

Appendix C

Summary of Locally Developed Plans

2008 Greater Minnesota Public Transportation Plan

October 2008

**Prepared For
Minnesota Department of Transportation**

**Prepared By
SRF Consulting Group, Inc.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0	Introduction	1
2.0	Urban Area Profiles.....	1
2.1	Duluth Transit Authority-Service Analysis, February 2003	1
2.2	Rochester Transit Development Plan, October 2006	2
2.3	St. Cloud 2030 Transit Plan, 2005.....	2
2.4	Fargo/Moorhead-2007-2011 Metro Transit Plan, November 2006.....	3
2.5	Grand Forks/East Grand Forks MPO Transit Plan, 2003	3
3.0	Twin City Commuter Corridors	4
4.0	Summary of Locally Developed Coordination Plans	4
4.1	Minnesota Public Transit–Human Services Coordination Study	6
4.2	Northwest Minnesota Region One Public Transit Plan.....	8
4.3	Headwaters Region Transit Coordination Plan	10
4.4	Northeast Minnesota and Duluth Area Human Services Coordination Transit Plan.....	12
4.5	West Central Minnesota Transit Coordination Study.....	13
4.6	Region 5 – Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan	15
4.7	Region 6E- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan.....	17
4.8	Region 6W- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan.....	20
4.9	Region 7E- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan.....	21
4.10	Region 7W- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan	22
4.11	Region 8- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan.....	24
4.12	Region 9- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan.....	25
4.13	District 6- Public Transportation/Human Services Coordination Plan.....	26
4.14	Metro Transit Plan (2007-2011)-Coordinated Plan	27
4.15	Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Grand Forks and East Grand Forks	28
4.16	Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Coordination Action Plan	
4.16	Public Transit/Human Services Transportation Coordination Action Plan	30
4.17	Preparing Minnesota for the Age Wave: Transform 2010.....	32

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Through the development of transit and public transportation plans, local transit agencies throughout Greater Minnesota have worked to characterize existing public transportation services, measure levels of service, and identify unmet needs. In order to build on these previous efforts, a summary of the following are presented below:

- Urban Area Transit Plans;
- Commuter Corridor identification and Express Route planning connecting to the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area; and
- Locally Developed Human Services/Transportation Coordination plans.

2.0 URBAN AREA PROFILES

To follow is a summary of transit plans for the urban areas throughout Greater Minnesota. Included is a system overview and summary of identified unmet needs for the cities of Duluth, Rochester, St. Cloud, Fargo/Moorhead, and Grand Forks/East Grand Forks.

2.1 DULUTH TRANSIT AUTHORITY-SERVICE ANALYSIS, FEBRUARY 2003

The Duluth Area Transit Authority (DTA) serves the Duluth Metropolitan Area with fixed route and demand responsive/ADA paratransit service. DTA offers 18 fixed routes serving popular destinations such as the Miller Hill Mall, University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), MN Power, the downtown area, and popular retail destinations. Fares vary depending on type of payment (i.e. cash, monthly pass, student pass-up to 45% discount), but standard fares are generally \$1.00 for peak hour, and \$0.50 for off peak. The DTA fleet includes 72 regular fixed route vehicles. As of 2001, DTA fixed route service had a ridership of 3,148,000 passengers annually. Demand responsive/ADA paratransit service is funded by DTA, but operated by private contractor.

Service start and stop times vary depending on route and day of the week. Weekday service typically begins between 5:00 and 6:30am, but starts as early as 4:30 on select routes, and service typically stops between 6:30 and 7:30pm, but runs as late as 12:00am for some routes. Limited weekend service is available (Saturday and Sunday).

The DTA has identified a need for additional resources to meet current demand. According to the DTA, instances in which busses cannot pick up waiting passengers because of capacity are becoming common. Specific areas where additional service is needed are listed below:

- The East Hillside area has an unmet need of approximately 3 service hours during peak hours on various routes.
- The Western Corridor has a need for approximately 8 additional service hours per day in order to meet existing demand.
- The Airport/Airport Park and Hospital areas are in need of approximately 24 service hours per day. Airport expansion and new light industry in the area has created new demand for late night and early morning service, not previously demanded. Because of its counter flow nature, the DTA has submitted an application for JARC funding for the airport area.

2.2 ROCHESTER TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN, OCTOBER 2006

Rochester City Lines offers fixed route and demand responsive/ADA paratransit service throughout the Rochester area. Its fixed route fleet includes 36 vehicles. The fare for fixed route service is \$1.25 per ride, with discounts for seniors and students. Service is offered from 6:00am to 6:00pm on weekdays, and 8:15am to 6:30pm on Saturdays with no service on Sundays. As of 2005, the fixed route system had a ridership of 1,301,107 passengers annually, and ridership is projected to increase by 12.6 percent over the next three years.

Demand responsive/ADA paratransit service is contracted through Zumbro Inc. Passenger Service (ZIPS) and is available to those not served by fixed route services. The demand response fleet includes eight vehicles and service is available on weekdays from 5:30am to 10:00pm and Saturdays from 7:00am to 7:00pm. There is no Sunday service.

Key destinations within the Rochester City Lines service area include the Mayo Foundation (Downtown Rochester), which employs 28,216 people; IBM (Northwest Rochester), which employs 6,000; and retail locations such as Shopko, Wal-Mart, and Cub.

A service warrants analysis identified an unmet need for additional service to Madonna Meadows, located in the southwest portion of the city, and north and south cross-town routing.

2.3 ST. CLOUD 2030 TRANSIT PLAN, 2005

St. Cloud Metro Bus operates fixed route and demand responsive/ADA paratransit service within the St. Cloud Metropolitan area. Fixed route service is available weekdays from 5:30am to 9:45pm, Saturdays from 7:45am to 6:45pm, and Sundays from 9:00am to 6:00pm. ADA demand response service is available on weekdays from 5:30am to 12:00am, Saturdays from 7:45am to 6:45pm, and Sundays from 9:00am to 6:00pm. Demand response service is available to the general public from the end of fixed route service until 12am on weekdays.

The current fixed route ridership for the St. Cloud system is approximately 1,853,306 passengers per year (2007), and in conjunction with an expected population increase of 53 percent, ridership is projected to increase 80 percent between 2000 and 2030.

Key destination within the Metro Bus system include St. Cloud State University, the downtown area, and the Crossroads Shopping Center.

Metro Bus has identified the following unmet needs:

- Link with Northstar Commuter Rail at Big Lake
- Service to St. Cloud Airport
- Service to St. Joseph
- Service to I-94 industrial area
- Service to St. Augusta

- Expand existing service hours (to include holidays)

2.4 FARGO/MOORHEAD-2007-2011 METRO TRANSIT PLAN, NOVEMBER 2006

Fargo/Moorhead Metro Area Transit serves the metropolitan area with fixed route, ADA paratransit, and demand responsive transit service. Fixed route service operates weekdays from 6:00am to 10:00 pm and Saturdays from 6:00am to 10:00pm. There is no service on Sundays. ADA and demand response service operates weekdays from 6:00am to 10:00p, Saturdays from 7:00a to 10:00p, and Sundays from 7:00am to 5:00pm. The current fixed route ridership is 978,728 passengers annually (2005).

Major employers in the area include North Dakota State University and Blue Cross Blue Shield. Key trip destinations include North Dakota State University, Minnesota State University Moorhead, West Acres Mall, K Mart (south Fargo), the downtown area, and Wal-Mart in Dilworth (east of Moorhead).

Metro Area Transit has identified a need for expanded fixed route service to the growing areas throughout the area. Further, demand for demand response service is expected to increase because the State of North Dakota has reduced/eliminated funding for private providers.

Specific unmet needs include the following:

- Service to Dilworth (included in state funding request for 2009)
- Increased frequency to college areas
- Improve Moorhead college circulation
- City-wide demand response service

2.5 GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS MPO TRANSIT PLAN, 2003

Cities Area Transit offers fixed route, ADA paratransit, and senior rider demand responsive service throughout the Grand Forks/East Grand Forks area. Fixed route service runs weekdays from 7:00am to 6:00pm and Saturdays from 10:00am to 6:00pm, with no service on Sundays. ADA and demand response service is offered weekdays from 6:00am to 10:00pm and Saturdays from 10:00am to 10:00pm, with no service on Sundays. The current ridership for the fixed route system is 243,000 passengers annually (2007), which is expected to increase by 10 percent per year.

The largest employer in the area is the University of North Dakota. An analysis of trip destinations found that 37 percent of trips are made to access employment, 27 percent are to school, 19 percent are to retail/service destinations, and 4 percent are to medical facilities.

Cities Area Transit has identified a need for service to employers south and west of Grand Forks, and southeast of East Grand Forks. Specific unmet needs include the following:

- Grand Forks Industrial Park

- East Grand Forks Industrial Park
- American Crystal Sugar Plant

3.0 TWIN CITY COMMUTER CORRIDORS

The Metropolitan Council Draft 2030 Transportation Policy Plan identifies several promising corridors for further study as potential transitway/commuter corridors and long-distance express routes to serve both the Twin Cities Metropolitan area and other areas throughout Greater Minnesota. Four corridors were identified for initial screening and possibly alternatives analysis studies. These corridors are as follows:

- I-35W north of downtown Minneapolis
- TH 36
- TH 65/Central Avenue
- I-94 east of downtown St. Paul and Minneapolis

Further, long-distance express routes may be introduced outside of the seven-county area where appropriate, to provide transit service between exurban areas and downtown Minneapolis or St. Paul. Possible corridors include the following:

- I-35 from North Branch
- I-35 from Faribault
- TH 55 from Buffalo
- St. Cloud to Big Lake (connecting to the Northstar Commuter Rail service)

4.0 SUMMARY OF LOCALLY DEVELOPED COORDINATION PLANS

As part of the SAFETEA-LU legislation, new requirements for grantees under the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Elderly and Disabled Transportation (5310) programs have been established. These changes require the creation of coordinated action plans for public transit and human services transportation. In order to receive funding, these plans should be completed at the state, regional and local levels. Coordination plans are meant to establish goals, criteria and strategies for delivering efficient, coordinated transportation services to elderly, underemployed/limited income persons, and people with disabilities.

In 2004 Mn/DOT began a study to develop a statewide plan for coordination with the goal of educating public transit and human service transportation stakeholders about the benefits of coordination. The plan includes a framework for developing metro area and Greater Minnesota coordination action plans.

As a result of this effort, human services transportation coordination plans were developed at the state, regional, and local levels throughout Minnesota. As prescribed by SAFETEA-LU, common plan components include an overview and demographics analysis for the study area, a transportation services inventory, a needs analysis, and strategies and goals for coordination. Further, each plan was developed using a comprehensive public participation process, including public meetings, workshops, and surveys/questionnaires. Although each followed the same basic

process and has the same key elements, the plans completed by various organizations differ in content. Each has a unique format, different focus areas, and varying levels of detail. The following is a summary of these coordinated plans, including any needs or service gaps identified, and coordination goals and strategies.

In addition, a related report titled *Preparing Minnesota for the Age Wave: Report on Transform 2010*, examines the impacts of an aging population in Minnesota and related issues. Developed by a team including the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Minnesota Department of Health, and the Minnesota Board on Aging, this study was designed to engage stakeholders and the general public in a discussion on how to prepare for the coming “age wave” as members of the baby boomer generation begin to retire. A brief overview of this report follows the coordination plan summaries as discussed above.

4.1 MINNESOTA PUBLIC TRANSIT –HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION STUDY

Title: **Minnesota Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Study**

Agency: **Mn/DOT**

Date: **3/31/2006**

The State of Minnesota, through the Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT), Office of Transit, undertook this project to establish a planning framework for coordination of public transit and human services transportation, identify transit industry best practices, and develop a statewide action plan for improving transportation coordination. The study was divided into three main phases: Phase I – Stakeholder Assessment, Phase II – Best Practices at the Local Level, Phase III – Transportation Coordination Study Action Plan.

Phase 1

The stake holder assessment included administering stakeholder surveys and workshops, and conducting interviews with key agency officials and private transportation providers to identify unmet needs.

NEEDS

As a result of this process, it was determined that although there is a wide range of transportation services provided across the state, there are still unmet needs. It was found that in order to enable true coordination, there must be a shared vision at the state level and among funding agencies that is then translated to the local level. Identified barriers to coordination varied by location throughout the state, but generally included the following:

- driver qualifications and training requirements
- lack of funding
- coordination leadership
- service fragmentation
- program regulations (inter-regional travel)
- STS regulations
- private sector issues
- turfism
- insurance
- funding

Phase 2

The analysis of best practices included a review of state and national practices through a series of case studies and an analysis of economic impacts. The study found that coordinated systems will yield positive economic benefit. The following best practices were examined through case study:

- Innovative funding, legislation, and service
- Incentive funding for coordination
- Maintenance management
- Cost allocation management
- Non-traditional management strategies for public transportation
- Utilization of the private sector
- Motor carrier regulations.

Phase 3

The Transportation Coordination Study Action Plan establishes a framework for moving transportation coordination forward in both Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities Metropolitan Area. Included is an Action Plan for Greater Minnesota, a Metro Area Action Plan, and implementation plan.

Coordination Transportation Planning - To foster the coordination of human service and public transit services at the local level Mn/DOT, Office of Transit developed a model planning process designed to allow local self determination in the development of coordinated transportation systems in Minnesota. Responsibility for preparing these locally developed coordination plans follows existing Federal requirements for state and metropolitan planning and will utilize the existing Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) for planning outside the state's urbanized areas.

During the planning process, the planning organization was required to inventory and document all the transportation services provided within the region, determine the nature and magnitude of unmet demand, and establish a plan for enhancing coordination at the local level. These Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans meet the requirements set forth in the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5311, Section 5310, New Freedom Program, and Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) grants and should include the following topics:

- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes;
- An inventory of available services that identifies areas of redundant service and gaps in service;
- Strategies to address the identified gaps in service;
- Identification of coordination actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies for more efficient utilization of resources;
 - Recognition of the Mobility Manager;
 - Scope of services; and
 - Mobility management functions.
- Prioritization of implementation strategies;
 - Identification of projects proposed for funding under Section 5310, JARC, and New Freedom programs;
 - Provision of seamless transportation throughout the region;
 - Implementation of reciprocity of fares between transit systems;
 - Standardization of safety and insurance standards consistent with ICTC guidance; and
 - Adoption of uniform policies and procedures.
- A plan to establish Local Mobility Managers to serve as a service broker, providing a single telephone number for all consumers requesting transportation services.

The following are summaries of the locally developed coordination plans described above, including any needs or service gaps identified, and coordination goals and strategies.

4.2 NORTHWEST MINNESOTA REGION ONE PUBLIC TRANSIT PLAN

Title: **Northwest Minnesota Region One Public Transit Plan**

Agency: **Northwest Regional Development Committee**

Date: **November, 2006**

REGION

Region one includes Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau Counties. The Cities of Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN are not included in this plan as they are involved in a separate planning process.

NEEDS

- Sporadic use/Scheduling (concern of providers)
- Funding - (concern of providers)
- Education - (concern of providers)
- Mobility - (concern of providers and riders)
- Evening/weekend usage (concern of providers and riders)
- Coordination/Collaboration (concern of providers)
- Rising costs - (concern of providers)
- Employee/College transit

GOALS/STRATEGIES

Regional Coordination:

- A. Transit Providers Group: Meet in order to provide increased coordination and information on current transit issues, deficiencies and concerns.
- B. Boundary Transit Coordination: Coordinate pick-up and drop off locations between service providers and/or county boundaries.
- C. Technology: Monitor the increasing technology for transit systems and implement in Northwest Minnesota when it becomes cost-efficient to do so.

Marketing

- A. Service Inventory: Compile an inventory manual of all transit services available and pass out to transit providers.
- B. Education: Provide more education to residents in order to increase knowledge about public transit and dispel stereotypes.
- C. Baby Boomers: Find ways to educate the baby boomer population on how to utilize public transportation.

Fill Transportation Gaps

- A. Kittson County: Increasing investigation about public transit needs to be done. Inquiries with the County Board should be done to find out why transportation has been absent.
- B. Small Cities/Unincorporated Cities: There have been individuals interested in transit for smaller/unincorporated cities such as Angus and Tabor. Although resident usage and cost-efficiency would play large parts in any transit route to these locations, resident interest should be studied to deduce whether a stable/needly riding population exists.

- C. Airlines/Busses: Currently there is no service connecting Crookston, Thief River and the surrounding communities to Jefferson Lines and the Grand Forks Airport. The Grand Forks Airport is an important connection for the University of Minnesota at Crookston and the Northland Community College at Thief River Falls.

Increased Weekend/Evening Transit

- A. Crookston Extended Service: Work with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council to provide weekend/evening transit service to Crookston, MN.
- B. Thief River Falls Service: Work with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council to provide transit service to Thief River Falls.
- C. Regional Extended Service: Extended service solutions will vary based on the city and the transit provider.

Increase Rural Transit

- A. Volunteer Agencies: Partner with available volunteers to see if there is an interest in helping transportation-dependent citizens.

Increase Transit Funding

- A. Mn/DOT: Develop a plan with Mn/DOT planning to address deficiencies and concerns.
- B. Advertising: Look into advertising on the side of working buses as a way to help defray costs and provide extra funding.
- C. Additional Funding: Search and apply for any additional funding opportunities that can directly apply to local transportation.
- D. Mobility Manager: Look into available state/federal dollars for the companies in Northwest Minnesota.

Employee Transit

- A. Company Employees: Connect interested companies with available transit providers to see if a viable transportation schedule can be created
- B. Grand Forks Shuttles: Provide more regular shuttles from Crookston and surrounding communities to Grand Forks.

4.3 HEADWATERS REGION TRANSIT COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Headwaters Regional Transit Coordination Plan (Region 2)**

Agency: **Headwaters Regional Development Commission**

Date: **2007**

REGION

The Headwaters Region is in North Central Minnesota and includes the following Counties: Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard, Lake of the Woods, and Mahnommen.

NEEDS

Needs Common to All Groups (elderly, disabled, low-income)

- Expand service hours to include weekday evenings and weekends
- Expand service in the more rural areas

Barriers Common to All Groups

- Funding and/or vehicle availability
- Client awareness of available resources
- Insurance providers
- Advance notice scheduling
- Mechanisms to facilitate coordination

Elderly Needs

- Transportation to social events
- More service to medical facilities

Elderly Barriers

- Accessibility of some vehicles
- Inefficient use of volunteer drivers

Persons with Limited Income Needs

- Expand service hours to include weekday early mornings and late night weekends

Persons with Limited Income Barriers

- Cost of the fare
- Pride

Persons with Disabilities Needs

- Coordination with medical facilities
- ADA vehicle availability in rural areas
- Transportation to the major medical facilities

Persons with Disabilities Barriers

- Wheel chair space is limited in vehicles
- Providing vehicles or drivers for longer distance trips to major medical facilities

GOALS/IMPLEMENTATION

1. Use volunteer drivers more effectively
 - a. Increase the quantity of drivers
 - b. Increase the number of passengers per trip
2. Create a set of Regional Coordination Tools
 - a. Create a web-based directory of service providers with locations served, days and hours of operation, and other information necessary for effective coordination

- b. Create a web-based tool that would allow providers to upload anticipated routes or post information about trips they are making with seats still available
 - c. Explore the creation of a “Mobility Manager” position
- 3. Reduce Operating Expenses
 - a. Use vans when appropriate rather than buses - buses can cost as much as \$12.00/mile to run in the Headwaters Region
- 4. Increase Funding
 - a. Look for additional funding not currently being accessed
 - b. Work with law makers to “adjust” laws and regulations to allow for more funding
- 5. Increase Public Awareness of Transit Services
 - a. Advertise services better
- 6. Minimize Insurance Issues
 - a. Standardize policies (make it so transit providers can pick up insurance from a state or federal agency to enable better transit coordination)

4.4 NORTHEAST MINNESOTA AND DULUTH AREA HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION TRANSIT PLAN

Title: **Northeast Minnesota & Duluth Metropolitan Area Human Services Coordination Transit Plan (Region 3)**

Agency: **Arrowhead Regional Development Commission**

Date: **January 2007**

REGION

The Arrowhead includes Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Carlton, Aitkin, Pine, Itasca, and Koochiching Counties. The Duluth metropolitan area is also included in the planning area.

NEEDS

Duluth Area

- Extending transportation services to outlying areas, job growth areas
- Identify human service trip generators
- Disabled job access options (need accessible vans, taxis etc.)

Arrowhead Region

- Geography/funding to reach the remote areas
- Eliminate restrictive timeframes for ridership
- Education (all parties)
- Communicating needs to administrators for coordination
- Resource guide
- Focused funding
- Networking
- Informal provider reimbursement
- Reasonably maintain access and cost
- Flexible scheduling
- Directory of Services
- Funding guide
- Building knowledge (education)

ACTION STATEMENTS

Based on the results of this study, the following action statements were developed:

Statement 1: Increased education would lead to a more effective transit system, higher ridership, and increased opportunities.

Statement 2: Coordinate efforts for affordable services in all geographical locations.

Statement 3: Coordinating services for transportation, by maintaining regular schedules and meeting individual needs.

Statement 4: Develop methods to increase funding and demand for transportation for everyone.

Statement 5: Increased networking of communicators and providers will strengthen the Arrowhead and Duluth metropolitan areas transportation system.

Statement 6: Reduce transportation barriers through creative approaches, means, or solutions.

4.5 WEST CENTRAL MINNESOTA TRANSIT COORDINATION STUDY

Title: **West Central Minnesota Transit Coordination Study (Region 4)**

Agency: **West Central Initiative**

Date: **January 2007**

REGION

The west central region includes Becker, Clay, Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Pope, Stevens, Traverse, and Wilkin Counties.

NEEDS

- Need for transit service in cities other than where transit system is based
- Service hours provided don't match rider hours requested
- Need uniform & quantifiable service refusal statistical information
- Coordination between contract riders and general public riders
- Desire for allowed use of cost-efficient vehicles; size, accessibility are issues
- Maintenance of viable volunteer driver corps
- Transportation collaboration techniques undefined
- Un-served target populations – i.e. disabled workers
- Ongoing and effective advertising strategy in service areas
- Service expansion ability
- Creating corridor-based transit between cities
- Expansion of public transit service into outlying cities in a county-wide service
- Concentration of services in county seats
- Lack of system funding for additional service hours
- Geographic distances in rural areas between pick-up & destination
- Extended weekday service hours
- Use of Section 5310 vehicle downtime to supplement public transit service
- Use of available public transit vehicles to supplement Section 5310 service
- Shortfall of vehicles to meet demand, based on Level of Service thresholds
- Coordination efforts between different classes of public transit services
- Coordination/financial cooperation between county-wide systems
- State level transit regulatory inconsistencies across system types
- Coordinated planning between local and regional planning agencies
- Fixed route vs. dial-a-ride service in new urban residential areas
- State and local funding gaps
- Regulatory limitations of city-only service vs. “local community service”
- Contract rider ride costs vs. general public rider fares• Insufficient funding for local promotional programs

STRATEGIES AND IMPLEMENTATION

The following were identified as strategies and implementation for increasing coordination within the region:

Promotional Rider Education - Transit providers need the ability to promote transit service based on actual service areas with available equipment, rather than using the contractual county-wide service area laid out in state contracts covering transit service areas. Sufficient inquiries during the survey process imply that individuals or families were unaware that service is not readily or ever available in their

community but outside a served area. This can create disgruntled citizens, and may lead to media-based negative commenting.

Application of Transit Rules in Service Areas

The state determines whether a county-wide transit service includes all portions of a county or only that county portion outside a specific city area. In some regions, small urban systems are allowed to co-exist, whether efficiently or not; while in other regions, either a county-wide system or a merged county-wide/city service are combined, whether efficient or not. This seems inconsistent in application of standardized rule-making. In any instance, administrative funding for public transit service in any area should be efficient yet tailored to meet proven administrative needs.

Coordinated Section 5310 Vehicle Use by Public Transit Systems

In observing past state requests to Section 5310 vehicle holders to note availability of vehicles for public transit service when not used for vehicle holder clients, coupled with some Section 5310 vehicles being converted to public transit status while continuing to serve the Section 5310 vehicle holder's clients, it appears that the state is promoting vehicle use efficiency among vehicle holder types. However, at the same time this can create funding shortfalls for Section 5311 and Section 5310 systems with regard to the inability to expand services due to fewer available vehicles. Vehicle coordination should be encouraged by everyone without reducing in any manner the number of total transit vehicles available despite stable or increasing rider requests.

Continued Regional Transit Needs Assessment and Collaboration Efforts

Based on the need to monitor ongoing regional transit system needs, collaboration efforts, and changing rider characteristics, it will be important that –at the state and regional level – coordination efforts among state, regional, and transit system operators continue. Ongoing discovery of various transportation providers and their target riders needs to be maintained. The determination of agreed ongoing oversight at the regional level needs to be implemented shortly so that local agencies may plan ahead to accomplish agreed tasks to meet state and regional needs in a timely manner.

4.6 REGION 5 - PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Public Transportation—Human Services Coordination Plan (Region 5)**

Agency: **Region Five Development Commission**

Date: **December 2006**

REGION

The region encompasses the counties of: Cass, Crow Wing, Morrison, Todd and Wadena Counties.

SERVICE GAPS

Both 5310 and 5311 are available throughout most of the Region. Cass and Todd Counties currently do not have county wide public transportation systems.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following is a list of goals developed as a part of the planning process:

- Goal 1: Making things happen by working together
- Goal 2: Taking stock of community needs and moving forward
- Goal 3: Putting Customers first
- Goal 4: Adapting funding for greater mobility
- Goal 5: Moving people efficiently

POSSIBLE PROJECTS

The following is a list of possible future coordination projects identified in the study

- **Medical Feeder Transportation** - hospital shuttles that pick up patients who may have a difficult time getting to a single pick-up location. This would help patients get to the hospital from their home for their appointments.
- **Early Morning Work Transportation** - many individuals do not work the same hours that the transportation services are available to them. A suggestion would be to encourage providers to operate earlier in the morning and later at night to accommodate these individuals' needs.
- **Veterans Hospital Transportation** - There is a desire felt by TAC members for more transportation opportunities to the Veterans Hospital in St Cloud and Minneapolis.
- **Weekend Services for Disabled** – A need for weekend service has been identified. Currently, there isn't a non-medical transportation service available for disabled individuals on weekends. This is very apparent in the Brainerd area where local Taxi service doesn't have handicap accessible vehicles.
- **Volunteer Driver Assistance** – Assistance is desired for current and new volunteer driver programs in the areas of recruitment, reimbursement and insurance coverage.
- **Year round-(Seasonal Emphasis) Resort Transportation** – A partnership is desired between transportation providers and local resorts. This would be for the transportation of resort employees and resort guests with a seasonal emphasis.
- **Brochure-Web Site Development** – A brochure identifying transportation options in the region is desired. The majority of members felt that a web site as a resource made the most sense. Members felt that a web site could be continuously updated and could contain a printable schedule and resource guide. Those without computer access could use computers at public libraries or social service agencies. Members felt that a mass produced resource guide might be out date as fast as it was published and could be difficult to distribute.

- **TAC remaining together** – A desire was expressed by this coordination plans TAC to remain together to discuss public transportation issues in an ongoing process.
- **Car Loan & Car repair Program** – This would be a program to assist low income individuals with the costs associated with having a car where public transportation is unavailable.
- **Volunteer Driver Program** – This would be targeted for the JARC and New Freedom programs.

4.7 REGION 6E-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (Region 6E)**

Agency: **Mid-Minnesota Development Commission**

Date: **November, 2006**

REGION

This study includes Kandiyohi, McLeod, Meeker, and Renville Counties.

NEEDS

- More service hours during early mornings, after 5 p.m. and on weekends.
- Improved transportation service to outlying smaller communities within the counties, as well as the non-urbanized rural areas.
- Transportation service that crosses county lines.
- Agencies having clientele with specialized transportation needs are difficult to serve with public transit systems, and some types of clientele do not mix well with other transit riders. In many cases, there is a need for additional use of aids/escorts.
- The region has a large and growing population of Hispanic and Somali persons. Some of these new immigrants need assistance with language skills necessary to comfortably access needed transportation services.
- Additional buses are needed, as are more volunteer drivers. In some cases, transportation providers are having problems finding well-qualified professional drivers.
- There is a demonstrated need to better educate/communicate to riders and potential riders about what is available and how to access what is available for transportation services. Education is needed to lower rider expectations of the service provided; service cannot match the transportation of persons in their own vehicles.
- There is a shortage of funding available to work on these varied needs.

STRATEGIES/IMPLEMENTATION

1. Funding and Rule Change Encouragement

a. Strategy: Targeted application for funds.

Actions: Increase Availability of Operating Funds.

- Maintain local transportation funding levels to make the money go farther, money for transit stays for transit, use that to make the services available; work with what you have. (Support the Transportation Amendment)
- Establish partnerships that can enter into joint venture grant applications
- Inform organizations about new funding opportunities, such as JARC and the New Freedom Program, and encourage organizations to apply for these programs to help fill gaps/needs in service.
- Work to better inform federal and state legislators about transit needs to encourage better financial support

b. Strategy: Promote utilization of consumer directed funding for families.

Actions: Relax rules for consumer utilization of Minnesota Department of Human Services funding, Promote utilization of flexible funds for riders

- Put decision making for use of funds at the level of the consumer
- Work with legislators to change rules to meet needs of local agencies and citizens.

2. Awareness

a. Strategy: Increase education, awareness and promotion of public transportation.

Locally Developed Plans

2008 Greater Minnesota Public Transportation Plan

October 2008

Page 17

Actions:

- Promote inexpensive ways to alert the public (all ages, all populations) of transportation service availability. Utilize the following:
 - Church bulletins
 - Local access television
 - School announcements
 - Shoppers' ads
- Coordinate with service providers to educate and familiarize potential new riders of service availability.
- Identify needs of first time fearful riders. Provide volunteer or escort program for first-time riders. Provide orientation for first-time riders.
- Encourage coordination between school districts and public transit for students to attend after school events or other activities.
- Encourage bilingual escorts/drivers where needed.
- Share best practices across transit providers by encouraging regular communications.

3. Flexible Schedules

- a. **Strategy:** Meet the needs of transportation before 7am and after 5pm Monday through Friday and additionally during Weekends.

Actions:

- Provide transportation for medical appointments, shopping, second, and/or third shift workers.
- Keep marketing materials easy to understand-brochures.
- Provide education regarding schedules. Be sensitive to public perception regarding over-lapping of two buses at same location for two people.
- Coordinate transportation between counties to meet consumer needs.
- Provide additional staff, additional vehicles (more money).
- Promote increase in inter-agency coordination of scheduling.
- Look for creative public and private partnerships to expand needed service.
- Maximize use of technology to achieve electronic scheduling where appropriate
- Link websites between agencies, such as city websites, agency websites, and bus shelters.
- Provide bus schedules with list of scheduled stops.
 - Expansion available
 - Most transit providers report that they currently are meeting capacity and would face concerns regarding safety issues.
- Encourage agency networking. A semi-annual schedule was suggested at the workshop; and the method and frequency of networking between agencies is limited only by technology. The purpose of the communications was to coordinate bus scheduling (routes, schedules, needs, etc).
- Support expansion of the volunteer and dial-a-ride programs

4. Rural Transportation

- a. **Strategy:** Equip transit providers with flexibility in service provision in order to the needs of long distance, isolated, varied age population base.

Actions:

- Providers require smaller handicapped accessible vehicles in order to better serve specialized populations

- One option for purchase is an electric lift that converts a regular van into wheelchair accessible available from a company from North Dakota for non public transit provider
- Expand coordination of church based groups such as Common Cup in McLeod County.
- Expand resources available to Rideshare Programs.
- Provide resources available to agencies to expand car loan/donated car programs.
- Partner with technical college to borrow auto bay to repair donated automobiles.
- Increase availability of transportation for all populations living in rural/deep
 - For shopping or errand needs (store- to-store)
 - For increased transportation pick-up service (door-to-door)
- Arrowhead Transit Example
 - Coordinate delivery related services to reach isolated persons through providers who travel throughout a designated area. For example, provide delivery of prescriptions, groceries, etc through an agency whose primary purpose may be to travel rural roadways. A CAP agency is currently funded in the Arrowhead region to provide this coordinated service. Participant's agreed that this model is replicable.

4.8 REGION 6W-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (Region 6W)**

Agency: **Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission**

Date: **November, 2006**

REGION

The Upper Minnesota Valley region encompasses the counties of Big Stone, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Swift and Yellow Medicine.

NEEDS

While the study did summarize the results of the workshop and questionnaire, no specific needs were identified.

STRATEGIES AND COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES

Based on the planning process, the following list of prioritized strategies was developed:

1. Create a local (regional) transportation coordination council (TCC) made up of transit providers and human service providers to encourage inter-agency coordination to improve the transportation network and its service within the region.
2. Identify ways that extended service hours could be implemented within the region.
3. Identify and seek solutions to barriers at the local level that stop coordination from happening and share with policy makers at all levels – local, state and federal.
4. Further implement and support volunteer driver programs as an intricate and vital part to the transportation network in our rural region.
5. Identify potential options to defray cost of trips and keeping transportation affordable for the consumer.

In addition to the strategies above, the following opportunities for coordination were indentified:

- There may be ways to use vehicles and drivers in down times if regulations and rules allowed it.
- Playing fields have to be equal between private providers and public providers before any coordination will take place.
- Creating multi-purpose transportation permits would allow systems to provide different types of service.
- Education is critical in coordination - education identifying limitations and what is available.
- Local providers in the region are willing to coordinate.
- Providers are willing to come together and strategize.
- There are economies of scale if coordination can take place – this region has low population per square mile, which is a barrier to delivery of services.
- Physical inventory in the region is available if more coordination could be done.
- Reality versus perception needs to be clarified. Identify real barriers versus the ones that are perceived or made up.
- Stakeholders need to be more legislatively active on funding and regulations. Support issue papers and “day on the hill” activities.
- Providers are willing to address mobility issues and shifting some of the responsibilities to the local level.
- Use of volunteers and insurance liability issues are barriers that need to be addressed.
- Fewer regulatory agencies would simplify the system – either under one roof or at a one stop shop.

4.9 REGION 7E-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Region 7E Public Transit-Human Service Coordination Plan**

Agency: **East Central Regional Development Commission**

Date: **December 2006**

REGION

The East Central Minnesota region includes Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs, and Pine Counties.

NEEDS

- **Lack of transportation when crossing county lines:** County leaders are reluctant to have their vehicles and staff cross county lines. Many basic transportation needs (i.e. health care, employment, social services) are located beyond a single county border.
- **Low interest from older adults to ride a bus:** The identified preference of older adults is to be able to access volunteer driver programs that have a perception of more flexibility with schedules, ride times, and level of assistance to the rider
- **Providers must move beyond existing limitations:** Issues with vehicle ownership/use, insurance, training and payment need to be resolved and more transit made available.
- **Make public transit available in all five counties:** For Kanabec and Pine counties, development of public transit programs is needed. In Chisago, Isanti, and Mille Lacs counties significant service expansion is needed.
- **Consolidate/coordinate operations of existing transportation:** Enhancements in consolidated schedules, routes, and rider access should be pursued to more fully utilize existing vehicle and staff.
- **Addressing the issue of cost:** Ridership cost was identified as a barrier across the region.
- **Difficulty in reaching rural areas:** While all of Region 7E is considered rural, there remains a struggle for existing transportation providers to reach beyond the city limits of the small cities which dot the region.
- **More effective marketing of existing transportation providers:** The number of riders accessing transportation programs would increase if promotions and publicity would be targeted to places riders frequent (i.e. businesses).
- **Need is far greater than programs available:** Funding programs to a level deemed necessary appears to be an obstacle that cannot be overcome.
- **Weekend, evening, extended hours, emergency hours:** A need has been identified for service beyond Monday through Friday.

STRATEGIES

Strategy #1: Funding, the cost to riders and the cost of services.

- **Action:** Encourage the development of 5311 public transit programs in Kanabec and Pine Counties.
- **Action:** Coordinate funding and pool resources.
- **Action:** Support the concept of a mobility manager within the region.

Strategy #2: Increase education and coordination of available transportation.

- **Action:** Promote ways to alert the public of transportation service availability.

Strategy #3: Expand the hours/days/area of transportation services.

- **Action:** Develop expanded services for older adults, those with disabilities and workforce riders.

4.10 REGION 7W-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Region 7W Public Transit-Human Service Coordination Plan**

Agency: **Region 7W – Transportation Policy Board**

Date: **2006**

REGION

Region 7W includes Stearns, Benton, Sherburne, and Wright Counties and all of the St. Cloud Metropolitan Area.

NEEDS

This study sited work done on the Greater Minnesota Transit Plan in its assessment of needs within the region. Although it identifies no specific needs, it does suggest that the transportation needs in Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO area are similar to the needs found around the state and that the Greater Minnesota transit operators have demonstrated strong performance, but at current funding levels are not able to meet all of the mobility needs within the region.

PRIORITIES AND ACTION STEPS

Priority 1 – Better Agency Coordination, Communication and Mobility Management

- Identify Providers within network Counties
- Changing Rules and Barriers Regarding Age, Funding Source, Insurance Restrictions and Liability
- Income Eligibility
- Reach Out to Under Served Individuals
- Create a Central Area Coordinator
- Politician Buy-In
- Continue to Strengthen State Government Mandate to Work Together
- Create Something Reputable (i.e. 211 or Senior Linkage)

Strategies and Actions

- Create and Maintain a Provider Directory, both electronically and hard copy. First draft by January 2007, 2nd Draft by March 2007, Final by June 2007 with ongoing updates
- Peer Coordination and Sharing of Information via e-mail updates, database and quarterly ATAC meetings (open to other stakeholders) and public education directed towards underserved individuals (i.e. billboards, brochures/fliers, county DHS newsletter inserts, posters, etc.)
- Creation of an Area Coordination Program with an ultimate vision of an interactive website with coordinated web hosting, automatic e-mail updates, directory with map, single point coordination for ride requests. Website draft by June 2007 and information line by December 2007
- Creation of linkage line (1-800#) for Region 7W and St. Cloud APO area (possibly linked with an entire state linkage line) which will be streamlined for use (i.e. enter ZIP code via telephone and will route directly to specific provider.) Fully operational by December 2009

Priority 2 – Support and Enhancement of Volunteer Programs

- Regional and Local Standards for Programs, possible statewide
- Recognition Given to Volunteer Drivers that Adds Value
- Recruitment of Volunteers and Changing the RSVP Method Rather than Word of Mouth

Strategies and Actions

- Provide reimbursement or incentives for volunteers and/or stipends
- Create a booklet of standards to streamline knowledge and use/referral of volunteer drivers. Draft standard booklet by March 2007 and final by June 2007 Facilitate increased communication between volunteer driver programs. Implement a regional coordinated effort to attract volunteers. Volunteer agencies that use, refer or make use of volunteers will be incorporated into the Area Directory by December 2007
- Cross utilize volunteers across agencies and county boundaries using mutual aid agreements. Mutual Aid Agreement by January 2008
- Training focus on safety, driver training, assistance of disabled and elderly, and first aid. Coordinated by December 2007

Priority 3 – Private/Public Partnerships

- Identify stakeholders and bring together to educate
- Continue to solicit information from all stakeholders throughout process
- Faith based association

Strategies and Actions

- Better coordination of transportation services within Region 7W and St. Cloud APO area
- Provision of reimbursement and/or incentives to volunteer drivers for the mention of their name (advertising)
- Work with employers to provide rate reductions for employees
- Review legislation to reduce insurance restrictions on cross utilization of vehicles between agencies
- Provide funding to support “tried and true” programs. (The tried and true programs are those that already work but lack the need for funding because of either lack of service (hours and routes) or vehicles. Need for expansion of existing fixed routes in the St. Cloud APO area, additional dial-a-ride service, and making use of all vehicles that are available but underutilized. Complete JARC and New Freedom Applications for 2007)
- Identify agencies who have components/portions of services that could be shared (i.e. maintenance, training or administration)
- Get multiple agencies together to provide a gap service and contract out services rather than start new service (i.e. request funding match from all agencies to provide service)

4.11 REGION 8-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Public Transit–Human Service Coordination Plan for Southwest Minnesota (Region 8)**

Agency: **Southwest Regional Development Commission**

Date: **December 2006**

REGION

Region eight includes Rock, Nobles, Jackson, Pipestone, Murray, Cottonwood, Lincoln, Lyon, and Redwood Counties.

NEEDS AND GAPS

- Affordability and funding sources
- Raising public awareness
- Expanded operation hours and destinations
- Coordination with volunteers
- Trips to large retail centers
- Escort/companion riders

STRATEGIES

- Additional hours and capital
- Funding
- Coordination and sharing
- Mobility Manager concept
- Sponsors
- Awareness, Marketing money needed
- In Marshall – bus stops, capacity
- Increase communication – other with transit providers and within community – examples
- Private transportation arrangements with Section 5310 and nursing homes
- Nursing homes and assisted living facilities coordinate multiple rider trips to allow transit system to be more efficient

4.12 REGION 9-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Human Services and Public Transportation Coordination Plan (Region 9)**

Agency: **Regional 9 Development Commission**

Date: **December 2006**

REGION

Region nine includes Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan Counties.

NEEDS AND BARRIERS

The assessment found that the current transportation system is fragmented because many agencies are providing their own transportation services. This fragmentation means that while some residents have adequate transportation provisions, there are limitations for other citizens. According to the results of the survey, it is agreed that the following three prohibit adequate transportation services:

- Lack of funding
- Limitations on hours of transportation services
- Limitations on multi-county service
- Qualifications for volunteer service are prohibitive
- Para-transit is localized in urban areas and cannot transport users to region centers (Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester)

In addition, the following needs were identified:

- Creation of one point-of-contact for people to access all transportation services available
- Expansion of hours and services
- Public education

STRATEGIES

1. **Implementation of a mobility management program.** This primarily follows plans and studies Mn/DOT has conducted on mobility management. Mobility management serves as a clearinghouse of information about all aspects of transit options in the service area. The goal of mobility management is to appropriately match rides (based on need) to the most cost-effective provider based on the level of service necessary for that ride.
2. **Using technology for enhancement of transit activities.** It is widely accepted that proper implementation of technology can enhance both efficiency and service delivery of transit providers. The plan recommends the procurement and use of modern technologies to bolster the administration and delivery of passenger transportation options.
3. **Working with funding resources.** With many different resources funding transportation, there are potential opportunities to be creative with how those funds are expended. This will require careful study and planning, but it is possible that funding streams can be coordinated to be stretched further and maximized.
4. **Maximizing agency to agency coordination.** At the core of a large coordination effort are small, micro-level efforts that cumulatively can make the whole all the better. This strategy focuses on interagency agreements and communications. It encourages agencies to look for ways amongst themselves to provide service efficiencies and quality service.
5. **Adjusting local policy and regulations.** In some cases, regulations implemented at the local level can be an impediment to transit coordination. This strategy encourages a reevaluation of those regulations to be more flexible for transit coordination.
6. **Adapting to external factors and limitations.** At the same time, there are numerous state, and in particular, federal regulations that inhibit cross agency coordination of transit services. Local providers, decision-makers, and elected officials should be in contact with federal and state agencies to address the limitations these regulations create and work towards solutions to work around those barriers.

4.13 DISTRICT 6-PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Title: **Public Transit – Human Services Coordination Plan (District 6)**

Agency: **District 6 Transportation Advisory Committee**

Date: **November 2006**

REGION

District 6 is located in southeastern Minnesota and includes Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona Counties. Both the Rochester/Olmsted County (ROCOG) and the La Crosse/La Crescent (LAPC) Metropolitan areas are also included within the planning area.

STRATEGIES/ACTIONS

Public Transit – Human Services Policy Statement

Mn/DOT District 6 supports and encourages coordination of transportation services between transportation operators and Human Services agencies to the extent of providing technical assistance and resources available to accomplish this task.

Goals:

1. To provide and promote coordination of transportation services.
2. To provide and promote communication among transportation service providers.

Strategies:

1. Establish a District 6 Transportation Operators and Human Service Provider Coordinating Committee
2. Develop an Inventory of Transportation Providers
 - a. Transportation Services (private, public, not-profit)
 - b. Fleet Inventory
 - c. Eligibility Requirements
3. Establish a Directory of Transportation Services
 - a. Printed, web-based, and telephone listing
 - b. Distribute or publicize
 - c. Develop a process for maintaining
4. Identify and Quantify unmet transportation needs.
5. Develop a Best Practices method for unmet transportation needs
6. Review transportation agency plans

4.14 METRO TRANSIT PLAN (2007-2011)-COORDINATED PLAN

Title: **Metro Transit Plan (2007-2011) - Coordinated Plan (Fargo-Moorhead)**

Agency: **Fargo-Moorhead Council of Governments (COG)**

SERVICE BARRIERS

A major issue identified in the existing services inventory is the idea of Full Cost Allocation or “client dumping.” According to the plan, full cost allocation involves allocating the full cost of transportation to the public transit system for the rides they provide an individual being serviced by other state and federal agencies being administered locally. Full cost allocation is not currently practiced in the Fargo-Moorhead area, but if implemented would free up additional funds for public transit.

ALTERNATIVES FOR COORDINATED SERVICES

The goal of the Fargo-Moorhead Coordinated Plan was to identify mechanisms which can be used to achieve coordinated delivery of services through consolidation of existing service agencies and providers. To achieve these goals, the following three alternatives were developed:

Alternative 1: Do Nothing

This alternative was used as a baseline for analysis. It was determined that the “do nothing” scenario would result in increased vulnerability to rising costs. Further it would do little to build capacity, and would not satisfy federal requirements for coordination.

Alternative 2: Joint Maintenance and Storage Facility

This alternative calls for agencies and providers to pool resources to create a joint maintenance and storage facility in order to achieve reduced costs through higher efficiency. This alternative meets federal requirements for coordination.

Alternative 3: Joint/Consolidated Operation

Through a consolidation of operation providers can benefit from can lower insurance costs, and increased efficiency do to elimination of duplicate trips. This alternative meets federal requirements for coordination.

RECCOMENDATIONS

The following recommendations were made as a result of this planning process:

- Create a mobility management program
- Identify mileage reimbursements to all contract social service providers
- Educate case workers on the unanticipated transportation costs related to facility or in-home placement when issuing service contracts to contracted providers (E.g. Red River Recovery Center, CCRI, MCRS, Access, The Family Link, Solutions, Connections, Heartland Ind. and others)
- Explore bulk purchase/cost sharing agreements between human services and public transit agencies (CCRT & Metro Area Transit)
- Capture Medicaid non-emergency transportation dollars
- Increase Job Access/Human Service transportation in coordination with MN CEP
- Establish a working group of county leaders and departments heads to coordinate transportation programs with in the county.
- Volunteer driver program should be coordinated between CCRT and Social Services
- Support a joint Section 5310 application between CCRT and providers of elderly and disabled transportation. Pursue the option of 5310 operating funds (purchase of service contract).
- Implement joint dispatch technology for human service transportation that piggy backs on existing infrastructure.

4.15 HUMAN SERVICES COORDINATED TRANSPORTATION PLAN FOR GRAND FORKS AND EAST GRAND FORKS

Title: **Human Services Coordinated Transportation Plan for Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN (2006-2009)**

Agency: **Metropolitan Planning Organization of Grand Forks, ND & East Grand Forks, MN**

Date: **October 2006**

BARRIERS

As part of the planning process, the following barriers to transportation coordination were identified:

Information Gap: The most common barrier identified for individuals not riding public transit is their lack of information.

Accessibility to Routes: ADA requires complementary paratransit service for residents within 3/4-mile of a bus route. Both cities provide the service within the entire city limits. However, origin and destination data for those rides reveal many rides are a brief distance from the bus route. Clear barriers to these routes include the cold weather and ice and snow buildup on sidewalks in the winter. In addition, current walking distances to bus stops and bus routes are not always achievable by all segments of the population including the elderly and people with disabilities.

Coverage Area: As the cities continue to grow out from a central core, increasing coverage area continues to become a challenge. Areas such as the employment center west of the Interstate are not fully covered by the bus system.

Cost: Many individuals are willing to pay for transportation, but the fare remains a burden on some users.

Hours of Service: Public transit in the MPO area does not provide service between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. Many businesses begin and end work shifts between those times. Providing public transit during these hours will allow greater employment opportunities for people with limited incomes.

Frequency of Routes: When a departure time cannot be met due to unforeseen circumstances, riders are left with very little affordable options than waiting for the next time the bus comes. Having this risk will deter many would-be riders from relying on that mode.

Indirectness of Routes: Convenience is greatly undermined when routes do not follow a similar path as a resident would use to reach their destination. Many times the benefits of riding the bus are outweighed by the cost of additional time spent riding the bus.

COORDINATION

According to the plan, coordination should start with information dissemination and marketing of transportation services available to specific clients. The next step will be to identify projects to overcome barriers in use of the transportation services. The following are several project concepts that were assessed as part of this plan:

Volunteer Programs: Volunteer programs are cost-effective ways to add demand-responsive service.

Travel Training: A travel training program was a concept proposed when discussing marketing to specific demographics. This training would focus on educating individual users on the transportation services available and how to properly utilize them.

ITS: Transit is identified in the MPO Information Transportation System (ITS) Architecture. A goal of the ITS is to “enhance transit operations to improve service and increase transit use.” Along with the systems in place, ITS should be used to the utmost extent to achieve this goal.

Employer Provided Transportation: Increasing coverage area of the transit system will increase costs but not necessarily provide the job access benefits needed for the target clientele. Every effort should be made to provide public transit to the locations of the communities’ largest employers.

Mobility Manager/Transportation Broker: Mobility management is short-range planning and management activities for improving coordination among transportation providers, but excludes operating public transportation services. Mobility management can be in the form of one local or regional manager. This manager could perform the duties of supporting a local human services coordinating council.

PRIORITIES

The following is a list of prioritized strategies identified in the plan:

1. **Continue the Coordination Committee:** An ongoing committee established with the creation of this plan was given as the top priority.
2. **Implement a Marketing Plan:** The metro public transit system does not presently have a line-item in their budget for marketing. The 2004 update of the Transit Development Plan recommended the system allocate 3 percent of the total expense budget for marketing expenses.
3. **Enhance Existing Services:** Many human service agencies and clients expressed the need to keep the existing fares affordable and comparable with other forms of transportation.
4. **Expansion of Services:** The stakeholder committee was hesitant to recommend expansion of public transit services but recognized the gaps in the existing routes. Of particular concern were the hours of service, coverage area, and commuter service.

4.16 PUBLIC TRANSIT/HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION ACTION PLAN

Title: **Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Coordination Action Plan**

Agency: **Metropolitan Council**

Date: **March 2007**

NEEDS AND STRATEGIES

1. Increase regular-route transit in areas and during times with low levels of service.
 - Need: Higher levels of service in suburban areas and during off-peak times.
 - Need: Adequate transit connections to human services sites such as hospitals, nursing homes and centers.
 - Strategy: Increase off-peak regular-route transit service, service in low density areas and service to human service centers.

2. Connect under and unemployed persons to entry-level jobs.
 - Need: Sufficient connections between under- and unemployed persons and entry-level jobs.
 - Strategy: Use reverse-commute routes, vanpools, route deviation, smaller transit vehicles, carpooling, or other innovative transit services to provide mobility in lower density areas.
 - Need: Increased mobility options for persons with transitioning into the workforce with unique schedules.
 - Strategy: Create opportunities for persons to obtain their own personal transportation.

3. Increase Metro Mobility service levels
 - Need: Serve areas of the region currently underserved by ADA providers.
 - Strategy: Expand ADA service hours and daily hours of operation.

4. Close gaps on public dial-a-ride service
 - Need: Eliminate service duplication in metropolitan region.
 - Need: Public dial-a-ride service and have higher levels of regular-route transit in areas of the region where appropriate demand exists.
 - Need: Countywide public dial-a-ride programs in suburban Hennepin, Ramsey and Dakota Counties.
 - Strategy: Expand public dial-a-ride service in underserved areas of Ramsey, Carver, Washington, Dakota and Hennepin Counties.

5. Improve integration between regular-route and dial-a-ride services.
 - Need: Adequate transfer facilities for dial-a-ride service to coordinate with regular-route service.
 - Strategy: Provide suitable, safe and reliable transfer locations.
 - Need: Information coordination on travel options between regular-route and dial-a-ride programs.
 - Strategy: Improve information about travel options.

6. Increase coordination in private transportation.
 - Need: Eliminate service fragmentation among private providers.
 - Strategy: Coordinate among human services transportation providers.
 - Strategy: Establish mobility managers to coordinate public and private transportation services in each county.
 - Need: Resolve regulatory issues hindering service coordination among providers.
 - Strategy: Address insurance issues related to shared transportation.

7. Improve awareness and understanding of transportation services available to human service agencies and clients.

- Need: Increase awareness of public transportation options among human service agencies and human service populations.
 - Strategy: Improve public transit marketing to human services agencies.
- Need: Increase convenient connections between information lines, such as United Way’s “2-1-1”, Metro Transit’s “Transit Line,” and MinnesotaHelp.
 - Strategy: Improve coordination among United Way’s 2-1-1, Metro Transit Line, and MinnesotaHelp

4.17 PREPARING MINNESOTA FOR THE AGE WAVE: REPORT ON TRANSFORM 2010

Title: **Preparing Minnesota for the Age Wave: Report on Transform 2010**

Agency: **MN Department of Human Services, MN Department of Health, and MN Board on Aging**

Date: **November, June 2007**

PURPOSE

The purpose of Transform 2010 is to identify the impacts of the aging population in the state of Minnesota and to transform our policies, infrastructures and services as this permanent shift occurs.

PROCESS

In order to engage stakeholders and the general public, a series of meetings were held to discuss the issues of an aging Minnesota. The participants were asked to examine issues related to the aging of the state's population and suggest actions that individuals, communities, businesses and government must take to prepare for 2010 and beyond. In addition, over 100 Transform 2010 presentations were made, during which these issues were discussed with various directors, business organizations, counties, cities, health and long-term care providers, and advocates. An analysis of demographic trends and issues was conducted in order to provide the context for discussions about the upcoming demographic shifts in our state. The following issues were highlighted:

1. In the next 50 years, most of the growth in Minnesota's population will occur in persons over 50.
2. Over the next 25 years, the number of older persons will rise dramatically.
3. Minnesota's future population will be much more diverse than ever before.
4. Labor shortages are already visible in parts of Minnesota and will become more acute in the future.
5. Many Minnesotans are having trouble saving for retirement and old age.
6. The demographic shift means dramatic changes in families in Minnesota.

As a result of the planning process described above, a set "focus areas" were developed in order to provide framework designed to "prepare for the age wave." Each focus area is supported by a detailed set of goals, and each goal has a set of action steps. The focus areas identified are as follows:

1. Redefining Work and Retirement
2. Supporting Caregivers of All Ages
3. Fostering Communities for a Lifetime
4. Improving Health and Long-Term Care
5. Maximizing Use of Technology

NEXT STEPS

The Transform 2010 plan calls on the organizations involved to move forward by:

- Keeping these issues in the public eye and on the policy agenda.
- Disseminating the Blueprint to all those who participated in the earlier discussions, as well as the change agents who can influence action.
- Rethinking and transforming the programs and services the state administers in order to accommodate and respond to an aging Minnesota.
- Monitoring progress toward meeting the challenges outlined in this Blueprint, using benchmarks to measure our progress.
- Completing additional work on key issue areas that require immediate attention and monitoring emerging trends and issues related to the aging of Minnesota.
- Developing an implementation plan for this Blueprint that establishes goals and timelines, and identifies the change agents that need to be involved in order to accomplish the changes needed by 2010.