

# Region 1 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

---

Prepared by:

Troy Schroeder, Transportation Director

NWRDC

115 South Main

Warren, MN 56762

Adopted by:

Northwest Regional Development Commission

December 3, 2011



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b>	2
<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Plan Process</b>	4
<b>Steering Committee and Adoption of Plan</b>	5
<b>Needs Assessment/Regional Background</b>	6
<b>Demographics</b>	9
<b>Transportation Provider Inventory</b>	19
<b>Strategy and Project Identification</b>	20
<b>Summary of Existing Conditions</b>	24
<b>Strategy and Project Identification</b>	25
<b>Appendix A- Public Workshop Participants</b>	34
<b>Appendix B- Maps of Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1</b>	35
<b>Appendix C- Transportation Provider Directory</b>	42
<b>Appendix D- Project Idea Summary</b>	47
<b>Appendix E- Project Analysis: Effort versus Impact Assessment</b>	52
<b>Addendum 1: Transit Coordination Plan Veterans Needs</b>	53

## **Executive Summary**

The focus of this Plan was Human Service Transportation Coordination with a special emphasis on transit dependent populations in Northwest Minnesota identified as: People in Poverty, Minority Population, Limited English Proficiency, Persons 65 and older, Zero Vehicle Households, and Low Wage Jobs. The largest concentrations of the transit dependent populations identified are located in the communities of Warroad, Roseau, Hallock, Warren, Thief River Falls, Red Lake Falls, Crookston, East Grand Forks and Ada; these are primarily the county seats or larger communities that provide medical services, housing for seniors, low income housing opportunities, social service offices, and retail services needed by these populations.

The Region 1 transit system is supported by Far-North Transit which serves Roseau County and the City of Baudette in Lake of the Woods County, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council serving; Polk, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Norman, and within the past year has started service in Kittson County. Tri-Valley also serves the City of Bagley in Clearwater County. The City of Fosston operates a small urban service area with a radius of 1-mile from the city.

Far North Transit is a rural public transit system, which operates three small buses within the eastern and western parts of Roseau County and one that serves the City of Baudette. The system is administered by the Roseau County Committee on Aging. The system operates weekly from 7A.M.-5P.M.

Tri-Valley Heartland Express is a rural public transit system, which operates twenty-two mid size buses and provides transit service to a large portion of Northwestern Minnesota. The system is open to general public and provides both city and countywide service. This system has special start and end times as appropriate to drop off and pick up from places of employment; the general operating times are weekly from 7:30AM to 5:00 P.M. The Tri-Valley transit system provides transportation service to Fargo/Moorhead, Grand Forks, Bemidji, and a variety of smaller communities to meet the needs the public has for the use of transit services. The Tri-Valley main office is located in Crookston and has two satellite offices in Thief River Falls and Ada.

Strategies and projects were identified from a public workshop that was held during the planning phase of this document. Strategies identified include: improving service, better organizational support, coordination between providers, improved service convenience, marketing and system coordination/communication. Projects include: coordinating bus service, education and marketing and regional coordination that includes more meetings with the steering committee on an annual basis.

Coordinated pick-ups and drop-offs or delivery over county line. Increase the use of technology with GPS in buses and at dispatch. Hire mobility managers to educate the public about public transit.

## **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 human services public transit coordination is to improve transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes by ensuring that communities maximize use of transportation resources funded through public and private sources.

This document is an update of the 2006 Northwest Regional Development Commission Region 1 Transit Plan, and will assist stakeholders as they determine ways to coordinate transit services in Region 1. The 2011 Region 1 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan documents technical analysis that evaluates existing transportation services in Region 1, and assesses strengths and weaknesses of transportation service provision among public transit agencies, social service agencies, and other providers. The plan also records public outreach efforts and stakeholders' preferred strategies and projects to improve transportation coordination in Region 1.

A Local Human Services Transit Coordination plan is a federal requirement under the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). Federal regulations state that projects eligible for funding under the Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310), Job Access and Reverse Commute (Section 5316), and The New Freedom Initiative (Section 5317) programs 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, 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 coordination strategies in Region 1. Through public outreach activities, stakeholders brainstormed project ideas and refined these ideas in a collaborative setting. The final project list reflects input of a broad range of regional stakeholders and provides a 5-year blueprint for future coordination efforts in Region 1.

## **Plan Process**

The goal of the 2011 Region 1 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan is to identify coordination strategies that will improve transportation services' ability to serve the unique needs of the elderly, persons with disabilities, and persons with low incomes. This planning process combines a needs assessment with public outreach tools to identify strategies for improved human services transit coordination in Region 1. An overview of the plan's key elements is described here.

## **Needs Assessment**

The needs assessment establishes baseline conditions in Region 1 by analyzing demographic trends and identifying available resources for human services transportation. Key elements of the needs assessment include:

- Identifying and analyzing regional demographic and transportation trends
- Mapping transit-dependent demographic groups, existing transit services, and key regional destinations
- Developing an inventory of public, private, and non-profit transportation provider capabilities and resources

## **Public Outreach**

Public outreach activities to inform the public and gather information for the Transit Human Services Coordination Plan occurred during two steering committee meetings held on April 14, 2011 and June 23, 2011 and a public workshop held on May 26, 2011.

Steering committee duties included:

- Evaluating strategies and assessing outcomes of projects identified in the 2006 NWRDC Region 1 Transit Plan.
- Developing project ideas and identifying priority strategies as part of the public workshop.
- Prioritizing project ideas identified at the public workshop for inclusion in the final plan.

The steering committee was made up of representatives from public transit agencies, county human service agencies, area agency on aging representatives, and others. Members included:

## Steering Committee Membership

Laurel Skala	Fosston Transit	laurel.skala@fosston.com
Teri Kouba	Grand Forks/EGF MPO	teri.kouba@theforksmmpo.org
Leann Holte	Polk County	leann.holte@co.polk.mn.us
Kent Ehrenstrom	Mn/DOT D2 Transit	Kent.Ehrenstrom@state.mn.us
Steve Butler	Far North Transit	rcoa@wiktel.com
Sally Hagl-McGlynn	ODC Thief River Falls	smcglynn@odcmn.com
Shannon Henrickson	Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging	shenrickson@nwrdc.org
Ken Yutrzenka	Penn Co. Human Services	kcyutrzenka@co.pennington.mn.us
Cynthia Pic	Tri-Valley Opp. Council	cpic@tvoc.org
Jo Bittner	Polk County DAC	EGFDAC@midconetwork.com
Sue Peterson	TRF Workforce Center	susan.m.peterson@state.mn.us
Danica Robson	Riverside Terrace	RiversideTerrace@schuettco.com
Dave Mills	Red Lake County	dsmills@mail.co.red-lake.mn.us
Sally Erickson	Thief River Falls DAC	fdacse@mncable.net
Wayne Holt	East Polk DAC	epcdac@gvtel.com
Cindy Gratzek	Warren ODC	cgratzek@odcmn.com
Renea Johnson	Riverview Health	rjohnson@riverviewhealth.org

## Strategy Identification and Plan Adoption

In addition to the steering committee meetings, the NWRDC hosted a public workshop on June 23, 2011 to incorporate input from all interested stakeholders. A total of 16 people attended, listed in Appendix A. 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 projects and strategies. A draft plan was distributed to stakeholders for public comment between September 2, 2011-October 2, 2011. The plan was adopted by the Region 1 RDC on December 3, 2011.

## **Needs Assessment**

### **Regional Background**

#### Region 1 Overview

Region 1 is located in the northwest corner of Minnesota and consists of Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau Counties. The political geography of Region 1 consists of seven counties, 54 incorporated cities, 228 townships and 6 unorganized territories. The Region has three regional trade centers; Thief River Falls, Crookston and East Grand Forks. An MPO also represents East Grand Forks.

The Region features a climate with wide seasonal variations and a diversified economy based in agriculture and manufacturing. This combination of factors has encouraged independent progressive thinking, leading to the successful development of large manufacturing companies such as: Polaris, Marvin Windows, Arctic Cat and Digi-Key. Kittson County has reversed its trend of a declining population with the construction of Northstar Ag Industries. The county also has opportunities to bring other business and a new population to the county in the coming years.

The independent way of life and the long travel distances between regional centers makes the use of public transportation difficult for area residents to comprehend and accept as a mode of travel. There is also a significant population that live on county gravel roads with very limited service.

The Region 1 transit system is supported by Far-North Transit which serves Roseau County and the City of Baudette in Lake of the Woods County and Tri-Valley Opportunity Council serving: Polk, Marshall, Pennington, Red Lake, Norman and within the past year, has started service in Kittson County. Tri-Valley also serves the City of Bagley in Clearwater County. The City of Fosston operates a small urban service area with a radius of 1-mile from the city.

Far North Transit is a rural public transit system which operates three small buses within the eastern and western parts of Roseau County, and one that serves the City of Baudette. The system is administered by the Roseau County Committee on Aging. The system operates weekly from 7A.M.-5P.M.

Tri-Valley Heartland Express is a rural public transit system, which operates twenty-two mid size buses and provides transit service to a large portion of

Northwestern Minnesota. The system is open to general public and provides both city and countywide service. This system has special start and end times as appropriate to drop off and pick up from places of employment, the general operating times are weekly from 7:30AM to 5:00 P.M. The Tri-Valley transit system provides transportation service to Fargo/Moorhead, Grand Forks, Bemidji, and a variety of smaller communities to meet the needs the public has for the use of transit services. The Tri-Valley main office is located in Crookston and has two satellite offices in Thief River Falls and Ada.

The transit systems have comfortable seating capacity with large buses capable of carrying forty-four passengers. The buses are equipped with dependable wheel chair lifts and tie downs to provide safe and efficient transportation for the transit users.

The Fosston Community Transit Service is a rural public system, which operate one small bus within the City of Fosston. The transit system provides dial-a-ride service on weekdays from 7:30A.M. to 5:30P.M. The system is owned and operated by the City of Fosston, with the City Clerk responsible for the day-to-day management of the system.

Region 1 has three regional trade centers as defined by the University of Minnesota Center for Urban and Regional Affairs during the 2000 Mn/DOT state transportation plan. Grand Forks/East Grand Forks is listed as a primary trade center, with Crookston and Thief River Falls listed as shopping trade centers. Other major communities include the City of Roseau and Warroad; these communities employ thousands of people and have major manufacturing industries in the state with Marvin Windows and Polaris Industries.

The large manufacturing businesses within Region 1 draws employees from long distances that often originate in rural areas thus creating a need for park and ride facilities, this need is often met with the use of parking lots at outlet chains such as Walmart.

### **Key Destinations**

The key destinations for transit riders in region 1 consist primarily in the transport of elderly, handicapped and low income individuals for trips to communities with health care facilities and shopping services. There is currently an ongoing effort to establish more transit service to the communities with large manufacturing that have employees traveling from a 20-60 mile radius to the place of employment.

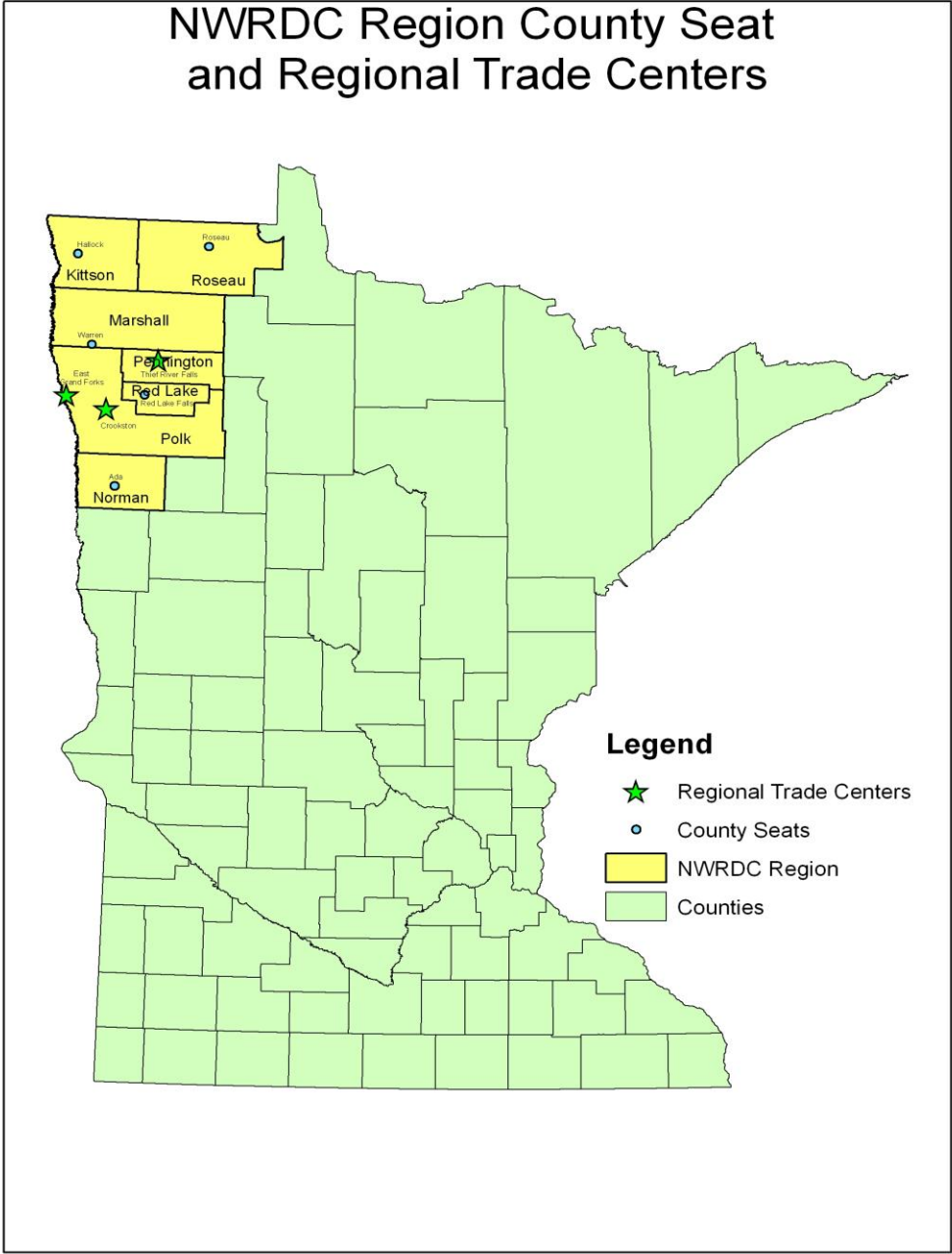


Grand Forks/East Grand Forks, Fargo/Moorhead, Crookston, Thief River Falls, Roseau, Warroad, Red Lake Falls, Fosston and Warren communities are destination centers that provide: hospital services, recreational opportunities, and shopping opportunities that the majority of transit users have an interest in acquiring.

The Far North Transit provides daily service between Roseau and Warroad, and is able to meet the needs of some employees that are working at either Marvin Windows or Polaris. Tri-Valley provides transit service between East Grand Forks and Crookston, and has worked well in providing a service to employees that live in one community and work in another.

The primary destinations for manufacturing include: East Grand Forks, Crookston, Red Lake Falls, Thief River Falls, Karlstad, Lancaster, Roseau and Warroad. The map on the next page shows all seven counties with transit services, the regional trade centers and the county seats where the most transit needs occur.

# NWRDC Region County Seat and Regional Trade Centers



## Demographics

Region 1 has a low zero vehicle household ratio with many families having 2 or more vehicles. The county seat is the largest city within the county; with the exception of Polk County where East Grand Forks has the highest population. These larger communities have the greatest need for public transportation as they have the highest zero vehicle household ratio, largest population of elderly, largest population of limited English proficiency, highest minority population, the highest level of households in poverty and the highest population density. The charts and graphs provide information about the demographic profile and makeup of region 1.

### Population Density

The persons per square mile in Region 1 are very low, ranging from 3.3 to 52.4. Appendix B-1 illustrates the population density in the region. Many of the flood prone housing districts in the region were bought out by FEMA after the 1997 flood. The Townships adjacent to the Red River of the North have portions with 0 population per square mile. The results of an aging population, flood events, and available services have forced many rural residents to move into nearby cities. The region still has a large population of people that could utilize transit service if made available for pickups at the rural homesteads.

### Households in Poverty

Region 1 is consistently low in poverty housing. Appendix B-2 illustrates the majority of the region has 0.2-3.9 households in poverty per square mile census tract. The larger communities of East Grand Forks, Crookston and Thief River Falls have the highest percentile of poverty housing, and the highest needs for public transit services.

### Minority Populations

Appendix B-3 illustrates the majority of the region has a 0-2.5 minority population per square mile. The minority populations located in Region 1 tend to be focused on the larger communities and several smaller farming communities, where full time employment is limited to the agricultural season.

### LEP Populations

Region 1 has a low density of limited English proficiency; the highest populations of non English speaking people tends to center around the larger communities.

Appendix B-4 illustrates these areas. The large manufacturing firms do business internationally; especially Digi-Key, a billion dollar business, and they are seeking bi-lingual qualified candidates for doing business. These manufacturing jobs are located in Thief River Falls, Roseau, Warroad, Crookston and East Grand Forks.

The chart below shows the population changes by county and total state numbers from 1960. One of the major factors in the declining populations in NW Minnesota from the 1990 to the current 2010 census is the amount of major floods that have occurred in the region. Many of those flood prone areas have been resolved and the population levels have started to rebound. The rural flood prone areas have forced residents to move into communities and especially the regional trade centers. These larger communities are better suited to the older residents. They have care centers, hospitals, and the necessary retail stores to serve an aging population that may not be able to drive themselves.

### Region 1 Population

County	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	(1960 - 2010)
Kittson	8,343	6,853	6,672	5,767	5,285	4,552	-3,791
Marshall	14,262	13,060	13,027	10,993	10,155	9,439	-4,823
Norman	11,253	10,008	9,379	7,975	7,442	6,852	-4,401
Penn	12,468	13,266	15,258	13,306	13,584	13,930	1,462
Polk	36,182	34,435	34,844	32,589	31,369	31,600	-4,852
Red Lake	5,830	5,388	5,471	4,525	4,299	4,089	-1,741
Roseau	12,154	11,569	12,574	15,026	16,338	15,629	3,475
Region	100,492	94,579	97,225	90,181	88,472	86,091	-14,401
Minnesota	3,413,864	3,804,971	4,075,970	4,375,099	4,919,479	5,303,925	1,890,061

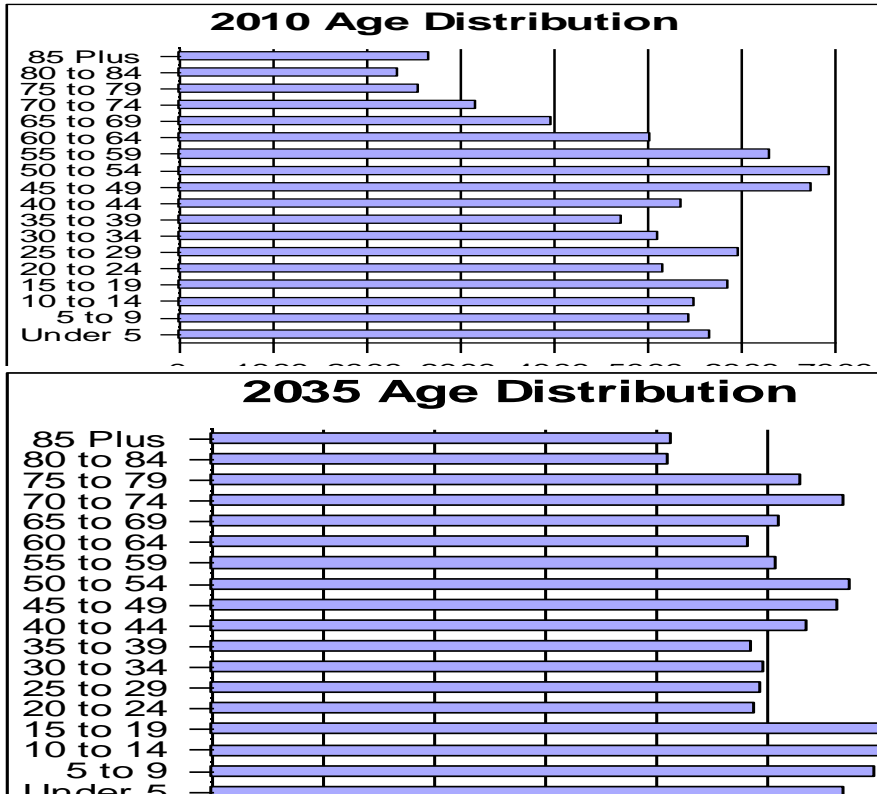
Source: US Census Bureau

Although currently a middle-aged region, the area is predicted to have significant elderly population growth in the near future. The elderly are one of the main population groups targeted to use transit in Northwest Minnesota. An explosive population growth in older Americans will require changes to be made to current transit systems.

### Seniors

Region 1 will have steady growth in the senior population over the next 25-years as illustrated in the age distribution chart below. As the baby boomers age the need for transit services will continue to grow in Region 1 and throughout the state. Appendix B-5 highlights the portions of the region with the highest percentile of population over the age of 65.

**Northwest Minnesota Age Distribution 2010-2035**



Source: 2010 Age Distribution (U.S. Census of the Population) 2035 Age Distribution (MN State Demographer Population Projections for RDC Region 1)

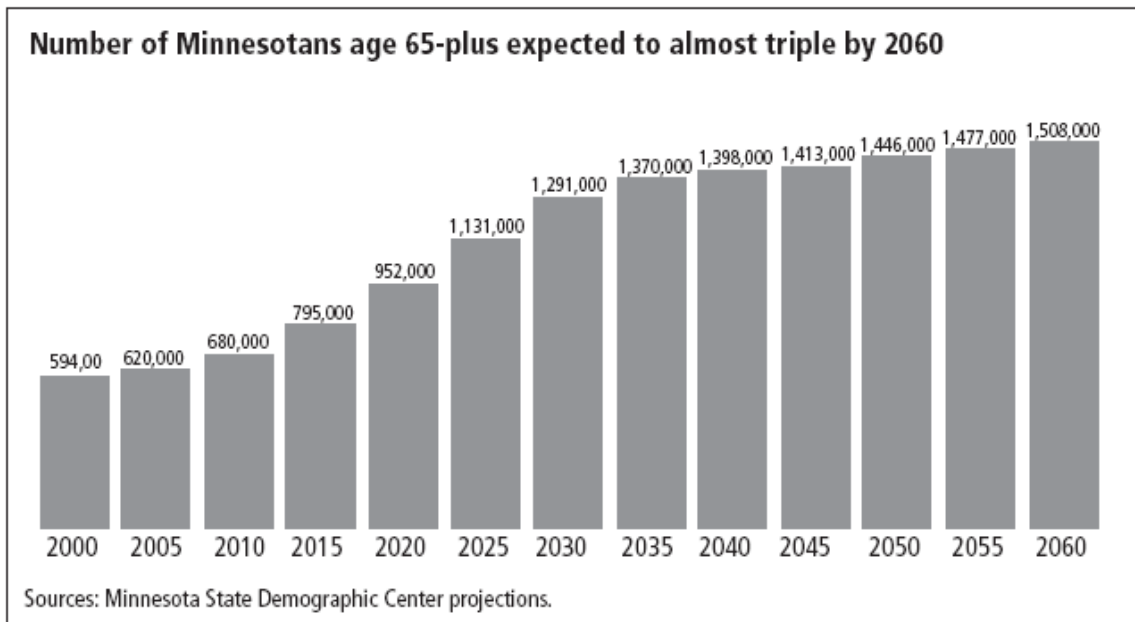
Zero Vehicle Households

Region 1 has a low zero vehicle household ratio because of the rural agricultural aspect of the seven counties. The largest areas with no vehicles tend to concentrate on the highest populated areas or lowest income portions of the respective county. The long distances necessary for travel to reach services requires the use of personnel vehicles throughout the Northwestern portion of the state. Appendix B-6 represents zero vehicle households.

The rural dynamics of Northwestern Minnesota and predominate agricultural profession categorizes many of the demographics to illustrate the same information. The population densities, households in poverty, minority populations, limited

English proficiency populations, highest number of seniors and zero vehicle households all tend to concentrate on the urban centers. The county seat is generally the areas with the most need for transit services.

The population of region 1 continues to decline as the death rate exceeds the birth rate. The youth move away for college and find employment in other parts of the state or country. Industry personnel have started action plans and training programs to keep the residents living in this part of the state. Colleges are developing curriculums that focus on specific trainings to keep the young people living and working in the agricultural and manufacturing jobs that are available in Northwestern Minnesota.



Northwest Minnesota contains seven counties with 8,426 square miles of area. Counties consist of: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau County. Characterized by Swedish, Norwegian, German, Asian, Polish and French-Canadians who settled in the area in the late 1800's; Northwest Minnesota has fifty-four incorporated cities, 228 townships and six unorganized territories. Features include a climate with wide seasonal fluctuation, a glacier-created topography and an economy based on agriculture and manufacturing.

Low-income individuals may practice various forms of transportation such as bicycling or walking, but the seasonal nature of weather in Northwest Minnesota makes it nearly impossible to practice this year-round. Low-income individuals are not different because of their preferences, but because of limited resources. Vehicle ownership is not often a choice for a low-income family, and is based on affordability issues of the vehicle, insurance, gas and maintenance.

The economic status of county residents is listed below. Low-income individuals are targeted as one of the main populations to use public transit. With the exception of Roseau, poverty level percentages are very similar.

Income	Kittson	Marshall	Norman	Pennington	Polk	Red Lake	Roseau
Median Household Income	\$45,404	\$46,242	\$43,976	\$41,027	\$43,731	\$41,510	\$46,846
Percent below poverty level	10%	9.7%	14%	13%	12.2%	11.1%	8.4%

Source: 2010 US Census Bureau

The Northwest Minnesota region is characterized by an increasing labor force, as well as an increasing amount of employed individuals. The unemployment rises and falls; however, the rate for the region is higher than the unemployment rate for Minnesota and for the United States for several years prior to 2011. The higher unemployment rate seen might be partially due to agriculture. Many individuals are employed in this field on a somewhat seasonal time frame.

#### Economic Development Region 1 - Northwest Unemployment Statistics Not Seasonally Adjusted

(Number of people estimated by place of residence)

Information supplied by the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development

Region	Year	Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Unemp. Rate	MN Unemp. Rate	US Unemp. Rate
Northwest	2011	51,304	48,600	2,704	5.30%	6.80%	9.10%
	2000	46,524	44,072	2,452	5.30%	3.10%	4.40%
	1995	47,140	43,930	3,210	6.80%	3.60%	5.60%

Kittson County was the last county in the NWRDC Region to be provided with transit services. The new service will need additional cooperation with other transit providers and travel trainers to help introduce the public to this new service. The

City of Crookston now has weekend church services. Tri-Valley coordinates the use of a mobile mechanic to provide services to other buses in the region. A travel trainer is visiting with communities to market the bus and inform residents about the availability of buses to the public. Tri-Valley Bus has also implemented the Job Access Reverse Commute program to provide bus services to communities with need. The public workshop and steering committee groups discussed expanding these services and incorporating strategies and projects to develop a Coordinated Transit Human Services Plan.



A geographic barrier to transit services in Region 1 is the large area as depicted with the map on page 9. The rural populations living on gravel roads don't have easy access to transit services without first coordinating a ride into a community. A large percentage of the population works between 20-60 miles from home.



The Sorlie Bridge in East Grand Forks closed to traffic in 2010. The Sorlie is a major connector between East Grand Forks/Grand Forks and serves as a main corridor for transit services between the two communities. Cities Area Transit (CAT) is the public transportation provider for Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN. Cities Area Transit buses operate Monday through Saturday covering the cities with eight different routes as well as providing Dial-A-Ride and Senior Rider services.

## **Transportation and Demographics**

To better understand the relationship between regional demographics, transit options, and key destinations, a series of maps were created depicting these elements in this region. These are included in Appendix B.

The Region 1 population is predominately white with nearly 96% of the population.

<b>Total Population</b>	88,472	100.0%
<b>Population Reporting One Race</b>	87,611	99.0%
White	84,731	95.8%
Black or African American	187	0.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	1,003	1.1%
Asian	514	0.6%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	14	0.0%
Some Other Race	1,162	1.3%
<b>Population Reporting Two or More Races</b>	861	1.0%

Source: Environmental Systems Research Institute 2010 data

The aging population continues to increase while the new births continue to decrease resulting in a declining population base in Northwestern Minnesota.

Although the population of Minnesota is increasing, not all the counties in Northwest Minnesota are following this trend. Reasons for population decline include natural disasters, rural migration, employment and housing. Long-term data for the region reveals a larger population decline occurring since the 1980's. Most population growth in the area is centered on cities and the townships surrounding them.

All of the minority population groups have a slight increase in future population projections, but not enough to have a considerable impact on future transportation modes.

The information provided on the next page displays the transportation modes for getting to work in 2010. Public transportation made up .5% of the transportation modes in the NWRDC 7 county region. The reasoning behind these low numbers are attributed to several factors; but mainly the independence factor of the residents from Northwest Minnesota, the operating time of the bus and the time of day that work starts.

### **2010 Workers 16+ by Means of Transportation to Work**

Total	41,048
Drove Alone - Car, Truck, or Van	73.8%

Carpooled - Car, Truck, or Van	14.2%
Public Transportation	0.5%
Walked	4.7%
Other Means	0.8%
Worked at Home	6.1%

The next set of information is the travel time it takes for residents to get to work. 30% of the population takes 10-19 minutes to travel to work. 3.8% of the population takes 45-59 minutes. These numbers give an understanding of the size of the seven county region and the distances that people drive to work.

**2010 Workers 16+ by Travel Time to Work**

Total	41,048
Did Not Work at Home	93.9%
Less than 5 minutes	9.6%
5 to 9 minutes	23.1%
10 to 19 minutes	30.2%
20 to 24 minutes	8.7%
25 to 34 minutes	11.3%
35 to 44 minutes	3.0%
45 to 59 minutes	3.8%
60 to 89 minutes	2.6%
90 or more minutes	1.5%
Worked at Home	6.1%
Average Travel Time to Work (in min)	17.9

A new Sanford Health facility is being built in Thief River Falls. The new facility will be located on Highway 59 and adjoin the existing facility. Thief River Falls and Grand Forks, ND are the major hospital providers in the Region. This new facility will service many of the transit users into the future. Digi-Key is the Regions' largest employer with over 2,600 employees. They are expanding and adding more employees annually. A projection shows the company adding over 200 employees in 2011. Arctic Cat is located next to Digi-Key employing over 1,300. These large industries provide a lot of employment opportunities to the residents of NW Minnesota. Coordinating transit use between these large employers and transit providers will be an important role for the NWRDC in the coming years.

There is a housing shortage in Thief River Falls forcing many of the people that work in Thief River Falls to live in adjacent communities. Transit services as in the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program has worked well for the Crookston to East Grand Forks travelers, not so well for the Thief River Falls adjacent communities. A bus is currently making several trips per day between the colleges in Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks. The college service has continued to grow in popularity and introduces young people to transit use.

The maps in Appendix B illustrate the most used bus routes in the region. East Grand Forks, Crookston, and Thief River Falls have the highest concentration of transit travel and will continue to increase with the JARC program and new initiatives that provide services between the colleges in all three cities. These communities are the regional trade centers that offer shopping, medical, and entertainment ventures to the transit system users.

Jefferson Bus Lines serves Region 1 with stops in Erskine, Fosston, Crookston and Grand Forks. Tri-Valley Heartland Express (THE BUS) out of Crookston covers a large area of the Region and will drop off Jefferson customers at the respective pick up location. Amtrak also serves Grand Forks and is a destination site for public transportation users.

### **Transportation Provider Inventory Findings**

Throughout the months of March through May 2011, the NWRDC 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 includes information such as fleet size, vehicle capacity, passenger eligibility requirements, and service cost; this information provides a source of comparison across agencies and a means to identify service gaps. To complete the inventory, the NWRDC sent an on-line questionnaire to 60 of the region's transportation providers in spring 2011. 34 responses were returned. A full record of responses to the questionnaire is available at [www.nwrdc.org](http://www.nwrdc.org). A directory listing of providers is available in Appendix C.

The NWRDC Region has a variety of transportation providers from public 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317, private vans and cars, taxi service to private service of residents living within an established business or government agency. School buses, health care facilities, churches, human services and senior centers also have vehicles available for transporting people. The ODC's, DT&H, and public transit systems are often operating small to medium size buses. Some of the larger public systems have buses capable of carrying over 40 passengers. The average start and end times for all systems were between the 7a.m. to 5p.m. time slots. This average often limits the use of public transportation for the individuals that have shift work, start early, or work later than the business norm. The lack of weekend service also limits the use by a large population of potential bus riders creating a substantial gap in service. Another gap discussed was the lack of volunteer drivers to transport riders to their desired locations.

Since the previous transit plan in 2006 several of the transit providers have started to coordinate volunteer driver programs with the bus services. One obstacle that often prohibits more efficient transport of people is the privacy act which keeps such a service from functioning.

The level of service in Region 1 declines in the rural areas. Kittson County is a new recipient of transit services, and still evaluating the best service procedure to accommodate the most people. The Thief River Falls Workcenter spends the most amount of time arranging and processing ride coordination.

The costs of rides per passenger are varied by the ride destination and the agency paying for the ride. Some ride for free while a long distance out of the region ride may cost \$200. Medical Assistance, state or federal funding, a personnel expense or an expense by the facility where an individual lives cover the cost of rides. The counties are sometimes liable for a portion of the billing. Some of the bus trips are only for a specific client such as the services provided by the school district. Many of the transit providers spend a large amount of time arranging rides and coordination pick up and drop offs. They also coordinate services between respective transit agencies. If a transit provider needs to make a delivery out of their respective region they will often line up a ride exchange so the person can be delivered to a route already scheduled by the other transit agency. Sometimes this is not allowed, citing personnel privacy issues or who is paying for the ride. Some of the barriers include: lack of coordination in certain circumstances, lack of volunteer drivers, insurance issues and the ability of the service being operational during the needed time of day.

### **Outcomes since the 2006 Northwest Region Public Transit Plan**

Another component of the needs assessment is an analysis of the 2006 Northwest Region Public Transit Plan. The 2006 Northwest Region Public Transit Plan was the first local human services transit coordination plan to be conducted in this region, and includes a list of strategies and projects for improving transit coordination. The 2011 steering committee reviewed these strategies and projects and assessed regional progress on transit coordination since 2006. The group also identified causes for success and barriers to action regarding project implementation. The complete list of 2006 strategies and projects and an assessment of their outcome is presented below.

The strategies and projects are prioritized in order of the largest concern from the 2006 transit plan. The projects are listed with the type of action taken over the past five-years.

### **Strategy and Project Identification**

#### **Strategy: Improve Service**

**Project:** Establish transit service to counties with no service.

**Action Taken** Kittson County now has transit services, marketing and education is necessary to get the public involved.

**Project:** Airline/bus connectivity

**Action Taken** Tri-Valley is providing bus rides to the airport in Thief River Falls and a connection to the Grand Forks airport.

**Project:** Provide service on weekends.

**Action Taken** The City of Crookston is utilizing a church bus on weekends.

**Project:** Provide rides to employment.

**Action Taken** Tri-Valley has started operation of the JARC program in Polk, Marshall, Red Lake and Pennington Counties.

**Strategy: Organizational Support**

**Project:** Coordinate bus services

**Action Taken** All agencies are doing a better job of coordinating bus services with volunteer drivers.

**Project:** Education and Marketing

**Action Taken** A regional blitz of media information was distributed through a variety of social media outlets. Radio, TV, Newspaper, ect. Provide a summer fun bus for transporting children across town.

**Project:** Maintenance of bus fleet.

**Action Taken** Tri-Valley has a mobile bus mechanic that is available for service calls to other transit agencies.

**Strategy: Coordination**

**Project:** Regional coordination: The previous (2006) stakeholder group wanted to meet on a regular basis in order to provide an increased sense of coordination between providers.

**No action taken** The steering committee feels this is a high priority project that should be pursued in the coming years. NWRDC noted that there is a funding mechanism to assist in the coordination of a steering committee group. Mn/DOT will be contacted for more information.

**Project:** Transit Providers Group: Put together a group composed of private and public transit providers in Northwest Minnesota. Meet on a semi-annual basis in order to provide increased coordination and information on current transit issues, deficiencies, and concerns, including those listed in this transportation plan. Meet in smaller local groups.

**No action taken**

**Project:** Improve service convenience: Coordinate pick-up and drop off locations between service providers and/or county boundaries. Specific attention should be paid to Roseau County, whose transit system is not currently able to extend beyond its defined borders to locations such as Thief River Falls, Crookston, or East Grand Forks.

**Some action taken:** Tri-Valley is coordinating transit rides with Far North transit.

**Project:** Regional extended service: There is a regional need for extended transit hours for weekends and evenings. Extended service will vary based on the city and the transit provider.

**Some action taken** There's increasing usage by church groups and Tri-Valley is transporting multiple rides per day between the colleges in Thief River Falls and East Grand Forks.

**Project:** Increase use of technology

**No action taken** The use of GPS will help to efficiently provide on the fly pick-ups to the requesting public. Upcoming technology could make it easier to coordinate between service providers as well as provide a multitude of other benefits.

### **Strategy: Marketing**

**Projects:** Advertise bus transportation to the general public.

**Some action taken** Mn/DOT provided funding to market the use of the public bus system. A travel trainer is often needed to get communities to try something new.

### **Strategy: System Coordination/Communication**

**Project:** Hire a Mobility Manager:

**Action Taken** Tri-Valley has a mobility manager to inform, educate, and participate in transit riding with the public.

**Project:** Service Inventory: Compile an inventory manual of all transit services available and pass out to transit providers. Gaps and doubled services can be avoided, and routes can be coordinated between different agencies, if necessary.

**No action taken** The communication between the service providers has increased and if a transit management position was in place to keep objectives moving forward; projects could get implemented at a faster pace.

**Project:** Education:

**Some action taken** Utilized local television channels, radio ads, flyers to increase the knowledge of the buses.

Implementation of the above projects relies upon coordination, cooperation, interest, funding, and cost-efficiency. Projects that were successful were because of what the people wanted, if there was a project champion to pursue the project, and if they had the local and or federal funding mechanism to make the application feasible.



2011 Transit Human Resources Coordination Steering Committee

The implementation of transit provider meetings (annually or bi-annually) is a vehicle in which to enact the proposed solutions. Future revisions of performance measuring manuals for individual service providers will encompass the above strategies, as well as identify potential upcoming concerns. The timeline for completion is extended, as some solutions require multi-agency support and organization on a large scale.

Many of the projects with little or no action was because of the lack of follow-up to



the proposal. It was considered to expensive or the idea just didn't have enough mutual support from local government and other supporting transit agencies.

### **Summary of Existing Conditions and Needs**

The final component of this needs assessment is a stakeholder-generated list of strengths and weaknesses of existing transit coordination efforts. At the public workshop, participants identified strengths and weaknesses of existing coordination efforts in Region 1. Combined with the plan's technical findings, these strengths and weaknesses form the basis for identifying strategies to address transportation coordination in this region.

The steering committee identified the strengths of the transit system in region 1. The results are listed below.

- Have strong transit agencies in the region, willingness to work together
- Have great agencies implementing the program
- There's an interest in coordinating services to provide the public with the best service
- There is service available to most
- Vehicles are available in all 7 counties, with lift accessibility
- There is good service to most costumers
- Interest in transit is increasing

The steering committee also discussed the weaknesses of the current transit services in the region. The weaknesses are listed below.

- Need regional coordination to provide more services
- Times of bus service is too short, need extended hours
- Public perception needs attention
- Lack of technology/FB/easy pay methods
- Marketing/lack of education to public
- More mobility managers/courses

- Lack of weekend/night service

The steering committee discussed the operating procedures of the transit systems in Region 1 and highlighted the services being done well. Everyone agreed that the transit providers work well with each other to keep costs down. They are all willing to coordinate services as best they can for the benefit of the public. The items listed in the weaknesses section highlight the need for more education and marketing. They also discussed having an easy pay method either through a credit card swipe or scheduling payments through PayPal. Facebook was also discussed as a mode of getting people connected and educated about the bus. The general public doesn't view the buses as public transportation that is open to everyone. A bus wrapped with advertising will promote the buses that are for public use. A county coordination transit champion and more mobility managers are needed to bring attention to transit systems.

### **Strategy and Project Identification**

The priority strategies and projects identified in this plan were initially identified by the stakeholders at the public workshop, and further refined by the steering committee. At the public workshop 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. A complete list of project ideas considered during the planning process is presented in Appendix D.

To categorize project ideas, steering committee members created an "Effort vs. Impact" chart to compare these project ideas. 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. This chart can be found in Appendix E. The strategies and projects listed below represent those ideas the steering committee prioritized as having the most potential to improve transit coordination in Region 1.

### **Prioritized Strategies**

The steering committee listed strategies identified at the public workshop and organized those into three categories, they include: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources; Mobility; Communication, Training and Organizational Support.

Strategy Coordination	Key Elements	Benefits
<b>Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>		
Allow joint purchasing	Coordinate purchases such as vehicle maintenance, insurance, driver training and substance abuse testing	Reduces costs by “buying in bulk;” increases consistency across organizations
Outsource business functions	Contract with external agencies for business services such as accounting, billing, or dispatching	Increased efficiency by allowing agency to focus on key mission while outside contractor handles ancillary functions
Program coordinator/organizer/ dispatch	A program coordinator can organize the operation procedures within the facility	Shared resources, the system will operate more efficiently
Central Call Center	Provide a one call shop to distribute services throughout the entire region	Transit system will operate more efficiently
PayPal type service/Card troll/bankcard use	Installing card troll devices in buses	Makes the bus fare easier to handle
Web based transit scheduling	Create or purchase a data package that allows transit ride scheduling from computer	Ease of use for the public
Organization/coordination of transit systems	Coordinate ride opportunities with other transit providers	Efficiency for riders
Contract between agencies	Allow providers with excess capacity to "sell" rides to other organizations, which are reserved for their clients	Improves service productivity and cost-effectiveness
Contract with common carrier	One or more sponsors have contracts with a common carrier, such as a public transit agency, and permit co-mingling of clients on the carrier's vehicles	Increases vehicle productivity; reduces per trip costs

Strategy Coordination	Key Elements	Benefits
Share resources	Share use of operational and capital resources (vehicles, facilities, support services)	Reduces costs; increases vehicle productivity; improves service quality
Coordinate dispatch	Create centralized call center and share trip dispatch under single entity within an organization. Buy software that incorporates reservation and scheduling capabilities and/or uses vehicle location information	Improves program access; creates cost-efficiencies; maximizes ridesharing; removes obstacles to providing same day, shared ride service; potential to reduce costs and increase productivity
Consolidate business functions	Merge various operating functions, such as call center or service delivery, from several agencies under single entity	Improves program access; creates cost-efficiencies
Coordinate volunteer driver training	Merge volunteer driver training across programs	Volunteer drivers are qualified to drive clients of more than one program
Implement tools that support data management	Install tools that improve data integrity, fare collection, cost sharing/allocation, billing, reporting and transfers	Improves service operations, design and management; may create cost savings
Coordinate agency schedules	Coordinate connections between transit services. Coordinate transit service hours with health services, social services, and employment schedules	Improves program access, could result in cost-efficiencies by grouping rides from similar origin/destination locations

	Key Elements	Benefits
<b>Mobility Strategies</b>		
Improve service convenience	Improve/expand service hours, geographic coverage, driver assistance, same-day service, inter-city services, etc. Purchase additional vehicles. Use software that matches service information with data to maximize service design and enhance productivity	Enhances travel and service options; increase services productivity and frees resources for service expansion
Mobility manager exposure	Expand the number of mobility managers throughout the region	Educate the public on the use of the bus system
Increase rides	Hold educational ride workshops to familiarize public with the operation of the bus	More people using the system will attract other potential riders
Coordination of volunteer drivers	Educate the volunteer drivers on the operating procedures of different service providers	A smoother operating system with reliability
GPS Tracking in vehicles	Purchase GPS units for placement in the fleet of buses	Increase efficiency
Small community service	Provide service to the small towns on a more frequent occurrence	Increase availability
Mechanic on the fly	Share mechanic between providers	Increase efficiency
Senior meal volunteer increase/availability	Increase the number of volunteers at senior meal sites	More transit oriented people will make educating new riders easier to accomplish
Convene a regional coordinated group	Organize a group of individual volunteers to assist in riding the bus	More people to ride the bus
Enhancing customer travel	Setting up an atmosphere of friendly riders and bus drivers	Comfort
<b>Mobility Strategies Continued</b>	<b>Key Elements</b>	<b>Benefits</b>

Establish/enhance assisted transportation programs	Train volunteers to help riders who are unable to use transit services without personal assistance	Increase access to transit services
Establish/expand taxi subsidy programs	Provide vouchers to partially or completely pay for taxi services	Offers flexible service; increases travel options
Improve access to transit stops	Make accessibility improvements at bus stops, such as installing accessible pedestrian signals	Improves accessibility of fixed-route; does not require on-going funding; can reduce reliance on paratransit
Maintain existing vehicle fleet	Replace existing buses appropriate to their age/wear and tear	Future levels of service match current levels

	Key Elements	Benefits
<b>Communication, Training and Organizational Support</b>		
Centralize information	Create centralized listing of regional transportation services	More user friendly ; increases access to service
Hire mobility manager	Dedicate personnel resources to manage local mobility issues and/or staff coordination efforts	Creates staff resources to promote and implement coordination efforts
Marketing	Continue a media blitz of transit services and the availability to the public	Will give the public an understanding of the available buses
Web based transit services	Hire an agency to create an internet web page	The public often seeks information from the web, a web based application will bring more people into contact with the transit providers
Expand Education Efforts	Educate the public of the availability of transit services through advertising on the radio, tv, and newspaper	More people will ride after they are familiar with the bus services
Software Improvements/GPS services	Update a central call center with new software that is capable of running a GPS service that tracks calls and bus locations	Will create an efficient transit service
Pricing list availability	Have the pricing options available to the public	Knowledge of how to use the transit system and the costs associated will add riders
Informational fact sheet for mentors	Provide uniform data to transit mentors so they are providing accurate and the correct information about each of the transit providers	Consistent and accurate information is needed to provide a stable rider base
<b>Communication, Training and Organizational Support Continued</b>		
	<b>Key Elements</b>	<b>Benefits</b>

Communication between providers	Improve the communication between providers to provide the best services to the public	Cost efficiency
Provide technical training for coordination staff	Obtain technical training on background skills needed to implement coordination strategies, such as financial tools, team-building, etc.	Ensures local coordination staff has skills to implement recommended programs
Offer customer travel training	Encourage targeted populations to use transit services by teaching them how to ride the bus	May reduce paratransit costs by moving riders to fixed route services; increases consumers' transportation options; means to offer culturally specific training to target groups
Convene regional coordination body	Convene transportation providers and human services agencies to discuss on-going coordination needs within each region	Designated body can oversee implementation of identified coordination efforts. Could initiate studies such as identifying and tracking transportation spending within region to promote understanding of dollar trail
Educate public of transportation options	Marketing and education to teach consumers about their transportation options	Increased ridership, could target culturally specific groups
Educate regional professionals of transportation options	Education of human service professionals of the whole spectrum of transportation options available to clients	More cost-effective and efficient recommendations to clients

The steering committee also discussed the following project ideas.

**Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources Projects**

- Shared resources and services
- Purchase software to economize trips
- Coordinate ride schedules with employer start times and shift changes
- Coordinated dispatching services between providers and riders



- Organize a call center that can dispatch with multiple providers
- Coordinate rides from one service region into another
- Coordinated payment service usable on all the systems (PayPal)

**The mobility project Ideas include;**

- More access to mobility manager
- Improved service convenience
- Enhanced volunteer program
- Improved service with electronic upgrades
- Maintenance of vehicle fleet
- Enhanced volunteer driver program
- Improved service/convenience
- Education

**The Communication, Training, and Organizational Support Strategies Project Ideas include;**

- Organize/coordination of 5310 vehicles to extend service
- Mentor/volunteer Program
- Communication software
- Software for transit
- Education
- Enhance travel training/mobility manager
- Coordinate volunteer driver program
- Coordinate contract with other facilities
- Travel Trainer educational courses

**Adoption and Approval of Plan**

The NWRDC TAC reviewed and approved execution of the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan on March 7, 2011. The TAC was kept informed on the process of the plan

throughout the summer months. The TAC will be given a copy of the draft plan for review and approval.

The steering committee was formed in May of 2011 with the first steering committee meeting taking place on April 14, 2011 at the Pennington County Courthouse. The meeting focused on the 2006 transit plan and discussion ensued on invites to the open house workshop.

May 26, 2011 the public open house workshop was held at the Tri-Valley Bus Facility in Thief River Falls. Strategies and projects were reviewed and discussed.

June 23, 2011 the final steering committee meeting was held at the Tri-Valley Bus facility in Thief River Falls.

The draft plan will be posted on the NWRDC transportation page the week of September 6<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

The draft plan was forwarded to Mn/DOT for review the first week of September.

A draft plan was distributed to stakeholders for public comment between September 2, 2011-October 2, 2011. This plan will be adopted by the Region 1 RDC on December 3, 2011.

## Appendix A- Public Workshop Participants

---

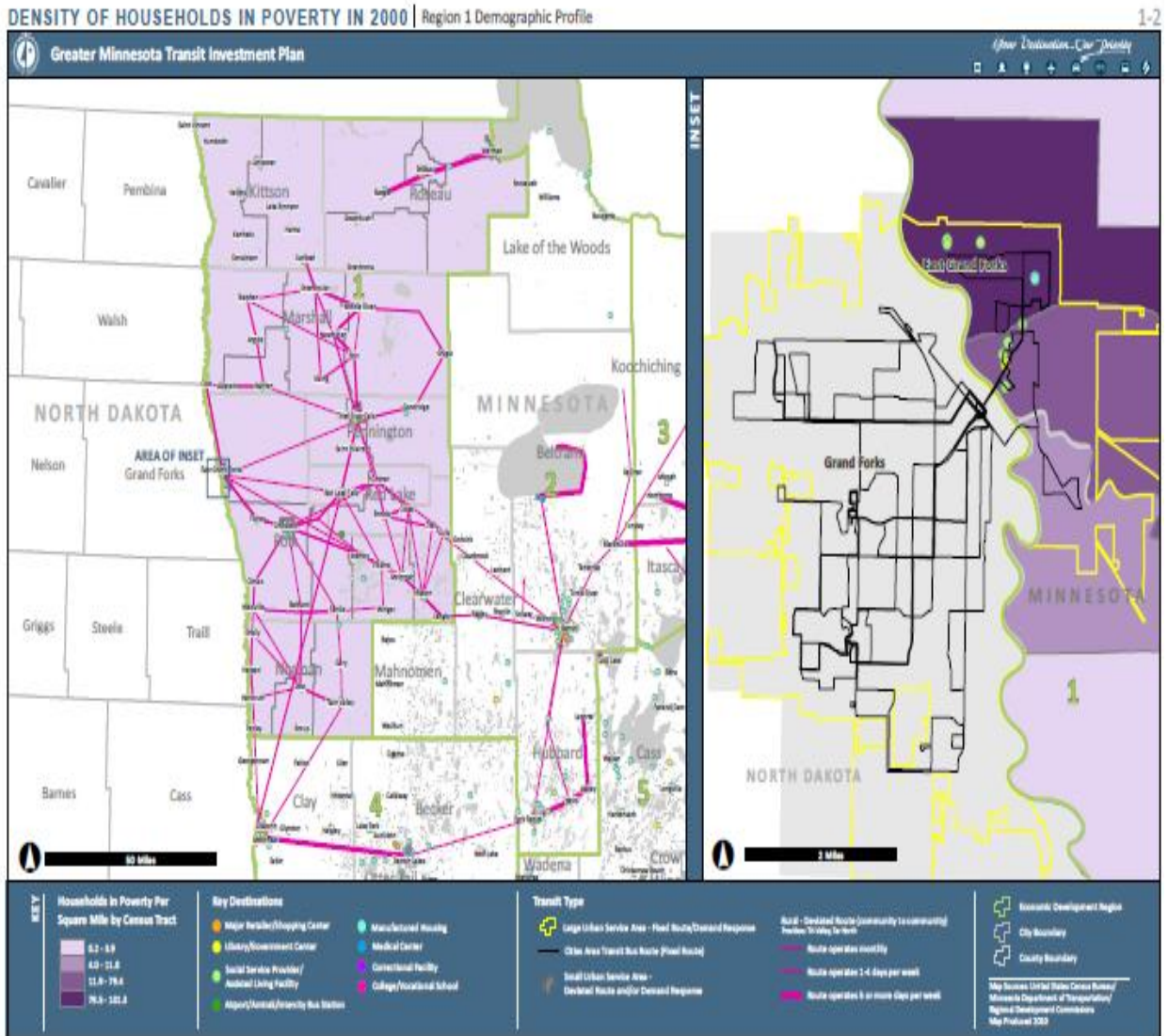
May 26, 2011 Workshop Participants

---

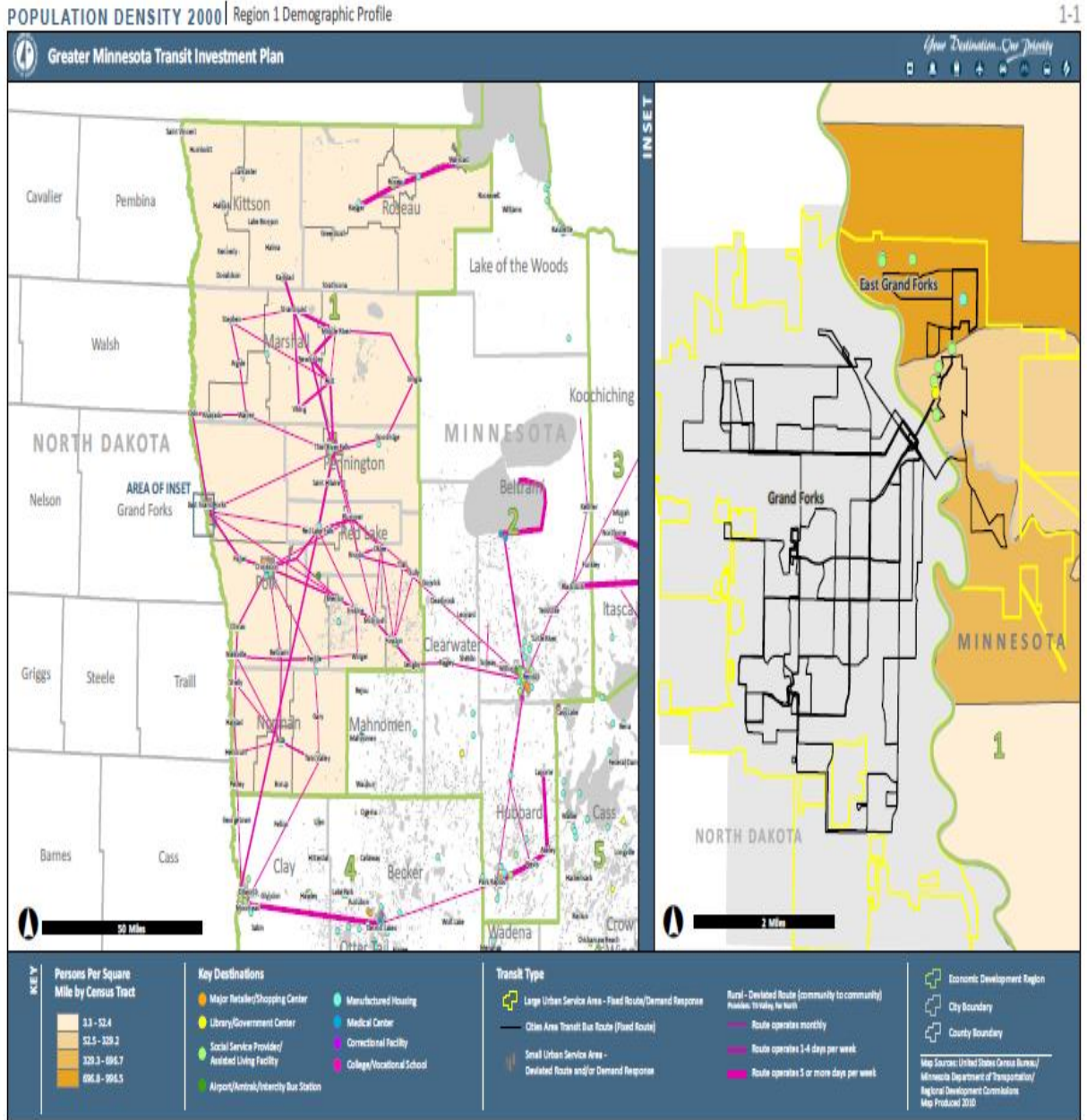
Name	Organization
Shannon Henrickson	Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging
Ken Yutrzenka	Pennington County Human Services
Tammy Sykes	Lutheran Social Services
Melissah Lundeen	Kittson County Social Services
Steve Butler	Far North Transit
Susan Peterson	Thief River Falls Workforce Center
Mark Hoiland	Tri-Valley Transit
John Johnson	Options
Teri Kouba	East Grand Forks MPO Transit
Cathy Fynboh	Digi-Key
Carol Demars	Lutheran Social Services
Jo Bittner	Polk County Development Activity Center
Dave Mills	Red Lake County Social Services
Cindy Pic	Tri-Valley Transit
Danica Robson	Riverside Terrace
Troy Schroeder	Northwest Reg. Development Commission

---

# Appendix B-1 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1. Density of households in poverty.

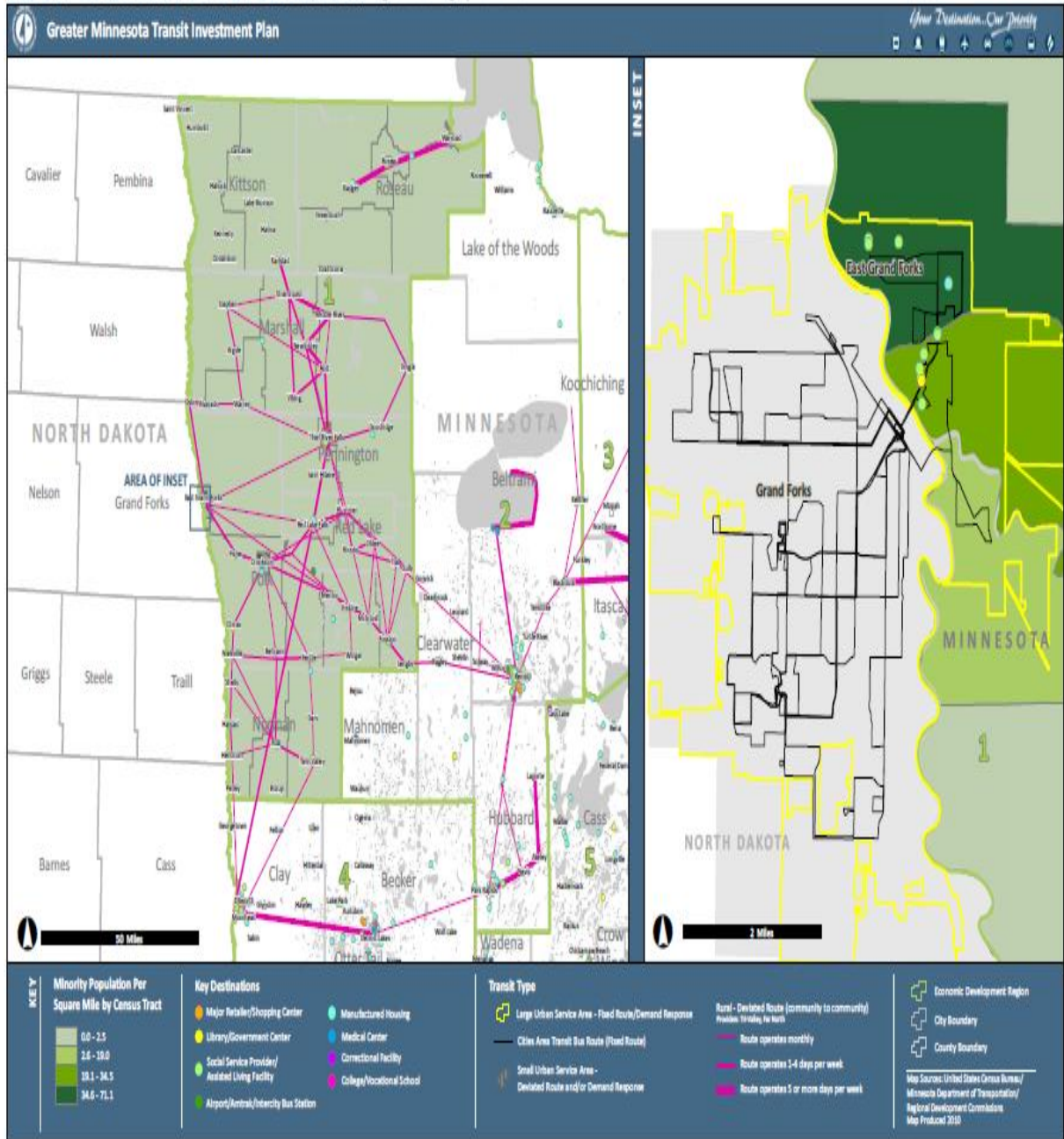


## Appendix B-2 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1. Population Density

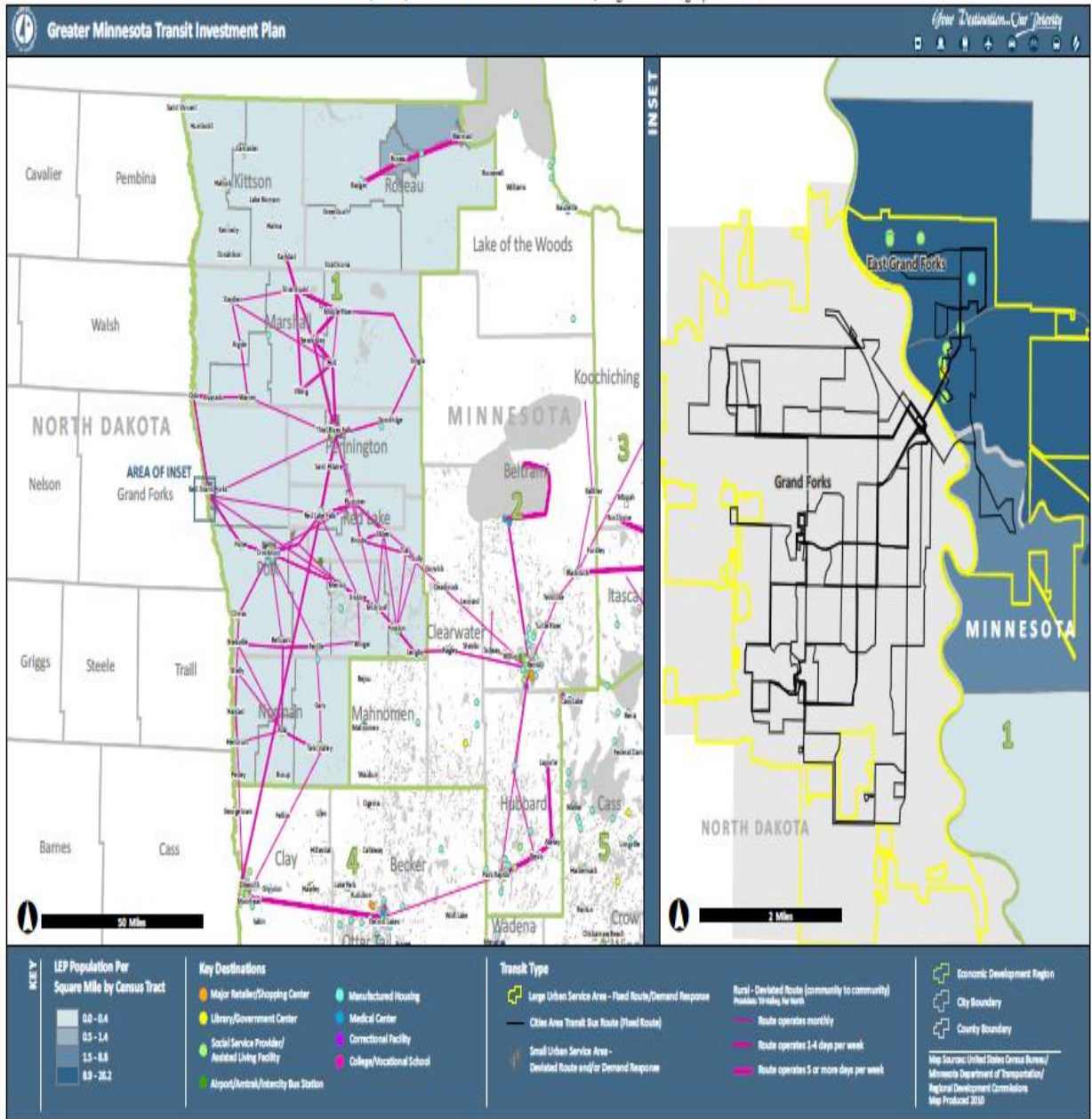


## Appendix B-3 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1. Density of Minority Populations.

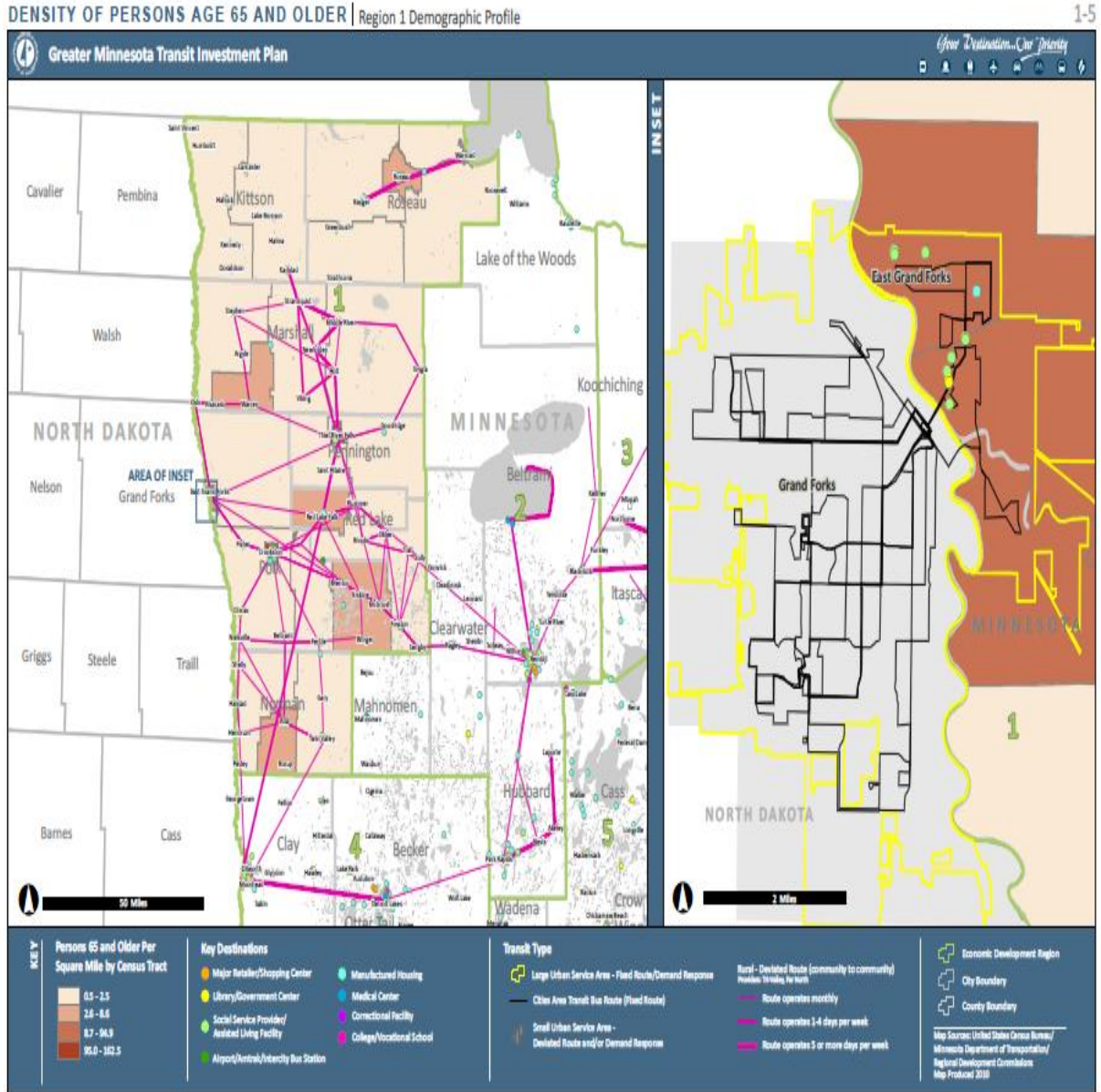




## Appendix B-4 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1

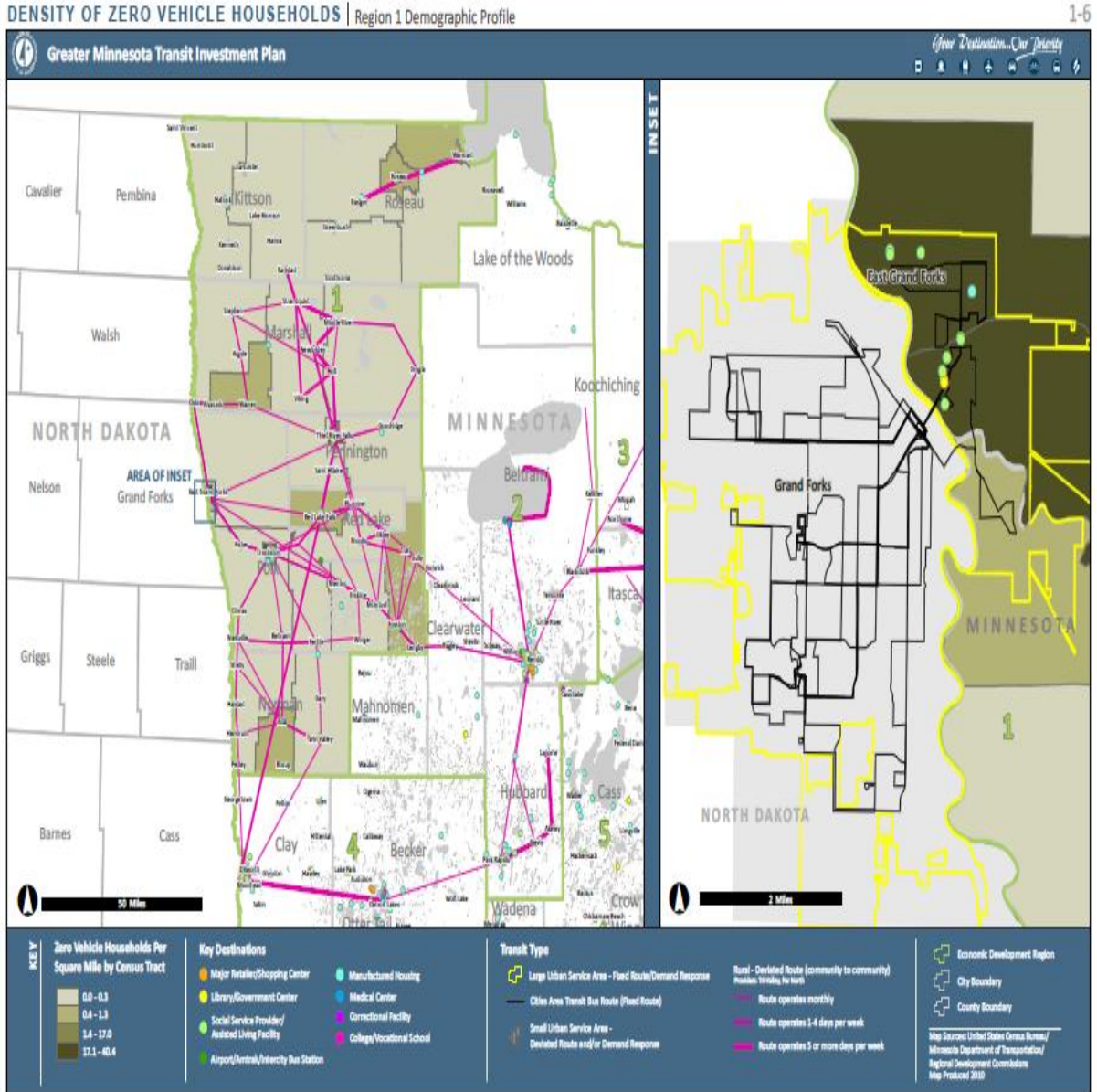


# Appendix B-5 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1

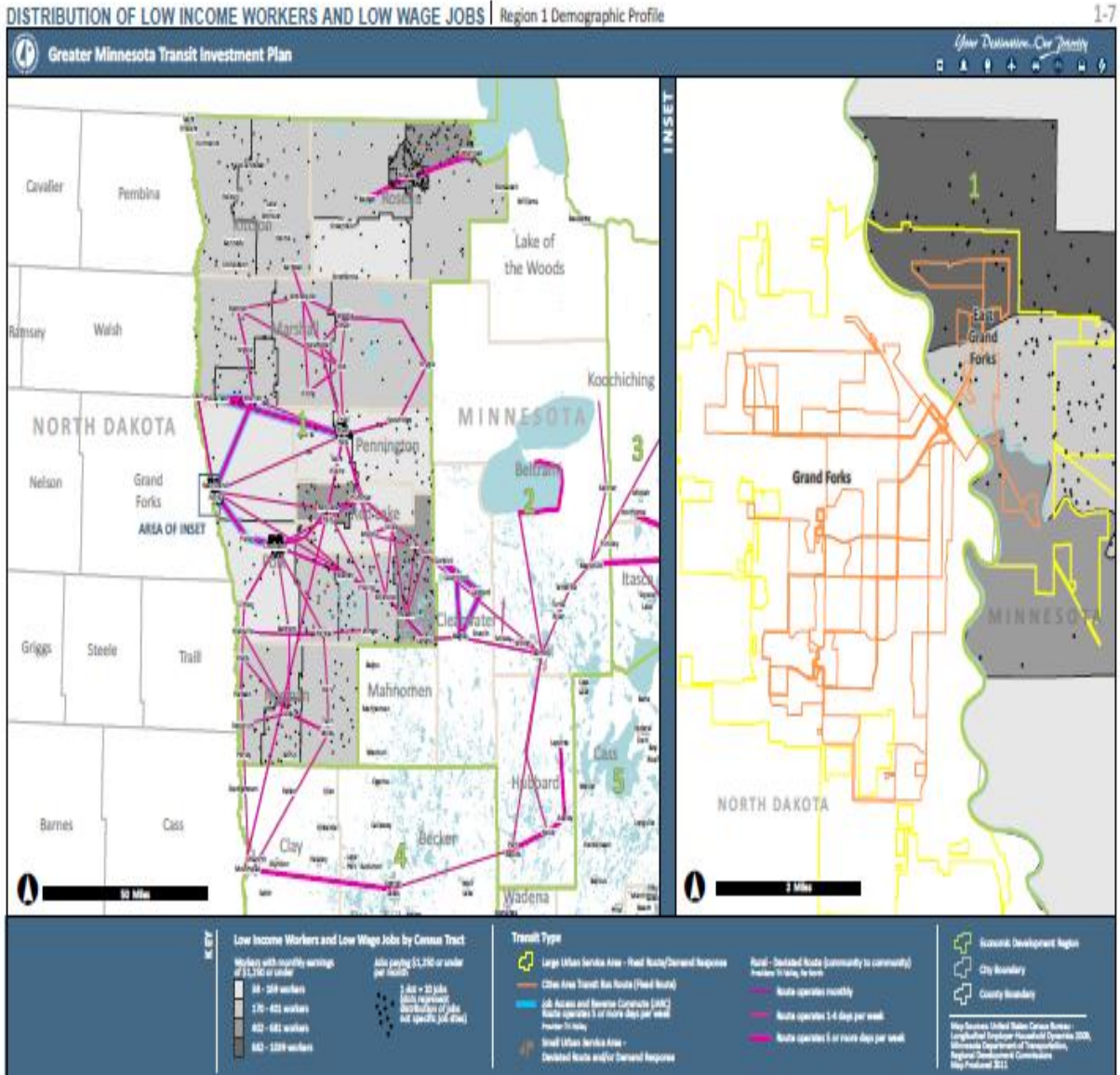




# Appendix B-6 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1



# Appendix B-7 Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 1. Distribution of Low Income Workers and Low Wage Jobs



## Appendix C- Transportation Provider Directory

The following directory includes contact information for all regional transportation providers who responded to an inventory questionnaire sent in the spring of 2011. This is not a complete list of providers in the region.

Kittson County	
<b>Name:</b>	Kittson Central School District
<b>Address:</b>	444 North Ash, PO Box 670 Hallock MN 56728
<b>Phone:</b>	218-843-3682 ext. 232
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.kittson.mn.us">www.kittson.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Kittson County Development Activity Center
<b>Address:</b>	102 Hill Street, Lake Bronson, MN 56734
<b>Phone:</b>	218-754-2225
<b>Web:</b>	Non-profit Transportation
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Kittson County Social Services
<b>Address:</b>	410 5th St. SE Suite 100, Hallock, MN 56728
<b>Phone:</b>	218-843-2689
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.co.kittson.mn.us">www.co.kittson.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Volunteer Driver
<b>Name:</b>	Lancaster Public School
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 217 Lancaster, MN 56735
<b>Phone:</b>	218-762-5400
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.lancaster.k12.mn.us">www.lancaster.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
Marshall County	

<b>Name:</b>	Marshall County Central
<b>Address:</b>	310 West Minnesota, Newfolden, MN 56738
<b>Phone:</b>	218-874-8530
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.newfolden.k12.mn.us">www.newfolden.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Marshall County Social Services
<b>Address:</b>	208 E. Colvin Ave., Warren, MN 56762
<b>Phone:</b>	218-745-5124
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.co.marshall.mn.us">www.co.marshall.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Non-profit Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Occupational Development Center, Inc
<b>Address:</b>	404 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> Street, Warren, MN 56762
<b>Phone:</b>	218-745-4401
<b>Web:</b>	
<b>Service Type:</b>	Private Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Stephen/Argyle Central
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 279, Argyle, MN 56713
<b>Phone:</b>	218-437-6615
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.sac.k12.mn.us">www.sac.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Pennington County</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Goodridge Public School
<b>Address:</b>	PO BOX 195, Goodridge, MN 56725
<b>Phone:</b>	218-378-4133
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.goodridge.k12.mn.us">www.goodridge.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Falls Development Activity Center, Inc.
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box C., Thief River Falls, MN 56701
<b>Phone:</b>	218-681-5951
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.positivelyminnesota.com">www.positivelyminnesota.com</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Non-profit Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Occupational Development Center
<b>Address:</b>	1520 Hwy 32 South, Thief River Falls, MN 56701
<b>Phone:</b>	218-681-6830
<b>Web:</b>	
<b>Service Type:</b>	Private Transportation

<b>Name:</b>	Pennington Co. Human Services
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 340, Thief River Falls, MN 56701
<b>Phone:</b>	218-681-2880
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.co.pennington.mn.us">www.co.pennington.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Riverside Terrace
<b>Address:</b>	225 LaBree Ave South #614 , Thief River Falls, MN 56701
<b>Phone:</b>	218-681-7657
<b>Web:</b>	
<b>Service Type:</b>	Service is primarily for the residents
<b>Name:</b>	Thief River Falls Workforce Center
<b>Address:</b>	1301 Hwy 1 East, Thief River Falls, MN 56701
<b>Phone:</b>	218-681-0909
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.positivelyminnesota.com">www.positivelyminnesota.com</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Polk County</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Altru Rehabilitation Center
<b>Address:</b>	701-780-2315
<b>Phone:</b>	<a href="http://www.altru.org">www.altru.org</a>
<b>Web:</b>	Transports patients to the Altru Rehab for therapy from within Grand Forks and
<b>Service Type:</b>	East Grand Forks city limits.
<b>Name:</b>	City of Fosston
<b>Address:</b>	220 East First St., Fosston, MN 56542
<b>Phone:</b>	218-435-1959
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.fosston.com">www.fosston.com</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Public transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Climax – Shelly School District
<b>Address:</b>	111 East Broadway, Climax, MN 56523
<b>Phone:</b>	218-857-2835
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.climax.com">www.climax.com</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	East Polk Development Activity Center
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 178, Fosston, MN 56542
<b>Phone:</b>	Non profit transportation, referral from Social Services
<b>Web:</b>	
<b>Service Type:</b>	

<b>Name:</b>	Fisher ISD
<b>Address:</b>	313 Park Ave, Fisher, MN 56723
<b>Phone:</b>	218-891-4105
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.fisher.k12.mn.us">www.fisher.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Good Samaritan Society
<b>Address:</b>	2122 River Road NW, East Grand Forks, MN 56721
<b>Phone:</b>	218-773-7484
<b>Web:</b>	Private transportation
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Winemac ISD #2609
<b>Address:</b>	23130 345th Street SE, Erskine, MN 56535
<b>Phone:</b>	218-563-2900
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.win-e-mac.k12.mn.us">www.win-e-mac.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	MN-DEED – Crookston Workforce Center
<b>Address:</b>	1730 University Ave, Crookston, MN 56716
<b>Phone:</b>	218-281-6020
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.positivelyminnesota.com">www.positivelyminnesota.com</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Dislocated Worker program, and Workforce Investment Act.
<b>Name:</b>	Options
<b>Address:</b>	318 3 <sup>rd</sup> St NW, East Grand Forks, MN 56721
<b>Phone:</b>	218-773-6100 or 1-800-726-3692
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.macil.org/options">www.macil.org/options</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Polk County Development Activity Center
<b>Address:</b>	515 5 <sup>th</sup> AVE South, Crookston, MN 56716
<b>Phone:</b>	218-281-4181
<b>Web:</b>	Private Transportation
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Polk County Social Services
<b>Address:</b>	612 North Broadway, Crookston, MN 56716
<b>Phone:</b>	218-470-8459
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.co.polk.mn.us">www.co.polk.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Private Transportation

<b>Name:</b>	Riverview Adult Day Services
<b>Address:</b>	323 South M St. Crookston, MN 56716
<b>Phone:</b>	Private Transportation
<b>Web:</b>	
<b>Service Type:</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Tri-Valley Public Transportation
<b>Address:</b>	1345 Fairfax Ave., Crookston, MN 56716
<b>Phone:</b>	218-281-0700
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.tvoc.org">www.tvoc.org</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Public Transportation
<b>Red Lake County</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Red Lake County Central School
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 7, Plummer, MN 56748
<b>Phone:</b>	218-465-4222
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.plummer.k12.mn.us">www.plummer.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Roseau County</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Far North Transit
<b>Address:</b>	215 South main, Roseau, MN 56751
<b>Phone:</b>	218-463-3238
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.farnorthtransit.com">www.farnorthtransit.com</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	Public Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Greenbush/Middle River School
<b>Address:</b>	401 Park Ave, Greenbush MN 56726
<b>Phone:</b>	218-782-2231
<b>Web:</b>	<a href="http://www.middleriver.k12.mn.us">www.middleriver.k12.mn.us</a>
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Focus Corp MN Inc.
<b>Address:</b>	706 7 <sup>th</sup> Street SW, Roseau, MN 56726
<b>Phone:</b>	218-463-0411
<b>Web:</b>	
<b>Service Type:</b>	



## Appendix D- Project Idea Summary

<b>Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>					
	<b>Title of Project</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>	<b>Strategy Projects Fulfills</b>	<b>Champions &amp; Potential Leader</b>	<b>Effort vs. Impact</b>
2	Mobility Manager /Travel Trainer	Provide a travel trainer in each of the Region One counties.	Hire mobility manager/Travel Trainer	Local Legislative representatives from Region One. Mn/DOT and Tri-Valley Transit	Easy to do, major impact
3	Shared Resources	Share equipment and technologies between transit providers	Improve the communication between providers	Transit systems	Easy to do, Major impact
4	GPS system for dispatch and buses	Install GPS units in buses for a better service to the public.	Purchase GPS to install in fleet of buses.	Tri-Valley Transit	Easy to do, major impact
5	Mentoring Program	Sharing information with other transit providers	Transit operators can share valuable information to other operators.	All transit providers, and the NWRDC	Easy to do, minor improvement



	<b>Title of Project</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>	<b>Strategy Projects Fulfills</b>	<b>Champions &amp; Potential Leader</b>	<b>Effort vs. Impact</b>
6	Extended Service Hours	Fund service on weekends and evenings. Many people work shifts not during 9-5 bus schedules.	Improve service convenience	Transit Providers	Easy to do, major impact
7	Mechanic on the fly	Utilizing one shop to assist in maintenance operations at other facilities	Organizational support	Tri-Valley currently is operating with this philosophy.	Easy to do, major impact
<b>Category 2: Mobility Strategies</b>					
18	More access to travel trainer	Have a travel trainer available in each county	Mobility Manager access	Tri-Valley	Easy to do, Major improvement
19	Improved Service/convenience	Longer hours of service	Extended service		Easy to do, minor
	<b>Title of Project</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>	<b>Strategy Projects Fulfills</b>	<b>Champions &amp; Potential Leader</b>	<b>Effort vs. Impact</b>
20	Enhanced driver volunteer program	Get more volunteer drivers	Improved service	Social services, community center leaders	Hard to do, major improvement

<b>Category 3: Communication, Training, and Organizational Support</b>					
30	Marketing	Market the bus to general public. Bus wrap/ internet	Marketing	All transit providers, local government agencies	Easy to do, major impact
31	Call Center	Create a one stop call site that coordinates rides region-wide	Program Coordinator	Tri-Valley	Easy to do, minor impact
32	Web based Transit information	Hire a consultant to develop a web based transit site	Marketing	All transit providers	Easy to do, minor impact

The steering committee brainstormed the following strategies and projects. The group discussed the best way to implement these practices.

**Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources Strategies**

- 1. Coordination Software between agencies
- 2. Program Coordinator/Organizer/ Dispatch
- 3. Central Call Center
- 4. GPS transit buses
- 5. PayPal type service/Card troll/bankcard use
- 6. Web based transit scheduling/systems
- 7. Organization/coordination of transit systems
- 8. Shared vehicles and capital equipment

### **Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources**

- Shared resources and services
- Purchase software to economize trips
- Coordinate ride schedules with employer start times and shift changes
- Coordinated dispatching services between providers and riders
- Organize a call center that can dispatch with multiple providers
- Coordinate rides from one service region into another
- Coordinated payment service usable on all the systems (PayPal)

### **Mobility Strategies**

- Mobility manager exposure
- Increase rides
- Coordination of volunteer drivers
- GPS Tracking in vehicles
- Mechanic on the fly
- Senior meal volunteer increase/availability
- Small community service
- Enhancing customer travel
- Convene a regional coordinated group

### **Mobility Project Ideas**

- More access to mobility manager
- Improved service convenience
- Enhanced volunteer program
- Improved service with electronic upgrades
- Maintenance of vehicle fleet
- Enhanced volunteer driver program

**Mobility Project Ideas Continued:**

- Improved service/convenience
- Education

**Communication, Training, and Organizational Support Strategies**

- Travel Trainer
- GPS services
- Marketing
- Web based transit services
- Expand Education Efforts
- Communication between providers
- Software Improvements
- Pricing list availability
- Informational fact sheet for mentors
- Regional transit champion

**Communication, Training, and Organizational Support**

- Organize/coordination of 5310 vehicles to extend service
- Mentor/volunteer Program
- Communication software
- Software for transit
- Education
- Enhance travel training/mobility manager
- Coordinate volunteer driver program
- Coordinate contract with other facilities
- Travel Trainer educational courses

## Appendix E- Project Analysis: Effort vs. Impact Assessment

<p><b>Difficult to do/Minor impact projects</b></p> <p>Coordination of large employers start time</p>	<p><b>Difficult to do/Major impact projects</b></p> <p>Purchase Software</p> <p>Card troll/PayPal</p> <p>Web scheduled rides</p> <p>Coordinate Volunteer Drivers</p> <p>Senior Meal Volunteers</p>
<p><b>Easy to do/Minor impact projects</b></p> <p>Call center</p> <p>Web based transit</p> <p>Share resources/equipment</p> <p>Increase rides</p> <p>Forming a regional coordinated group</p> <p>Informational fact sheet</p>	<p><b>Easy to do/Major impact projects</b></p> <p>Travel trainer</p> <p>GPS system in the buses</p> <p>Shared resources/mobility manager</p> <p>Mentoring program</p> <p>Organized/coordinated transit</p> <p>Mobility manager exposure</p> <p>Mechanic on the fly</p> <p>Small community service</p> <p>Enhancing customer travel</p> <p>Marketing</p> <p>Regional transit champion</p>

# NWRDC Region 1 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan Addendum



Prepared by:  
Northwest Regional Development Commission  
115 South Main  
Warren, MN 56762

Addendum to be adopted by:  
NWRDC Board  
August, 2012

# NWRDC Region 1 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan Addendum

---

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Steering Committee Membership</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>Planning Process</b>	<b>56-57</b>
<b>Work Plan</b>	<b>58-59</b>

## Introduction

The NWRDC completed this Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan for Region 1 in 2011. The planning document is available for review on the NWRDC website located at [www.nwrdc.org](http://www.nwrdc.org). As the transit coordination plan was in development new initiatives surfaced that included a one call one stop hotline that would enable veterans access to transit services from anywhere in the state. This addendum incorporates the needs of veterans into the 2011 plan.

The NWRDC Area Agency on Aging applied for a funding grant to the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative to incorporate these federal funding opportunities in the region. The Grand Forks/East Grand Forks Cities Area Transit is planning to implement the Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant. The transit providers in Region 1 are discussing how they can coordinate a working agreement to utilize the services in Northwestern Minnesota. The Transportation and Community Living Initiative grant only covers capital costs associated with transportation one-call/one-click centers, it is important for applicants and grantees to identify other funds to support the operation of these centers. The grant covers 80% of the capital costs, more information is available at [www.fta.dot.gov/veterans](http://www.fta.dot.gov/veterans).

There are questions that need to be addressed to the operation of the federal grant across state boundary lines. This is also an area of concern when transporting veterans from Minnesota to a VA Hospital in North Dakota. There may need to be new legislation written to allow this type of transit service.

Following plan adoption, the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) requested that the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination plans be amended to describe how the plan addresses veterans' transportation issues. The amended plans were also to include a detailed three-to-five-year work plan, outlining how projects identified in the plan would be prioritized, and what specific steps would be taken to implement them.

As such, this Addendum to the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan for Region 1 was developed.



## June 14, 2012 Steering Committee Transit Addendum Members

Teri Kouba	Grand Forks/East Grand Forks MPO	<a href="mailto:teri.kouba@theforksmpo.org">teri.kouba@theforksmpo.org</a>
Kent Ehrenstrom	Mn/DOT D2 Transit	<a href="mailto:Kent.Ehrenstrom@state.mn.us">Kent.Ehrenstrom@state.mn.us</a>
Steve Butler	Far North Transit	<a href="mailto:rcoa@wikel.com">rcoa@wikel.com</a>
Sally Hagl-McGlynn	ODC Thief River Falls	<a href="mailto:smcglynn@odcmn.com">smcglynn@odcmn.com</a>
Shannon Hendrickson	NW Area Agency on Aging	<a href="mailto:shendrickson@nwrdc.org">shendrickson@nwrdc.org</a>
Deb Waterworth	Pennington County Human Services	<a href="mailto:dwaterworth@co.pennington.mn.us">dwaterworth@co.pennington.mn.us</a>
Cynthia Pic	Tri-Valley Opportunity Council	<a href="mailto:cpic@tvoc.org">cpic@tvoc.org</a>
Sue Peterson	Thief River Falls Workforce Center	<a href="mailto:susan.m.peterson@state.mn.us">susan.m.peterson@state.mn.us</a>
Bryan McCoy	MPO	<a href="mailto:bryan.mccoy783@gmail.com">bryan.mccoy783@gmail.com</a>
Cindy Gratzek	Warren ODC	<a href="mailto:cgratzek@odcmn.com">cgratzek@odcmn.com</a>
Troy Schroeder	NWRDC	<a href="mailto:tschroeder@nwrdc.org">tschroeder@nwrdc.org</a>
Beth Budziszewski	NW AAA	<a href="mailto:beth@nwrdc.org">beth@nwrdc.org</a>
Wayne Kilen	Marshall Co. Veterans Service	<a href="mailto:mcva@wikel.com">mcva@wikel.com</a>
Theresa Sandness	Norman Co. Veterans Service	<a href="mailto:Theresa.anderson@co.norman.mn.us">Theresa.anderson@co.norman.mn.us</a>
Donald Dunn	Roseau Co. Veterans Service	<a href="mailto:don.dunn@co.roseau.mn.us">don.dunn@co.roseau.mn.us</a>
Mark Hoiland	Tri-Valley Transit	<a href="mailto:mark@tvoc.org">mark@tvoc.org</a>

## Planning Process

The Transit Steering Committee expanded its outreach and data gathering capabilities by inviting the County Veterans Service Officers (CVSOs) from all seven counties to participate in this addendum to the plan. The CVSO's were invited to serve as steering committee members to help provide input regarding the transportation needs of veterans. Three of the seven CVSO's from the region participated in the meeting and provided valuable information that all the different agencies appreciated. There was good networking between the different service providers and new ideas were shared between the groups.

The focus of the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan was on four distinct groups of people: individuals with disabilities, low-income individuals, the elderly and minority populations. In the course of developing the plan, it was determined that many of the goals and objectives – and ultimately many of the projects identified – were the same as the goals and objectives for all users of the transit systems in the region, or the general public.

## **Planning Process Continued:**

In June 2012, the Steering Committee met to review the status of local coordination activities that were identified in the plan from 2011 and gather input into how veterans can be better served in the region. Activities that have progressed from the 2011 plan include coordination activities with the ODC and Tri-Valley to coordinate dispatch services, utilizing a travel trainer at Tri-Valley to educate people on how to utilize and ride the bus. Market the transit system, and identified additional funding sources with United Way out of Crookston.

This addendum identifies potential projects for funding in 2013, and discusses how these projects and others already identified in the plan will benefit veterans in the region. Most of the projects identified would serve both the needs of the general public as well as the four groups listed above, the projects listed in the plan would also be of benefit to veterans in the region as well.

Many of the same types of trips that are common for both the general public, as well as the four disadvantaged groups that the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan focused on, are similar to those trips that are needed by veterans. Foremost amongst these are trips for employment, medical appointments, and shopping.

The Steering Committee values the interaction of the different agencies and plans to continue to meet twice a year to keep project ideas moving forward and continue outreach efforts to gain a better understanding of the transportation issues facing the veterans and transit users in the region.

## Work Plan

The Steering Committee identified five projects for advancement from the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan for Region 1. The projects listed below are those for which the Steering Committee felt reasonable progress could be made within the next three years.

Category	Communication Strategies
Project	Marketing Transit Services
Description	Provide weekly radio and TV commercials to educate the public on the availability of the buses in the region.
How this project will be accessible to veterans	The marketing blitz of information will get the information to veterans that may need rides to medical appointments, jobs, shopping, or other travel demands.
Next steps	Bus operators will continue to seek funds to help pay for the advertising.

Category	Mobility Strategies
Project	Expanded Evening & Weekend Service
Description	Establish or expand routes to serve people working evenings, nights and weekends. Also establish or expand routes to serve people accessing educational opportunities.
How this project will be accessible to veterans	Expanded evening and weekend service could provide additional transportation options for returning veterans that are reintegrating back into the workforce. By having transportation available beyond the traditional "8-to-5" hours, this could increase employment opportunities for veterans in need of transportation to employment. In addition, with the advent of urgent-care clinics, some veterans may have medical appointments on evenings or weekends.
Next steps	Tri-Valley Bus will seek opportunities to providing more services.

Category	Mobility Strategies
Project	Enhanced Volunteer Driver Program
Description	Recruit new volunteer drivers to help with the aging volunteer group. It continues to get harder to find volunteers for this program.
How this project will be accessible to veterans	Veterans often have medical appointments that are a long distance from where they reside. Appointments are often outstate in Grand Forks, Fargo, or Grafton. A volunteer driver is better suited to make these long trips.
Next steps	Work with service groups to recruit more volunteers.

Category	Coordinate and consolidate services
Project	Regional transit systems work with either Cities Area Transit in Grand Forks or Tri-Valley.
Description	Coordinate transit services throughout the region with a one call center to provide rides.
How this project will be accessible to veterans	The Transportation Community Living Initiative grant that has been developed for Veterans will make a one call one stop shopping experience for Veterans making it easier to schedule rides.
Next steps	Tri-Valley transit has expressed an interest in this opportunity. Cities Area Transit from Grand Forks is also willing to work with Minnesota providers to make the best use of this resource.

Category	Communication and Organizational Support
Project	Utilization of the web
Description	Update the web for easy access to transit services
How this project will be accessible to veterans	Most veterans have access to the internet and will be able to tap into the webpage to schedule rides. This site will also be a valuable asset to the County Veterans Service Officers.
Next steps	Research funding options to help pay for the development of a user friendly web site that contains all the contact information.

