

Region 10

2017 Regional Transit Coordination Plan for Southeast Minnesota

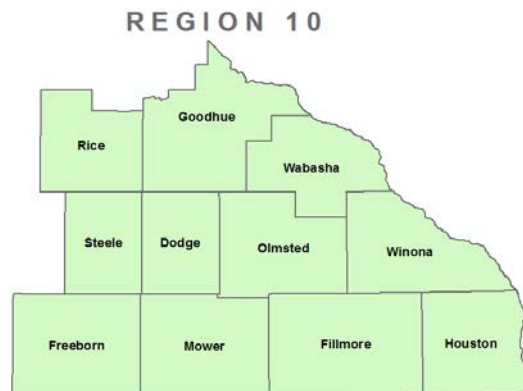


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Common Acronyms

MnDOT – Minnesota Department of Transportation

FAST Act – Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act

ROCOG – Rochester Olmsted Council of Governments

LAPC – La Crosse Area Planning Committee

LEP – Limited English Population

RDC – Regional Development Commission

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act

Executive Summary

The 2017 Regional Transit Coordination Plan for Southeast Minnesota planning process was led by a Steering Committee that included leadership from services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, persons with limited incomes, and public and private transportation in the area. Public input was solicited via an engagement process that included a standardized survey, a series of workshops held across the region, and a listening meeting. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT) District 6 Planning Office provided project management for the development of the plan, technical assistance, and developed the draft sections, with input from the Steering Committee and Organization Questionnaire to compile the plan. The Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Transit provided technical assistance, oversight and funding to complete the plan.

The Minnesota Department of Transportation District 6 serves as a steward for the eleven county area of southeastern Minnesota for some regional development and planning needs including the development of this plan. The counties included within the legislatively designated area of Region 10 are Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona. The Rochester and La Crosse/La Crescent metropolitan areas are also included within this planning area.

A wide variety of transportation options are available to persons in Region 10, which include agency, for-hire transportation providers, shuttle services, specialized transportation services, taxi service, public transit, para-transit, ridesharing and volunteer based services. Regional transit travel is possible around the region via public and private providers.

One of the most important outcomes of the plan was the desire and need for information sharing in the digital age. For that reason an updated inventory was developed as part of the plan to document, evaluate and communicate the existing services in the region. One of the major coordination strategies for this region is to develop a central repository of commonly used data for providers and to help transit users more easily connect with services via one place – such as an application for a phone.

Regional stakeholder interests show that strategies for coordination need to follow new trends in technology and travel patterns. Ride sourcing services from new companies such as Uber and Lyft now present an opportunity to supplement availability in areas that were previously unable to offer service because of cost. The possibility for non-profit ridesharing programs are also future opportunities. While these new types of service are now available, they alone will not be able to meet the needs for human services transportation in the future. Existing transit providers will work together to identify targeted new capital and service improvements. Regional economic centers such as Rochester, Winona, and La Crescent/La Crosse will continue to grow and travel demand is projected to increase during the planning horizon of this plan.

There are several key opportunities to coordinate in the future. Transit providers have successfully delivered more service to larger areas over the period of previous versions of this plan. The need to work together to address changes in technology and service demand will continue into the future. Strategies such as sharing resources, coordinating routes and dispatch services will help to address some of these trends. Long term, a goal of coming together to discuss current issues facing public and private transit and human service providers is another way to meet these needs. Identifying ways to improve service convenience, accessibility and cost are high priorities for current riders and users. As we look to the future the need to address the aging of volunteer driver programs will be a significant concern moving forward. The average age of volunteer drivers is currently 65 in most transit programs within the region and the ability to provide flexible low cost service will be an issue in the future if this trend continues.

The strategies and projects identified in this plan were collaboratively developed to address the major needs and concerns of transit in the next five years across the region.

Introduction

The goal of transit coordination is to enhance transportation access by minimizing duplication of services and facilitating the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. The purpose of coordination between human services and public transit is to improve transportation services for all, but with special focus on persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes. By coordinating, communities can maximize use of transportation resources funded through public and private sources.

This document is an update of the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan and will assist stakeholders as they determine ways to coordinate transit services in Region 10. The 2017 Regional Transit Coordination Plan for Southeast Minnesota documents technical analysis that evaluates existing transportation services in Region 10 and assesses needs and gaps of transportation service provision among public transit agencies, social service agencies, and other providers. The plan also records public participation efforts and stakeholders' preferred strategies and projects to improve transportation coordination in Region 10.

A Local Human Services Transit Coordination plan is a federal requirement under the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act). Federal regulations state that projects eligible for funding under the Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310) program must advance strategies identified in a Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan. This planning process fulfills federal requirements by engaging transportation providers, social services agencies, veterans and members of the public in identifying strategies for regional transportation coordination.

Beyond fulfilling federal requirements, this planning process encouraged representatives of diverse organizations to join together in articulating specific projects that could advance transportation services in Region 10. Through public participation activities, stakeholders brainstormed project ideas and refined these ideas in a collaborative setting. The final project list reflects input from a broad range of regional stakeholders and provides a 5-year blueprint for future coordination efforts in Region 10.

Plan Goals

The goals for this plan are to:

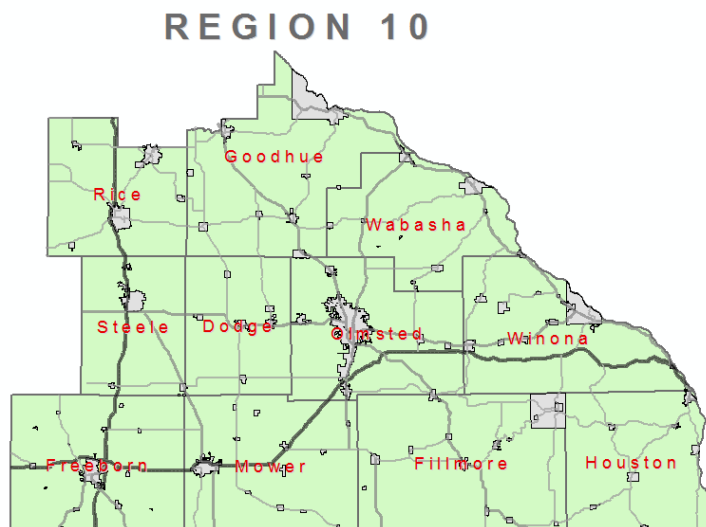
- Increase the level of understanding of public transit and human service transportation coordination among stakeholders, elected officials and the governmental partners within the region.
- Identify where there is potential for better coordination with the assistance of federal, state and local funding, particularly where cooperation or consolidation could address existing unmet transit needs.
- Establish strategies and identify projects for associated funding sources that support coordination within the delivery of human services transportation.
- Update and prioritize needs and strategies within the region.
- Incorporate veterans as a special stakeholder focus with human services needs across the region.

Plan Process

The plan goals were established by assembling a diverse Steering Committee representative of stakeholders across the region. Members of the committee are shown in Table 3 later in the plan. The plan goals were accomplished via several products. A needs assessment was developed that reviewed existing trends in demographics, travel patterns, and investment guidance. The planning team also examined the 2006 and 2011 Region 10 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plans to determine gaps, successes and past work. A new public outreach approach was carried out for this plan to broaden the number of stakeholders participating in the plan process. Strategies were identified and codified for adoption to align with the future use of funding.

Study Area

The study area is the 11 county area in southeast Minnesota consisting of Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Rice, Steele, Wabasha, and Winona counties.



Existing Conditions

Regional Background

Region 10 is located in southeastern Minnesota and includes a diverse geography. From the rugged hills of the Karst/Bluff lands region in the east to the flat farmland in the west, the region has a unique geography amongst the topography of Minnesota. This presents physical barriers to transportation in areas in the east of the region. The region is also part of the Midwestern farming belt and agriculture is one of the top freight transportation demands. The Mayo Clinic is located and headquartered in the area and healthcare also plays an important role in the regional economy.

When the economic region was designated in 1971, eleven counties were included as part of Southeast Minnesota. Amongst this geographic area are eight regional trade centers: Faribault, Northfield, Owatonna, Austin, Albert Lea, Rochester, Winona, and Red Wing. In addition, the Region 10 area includes two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), the Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG) and the La Crosse/La Crescent Area Planning Committee (LAPC).

Demographics

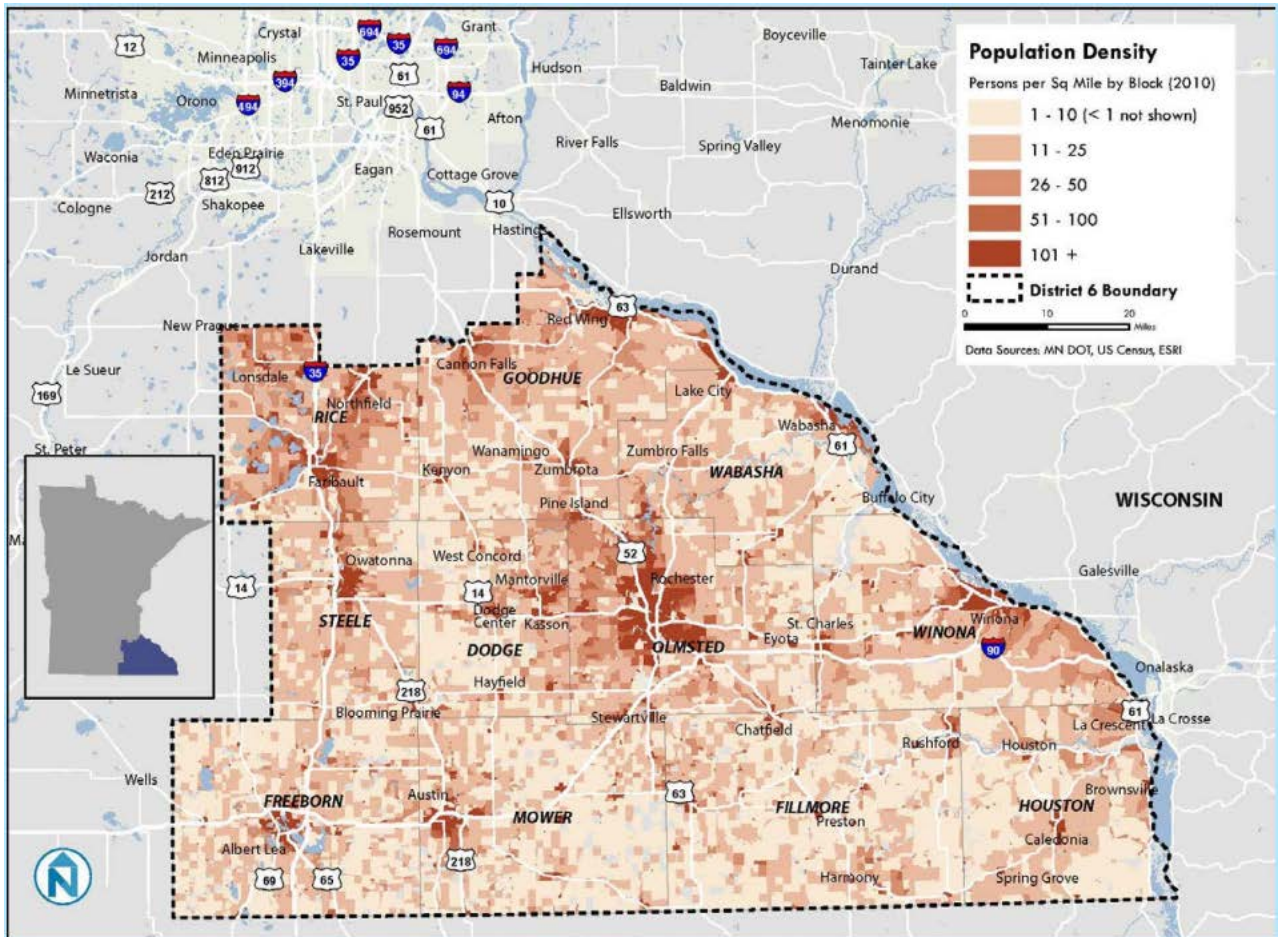
To better understand the relationship between regional demographics, transportation options, and key destinations, a background study of travel patterns were completed to inform the needs analysis. A series of maps was created depicting these elements in this region and are incorporated into this section of the plan.

Population

Over 502,000 people currently live in Region 10 according to recent estimates published in 2015 from the Minnesota State Demographic Center. This is projected to grow by 1.8% to approximately 511,000 by 2025. Recent projections from the 2015 Destination Medical Center Development Plan show that much of the total growth in the region may occur in the planning boundaries surrounding the ROCOG Metropolitan Planning Organization.

The distribution of population density is shown on the next page in the map Figure 1. The City of Rochester is the largest and most dense urbanized area within the region. The Cities of Faribault, Northfield, Owatonna, Austin, Albert Lea, Rochester, Winona, and Red Wing are other major population centers. These areas represent the highest population density and account for approximately 55% of the total population within the region. Because of the highly mobile nature of the population and the availability of transit services there is a sizeable population that lives in small cities elsewhere within the region. Approximately 18% of the total population lives in these areas. The remaining 27% of the population currently live in rural areas or in neighboring townships.

Figure 1. Population Density in Southeast Minnesota per Square Mile

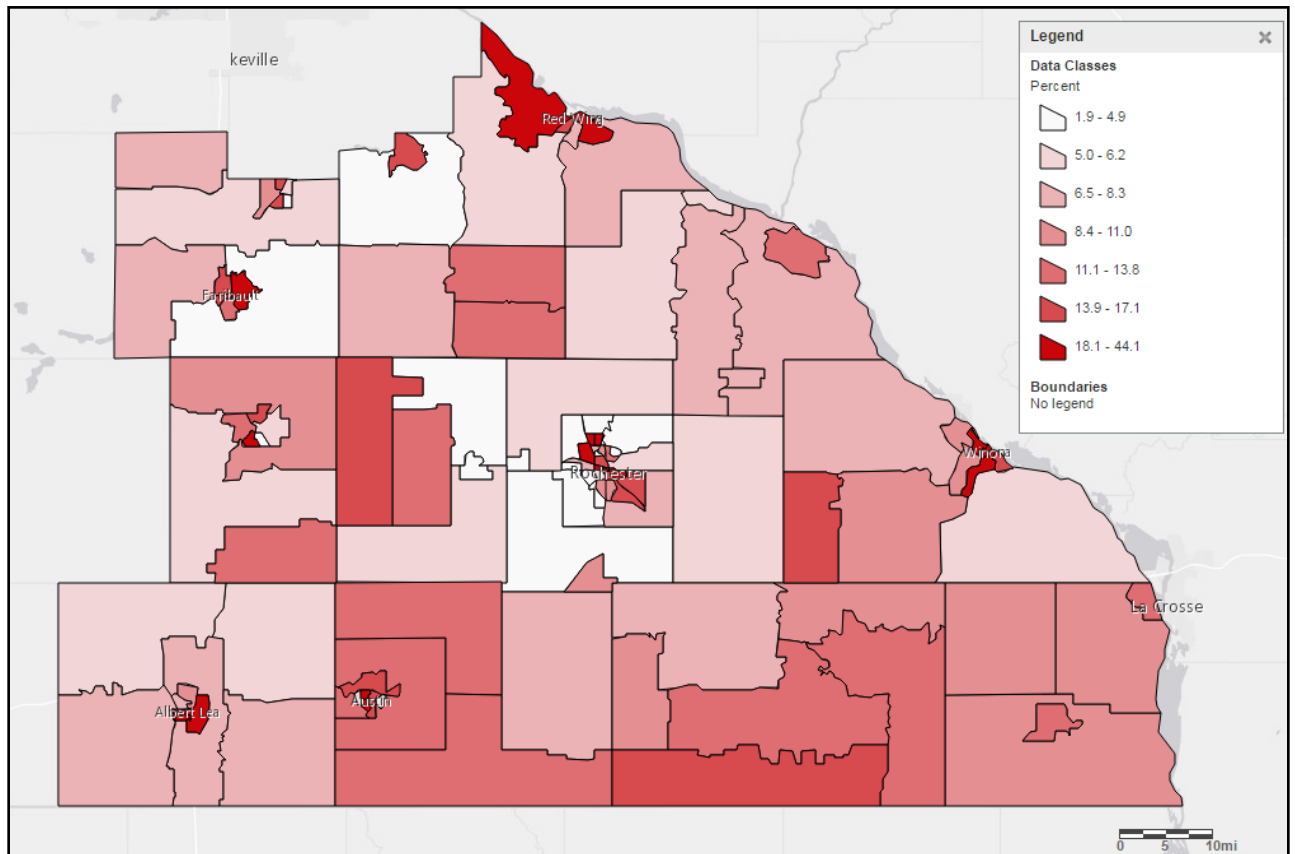


Source: Figure from the Southeast Minnesota Travel Pattern Study

Income and Poverty

Region 10 has households in poverty per square mile from 0 to 143.3 based on previous estimates in the 2010 United States Census. Figure 2 shows poverty across the entire Region. Poverty as a percentage of the total population is primarily clustered around urban areas. Amongst other geographic areas, portions of southern Mower and Houston Counties also have higher levels of poverty. In Rochester, areas of low income households are distributed amongst pockets of the city including older neighborhoods, manufactured home communities in the northwest, southeast and near the urban core.

Figure 2. Poverty Levels in Southeast Minnesota



Source: US Census Bureau Selected Age Categories by Census Tract, 2011-2015 5 Year Averages

Cultural and Racial Diversity

As a whole southeastern Minnesota is predominately of European ancestry, with nearly 86% of the total population being Caucasian. In terms of racial diversity, Rochester supports the highest level of minority populations in Region 10. The cities of Austin and Albert Lea also have higher levels of minority populations. These cities, along with Owatonna, have seen increased population migration due to employment opportunities in local economic drivers such as manufacturing and food processing companies. The minority populations follow the similar geographic distribution as the Limited English Populations (LEP). Future demographics show that the region will become increasingly diverse.

Table 1. Racial and Ethnic Demographics of Region 10

	Region	Minnesota
Caucasian	86.1%	80.6%
Hispanic	5.4%	4.7%
Black	2.7%	5.2%
Native American	0.3%	1.1%
Asian	2.8%	4.0%
Native Pacific	0.0%	0.0%
Other Race	1.0%	1.9%
2+ Races	1.7%	2.4%

Data from United States Census ACS Five Year Average 2011-2015

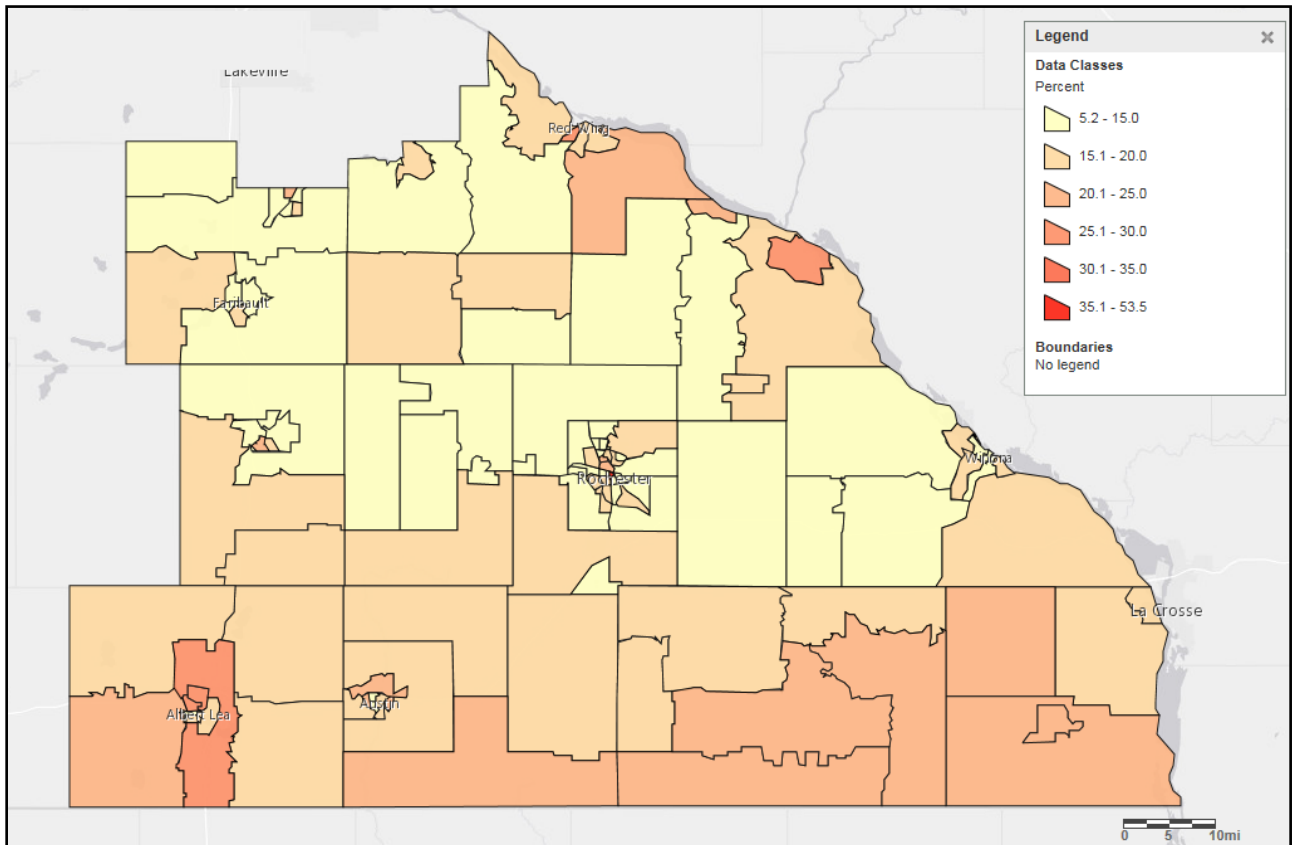
Limited English Populations

Overall, in Region 10, there is a relatively small Limited English Population (LEP). The most significant LEP in Rochester follows US Highway 52 from downtown to the Northeastern city limits, to southeastern edges of the city. Albert Lea, Austin, Owatonna, Faribault, Northfield, and Winona have seen increased levels of LEPs also. Persons of Somalian heritage are also present in Rochester, Northfield, and Faribault. Spanish populations are most common in Austin, Albert Lea, Owatonna, Winona, and Rochester.

Older Adults and Seniors

According to recent projections there will be an increasing percentage of persons age 65 and over in the next two decades as the Baby Boomer and Echo Boomer generations retire. Aging is an important trend within Minnesota as the need for accommodations and system modifications for older citizens become higher priority issues. As a relative proportion, communities such as Lake City, and rural areas in Freeborn County have the highest concentrations of persons age 65 or older in the region. This is shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Older Adult Population, 2011-2015



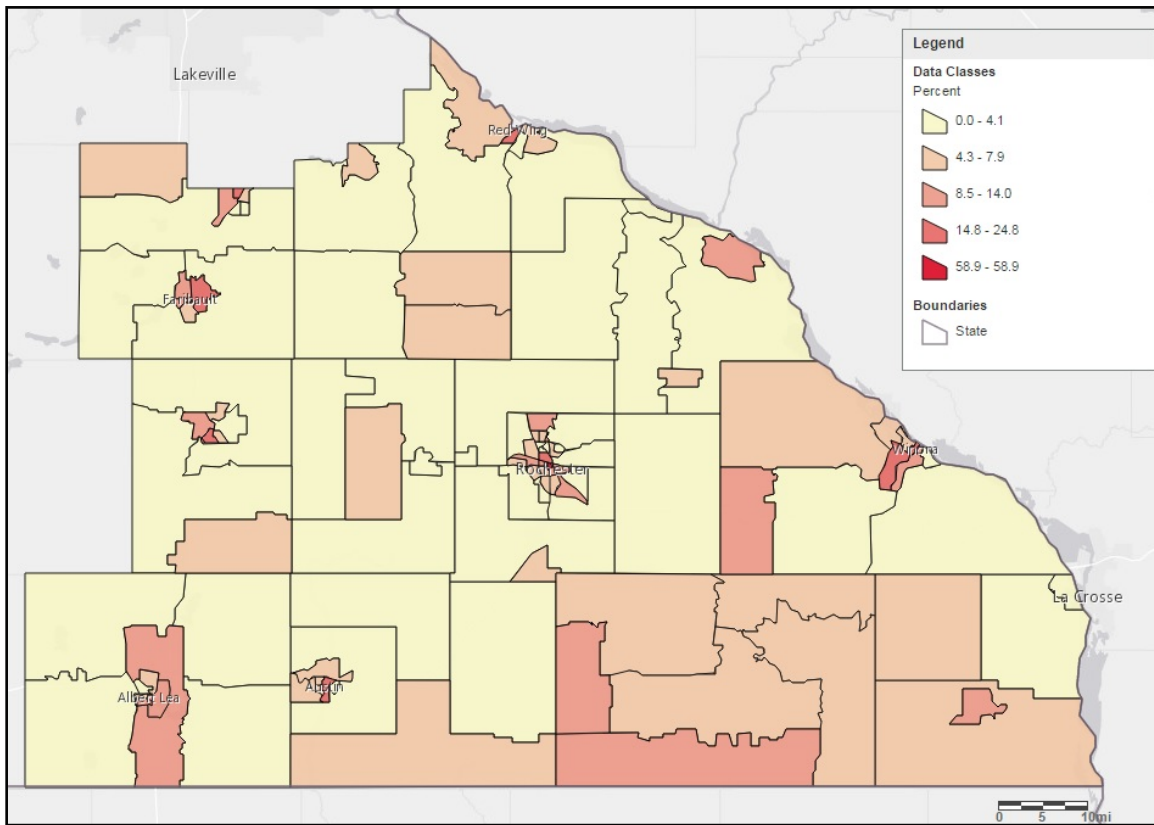
Source: US Census Bureau Selected Age Categories by Census Tract, 2011-2015 5 Year Averages

According to the Southeast Minnesota Area Agency on Aging, there is a strong desire for mobility amongst seniors in the region. Several communities have taken steps to address this concern. As an example, the City of Albert Lea has adopted the Blue Zone Planning approach in which healthy active living for seniors is a central tenant of future policies in the city.

Zero-Vehicle Households

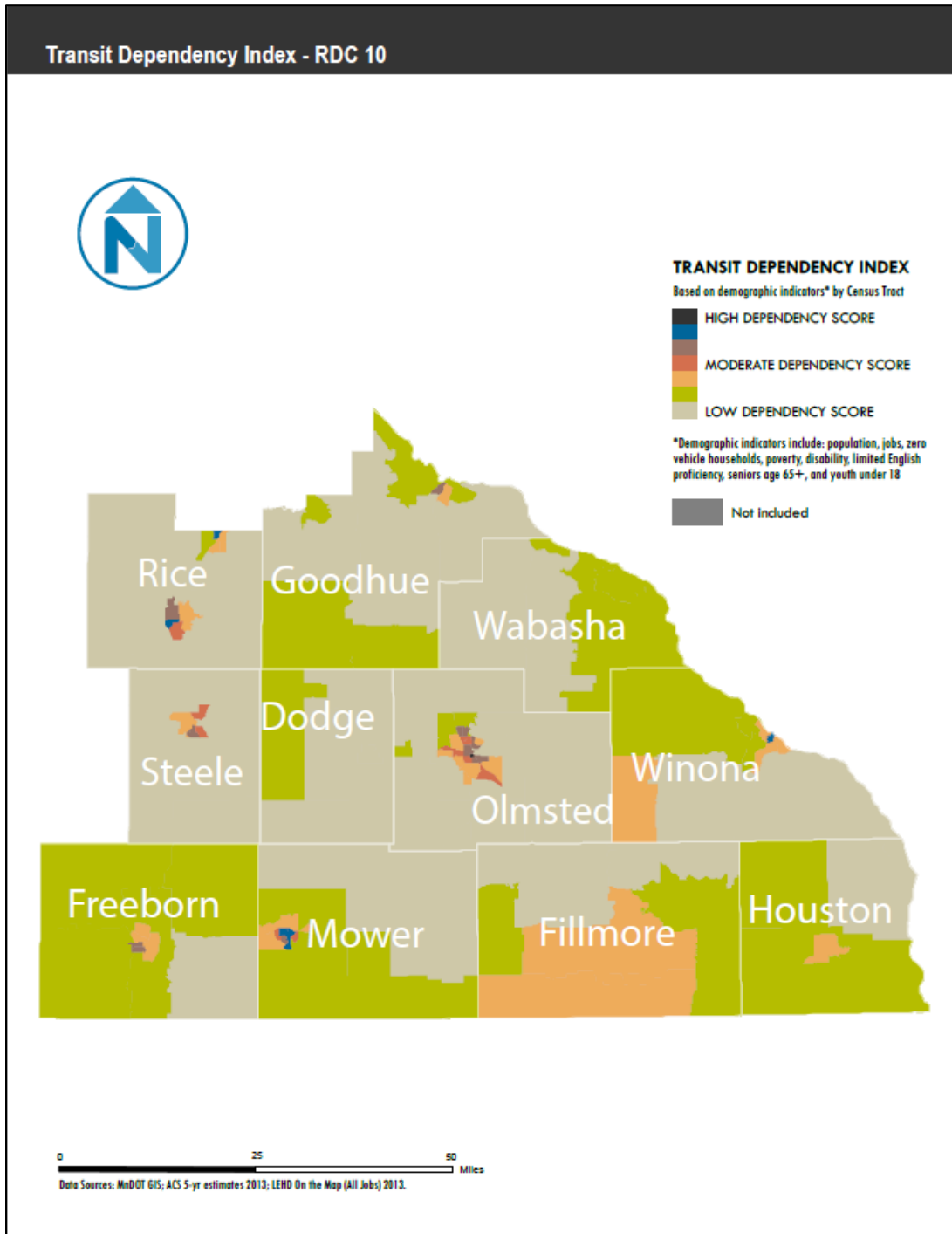
The majority of households that have zero vehicles are located around the urbanized areas previously described. Winona, Northfield and Rochester, have the highest overall concentrations of households with zero vehicles as shown in Figure 4. Rochester has the highest population that have zero vehicle households. Because of the wider availability of transit service in these areas there is a correlation for a higher concentration of zero vehicle households. In relation a majority of the transit dependent population is concentrated in urban areas within the region shown in Figure 5 on the next page.

Figure 4. Households without a Car by Percentage of Population



Source: US Census Bureau ACS Selected Demographics by Census Tract, 2011-2015 5 Year Averages

Figure 5. Transit Dependency Index for Region 10



Source: US Census Bureau ACS Selected Demographics by Census Tract, 2011-2015 5 Year Averages, Minnesota Department of Transportation Transit Office Analysis

Transportation Resources

Throughout the last quarter of 2016 the Minnesota Department of Transportation District 6 Planning Office developed an inventory meant to capture service information for all public, private, school district, human service, and non-profit transportation providers in the region. The inventory provides a source of comparison across agencies and a means to identify service gaps. To complete the inventory, an online questionnaire was sent out to the region's transportation providers. The responses were used to update the inventory with changes in services. A summary of the transportation resources is available in Appendix A.

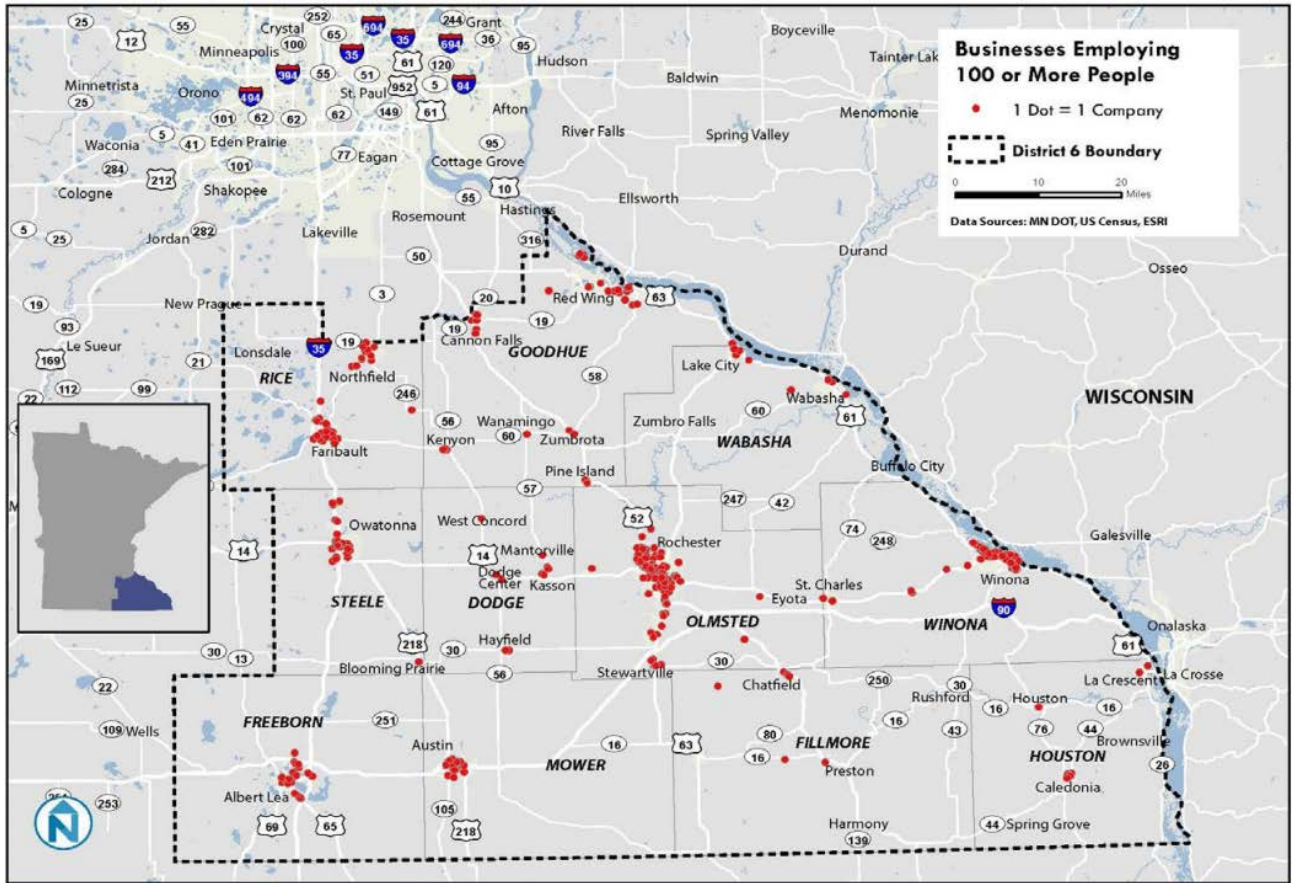
Region 10 transit providers serve this region in various ways by supplying transportation in the following categories:

- Urbanized Systems
- Small Urban Systems
- Rural Systems
- Elderly and Individuals with Disabilities (5310)
- Private Non-Profit
- Private For-Profit
- Nursing Home/Assisted Living
- Intercity Bus
- Rideshare/Vanpool

Travel in the region is reliant on roads and bridges for a majority of trips. Major interstate routes I-35 and I-90 provide freeway travel to the north and south and east and west, respectively. In the east the Mississippi River provides a freight route for grain, silica sand and other goods.

A study of the travel patterns in Southeast Minnesota was performed in 2015 by the Minnesota Department of Transportation. This study showed that there are several major patterns in the region. Travel for work and for other trips, such as for medical purposes, occur on a wide basis and the center of this travel pattern is to and from the Rochester area. Figure 6 shows the major employers around the region that create travel demand for both single occupancy vehicles such as cars and transit. Travel from outside the state occurs along I-90 between Wisconsin and South Dakota and I-35 from Iowa and also to the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan region.

Figure 6. Businesses Employing 100 or More People in Southeast Minnesota



Source: Figure from the Southeast Minnesota Travel Pattern Study

There are also several major groups of distinct transit stakeholders. The elderly and persons with medical needs frequently utilize transit systems to get to the Mayo Medical Clinic and the Methodist and Saint Mary’s Hospitals. Students and young adults utilize urban transit systems for work and for retail trips in many of the regional trade centers. Millennials and Baby Boomers are interested in travel to and from the Minneapolis-Saint Paul metropolitan area for purposes of commuting to work, entertainment and business.

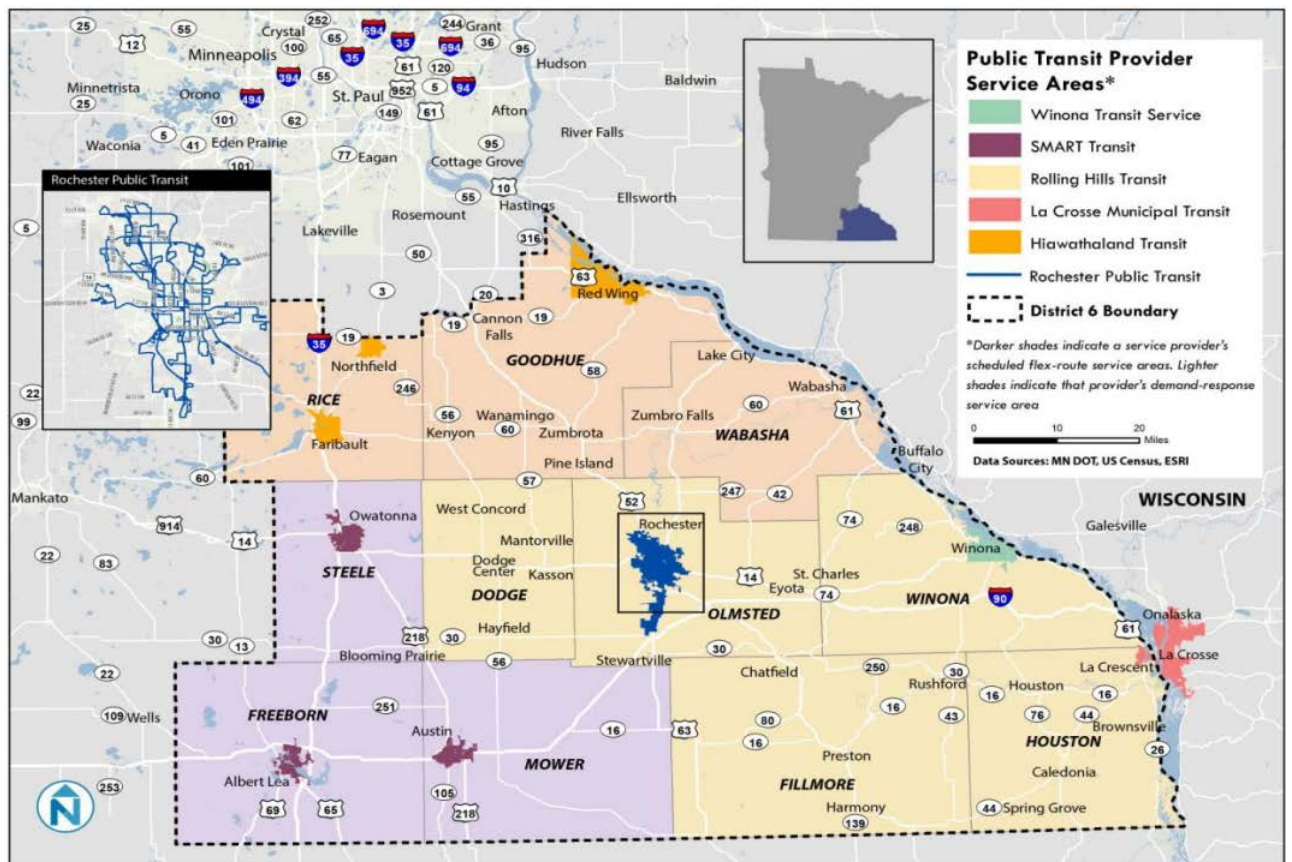
Taxi Services and Transportation Network Companies

There are several taxi companies located in the region that serve medium and large markets including Yellow Cab of Rochester, Yellow Cab of Winona, Med City Taxi and others. There are numerous for hire services to the Minneapolis Saint Paul International airport from the Rochester area including Star Shuttle Service, Go Rochester Direct, and Rochester Shuttle Service. In addition, transportation network companies such as Uber and Lyft that source rides have expanded into some areas within the region. Uber has expanded into Rochester and Lyft includes Owatonna in the Mankato service area.

Public Transit Systems

Throughout the region there are a number of public transit providers that serve all transit users as a public service. Figure 7 shows the service areas of public transit providers throughout the region as of 2015. Large areas are covered by the Hiawathaland Transit, Rolling Hills Transit and SMART Transit systems. These systems are operated by area non-profit organizations. In addition to this, there are three fixed route public transit providers: Rochester Public Transit, Winona Transit Service and La Crosse Municipal Transit systems. Figure 6 shows the urbanized service areas of these providers. The current public transit systems is critical to serving the needs of persons with low income, persons with disabilities and the elderly. Although not universal, some public systems coordinate to a certain extent with private transportation providers in the region.

Figure 7. Public Transit Provider Service Areas in Region 10



Source: Figure from the Southeast Minnesota Travel Pattern Study

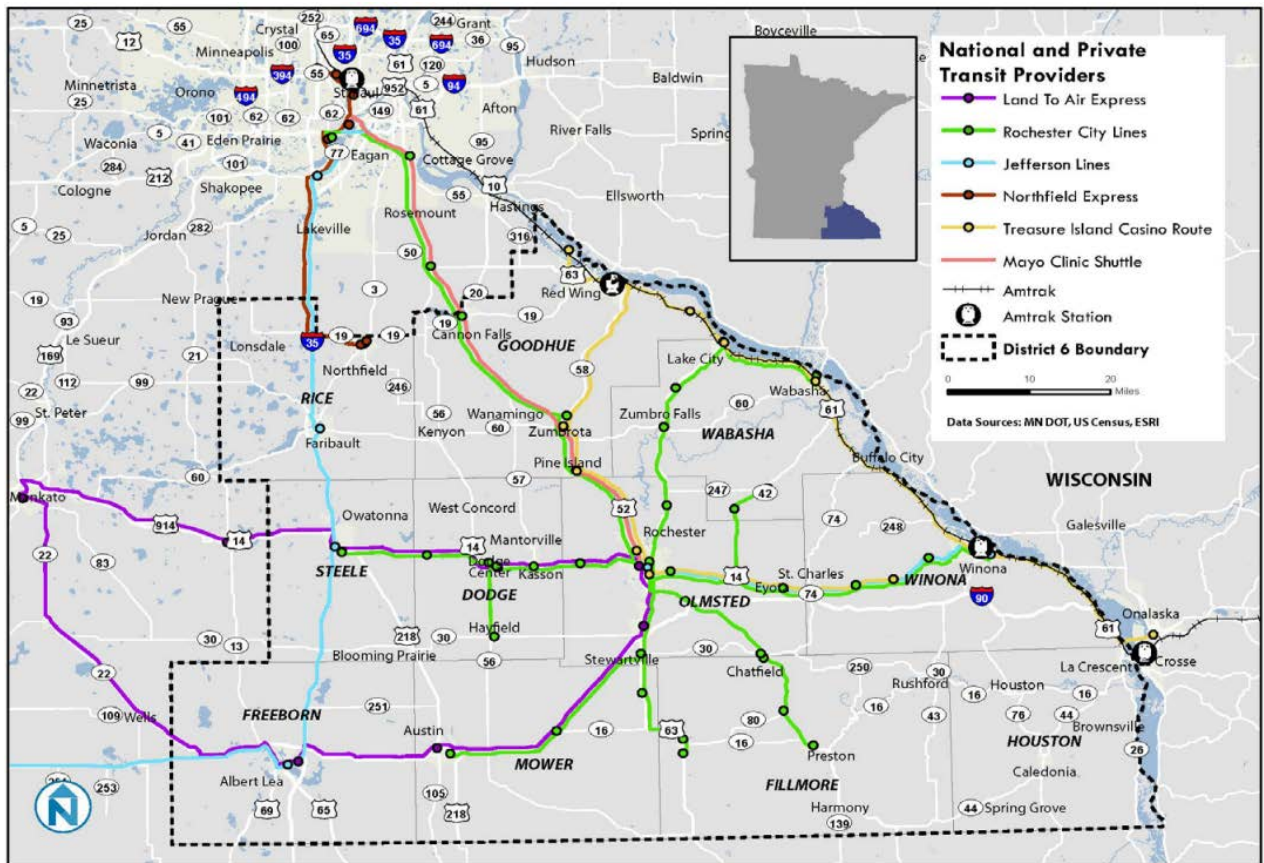
Paratransit services in the region are coordinated between public and non-profit transit providers. The Zumbro Independent Passenger Services (ZIPS) provides origin to destination services for persons who cannot use other transit vehicles or services within the Rochester area. Many providers have utilize vehicles that are ADA Act Complaint and can provide linkage services where paratransit specific service is not available.

Commuter Transit and Interregional Transit

Private transit providers such as Rochester City Lines, Jefferson Lines, Greyhound and FirstGroup are also important linkages throughout the region. Commuters are able to travel longer distance trips such as from Albert Lea to Rochester and on to Winona or to the Twin Cities via these systems. A radial linkage to and from Rochester exists as part of the Rochester City Lines system. This has allowed for a close relationship with the Mayo Clinic as demand for healthcare professionals and health care clients is high. Private providers were consulted and their input incorporated as part of the coordination element of this plan.

Interregional travel by transit is provided by the Empire Builder passenger rail line which has a daily service through the region from Chicago to Minneapolis/St. Paul and beyond. Bus service is available by Rochester City Lines, Jefferson Lines, Greyhound and numerous bus to airport services.

Figure 8. Interregional Transit Providers in Southeast Minnesota



Source: Figure from the Southeast Minnesota Travel Pattern Study

2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan Outcomes

Another component of the existing conditions in the region is an analysis of the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan’s list of strategies and projects for improving transit coordination. The 2017 Steering Committee reviewed these strategies and projects to assess regional progress on transit coordination since 2011. The group also identified causes for success and barriers to action regarding project implementation. The complete list of 2011 strategies and projects and an assessment of their outcome is presented below.

Table 2. 2011 Plan Prioritized Strategies and Projects

Prioritized Strategies		
Category #1 – Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources		
Strategy	Share resources	Started
	Coordinate volunteer driver training	Not Started
	Coordinate dispatch	Started
Category #2 – Mobility Strategies		
Strategy	Improve service convenience	In Progress
	Establish and enhance volunteer driver training programs	Complete
Category #3 – Communication, Training and Organizational Support		
Strategy	Convene a Regional Coordination Body	Not Started
	Centralize information	Started
	Provide technical training for coordination staff	In Progress
	Educate public on transportation options	In Progress
Non-Prioritized Strategies		
Category #4 – Contracting and Purchasing		
	Contract between agencies	Started
	Outsource business functions	Not Started
	Allow joint purchasing	Not Started
	Coordinate agency schedules	Ongoing
	Contract with common carrier	Not Started
	Consolidate business functions	Started
Category #5 – Funding		
	Establish/expand taxi subsidy program	Not Started
	Establish/enhance assisted transportation programs	Started
	Improve access to transit stops	In Progress
	Maintain existing vehicle fleet	Ongoing
Category #6 - Others		
	Educate regional professionals on transportation options	Ongoing
	Hire mobility manager	Not Started
	Offer customer travel training	Not Started

Coordination Successes

The region has seen particular successes in several key coordination efforts through the strategies of the previous two plans.

The public transit systems in Austin-Mower County Area Transit, Steele County Transit and the Albert Lea Transit decided to consolidate services under one agency in 2013-2014. They integrated service operations through a joint powers agreement. Cedar Valley Services, a non-profit organization lead the efforts to address the needs of these areas and was selected as the service provider. As a result 21 buses are now cooperatively owned and maintained by the new organization now named Southeast Minnesota Area Rural Transit (SMART). This allows for buses to be rotated while specific repairs are addressed or service demands change. Dispatching was consolidated from three systems to one located in the City of Austin. It also allowed SMART to provide connection service to major markets such as Rochester. Subsequently service to Waseca County was added as economies of scale were realized.

The Rolling Hills Transit system that is part of the non-profit organization South East Minnesota Citizens Action Council (Semcac) have coordinated and provided transit service to Dodge, Houston, Fillmore and rural Winona counties. Rolling Hills in 2014 reorganized dispatching out of a location in the City of Kasson. This along with a state grant and organizational efficiencies allowed for the expansion of transit services to Olmsted County, including services to Bryon, Dover, Eyota and St. Charles, Spring Valley and consolidation with the City of Stewartville.

Volunteer driver programs in both SMART and Rolling Hills Transit have been highly successful in providing expanded hours and services since their founding. Cooperation between the two organizations has also allowed Rolling Hills Transit to expand their volunteer driver program to neighboring Waseca County located in Region 9 under a cooperative agreement with SMART in 2015.

Rochester Public Transit has integrated new technologies into their website, developed a new mobile application that allows transit users to know the location of the bus stops, the time that routes will be available and the location of bus vehicles in real time.



Public Participation

Steering Committee

The public participation process informed the development of the plan. A Steering Committee was formed to guide the development of the plan and to provide connections and feedback to transit providers.

Steering Committee duties included:

- Evaluating strategies and assessing outcomes of projects identified in the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan
- Developing project ideas and identifying priority strategies during steering committee meetings
- Prioritizing project ideas identified at the public workshop for inclusion in the final plan

The Steering Committee was made up of representatives from a wide variety of stakeholders including county human service agencies, area agency on aging representatives, centers for independent living representatives, transit providers, metropolitan planning organizations, workforce agency representatives, Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Transit and others. Members are shown in the following table.

Table 3. Steering Committee Membership

Steering Committee Membership	Organization	Representing
Jon Losness	Families First of Minnesota	Families, Children, Head Start
Wanda Jensen	Workforce Development Inc.	Workforce Agency
Dana Syverson	South Country Health Alliance/Goodhue County Health and Human Services	County Health and Human Services
Heather Cherry	Olmsted County Health and Human Services	County Health and Human Services
Linda Hibbard	EPIC Enterprise, Inc	Section 5310 System
Katie Gifford	Ability Building Center	Section 5310 System
Melinda Etsey	SMART and Cedar Valley Services, Inc.	Section 5311/5310 System

Connie Bagley	South-East Minnesota Area Agency on Aging (SEMAA)	Area Agency on Aging
Jacob Schuller	Southeastern Minnesota Center for Independent Living, Inc. (SEMCIL)	Health and Human Services Organization
Erlene Welshons	South East Minnesota Community Action Council (Semcac) and Rolling Hills Transit	Section 5311 Transit and Community Action Organization
Tony Knauer	Rochester Public Transit	Section 5307 Transit System
Bryan Law	Rochester Public Transit	Section 5307 Transit System
David Pesch	Rochester-Olmsted Council of Governments (ROCOG)	Metropolitan Planning Organization
Tom Faella	La Crosse Area Planning Committee (LAPC)	Metropolitan Planning Organization
Jean Meyer	MnDOT Office of Transit	Statewide Transit Coordination
Andrew Andrusko	MnDOT District 6/Region 10	Ex-Officio

Rider Survey

Rider surveys were conducted as part of the 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan and incorporated into this plan. Additionally, a separate survey was conducted for riders that desired to provide further specific input into this plan. More detail on the results of this effort is discussed below.

Public Workshops

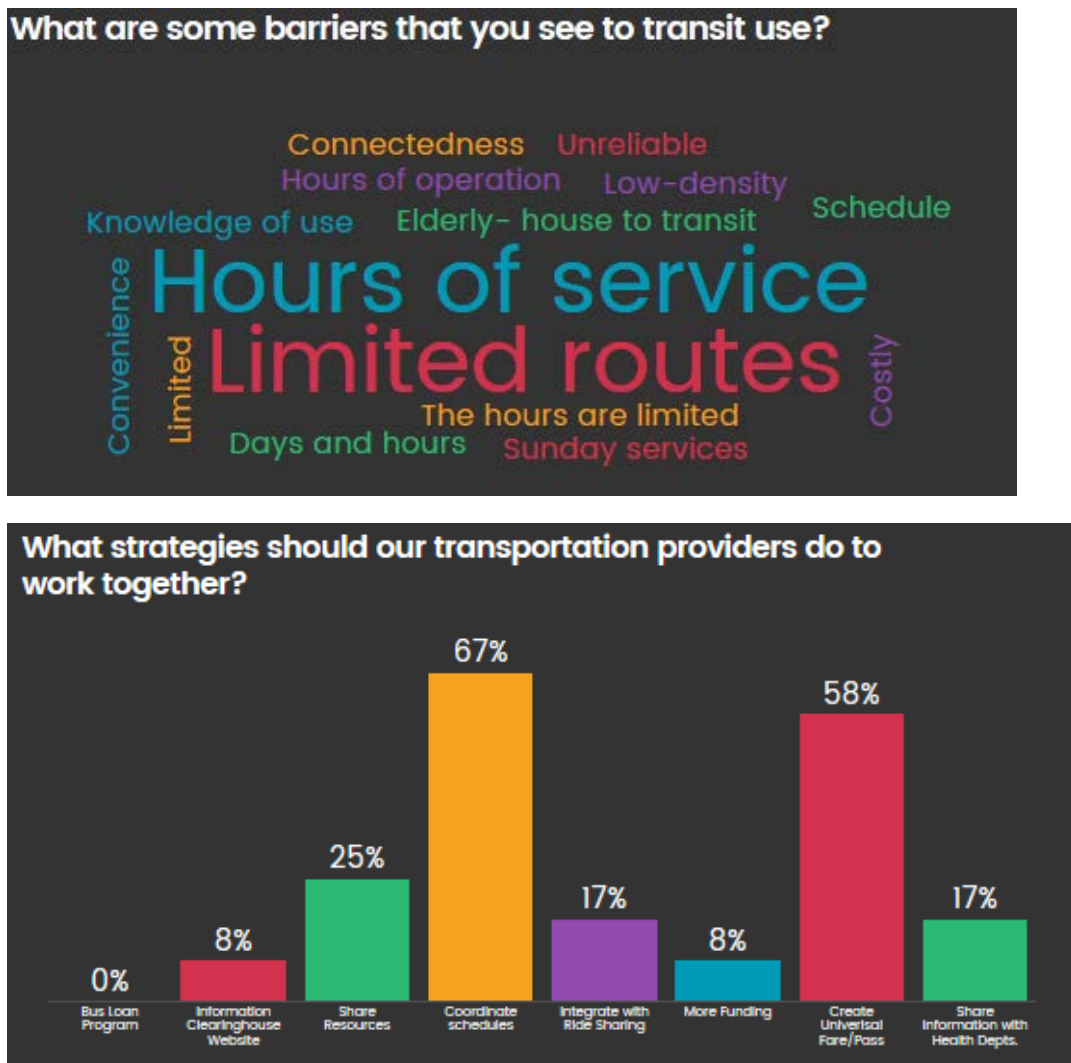
Public workshops were held on February 7th, 15th, and 22nd, 2017 and incorporated input from all interested stakeholders. A total of about 30 people attended, listed in Appendix B. At the workshop, stakeholders identified strengths and weaknesses of transit coordination in the region. Building from these, stakeholders then identified priority strategies for transit coordination and brainstormed project ideas that could address these strategies. Using input gathered at this workshop, the Steering Committee prioritized the strategies and projects included in the final plan. A complete list of project ideas considered during the planning process is presented in Appendix C.

Focus Groups

As part of the public workshops, focus surveys and questions were asked of attendees. Surveys were available as part of an interactive Mentimeter survey online, as well as paper format, and one on one survey discussion to ensure that all persons regardless of abilities or condition were able to provide input. Responses varied amongst the Region and specific coordination strategies, barriers and needs were different in each area.

The highest attendance was at the Rochester Public Workshop. Twelve attendees participated in the interactive survey. Results indicate that common barriers for transit riders were hours of service, limited routes and accessibility to locations off of the specific routes. Figure 9 shows a word cloud with the most repeated responses in the largest font and additional responses to the live survey.

Figure 9. Responses from Rochester Attendees on Barriers and Coordination Strategies



In addition to this attendees thought that coordinated transit schedules between providers, creating a universal pass system and sharing resources would be areas where transportation providers should work together in the future.

Attendees from the Owatonna and Winona public workshops also participated in paper surveys. There was a strong desire from attendees to address the needs of veterans. In particular addressing the cost and availability of transportation services for veterans to be able to get to and receive medical treatment was a significant issue. Another barrier that was raised was public acceptance of transit and a recommendation to share information on the benefits of transit and the available routes, services to businesses and chambers of commerce. Attendees also recommended that sharing resources was an important strategy where possible and were supportive of an equipment loan program such as a bus or van vehicle loan program that could be used throughout the region.

Strengths and Weaknesses

At the public workshops, participants identified strengths and weaknesses of existing coordination efforts in Region 10. Combined with the plan's technical findings, these strengths and weaknesses form the basis for identifying strategies to address transportation coordination in this region.

Regional population in-migration was repeatedly identified as a strength. As identified in other regional planning efforts such as the Destination Medical Center, the Rochester area will see a demand for skilled labor higher than future population estimates show will be available. Transit patterns in the area are interconnected due to regional demand for public transit across the area. This has led to a desire to work together and to partner with volunteer driver programs. Employees and medical patients frequently rely on large employers such as the Mayo Clinic to provide transit service or a transit subsidy to use other providers. Other large employers such as IBM, the State of Minnesota, and Olmsted Medical Center have been involved in future transit service discussions.

There are several major weaknesses that were identified during the process. Funding was a major barrier to expanding service or providing convenient access to rural areas. Follow through on specific strategies was a difficulty as not all of the potential strategies in previous plans have been completed. Legal limitations such as those placed on school bus transit, non-emergency medical transportation, veteran's transportation and other specialized service areas are beyond the scope of this plan and are difficult to overcome given limited resources.

A visual of these strengths and weaknesses is show on the next page in Table 4.

Table 4. Identification of Region Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
Increase demand for workers/skilled labor	Funding
Desire to work together	Follow through
Employer involvement	Legal limitations
Good quality infrastructure in place	Costs to provide services in rural areas

Needs Assessment

The needs assessment was developed with input from providers, riders and other stakeholders such as governments, businesses and non-profit organizations.

The Minnesota Legislature established a target to meet 90% of the public transit need in Greater Minnesota by 2025. The Minnesota Department of Transportation supports transit in Greater Minnesota by administering the funding for all regions. In 2015, it supported 12.2 million rides, meeting 88% of the 2015 transit need of 13.3 million rides.

According to the 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan the need for public transit is growing steadily in Greater Minnesota. To meet the target of 90 percent, or approximately 17 million additional rides, the transit systems will need to provide 40% more rides in 2025 than they did in 2015. From this projection, approximately 15% will be located in Region 10. As a result, input from providers played an important role in the development of this plan.

Feedback from providers identified several key areas that were challenges to coordination. These were:

1. Difficulties with the cost to provide services as factors of inflation
2. Increasing demand for service area
3. Fluctuations in funding present common barrier
4. Need to commit to work together and cooperate

In addition, where service is provided for human services reimbursement and cooperation were difficult barriers to working together. In particular non-emergency medical transportation payments, regulations and processing were particularly difficult for providers to address. As changes to healthcare law occur they impact transportation demand across the region. The Mayo Clinic creates a draw from within and across other regions for medical related trips that play an important part of planning for future transit in the region.

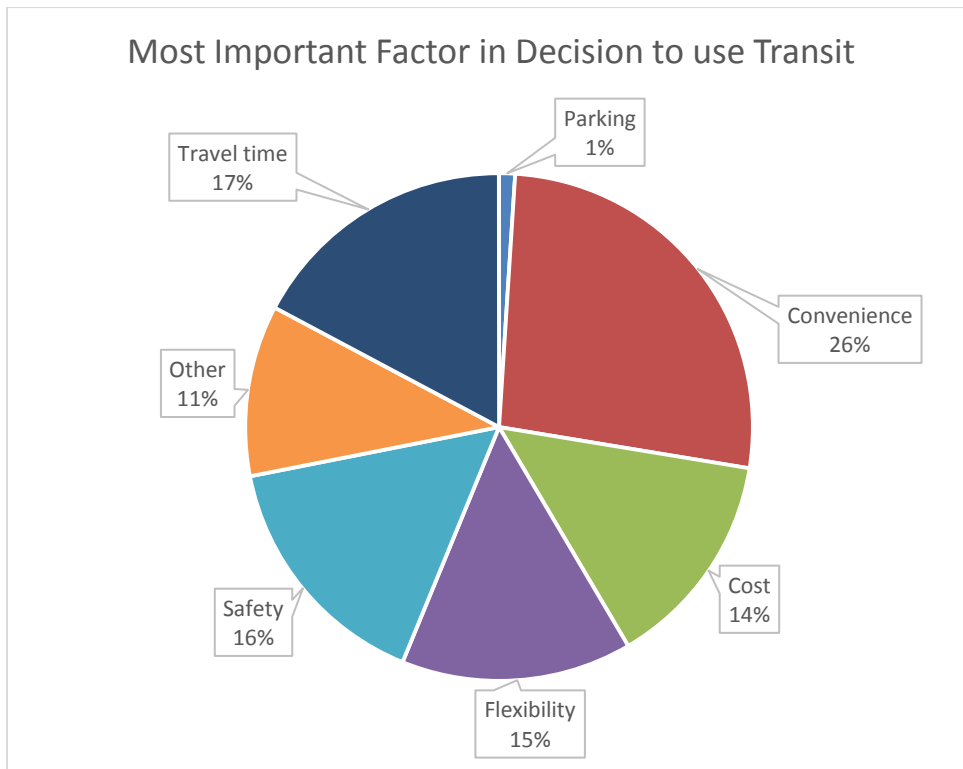
A major issue that was identified as a future gap was the availability and training of volunteer drivers for volunteer driver program providers that were created as part of the outcome of the 2006 and 2011 Region 10 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plans. The average age of volunteer drivers in the region was over 65. Many of the drivers are retiring from service due to health or old age. As a result availability in large areas in the region will change to address this gap in the short term. In the long term, partnership or coordination with ridesharing programs or ride sourcing transportation network companies such as Uber or Lyft may assist with this need where trips would otherwise be uneconomical in more rural areas.

Another major challenge was common or shared resources. There is a strong desire for a shared website or mobile application which provide users with service information or costs across the region and across providers. This centralized information system is a potential future improvement that could be assisted with federal funding.

In terms of physical shared resources, a bus or van vehicle loaner program was also a desired resource. Currently a bus is available throughout the region for public and nonprofit transit providers when a vehicle breaks down. Rochester Public Transit services and maintains the vehicle and were able to use it during times when demand by other providers was low. Ensuring maximal flexibility amongst public transit providers could help to provide better service across the broader region where mobility is a greatly desired service in Greater Minnesota.

Input from riders was collected and aggregated from the 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan and additional surveys were conducted to fill in survey gaps in the Rochester area. 434 Surveys were collected in Region 10. The most important factors in transit use were convenience, cost and travel time. Overall respondents were satisfied with transit service and many were supportive of maintaining existing levels of service.

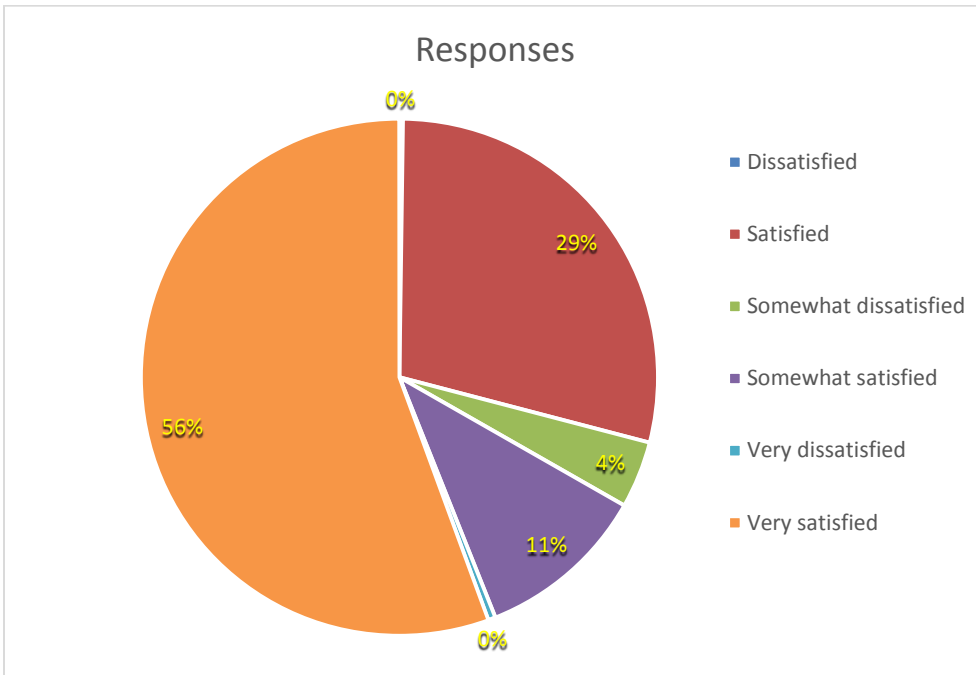
Figure 10. Survey Result Most Important Factor in Decision to use Transit



Source: 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan Public Survey data

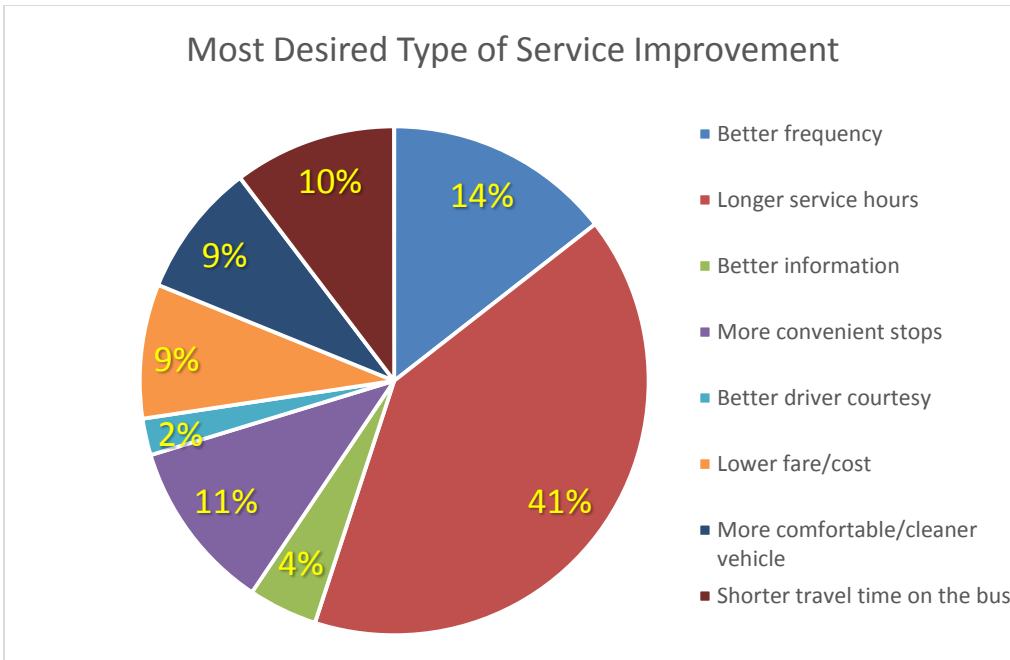
The survey results shown in Figure 10 reflected perspectives that were identified during the planning public engagement process during focus groups. There are many factors that weigh on the decision to utilize or not utilize transit services. The most important of these in Southeast Minnesota is convenience.

Figure 11. Survey Result Satisfaction of Transit Users in Region 10



Source: 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan Public Survey data

Figure 12. Survey Result Most Desired Type of Service Improvements



Source: 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan Public Survey data

As shown in Figure 12 the most desired improvements to transit service were expanded service hours, higher frequency and more convenient stop locations.

Physical barriers such as snow, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant walkways and safe routes to transit were also very important obstacles to regular transit and human service stakeholders during discussions held in the public workshops. Limitations in reimbursements and authority were a particular barrier to military veterans in terms of being able to travel for medical trips to United States Veterans Administration Hospitals or Clinics.

According to the 2017 Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan the greatest areas to improve transportation coordination are:

1. Service hours, availability and convenience
2. Funding
3. Physical barriers, ADA accommodations for infrastructure and vehicles
4. Political boundaries create barriers to ease of use
5. Better communication and better information



Coordination Strategies and Projects

Coordination Strategies

The priority strategies and projects identified in this plan were initially identified by stakeholders at the public workshop and further refined by the Steering Committee. At the public workshops, stakeholders reviewed strategies for transit coordination, identified which strategies should be prioritized for this region, and brainstormed project ideas for implementation of these strategies. Taking the entire list of ideas generated, public workshop participants voted on high-priority strategies and projects to be highlighted in the final plan. Later, Steering Committee members considered this input while prioritizing strategies and projects for inclusion in the list presented below.

The following is a list of strategies that were attached to project ideas identified at the Region 10 Workshop. This list is broken into four categories:

Category 1 – Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources

Strategy 1 – Share Resources

Strategy 2 – Coordinate Dispatch

Strategy 3 – Address Regulatory Barriers

Category 2 – Mobility Strategies

Strategy 4 – Improve Service Convenience

Strategy 5 – Enhance/Maintain Volunteer Driver Programs

Strategy 6 – Accessibility Enhancements

Category 3 – Communication, Training and Organizational Support

Strategy 7 – Create a Regional Coordination Body

Strategy 8 – Improve Awareness of Existing Resources and Programs

Strategy 9 – Maintain Information in Central Website

Category 4 – Other Strategies

Strategy 10 – Contract with Common Carrier

Strategy 11 – Develop Low-Cost Partnership with Ride Sharing Programs or Transportation Network Companies

Priority Coordination Projects

The strategies and projects listed below represent those ideas the Steering Committee prioritized as having the most potential to improve transit coordination in Region 10. However, this list does not include the entire list of projects identified. A complete list of project ideas considered during the planning process is presented in Appendix C.

To categorize project ideas, Steering Committee members created an “Effort vs. Impact” chart to compare them. This created a relative sense of how much effort (low to high) each project idea would take as well as how much impact (minor to major) each project could have in its region. The complete chart containing a categorization of all projects from Appendix C can be found in Appendix D.

The table below also identifies the priority projects and the strategy each addresses.

Table 5. Priority Coordination Projects and Categorizations

<i>Easy to do/Major Improvement</i>	
Project 1 Establish online resource directory of transportation information. This project would incorporate a website database with transportation resource information delivered online and/or via a toll free telephone number service.	
Clients Served	Agency providers and rider customers
Communities Served	This is a regional, multi-county project and would serve all communities in all 11 counties.
Type of Agency Responsible	Region 10 Consortium of Agencies
Strategy Addressed	Centralized Information
Project 2 Establish and convene a regional coordination body several times per year to review and renew work on the coordination plan, to discuss issues facing transit providers and riders incorporating specific participation from health organizations and key stakeholder groups.	
Clients Served	All Region 10
Communities Served	Southeast Minnesota
Type of Agency Responsible	MnDOT and the plan steering committee
Strategy Addressed	Convene Regional Coordination Body
<i>Easy to do/Minor Improvement</i>	
Project 1 Enhance the existing Volunteer Drivers Program by identifying training programs and incentives to retain existing drivers and attract new volunteers	
Clients Served	Low income, elderly, disabled

Communities Served	Southeast Minnesota
Type of Agency Responsible	Existing volunteer coordinators and service clubs
Strategy Addressed	Establish/Enhance Volunteer Driver Program
<p>Project 2 Improve transit flexibility with multiple transit agencies by re-implementing a vehicle loaner program where-by an provider will host a vehicle that other public and non-profit agencies can use if their vehicle is down for repair.</p>	
Clients Served	Members of smaller communities, smaller transit operators
Communities Served	Smaller communities
Type of Agency Responsible	Urban Section 5307 Provider
Strategy Addressed	Improve service convenience
<i>Difficult to do/Major Improvement</i>	
<p>Project 1 Implement a region wide electronic pass or universal fair system.</p>	
Clients Served	All transit users, transit systems
Communities Served	Units of government and citizens throughout Region 10
Type of Agency Responsible	MnDOT, counties, cities, and towns
Strategy Addressed	Coordinate transit fare system
<p>Project 2 Convene Regional Cooperative to research funding and technology options.</p>	
Clients Served	Providers, employees, and ultimately citizens of all communities
Communities Served	Southeast MN counties
Type of Agency Responsible	Region 10 Consortium of agencies
Strategy Addressed	Hire mobility manager

Appendix A – Transportation Provider Inventory

The following includes contact information of all regional transportation providers for whom information was received. This is not a complete list of all providers in the region.

Dodge County
<p>Name: Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (Dodge County Human Services) Address: 22 6th Street East, Dept. 401, Mantorville, MN 55955 Phone: (507) 923-2900 Website: http://www.co.dodge.mn.us/departments/minnesota_prairie_county_alliance.php Service Type: Human Services</p>
<p>Name: Rolling Hill Transit Service (Semcac) Address: 20 E. Veterans Memorial Hwy, Kasson, MN 55944 Phone: (800) 528-7622 Website: http://www.semcac.org/transportation/ Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride, Volunteer Driver Program</p>
Fillmore County
<p>Name: Fillmore County Community Services Address: 902 Houston Street, Suite 1, Preston, MN 55975 Phone: (507) 765-2175 Website: http://www.co.fillmore.mn.us/community-services/human-services Service Type: Human Services</p>
<p>Name: Good Shepherd Lutheran Services Address: 800 Home Street, PO Box 747, Rushford, MN 55971 Phone: (507) 864-7714 Website: http://goodshep-rushford.org/ Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Kingsland Schools Address: Spring Valley, MN 55975 Phone: (507) 346-7276 ext. 3170 Website: http://www.kingsland.k12.mn.us Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Mabel-Canton School District #238 Address: 316 West Fillmore, PO Box 337, Mabel, MN 55954 Phone: (507) 493-5422 Website: http://www.mabelcanton.k12.mn.us Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Rushford – Peterson Schools Address: 102 North Mill Street, PO Box 627, Rushford, MN 55971 Phone: (507) 864-7785 ext. 103 Website: http://www.r-pschools.com Service Type: School Transportation</p>

<p>Name: Rolling Hill Transit Service (Semcac) Address: 204 South Elm Street, Rushford, MN 55971 Phone: 1 (800) 528-7622 Website: http://www.semcac.org/transportation/ Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride, Volunteer Driver Program</p>
Freeborn County
<p>Name: Good Samaritan Society Address: 75507 240th Street, Albert Lea, MN 56007 Phone: (507) 379-2706 Website: http://www.good-sam.com/ Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Southern Minnesota Area Rural Transit (SMART) Address: 2205 Myers Road, PO Box 40, Albert Lea, MN 56007 Phone: (855) 762-7821 Website: http://smartbusmn.org Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial Ride</p>
<p>Name: Throne Crest Retirement Community Address: 1201 Garfield Avenue, Albert Lea, MN 56007 Phone: (507) 373-2311 Website: www.abhomes.org Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
Goodhue County
<p>Name: Angels Care Center Address: 300 North Dow Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009 Phone: (507) 263-6709 Website: N/A Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Cannon Falls Schools Address: 1420 North 6th Street, 920 East Minnesota Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009 Phone: (507) 263-3597 Website: www.cannonfallsschools.com Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Fairview Seminary Home Address: 906 College Avenue, Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 385-3435 Website: www.redwing.fairview.org Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Goodhue County Health & Human Services Address: 426 West Avenue, Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 385-2005 Website: www.goodhue.mn.us Service Type: Human Services</p>

<p>Name: Hiawathaland Transit Address: 55049 241st Avenue, Plainview, MN 55964 Phone: 1 (866) 623-7505 Website: http://www.threeriverscap.org/transportation/hiawathaland-transit Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride, Volunteer Drive Program</p>
<p>Name: Kenyon Sunset Home Address: 127 Gunderson Blvd., Kenyon, MN 55946 Phone: (507) 789-8887 Email: Hannah.m.davidson@hotmail.com Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: ProAct Inc. Red Wing Address: 204 Mississippi Avenue, Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 388-7108 Website: www.proactinc.org Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Red Wing Health Center Address: 1412 West 4th Street, Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 385-4800 Website: www.missionhealthcare.org Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Red Wing Mobility LLC Address: 416 Riedell Court, Red Wing, MN 55066 Phone: (651) 388-9215 Website: www.redwingmobility.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Shepherd's Center of Cannon Valley Address: 120 West State Street, Cannon Falls, MN 55009 Phone: (507) 263-2136 Email: shepherdscenter@frontiernet.net Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Houston County</p>
<p>Name: ABC Works Address: 730 North Pine, PO Box 408, Caledonia, MN 55921 Phone: (507) 7252057 Website: www.abcinc.org Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Houston County Human Services Address: 304 South Marshall, Room 104, Caledonia, MN 55921 Phone: (507) 725-5811, ext. 1306 Website: www.co.houston.mn.us Service Type: Human Services</p>

<p>Name: La Crosse Area Planning Committee Address: 400 4th Street North, La Crosse, WI 54601 Phone: (608) 785-5977 Website: www.lapc.org Service Type: Transportation Planning Organization</p>
<p>Name: La Crosse Municipal Transit Utility Address: 2000 Marco Drive, La Crosse, WI 54601 Phone: (608) 789-7350 Website: www.cityoflacrosse.org/mtu Service Type: Public Transportation Fixed Route</p>
<p>Name: Rolling Hill Transit Service (Semcac) Address: 138 East Main Street, Caledonia, MN 55921 Phone: (800) 528-7622 Website: http://www.semcac.org/transportation/ Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride</p>
<p>Mower County</p>
<p>Name: Adams Health Care Center Address: 810 West Main, Adams, MN 55909 Phone: (507) 582-3263 Website: www.adamshcc.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Southern Minnesota Area Rural Transit (SMART) Address: 2801 West Oakland Avenue, Austin, MN 55912 Phone: (855) 762-7821 Website: http://smartbusmn.org Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride</p>
<p>Name: Grand Meadow Healthcare Center Address: 210 East Grand Avenue, PO Box 365, Grand Meadow, MN 55936 Phone: (507) 754-5212 Website: www.tealwoodcc.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: LeRoy Ostrander School Address: 406 West Main Street, PO Box 1000, LeRoy, MN 55951 Phone: (507) 324-5743 ext. 226 Website: www.leroy.k12.mn.us Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Mower County Human Services Address: 1301 18th Avenue NW, Suite A, Austin, MN 55912 Phone: (507) 437-9729 Website: www.co.mower.mn.us Service Type: Human Services</p>

<p>Name: St. Mark's Lutheran Home Address: 400 15th Avenue SW, Austin, MN 55961 Phone: (507) 434-7212 Website: www.stmarksliving.org Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Olmsted County</p>
<p>Name: Chatfield Public School Address: 205 Union Street SE, Chatfield, MN 55923 Phone: (507) 867-4210, ext. 5011 Website: www.chatfield.k12.mn.us Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: First Student (Rochester Schools) Address: 2021 32nd Avenue NW, Rochester, MN 55901 Phone: (507) 289-4541 Website: www.firstgroup.com Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Grism Bus Service Address: 628 6th St SE, Stewartville, MN 55976 Phone: (507) 533-8775 Website: n/a Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Gold Crown Limousine Address: 1101 1st Avenue SE, Rochester, MN 55904 Phone: (507) 285-9528 Website: www.goldcrownlimo.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Golden Living Center Rochester East Address: 501 8th Avenue SE, Rochester, MN 55904 Phone: (507) 288-6514 Website: www.goldenliving.com Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Madonna Towers of Rochester Address: 4001 19th Avenue NW, Rochester, MN 55901 Phone: (507) 288-3911 Website: www.bhshealth.org Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Med City Taxi Address: 420 1st Avenue NW, Suite B, Rochester, MN 55901 Phone: (507) 282-8294 Website: www.medcitytaxi.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>

<p>Name: Olmsted County Community Services Address: 2100 Campus Drive SE, Suite 200, Rochester, MN 55904 Phone: (507) 368-6665 Website: https://www.co.olmsted.mn.us/cs/Pages/default.aspx Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Olmsted County Volunteer Driver Program Address: 2100 Campus Drive SE, Rochester, MN 55904 Phone: (507) 328-6371 Website: https://www.co.olmsted.mn.us/cs/AFS/volunteerdrivers/Pages/default.aspx Service Type: Volunteer Driver Program</p>
<p>Name: Pine Island Area Home Services Address: 109 3rd Street SW, PO Box 566, Pine Island, MN 55963 Phone: (507) 356-2999 Email: piahs@pitel.net Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Rochester City Lines Address: 1825 North Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906 Phone: (507) 288-4353 Website: www.rochestercitylines.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Rochester Public Schools Address: Edison Building, 615 7th Street SW, Rochester, MN 55902 Phone: (507) 328-4260 Website: www.rochester.k12.mn.us Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Rochester Public Transit Address: 201 4th Street SE, Rochester, MN 55904 Phone: (507) 328-2424 Website: www.rochestermn.gov/departments/public-transportation Service Type: Public Transit Fixed Route</p>
<p>Name: Rochester Senior Center Address: 121 North Broadway, Rochester, MN 55906 Phone: (507) 424-6401 Website: www.rsc-mn.org Service Type: Volunteer Driver Program</p>
<p>Name: Rolling Hill Transit Service (Semcac) Address: 20 E. Veterans Memorial Hwy, Kasson, MN 55944 Phone: (800) 528-7622 Website: http://www.semcac.org/transportation/ Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial Ride</p>
<p>Name: Southern Minnesota Area Rural Transit (SMART) Address: 2111 4th St SW, Owatonna, MN, 55060-4704 Phone: 1 (855) 762-7821 Website: http://smartbusmn.org Service Type: Public Transit Dial a Ride</p>

<p>Name: Star Transportation Address: 420 1st Avenue NW, Suite A, Rochester, MN 55901 Phone: (507) 281-0969 Website: www.limostar.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Workforce Center Address: 1302 7th Street NW, Rochester, MN 55901 Phone: (507) 292-5188 Website: www.wfdi.ws Service Type: Workforce Transportation Provider</p>
<p>Name: Zumbro Independent Passenger Service (ZIPS) (RPT) Address: 4300 East River Road NE, Rochester, MN 55906 Phone: (507) 288-8404 Website: http://www.rochestermn.gov/departments/public-transportation/zips-paratransit-service Service Type: Public Paratransit Service Provider</p>
<p>Rice County</p>
<p>Name: Hiawathaland Transit Address: 55049 241st Avenue, Plainview, MN 55964 Phone: 1 (866) 623-7505 Website: http://www.threeriverscap.org/transportation/hiawathaland-transit Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial Ride</p>
<p>Name: Laura Baker Services Association Address: 211 Oak Street, Northfield, MN 55057 Phone: (507) 645-8866 Website: www.laurabaker.org Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Lutheran Social Services Address: 128 1st Avenue NW, Faribault, MN 55021 Phone: (507) 332-8087 Website: www.lssmn.org Service Type: Social Services</p>
<p>Name: Northfield Hospital Ambulance Address: 2000 North Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057 Phone: (507) 646-1206 Website: www.northfieldhospital.org Service Type: Nonprofit Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Northfield Senior Center Address: 1651 Jefferson Parkway, Northfield, MN 55057 Phone: (507) 664-3701 Website: www.nscmn.org Service Type: Volunteer Driver Program</p>

<p>Name: Palmer Bus Service Address: 116 2nd Street NE, Montgomery, MN, 56069 Phone: (507) 364-8104 Website: www.palmerbusservice.com Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Pleasant Manor, Inc. Address: 27 Brand Avenue, Faribault, MN 55021 Phone: (507) 334-2036 Email: mmeillier@qwestoffice.net Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Rice County Social Services Address: 320 3rd Street NW, Suite 2, Faribault, MN 55021 Phone: (507) 332-6206 Website: http://www.co.rice.mn.us/node/923 Service Type: Human Services</p>
<p>Name: St. Lucas Care Center Address: 500 1st Street SE, Faribault, 55021 Phone: (507) 332-5101 Website: www.missionhealthcare.org Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Three Links Care Center Address: 815 Forest Avenue, Northfield, MN 55057 Phone: (507) 664-8815 Website: www.threelinks.org Service Type: Non-Profit Transportation</p>
<p>Steele County</p>
<p>Name: Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (Steele County Human Services) Address: 630 Florence Avenue, P.O. Box 890, Owatonna, MN 55060 Phone: (507) 431-5600 Website: www.mnprairie.org Service Type: Human Services</p>
<p>Name: Prairie Manor Care Center Address: 11772 89th Avenue SE, Blooming Prairie, MN 55917 Phone: (507) 583-4434 Website: www.prairiemanorinc.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Southern Minnesota Area Rural Transit (SMART) Address: 2111 4th St SW, Owatonna, MN, 55060-4704 Phone: (855) 762-7821 Website: http://smartbusmn.org Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride</p>
<p>Wabasha County</p>

<p>Name: Hiawathaland Transit Address: 55049 241st Street, Plainview, MN 55964 Phone: 1 (866) 623-7505 Website: http://www.threeriverscap.org/transportation/hiawathaland-transit Service Type: Public Transit Deviated Route, Dial A Ride, Volunteer Driver Program</p>
<p>Name: Wabasha County Social Services Address: 411 Hiawatha Drive East, Wabasha, MN 55981 Phone: (651) 565-3043 Website: www.co.wabasha.mn.us Service Type: Volunteer Driver</p>
<p>Winona County</p>
<p>Name: MV Student Transportation Address: 32 Wenonah Road, Minnesota City, MN 55959 Phone: (507) 454-5871 Website: www.mvstudenttrans.com Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Winona Area Public Schools Address: 903 Gilmore Avenue, Winona, MN 55987 Phone: (507) 494-0810 Website: www.winona.k12.mn.us Service Type: School Transportation</p>
<p>Name: Winona County Community Services Address: 202 West 3rd Street, Winona, MN 55987 Phone: (507) 457-6264 Website: www.co.winona.mn.us/page/2499/mn Service Type: Volunteer Driver</p>
<p>Name: Winona Senior Services Address: 865 Mankato Avenue, P.O. Box 5600, Winona, MN 55987 Phone: (507) 457-4335 Website: http://www.winonahealth.org/ Service Type: Volunteer Driver</p>
<p>Name: Winona Transit Service Address: P.O. Box 378, Winona, MN 55987 Phone: (507) 457-8200 Website: https://www.cityofwinona.com/city-services/city-clerks-office/winona-transit-services/ Service Type: Public Transit Provider, Fixed Route Service, Safe Ride Program</p>
<p>Name: Yellow Cab of Winona, Inc. Address: 260 West 3rd Street, Winona, MN 55987 Phone: (507) 454-5200 Email: ridehome@gmail.com Service Type: Private Transportation</p>

Appendix B – Public Workshop Participants

Public Workshop #1 Participants – (Rochester City Hall)

Name	Organization
Amberlee Dunagan	Hawthorne Education Center
Edward Cohen	Stakeholder
Dale Heltzer	Stakeholder
Laretta Magan	Stakeholder
Erin Gomez	Olmsted County Public Health
Sarah Lawrence	Elder Network Organization
Sarah Stevens	Olmsted County Public Health
Natalie Siderius	MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development
Brian Carlson	Widseth Smith Nolting Engineering
Diane Tradup	Olmsted Co. Volunteer Driver Program
Bryan Law	Rochester Public Transit
Kim Fanning	Hawthorne Education Center
Nadine Holthaus	Hawthorne Education Center
Emily Colbenson Ties	Olmsted County Adult and Family Services
Theresa Goerss	Rochester Public Schools
Karen Gecke	Stakeholder
Jonathan Saphira	Olmsted County Volunteer Driver
Christian Holter	Rochester City Lines
Jean Meyer	MnDOT Central Office, Office of Transit
Nicole George	MnDOT Central Office, Office of Transit
Andrew Andrusko	MnDOT District 6, Rochester

**Public Workshop #2 Participants –
(Owatonna MnDOT Office)**

Name	Organization
Josh Ramaker	Rice County Public Health
Ashley Stewart	Owatonna People’s Press
Dennis Luebbe	Rice County Engineer
Jean Meyer	MnDOT Central Office, Office of Transit
Andrew Andrusko	MnDOT District 6, Rochester

**Public Workshop #3 Participants –
(Winona City Hall)**

Name	Organization
Beemi Lewitz	Catholic Charities of Winona
Jerry Obieglo	Winona County Veterans Service
Paul Schollmeier	Winona City Council
Will Armstrong	Saint Anne’s of Winona
Marsha Yancy	City of Winona
Monica Hennessy Mohan	City of Winona, City Clerk/Transit Administrator
John Howard	City of Winona, Sustainability Coordinator
Lynette Power	Stakeholder
Nick Larson	Stakeholder
Ruth Betcher	MnDOT District 6, Rochester
Andrew Andrusko	MnDOT District 6, Rochester

Appendix C – Public Comment Responses

This plan was uploaded to the MnDOT District 6 Area Transportation Partnership website located at <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/d6/atp/index.html> and also at the Minnesota Coordinated Transit website located at: <http://www.coordinatemntransit.org/regionalplans/2017/index.html> on April 19th, 2017.

The plan was open for public review from April 19th, 2017 and comment until May 11th, 2017. Enclosed on the following page are the responses received.

-- Skip to the next page--

ROCHESTER - OLMSTED COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

MEMORANDUM

— — — — —

TO: Andrew Andrusko, Ronda Allis
MnDOT District Six

FROM: ROCOG Staff

DATE: May 3, 2017

RE: **2017 Regional Transit Coordination Plan for Southeast Minnesota**

ROCOG Staff is please to write in support of the 2017 Regional Transit Coordination Plan for Southeast Minnesota.

The Plan Development

The Advisory Committee serving this latest update of the Regional Transit Coordination Plan for Southeast Minnesota involved both the ROCOG representative and representatives from the Rochester Public Transit System. These same reps were involved in the previous two updates as well. There has been excellent coordination between MnDOT regional transit planning and the local Rochester/MPO planning processes over the years. We are hopeful that this coordination will continue with future updates.

ROCOG Support

ROCOG Staff strongly supports the new 2017 Regional Transit Coordination Plan. In addition, we will be referencing this Plan in our next MPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan update to be completed by August, 2020. Note that we also reference the former Regional Transit Coordination Plan in our current Reaffirmation of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan.

- Mitzi Baker, ROCOG Executive Director
- Dave Pesch, ROCOG Transportation Planning Coordinator

- **cc:** Tony Knauer, RPT
Bryan Law, RPT

Appendix D – Project Idea Summary

The following tables are all of the project ideas generated during the planning process, including those from the public workshops, steering committee suggestions, and the transit planning staff.

-- Skip to the next page--

Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources			
	Title of Project	Description of Project	Strategy Projects Fulfills
1	Coordinate Purchases	Save money on testing & training	Allow Joint Purchasing
2	Bus Loan Program	Purchase a passenger bus and passenger van for flexible use as part of a region wide bus loan program where other transit providers can utilize the bus if their vehicle is down and needs maintenance or during emergencies	Share Resources
3	Improve Service Productivity and Cost Effectiveness	Provide rides to other agencies at a cost per ride, Rochester & outlying communities	Contract Between Agencies
4	More Affordable Rides	More affordable rides for low income people. More cooperation between agencies and maybe use vehicles in county car pools	Share Resources
5	Purchase Hybrid Vehicles	Pool of hybrid vehicles for drivers to use and would make it easier to have "volunteer drivers" Elderly/Disabled/Low Income	Share Resources
6	Pool Resources	Pool resources with other transit agencies in southeastern Minnesota for cost savings	Share Resources
7	Ride Sharing Programs	Workers from small towns open their vehicles to community members to a larger town for shopping or other trips	Share Resources
8	Dispatch Coordination	Centralized number for dispatching volunteer drivers. Use yahoo calendar or secure data system that has all volunteers & receives needed info. Provider resources, dispatching, scheduling, funding resource, information on different transportation agencies to fit client needs. Coordinate service delivery monitor for gaps. Call center to coordinate rides to/from medical appointments	Coordinate Dispatch

9	Transportation Accessibility	Work on physical and information ADA	Share Resources
Category 2: Mobility Strategies			
10	Improve Transportation	Improve transportation within small cities. For example; at home senior without car to grocery store, church, etc.	Improve Service Convenience
11	Coordinate Applications for Safe Routes to Transit Projects	Plan and apply for Safe Routes to Transit projects for infrastructure such as sidewalks and bicycle/pedestrian paths to encourage transit use	Improve Service Convenience
12	Maintain and Update Existing Fleet of Vehicles	Maintain and update existing fleet of vehicles by utilizing newer fixtures, seating, attractive styling and/or lighting	Improve Service Convenience
13	Volunteer Driver Outreach and Incentive Program	Develop a volunteer driver outreach program explaining the purpose of the program, the importance of the transit access and identify incentives that could be offered for individuals willing to donate their time and efforts	Enhance/Maintain Volunteer Driver Programs
14	Volunteer Driver Training Retention Program	Develop a volunteer driver retention program by supporting, providing vocational training and enhancing opportunities for existing drivers	Enhance/Maintain Volunteer Driver Programs
15	Regional Training Coordinator	Outreach person to travel. This person is responsible for coordinating training opportunities for public, private, and volunteer drivers	Enhance/Maintain Volunteer Driver Programs
16	Volunteer Driver Training Program	Improve volunteer driver's skills, knowledge of responsibilities. Seek funding for 55 alive training and implement	Enhance/Maintain Volunteer Driver Programs
17	Coordinate Agency Schedules	Add service hours to meet needs with employment, appointments, etc	Improve Service Convenience
18	Improve Geographic Locations	Increase bus routes and transportation to surrounding communities	Improve Service Convenience

19	Online Clearinghouse of Agency Volunteer Drivers	Website with pool of drivers in SE MN	Establish/Enhance Volunteer Driver Program
20	Development of Volunteer Driver Programs	Establish more volunteer driver programs. Offer education, assistance, and startup funding for a set number of communities with interest in developing a VDP in areas where a gap has been identified.	Establish/Enhance Volunteer Driver Program
21	Enrich Volunteer Driver Programs	Coordinate within agencies, pool resources	Establish/Enhance Volunteer Driver Program
22	Provide Increase in Resources for Taxi/Bus Services	Increase travel options to low income populations or other key stakeholders	Establish/Expand Taxi Subsidy Programs
Category 3: Communication, Training, and Organizational Support			
23	Establish On-Line Resource of Transportation Information & Transportation Resource Directory	Website with transportation resources for agency providers & rider needs. Understanding what agencies provide. Call center or creation of list serve website, etc. for accessing transportation info. Develop and maintain an up to date Region 10 transportation resource directory	Maintain Information in Central Website
24	Share Resources	Shared Transit Marketing Coordinator	Improve Awareness of Existing Resources and Programs
25	Convene Regional Coordination Coop	Goal is to meet regularly to discuss opportunities and issues amongst transit leaders in the Southeast Minnesota region	Create a Regional Coordination body
26	Transit 101 – Online Resource of Transportation Projects	Develop and find training material for community provider groups related to the complexity of transit (who can use what, what does each category do/not do, help in/out of house)	Provide Technical Training for Coordination Staff
27	Centralized Training Office and Department	One location to train all employees from each business so everyone is taught the same and understands it correctly	Provide Technical Training for Coordination Staff

28	Education to Providers	Transportation providers in public/private meet with vested partners and discuss transportation issues and services	Provide Technical Training for Coordination Staff
29	Educate Professionals of Different Options	Training and information session held after the closure of legislative session & once coordination plan has been developed	Provide Technical Training for Coordination Staff
30	Educational Programs and Resources	Education on available resources, how to access them, teaching of programs and systems	Provide Technical Training for Coordination Staff.
31	Public Transportation Options	Educate general public on types of transit services and what they do. Cost of public transit vs. driving, rules and regulations when it comes to funding	Improve Awareness of Existing Resources and Programs
32	Community and Training, Support and Educate Regional Professionals	Educate agencies and service providers – healthcare providers about spectrum of transit providers and what they do. Educate human service professionals on transportation options	Improve Awareness of Existing Resources and Programs
Category 3: Other Strategies			
33	Contract with Common Carrier	Contract with common carrier for areas of high cost	Other Strategies
34	Develop Low-Cost Partnership with Ride Sharing Programs	Develop a partnership with public, private or for-profit ride sharing programs to provide service to rural areas or high cost areas	Other Strategies
35	Bus Buddy Expansion/Development	Utilize existing volunteer organizations to create a bus buddy system	Other Strategies

Appendix E – Project Analysis: Effort vs. Impact Assessment Results

<p>Difficult to do/Minor impact projects</p> <p>#8 #21 #22</p> <p>#26 #27 #35</p>	<p>Difficult to do/Major impact projects</p> <p>#1 #3 #4</p> <p>#6 #10 #18</p> <p>#19 #20 #23</p> <p>#24 #25 #33</p> <p>#35</p>
<p>Easy to do/Minor impact projects</p> <p>#2 #5 #12</p> <p>#14 #15 #16</p> <p>#29 #30</p>	<p>Easy to do/Major impact projects</p> <p>#7 #9 #11</p> <p>#13 #17 #28</p> <p>#31 #32</p>