is to be known as the *Gunnison Valley Ground Transportation Task Force*.

The *Gunnison Valley Ground Transportation Tasks Force* shall assess mass transit related planning issues in the context of a four to six year time frame, and make recommendations to the Gunnison Valley Rural Transportation Authority.

The task force shall conduct itself in the context of collaboration and openness. Although a core group of individuals comprise the task force, public input is considered essential to fulfillment of this purpose.

The 2006 Ground Transportation Task Force (GTTF) consisted of over thirty individuals representing a wide variety of interests in the valley with the common goal of improving ground transportation (transit services) between Gunnison and Mt. Crested Butte.

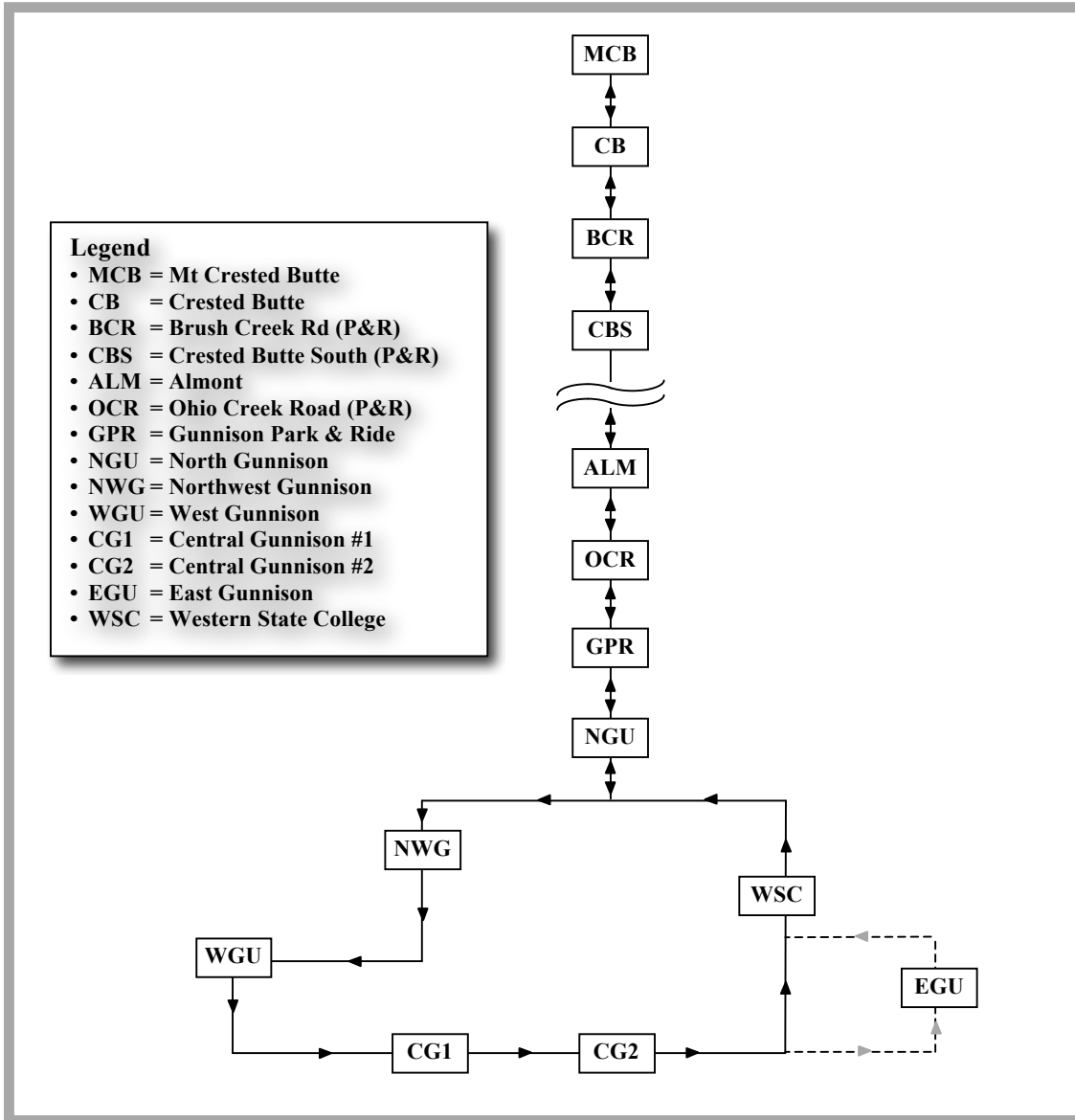
The GTTF met monthly during the seven month period between January and July, 2006. At the first meeting, the group broke the discussions into the following areas – which then became the outline for all of the future meetings:

- Routes and schedules & timelines
- Funding & possibly committing a percent of the RTA budget for ground transportation
- Constituents
- Responsibility for implementation
- Benefits to the community (beyond riders)
- Park & rides

Several subcommittees were created over seven months and all of the above issues were discussed and in most cases unanimity was reached. The following pages constitute the formal recommendation from the GTTF to the Gunnison Valley Rural Transportation Authority.

The Task Force Recommends the route be as follows in Exhibit 1. The Task Force also recognized that this route may evolve as new development occurs.

Exhibit 1. Proposed Route for the Gunnison Valley Regional Transit Service



The Task Force proposes this route after thorough discussion regarding current residential areas in Gunnison and the route is designed to accommodate as many people as possible given the necessity of completing the route in two hours (round-trip.)

The GTTF discussed the possibility of service to subdivisions north of Round Mountain from Crested Butte and Mt. Crested Butte, and due to funding restrictions at this time, service on the Gunnison – Mt. Crested Butte corridor was deemed more pressing. As demand increases, service into CB South and other subdivisions should commence.

Schedule Recommendation & Operating Expenses:

The ultimate goal should be hourly service, seventeen hours per day, 365 days per year, with extra buses during the rush hours. The group settled on a six year time frame to reach this goal and came up with the following recommendation:

<u>Season</u>	<u># of Round Trips</u>	<u>Estimated Operating Expenses</u>	
Winter 06-07	5		
Spring, Summer, Fall 07	1	2007	\$150,000
Winter 07-08	8		
Spring, Summer, Fall 08	3	2008	\$289,000

Thereafter service should be increased as is financially possible and as is proven necessary up to 17 Round Trips year-around by Winter of 2012-2013. In 2007 dollars, this would equate to approximately \$1 million in operating costs which could be subsidized by FTA Section 5311 funds. Therefore, as the budget and FTA funding grow, the RTA will increase the level of service from 2008 levels to the full 17 round trips as it becomes financially feasible.

Funding:

The Task Force recommends that a fixed percentage of the total RTA budget be committed to bus service as described herein. This is so that as the budget grows, service will also be allowed to grow. For the purposes of this Strategic Plan, the RTA adopts the policy that approximately 30% of expenditures in a budget year will be budgeted for ground transportation operating expenses contingent upon grant receipts.

For operating assistance, the Task Force recommends applying for FTA Section 5311 Operating funds in FY2008, thereby allowing for the increase in service beginning in 2008. In FY2008 the RTA will be eligible to apply for approximately \$145,000 for operating assistance. While the awarded amount may be less, any award will decrease the local funds required to operate the system.

Capital Funding:

The Task Force also recommends that the RTA apply for all available capital funding including continuing to apply for FTA Section 5309 Bus Capital funds through the Colorado Transit Coalition (as has been done for FY2007) to be used for vehicle acquisition as well as possible Park & Ride facilities. Also, Senate Bill One money should be pursued for vehicle acquisition in 2006.

It appears that the RTA will receive approximately \$880,000 in Senate Bill One funding in calendar year 2007. The RTA will commit a local match of \$220,000 and spend approximately \$1.1 million to purchase 4 new vehicles in 2007.

Because these buses will be adequate to serve the RTA for at least ten years, all Colorado Transit Coalition (CTC) funds will be committed towards funding the acquisition and development of Park & Ride facilities. The RTA will need to commit a 20% local match

for these funds. Based upon historical awards, the RTA can expect to receive approximately \$140,000 per year from the CTC and would therefore need to commit \$35,000 annually in local funds to match this grant. If these numbers become reality, the Park & Ride program would be funded to the tune of \$175,000 annually.

Acquisition of land and improvements to Park & Rides will continue with CTC funding and local match dollars until the plan (as described below) is complete.

The RTA estimates that land for the Park & Rides at North Gunnison and Cement Creek Rd. will cost approximately \$100,000 per acre and that total land costs will be approximately \$600,000.

Improvements should take place after land is acquired and may cost another \$600,000 for the four main Park & Rides (\$100,000 for paving and landscaping each site and \$50,000 for structures and lighting at each site.)

It would take 7 years to pay for the Park & Rides at this funding level.

Constituents:

The Task Force recognizes the following groups as potential users of public transit in the valley and encourages the RTA to market to these groups as effectively as possible:

- Residents at the south end of the valley working in the north end;
- Residents at the south end of the valley going skiing or visiting the north end.
- WSC students;
- Residents at the north end of the valley running errands or working in the south;
- Visitors who wish to make day trips to the opposite end of the valley; and
- Workers who could meet the bus at Park & Rides along the corridor.

Responsibility for implementation:

The RTA is the appropriate entity to be responsible for implementation of these recommendations.

Park & Rides:

The Task Force firmly believes that the rest of these recommendations will not live up to their full potential without the early acquisition and construction of Park & Rides. Each Park & Ride should be between 2 and 3 acres (with 3 being preferred.) The Task Force identified several locations as key for the success of the overall plan.

North of Gunnison:

The Task Force made contact with a developer who is considering including a Park & Ride facility on his land. The Task Force feels that this land may be appropriate for a Park & Ride and encourages the RTA to continue discussions. Alternative sites may include the Meadows Park or the Community Center. A Park & Ride just north of Gunnison is essential for capturing a large number of single occupancy vehicles before they travel on State Highway 135.

Ohio Creek Intersection:

This location makes sense due to the increase in residential units to be built north of Gunnison and up Ohio Creek. The County is planning a realignment of this intersection and has plans and funds budgeted to include a Park & Ride in this realignment.

Almont & Jack's Cabin Intersections:

No Park & Ride was deemed necessary at these intersections – however bus stops are recommended.

Cement Creek Intersection:

The Task Force has made informal contact with two property owners and encourages the RTA to follow up with any potential land acquisition at this intersection. This may be the most heavily used Park & Ride in the future and the success of public transit in the valley will be heavily impacted by the ease of use of this particular Park & Ride. Therefore, the recommendation is to construct this Park & Ride as close to the highway as possible and with techniques to keep the visual impacts to a minimum.

Brush Creek Intersection:

This Park & Ride facility will also be very important in the future. The recommendation is to work with the entities that own the land (CBMR, Gunnison County, CB, & Mt. CB) to construct a Park & Ride convenient to the highway on this land or to exchange a portion of this land for more convenient land.

The RTA should work with the other entities in the valley to ensure the maintenance of these Park & Ride facilities.

Strategic Plan:

The Task Force recommends that the RTA adopt this document or an amended document as an initial strategic plan for the purpose of making a statement regarding ground transportation in the valley. A strategic plan including all of the above elements will enable the RTA to more easily apply for Federal and State funds and will make a commitment to the residents of the valley that the RTA is in full support of transit between the two ends of the valley.

Core Committee Members – Ground Transportation Task Force - RTA

- Gunnison Chamber
- Western State College
- Town of Crested Butte
- Town of Crested Butte
- Town of Mt. CB
- Town of Mt. CB
- Town of Mt. CB
- City of Gunnison
- Gunnison County
- Mt. Express
- Mt. Express
- Mt. Express
- RTA
- RTA
- RTA
- CB South
- CB South
- Skyland
- CBMR
- Tourism Association
- Tourism Association
- Development Community
- Alpine Express
- CB Lodging Community
- Gunnison Lodging
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- At Large
- Steve Shelafo
- Gary Pierson
- Frank Bell, Skip Berkshire
- John Hess
- Joe Fitzpatrick,
- Danny D'Aquila
- Chris Morgan
- Steve Westbay
- Jim Starr
- Bill Dickerson,
- Danny D'Aquila
- Chris Larsen
- Jim Starr
- Chris Morgan
- Scott Truex
- Chris Behan
- Al Smith
- Gary Garland
- Michael Kraaz
- Devin Marks
- Mark Ewing
- Gary Garland
- Woody Sherwood
- Devin Marks
- Steve Shelafo
- Richard Karas
- Amanda McDowell
- Brenda Johnson
- Christina Alvord
- Mel Harper
- Mary Kay Bangert
- Jim Schmidt
- Mike Potoker