



**U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration**

**Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program (Transit in the Parks Program)
Project Proposal for Fiscal Year 2010 Funds – Planning Project**

BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION			
Project Name (Please provide a 1-2 sentence description of the project): Bozeman Area Recreational Access Alternative Transportation Study			
Proposed Funding Recipient: USDA Forest Service – Gallatin National Forest			
Public land unit(s) involved: Gallatin National Forest		<u>Location of Project</u> City:Bozeman County:USA State: MT Congressional District: 01	
Federal Land Management Agency managing the above unit(s): <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Land Management <input type="checkbox"/> Bureau of Reclamation <input type="checkbox"/> Fish and Wildlife Service <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Forest Service <input type="checkbox"/> National Park Service <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g. Federal Trust) Describe:		Type of Planning Project: (Implementation projects, please use the alternate form) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Planning	
<input type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible new alternative transportation system where none currently exists. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposal is to plan for a possible expansion or enhancement of an existing alternative transportation system.			
Transit in Parks Program Funding Requested during FY 2010 \$290,000		Total Cost of Planning Project at Completion (All sources) \$290,000	
Were you awarded Transit in Parks Program funds for this project in the past? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please provide amount awarded: \$			
Do you plan to request additional Transit in Parks Program funds in future years? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No (Note: If you wish to compete for future Transit in Parks Program fiscal year funds you must reapply).			
If answer "Yes," please specify Transit in Parks Program proposed funding levels for out years below:			
FY 2010 \$	FY 2011 \$3,000,000 Depending on Study outcome	FY 2012 \$3,000,000	
FY 2010 Funding Amounts from sources other than Transit in Parks Program funds? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If answer "Yes," please specify funding levels per source below:			
State \$	Local \$ Incidental salary	Federal (other than Transit in Parks Program) \$	Private sources \$ Incidental Salary

CONTACT PERSON

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OTHER PROJECT SPONSORS (in addition to funding recipient)

Gallatin County, City of Bozeman, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Gallatin Valley Land Trust, Western Transportation Institute, Montana Department of Transportation (MDT), Streamline Transit System, Human Resource and Development Council (HRDC), numerous service organizations (see letters of support)

REQUIREMENTS

If a State, Tribal, or local government entity is proposing the project, the applicant has contacted the manager of the Federal land unit(s) and has the consent of the Federal land management agency or agencies affected.

The project is consistent with the metropolitan and statewide planning process.

The project is consistent with agency plans.

The planning project will analyze all reasonable alternatives, including a non-construction option.

BASIC PROJECT DATA

Number of Visitors (Annual): 150,000

Daily Number of Visitors (Peak season): 3000

Average Number of Vehicles per Day at Peak Visitation: 1500

Current Road Level of Service at Peak Visitation: LOS C Observational Data, not directly studied to date.

(Please consult guidance where available on determining this variable. You may use observational accounts or pictures to provide an assessment of this datum for FY 2010 proposals).

What time of the year does your land unit experience Peak Visitation?

 Spring Summer Fall Winter

Current Carrying Capacity of Existing Roads: 2000 (vehicles/day)

What percent of that capacity is the site operating at during peak periods? 75%

Current parking shortages during peak visitation: 50% of Trailheads

Current Number of Persons who use the alternative transportation system (if one already exists) at peak visitation:

0, not currently accessing the recreational access points (average number of visitors/daily at peak)

Estimated Annual Number of Persons who will use the alternative transportation system at project completion: 20,000 (anticipated number of riders or users/annually)

Average number of auto collisions with wildlife in the area? Minimal, no data available collisions/year

Executive Summary

Please provide an executive summary of your proposal that is no more than one page in length.

This proposal seeks to expand on the "Highway 86 Alternative Transportation Study" that has been selected as a 2009 Project for \$279,925. This proposal would study opportunities for alternative transportation to the other highly popular recreational destinations surrounding the Bozeman area.

Since the 2000 census, the towns of Bozeman and Belgrade have posted growth rates of 38% and 40%. That growth in the Gallatin Valley has equally increased visitation on the local recreational destinations, particularly on the National Forest. Trailhead parking and access roads are more congested than ever. The local agencies and communities logically question whether additional road and parking construction throughout the Forest should be the first response. Instead, we should first study alternative transportation possibilities such as additional community-to-mountains trails and mass transit, particularly expansion of the existing mass transit system. Providing high quality alternatives will get folks out of their private vehicles and onto trails and mass transit. This is especially important during a time of growth when opportunities may be incorporated in community growth plans.

This proposal plans to study the following sampling of destinations for biking, hiking, skiing, fishing, rafting, site-seeing, and other recreational values:

1. Popular National Forest and State Lands access points such as Bozeman Creek, Bear Canyon, Leverich Canyon, Sypes Canyon, Middle Cottonwood, Bear Creek, and others.
2. Hyalite Canyon, both National Forest and County Youth Camp destinations.
3. Kirk Hill Recreational Area managed by Montana State University.
4. Other community recreational destinations north, south, east, and west.
5. A general look at interconnecting other nearby destinations such as Big Sky, the Gallatin River Canyon, the Madison River Canyon, the Yellowstone River Valley, Lewis & Clark Caverns, Yellowstone National Park and it's gateway communities of West Yellowstone and Gardiner, etc.

Creating a year-around transportation system that both reflects the needs of the community today and further encourages the recreational and commuting public to more frequently choose mass transit or trails rather than individual vehicles is a worthy goal for a growing community like Bozeman. This is an ideal time for a community like Bozeman to be working toward those goals, before any additional trail-expansion opportunities are lost.

This study will include collection of traffic data, visitor surveys and stakeholder interviews to assess the feasibility of alternative transportation. Considerations will include environmental impacts, motorist safety, and wildlife/vehicle collisions. Alternative transportation options can provide mobility to people without access to vehiclesThis project enjoys widespread support from the community of Bozeman as is evident from the attached letters of support.

A study of this type is critical to testing the feasible dimensions of problem and the search for solutions. Without it, we are likely to seek only solutions of the past and not test the possibilities of the future.

Project Description

What activities would be funded by the requested Transit in Parks Program financial assistance? Please provide a project description that is no more than one page in length. You may attach up to two pages of maps or other illustrations that do not count towards the page limit.

The “**Bozeman Area Recreational Access Alternative Transportation Study**” will assess, plan, and design alternative transportation options for accessing popular recreation sites throughout the Gallatin Valley and surrounding forests, rivers, lakes, and streams. Gallatin National Forest and its partners hope to secure funding for the following activities:

Longterm Recreational Type, Demand, and Needs. Research and quantify recreational types, demands, and needs that require transportation to and from the Forest. Include both local residents and tourists.

Existing and Future Transportation Network. Evaluate City, County, and Federal planning efforts for their connectivity to Federal and State Lands. Recommend integrated solutions that provide alternative transportation solutions that draw recreational users from the private vehicles onto trails or mass transit where and when appropriate.

Traffic Data. Collect existing traffic data such as volumes, average vehicle occupancy, average length of stay, and the percentage of vehicles which are dropping off and/or picking up people. Visitor surveys will help answer questions such as: How many days per week do you drive? Would be you be willing to ride a bus? How long do you normally stay? What is the typical occupancy rate per vehicle? Data and survey results will inform options to expand existing transit service and address safety issues.

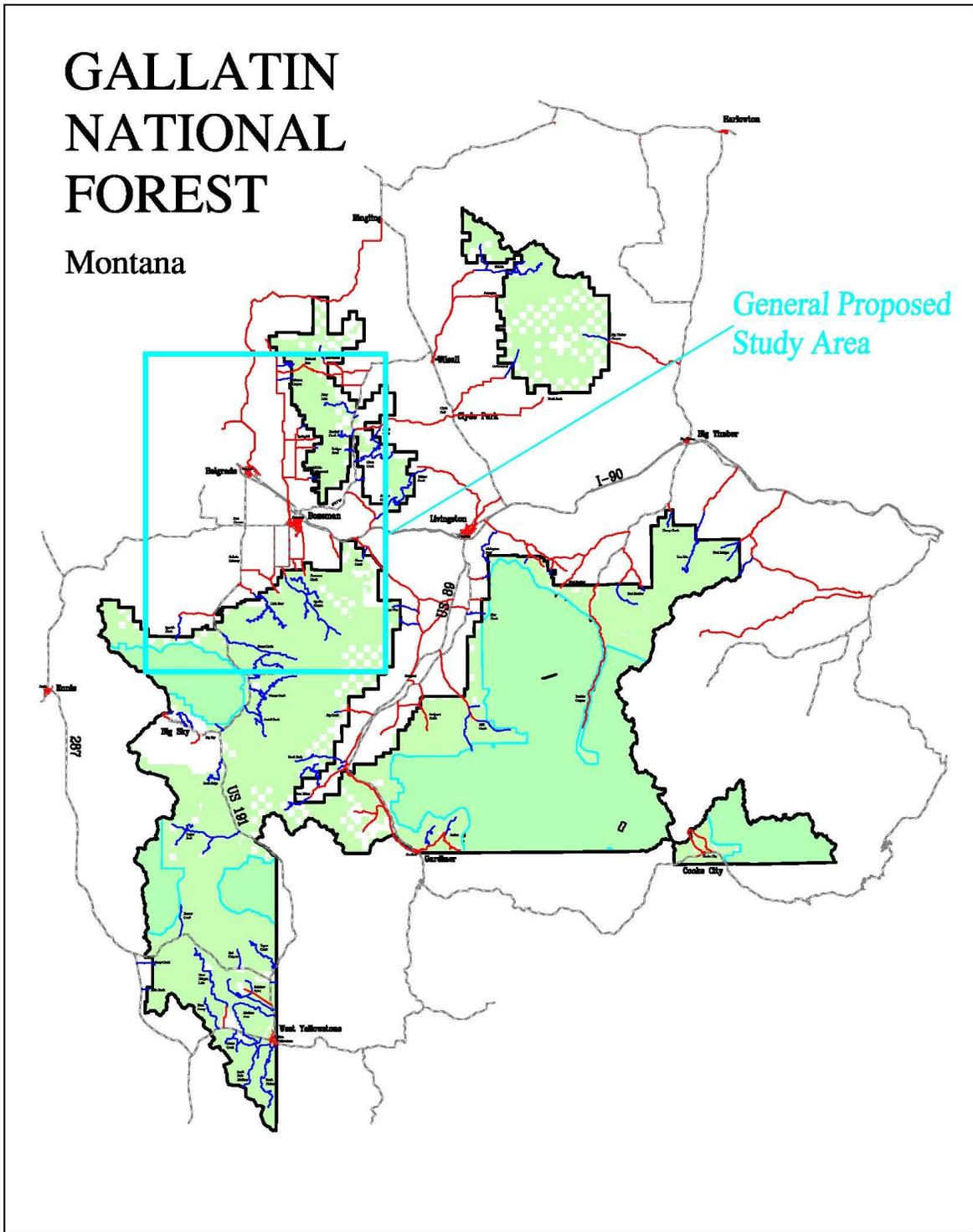
Available Mass Transit. Evaluate existing transit systems for viable expansion capabilities to meet the goals of the study. Identify and interview transit stakeholders, conduct rider surveys, identify issues, and look for opportunities to improve efficiency and coordination between existing transit systems. Develop alternatives for expanding transit schedules, routes, and connections to other modes and funding options to connect the community to Federal and State lands.

Safety Assessment. Assess the current transportation connections between the community and the Federal and State lands for safety and recommend safety improvements. Many of the accesses involve use of a National Forest System roads that are single lane with turnouts. Hyalite Canyon is a double-lane paved road with considerable traffic and safety concerns, particularly between bicycles and highway vehicles, and they are growing every year.

Highway 86 Alternative Transportation Study. Build on the information, conclusions, and recommendations provided by this study. Coordinate to the extent practical to avoid duplication.

GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST

Montana



Alternative Transportation in the Parks and Public Lands Planning Evaluation Criteria

(There are separate evaluation factors for implementation projects. Use the implementation project proposal template for implementation projects.)

Criteria	Points	Weight
1. Demonstration of Need		50%
a. Visitor mobility & experience	(1-5)	
b. Environmental condition as result of existing transportation system	(1-5)	
2. Methodology for Assessing: Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project		15%
a. Reduced traffic congestion	(1-5)	
b. Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety	(1-5)	
c. Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits	(1-5)	
3. Methodology for Assessing: Environmental Benefits of Project		15%
a. Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources	(1-5)	
b. Reduced pollution	(1-5)	
4. Methodology for Assessing: Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability of Alternatives		20%
a. Effectiveness in meeting management goals	(1-5)	
b. Financial plan and cost effectiveness	(1-5)	
c. Cost effectiveness	(1-5)	
d. Partnerships and funding from other sources	(1-5)	

Planning Justification

Your responses to these questions must total no more than eight pages.

1. Demonstration of Need

- a. Visitor mobility and experience:** Describe the site’s current and/or anticipated transportation problem or opportunity for improvement. You should include information on issues such as traffic congestion, traffic delays, parking shortages, difficulty in accessing destinations, safety issues, lack of access for persons with disabilities, lack of access for individuals with lower incomes or without cars, and visitor frustration. Please cite reports, plans, studies, and other documentation to support your description.

General. The main need of this study is to demonstrate what the local community and agencies acknowledge as the need but have little in terms of documentation, reports, and other studies. This is a small to medium size community with growing pains and has not over the years had to address these issues. The transportation system has been sized for the past and with increases in types, seasons, and volume of use, the community and Forest need a study to help guide the near term decision-making. Do we increase the capacity and size of our road and parking transportation system or are there opportunities to evolve into other modes of transportation such as mass transit or trails? Or is there a mix? Either way, it’s an opportune time to consider alternate methods that may save the community and agencies considerable investments and at the same time enhance the recreational experience for many more of the users. Lesser impact on resources would likely be an additional benefit. This is the primary purpose of the study.

Growth and Tourism – Bozeman has a population of nearly 40,000 and has grown 38% since the 2000 census, while neighboring Belgrade has another 8000 residents and has

grown by 40% in the last eight years. At the same time, the area enjoys significant tourism. According to the Bozeman Chamber of Commerce Convention and Visitor Bureau, over 1.5 million visitors travel through Bozeman every year. Of non-resident visitors who spend at least one night in Bozeman, 40% participate in wildlife viewing and 30% enjoy day hiking. Of the vacationers spending at least one night in Bozeman 71% of them are attracted to Montana for the mountains and forests. Bozeman's dramatic growth and popularity are both reflected and spurred on by frequent recognition in the national media as an outdoor recreation mecca, including ratings in Outside Magazine as the fifth-best college town and one of the "top U.S. Adventure Hot Spots".

Wintertime Traffic Safety Concerns – Bozeman is a wintertime wonderland. Use of the National forest in winter is growing each year. Most forest roads were never designed to be plowed and utilized in the winter. Poor snow storage, proximity to the creeks, steep cut and fill slopes, and single lane roads are some of the concerns.

Transit Currently Limited – Most people drive to these public lands destinations because the contracted transit system provides only limited service to these destinations. People who cannot afford a vehicle, do not have access to a vehicle or are unable to drive have very limited options for access to these federal lands. Bozeman is a college town and many students do not have access to a vehicle. A transit system has the potential to remove drivers from the roadways during wet, icy or snowy conditions, thus reducing the risk for crashes. Transit can also decrease parking needs.

Trailhead Parking Issues – Most parking on the Forest, particularly within the Bozeman area is limited, undersized, and with limited capacity for size increases due to terrain and private land limitations. Providing the opportunity for folks with the opportunity for drop-off and/or pick-up opportunities would coax them out of their vehicles. Visitors to the area may opt for mass transit rather than rentals.

Connection to Existing Urban Trails - Bozeman's "Main Street to the Mountains" trail system includes over 50 miles of greenway trails linking parks and neighborhoods throughout the community. Connecting these trail to the Mountains is an important part of this application.

Strong City and County Support – As demonstrated by the attached letters of support, this planning project is strongly supported by both the City of Bozeman and Gallatin County. The planned trail connection has been identified as a high priority in planning documents adopted by both the City and County. Thanks to City trail system master planning, 0.3 miles of the planned Hwy 86 paved trail has already been constructed as part of one of the new subdivisions on the north side of the highway.

- b. **Environmental condition as a result of the existing transportation system:** Describe the site's current or anticipated problem or opportunity for improvement of the environment in this area. You should include information on current or anticipated problems such as air pollution, noise pollution, run-off, water quality, harm to vegetation and wildlife, and other impacts or stressors on natural, scenic, cultural and/or historic resources caused by the existing transportation system. Please cite documentation in agency plans, studies, reports and other documentation that will help to support your description.

Reducing the amount of infrastructure and number of vehicles onto the National Forest is a considerable concern and need for this study. Hyalite Canyon, one of the most popular recreational destinations in the State of Montana is also a key part of the Bozeman Municipal watershed system and contributes to over 40% of the city water supplies. Much of the road system on the Forest is native surface and designed and maintained for light duty use.

Growth in the valley has noticeably increased use on the roads and is contributing to the more maintenance needs and additional resource concerns, such as sediment production and vegetation loss.

The location of today's trailheads are limited by terrain. Creeks and steep hillsides are the main constraints. Expanding trailheads in those areas is problematic and resource intensive, and expensive. Alternate ways of getting folks to the trails and out of parking lots would be a major benefit and avoiding unnecessary parking expansion.

Scope of Work and Methodology

The planning project's scope of work and methodology should include tasks that will assess the areas below in a thorough and professional manner. The planning project should have a scope of work and methodology at this proposal phase, although it may be refined later.

2. Methodology for Assessing - Visitor Mobility & Experience Benefits of Project

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the visitor mobility & experience benefits of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. Reduced traffic congestion:** This criterion includes: reduced average number of daily motorized vehicle trips during peak visitation, time lost to traffic delays, visitor frustration, and the area's current capacity of the existing transportation system.

Providing high quality trails and mass transit options will draw, it is anticipated, a fair number of folks out of their vehicles. This study will help decide if this is a viable and feasible possibility.

- b. Enhanced visitor mobility, accessibility, and safety:** This criterion includes enhanced intermodal interconnectivity, improved public access to resources, improved access for those with disabilities and low incomes, traffic safety, pedestrian/cycling safety, and safety in the case of catastrophic events (i.e., forest fires or security threats).

Surveys and/or interviews from people with disabilities (such as Eagle Mount participants and Galavan riders) and low income populations can provide information on potential use of alternative. Alternatives to driving, particularly use of mass transit to destinations like Hyalite Canyon and Middle Creek Reservoir would reduce the need to additional transportation and parking capacities. Bikers could fetch a mass transit ride into the canyon and ride out, reducing mixed traffic by ½ on the 10 miles of paved roads in the Hyalite Canyon.

- c. Improved visitor education, recreation, and health benefits:** Describe how the project's scope and methodology will assess improved visitor education, recreation and health benefits?

The assessment, planning and design for alternative transportation options proposed within the scope of this project has the potential to achieve great health and recreation benefits by providing convenient, safe transit and bicycle-pedestrian options for accessing a high concentration of heavily-used recreational destinations on Federal lands.

Visitor surveys and surveys of user groups will help determine how visitors may improve their education, recreation and health through a potential transit and trail system.

3. **Methodology for Assessing - Environmental Benefits of Project**

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the environmental benefits of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. **Protection of sensitive natural, cultural, and historical resources:** This criterion includes energy conservation, energy efficiency, ecosystem sustainability, preservation of archeological and/or historical resources, view-shed and watershed preservation, reduction in auto-wildlife collision rates, improved habitat connectivity, ensuring that visitation does not exceed an area's ability to handle increased levels of visitation or the "carrying capacity" of the land unit, and other protection benefits where applicable.

Collecting traffic data, visitor counts and surveys will provide information to estimate the number of motor-vehicle trips that can be replaced by alternative modes. This information can be used to estimate gas savings, emission reductions and related energy conservation data. Proposed wildlife monitoring and assessment and research from other similar projects will provide estimates of reductions in auto-wildlife collisions through wildlife/vehicle collision avoidance techniques.

- b. **Reduced pollution:** This criterion includes air pollution, water pollution, noise pollution, and visual pollution.

Many people visiting the National Forest either live in the Bozeman area or stay in lodging in Bozeman. A trail connection to town combined with a transit system would allow visitors to leave their cars in town, yet access Federal lands. This would result in reducing vehicles which is a key factor in reducing air, noise and visual pollution.

4. **Methodology for Assessing - Operational Efficiency and Financial Sustainability**

Please address how the planning project's scope and methodology will assess the operational efficiency and the financial sustainability of a potential alternative transportation system improvement in the following areas:

- a. **Operational efficiency:** This criterion includes considerations of how a potential alternative system may/may not meet identified management goals and objectives for this site, including consideration of multiple alternatives.

The visitor survey, counts and stakeholder interviews will be used to determine a preferable frequency for the potential transit system and trails. Based on the potential system and ridership, an operational efficiency can be determined (rides per hour, rides per mile, etc.). This information can be compared to similar systems on other Federal lands to check if goals are realistic.

Further, the estimated ridership numbers can be used to estimate how much a potential intermodal transit and trail system could reduce traffic. This operational efficiency information will also be linked to cost figures to determine the financial feasibility and cost effectiveness of the potential system.

- b. Financial feasibility:** This criterion includes the development of a financial plan that will incorporate a potential alternative transportation system, including the evaluation of multiple alternatives.

This Study will investigate sources of revenue (including partnerships) that would allow for the long-term funding of the transit system and trail connections. Various options for financing alternative transportation systems will be explored including continuing support from existing partners and expanding partnerships for the Streamline transit system. The Study will include at least three alternatives for levels of service as well as a connector route/service. The Study will use the visitor surveys and stakeholder interviews to determine the appropriate levels of frequency for the proposed system. Given the widespread community support for transit and trails alternatives, other options may include establishing a local transit district, researching a variety of grants and donations from individuals and businesses.

In addition the Study will look at alternatives to procuring vehicles (such as purchase or lease), as well as alternatives for operating the system (hiring seasonal drivers, contracting for services, etc.).

- c. Cost effectiveness:** This criterion includes the development of an analysis of cost effectiveness considerations that includes multiple alternatives.

Cost effectiveness of the system will be based on estimates of the cost per ride, cost per mile, etc. and will be compared against the peer group information, as well as information from the National Transit Database (NTD). The NTD provides information on public transit systems in urban and rural areas. The NTD and peer group information will allow the Study to determine if a potential system would be within the current “cost effectiveness” range of similar systems.

Cost effectiveness will also be relevant when comparing the potential transit system against other possible transportation strategies, such as building additional lanes, entrance stations, parking spaces, etc.

Reducing infrastructure on National Forest would also reduce improvement and long-term maintenance costs.

- d. Partnerships and funding from other sources:** This criterion includes planning projects that would be carried out or funded in partnership with other entities in addition to the sponsor and will receive points depending on the level of partnership. Documentation (e.g., partnership agreements, letters of partnership support, letters of confirmation of financial contribution, letters of in-kind contributions, etc.) that supports and verifies involvement of partners and level of partnership *must* accompany this proposal.

Streamline Transit bus services could very well be the private partnership that provides mass transit options to and from the Forest

For 18 years, Gallatin Valley Land Trust has worked to create and connect recreational and alternative transportation trails both within Bozeman and from the community to surrounding public lands. In addition, GVLТ has worked with private landowners to permanently conserve over 50 square miles in Gallatin County and surrounding valleys, including a conservation easement on Bohart Ranch property abutting USFS land and a number of other conservation easements in the Bridger Canyon area. GVLТ is strongly committed to this project and has the capacity to bring significant funding from other sources. GVLТ coordinated the seven-year project to complete the new Drinking Horse Mountain trail at the USFWS Fish

Technology Center. Principal partners on this project included USFWS, USFS, Montana Outdoor Science School and Friends of the Fish Technology Center. The project, which included a large pedestrian bridge over Bridger Creek, totaled over \$200,000 including nearly \$60,000 from five foundations, \$64,000 of in-kind donations from a large number of business partners and many large and small private donations. GVLT is confident that many of these funders and in-kind donors will also enthusiastically support the planning and design work proposed in this application. Bridger Engineers, one of GVLTs business donors on the Drinking Horse Mountain Project, has already donated \$6,600 in planning and design work toward the planned trail along Hwy 86. Additional similar support from GVLT can be expected in the future.

Based on the partnerships forged to create the Streamline Transit System and Bozeman's "Main Street to the Mountains" trails, we are confident of strong support for an integrated transit and trail network linking Bozeman to Federal and State lands. Please see the attached letters from organizations that support this planning study.