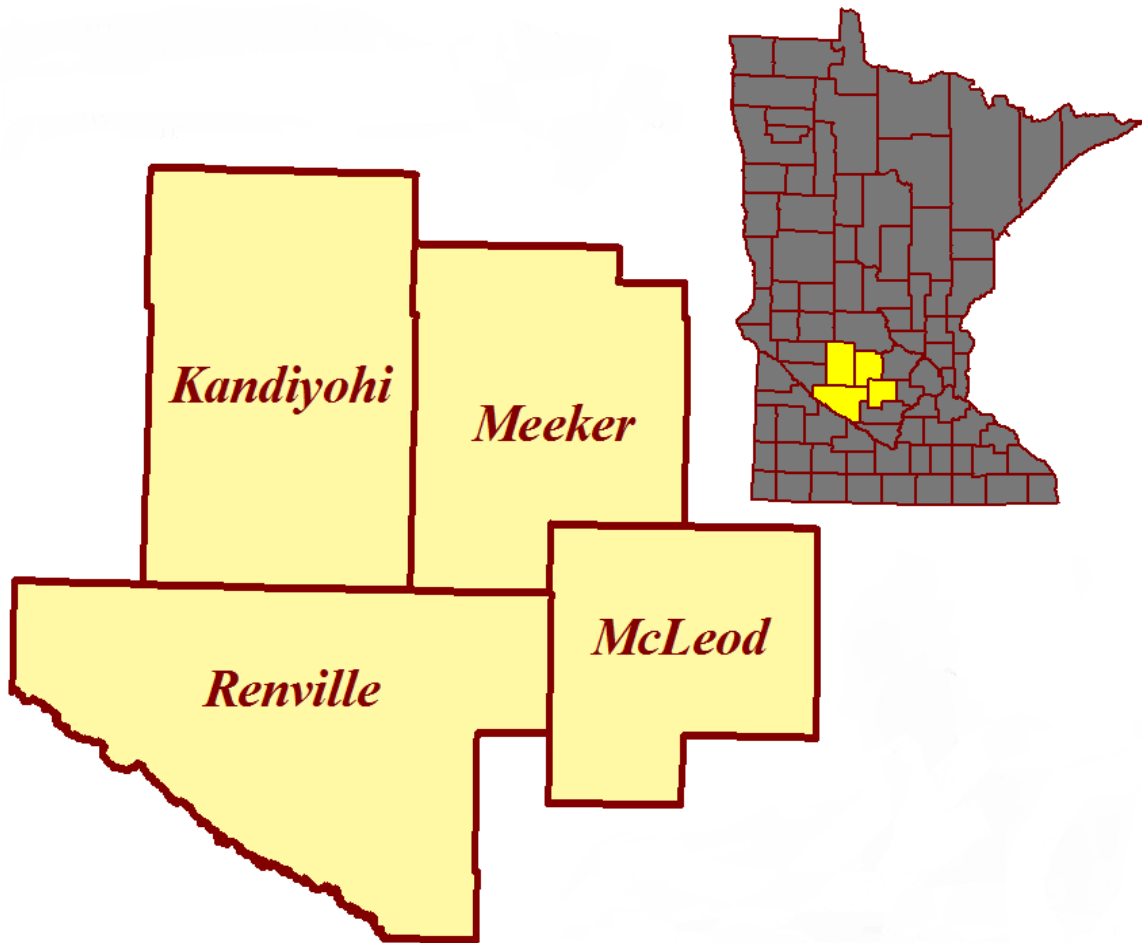


# Region 6E

## 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

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**Adopted December 7, 2011**

Prepared by the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission  
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## Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> -----	<b>2</b>
<b>Introduction</b> -----	<b>3</b>
<b>Planning Process</b> -----	<b>4</b>
<b>Regional Background</b> -----	<b>7</b>
<b>Needs Assessment</b> -----	<b>11</b>
<b>Strategy and Project Identification</b> -----	<b>22</b>
<b>Adoption and Approval of Plan</b> -----	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendix A – Public Workshop Participants</b> -----	<b>30</b>
<b>Appendix B – Maps: Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region 6E</b> -----	<b>31</b>
<b>Appendix C – Transportation Provider Directory</b> -----	<b>37</b>
<b>Appendix D – Project Analysis: Effort versus Impact Assessment</b> -----	<b>41</b>

## **Executive Summary**

The Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Transit contracted the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (MMDC – Region 6E) to prepare a plan that creates a comprehensive strategy to improve the coordination and cooperation of transportation providers in the Region and to overcome identified barriers that cause gaps in access to services. This Plan is one of the requirements set forth within the federal bill reauthorizing the surface transportation act, called SAFETEA-LU. The Plan is necessary before any organization within the Region can apply and receive funding from the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (Section 5310).

To assist with the development of the plan, a Steering Committee was formed consisting of representatives of public, private, non-profit transportation services, human services providers, and the general public. Committee members are listed in Table 1 (page 5).

The Plan includes a section providing background information on Region 6E, a section describing the process used to develop this Plan, a needs assessment on transit issues, and a section listing the specific strategies and projects identified throughout the planning process. The specific implementation projects can be grouped under one of the following three categories:

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

- Example: This Plan identifies creating Transportation Ambassadors (“Bus Buddies”) to assist riders with understanding how best to use local transportation options.

### ***2. Mobility Strategies***

- Example: This Plan identifies developing new programs such as Smart Ride to assist with transportation services outside of normal transit operating hours.

### ***3. Communication, Training, and Organizational Support***

- Example: This Plan identifies creating a Regional Forum for transportation/transit stakeholders.

## **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 Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan and will assist stakeholders as they determine ways to coordinate transit services in Region 6E. The Region 6E 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan documents technical analysis that evaluates existing transportation services in Region 6E 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 6E.

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 6E. 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 6E.

## **Planning Process**

One goal of the Region 6E 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan is to identify coordination strategies that will improve transportation providers' 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 6E. An overview of the Plan's key elements is summarized below:

### ***Needs Assessment***

The needs assessment establishes baseline conditions in Region 6E 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; and
- Mapping transit-dependent demographic groups, existing transit services, and key regional destinations; and
- Developing an inventory of public, private, and non-profit transportation provider capabilities and resources.

### ***Public Outreach***

Public outreach activities informed the strategies and projects identified in this plan. Public outreach occurred during two steering committee meetings held on April 19, 2011, and June 27, 2011, and a public workshop held on May 23, 2011.

The Steering Committee closely guided the decision-making process. Steering Committee duties also included:

- Evaluating strategies and assessing outcomes of projects identified in 2006 Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan; and
- Developing project ideas and identifying priority strategies as part of the public workshop; and
- 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. The following people served on Region 6E's Steering Committee:

**Table 1: Region 6E Steering Committee Membership**

Donna Anderson	Meeker County Transit
Kate Selseth*	Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Debi Brandt*	Heartland Community Action Agency – Region 6E
Clark Gustafson	Meeker County Family Services
Jerry Brustuen*	Renville County Human Services
Rachel Schneiderman	Renville County Heartland Express
Gary Ludwig	Trailblazer Transit – McLeod & Sibley Counties
Bev Herfindahl*	MnDOT Transit District 8
Tiffany Collins	Kandiyohi Area Transit
Sue Leal	Kandiyohi County Family Services
Cathy Baumgartner*	Central Minnesota Job Training Service
Cindy Wilkens	Bethesda Day Break
Gary Sprynczynatyk	McLeod County Human Services
Darlene Schroeder	Minnesota Department of Human Services
Matthew Johnson	Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
Donn Winckler*	Mid-Minnesota Development Commission

***\*2006 Steering Committee Member***

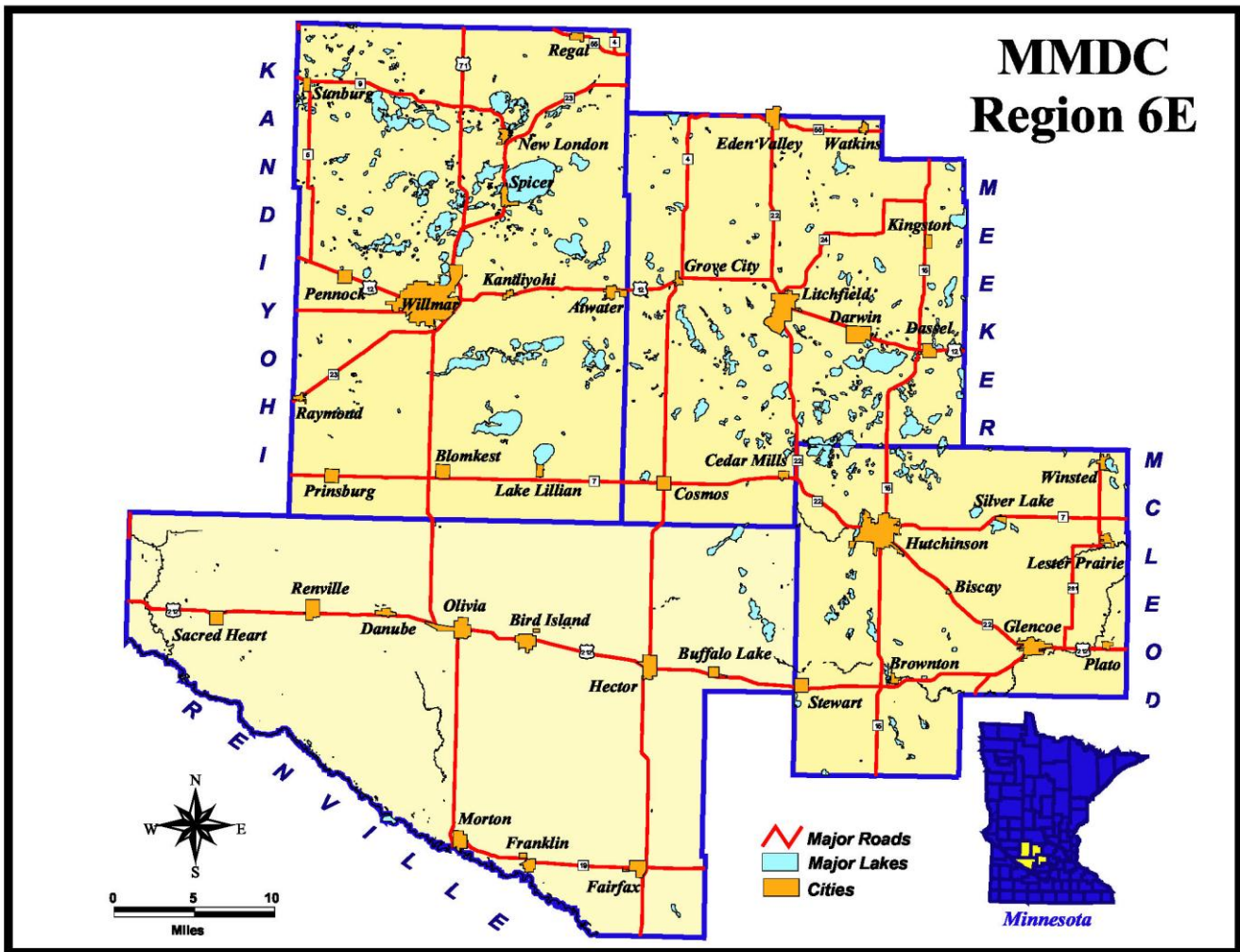
### ***Strategy Identification and Plan Adoption***

In addition to the Steering Committee, the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission hosted a public workshop on May 23, 2011, to incorporate input from all interested stakeholders. A total of 24 people attended the workshop (attendees are listed in Appendix A). During 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 included in the final plan. A draft plan was distributed to stakeholders for public comment from November 3, 2011, to a public meeting held December 7, 2011. This Plan was adopted by the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission on December 7, 2011.

## Regional Background

The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission (Region 6E) includes Kandiyohi, Meeker, McLeod, and Renville Counties in West-Central Minnesota. The Region includes 40 cities with Willmar (Kandiyohi), Litchfield (Meeker), Hutchinson (McLeod), Glencoe (McLeod), and Olivia (Renville) being the five largest communities. Willmar is noted as being the largest community in Minnesota currently not assessable by a four-lane highway. Map 1A: MMDC Region 6E below shows the location within the State and displays the Region's 40 municipalities.

Map 1: MMDC Region 6E



For more information, visit [www.mmrdc.org](http://www.mmrdc.org)



Agricultural land use dominates most of the Region, although there is a vast amount of lakeshore development throughout the northern part of the Region. The larger communities have also experienced fairly steady commercial and industrial growth, primarily benefiting from being located close to both the St. Cloud and Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan areas.

### ***Transportation and Demographics***

To better understand the relationship between regional demographics, transit options, and key destinations, a series of maps was created depicting these elements in the Region.

The following maps are included in Appendix B:

- ❖ **Map 6E-1** shows Region 6E's *Population Density* based upon the 2000 Census, along with Key Destinations and scheduled/normal Transit Routes.
- ❖ **Map 6E-2** shows Region 6E's *Density of Households in Poverty* based upon the 2000 Census, along with Key Destinations and scheduled/normal Transit Routes.
- ❖ **Map 6E-3** shows Region 6E's *Density of Minority Populations* based upon the 2000 Census, along with Key Destinations and scheduled/normal Transit Routes.
- ❖ **Map 6E-4** shows Region 6E's *Density of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) Populations* based upon the 2000 Census, along with Key Destinations and scheduled/normal Transit Routes.
- ❖ **Map 6E-5** shows Region 6E's *Density of Persons Age 65 and Older* based upon the 2000 Census, along with Key Destinations and scheduled/normal Transit Routes.
- ❖ **Map 6E-6** shows Region 6E's *Density of Zero Vehicle Households* based upon the 2000 Census, along with Key Destinations and scheduled/normal Transit Routes.

A quick examination of each of the six maps found in Appendix B reveals that each map is remarkably similar, with only noticeable density variations found in the Region's five major cities (Willmar, Hutchinson, Litchfield, Glencoe, and Olivia). Table 2 shows the Region's overall 2010 population at 117,920. In addition, Table 2 shows each of the County's 2035 population projection based upon information provided by the Minnesota State Demographer's Office.

**Table 2: Region 6E 2010 Population & 2035 Projections<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Area</b>	<b>2010 Population</b>	<b>2035 Projection</b>	<b>Population Gain</b>	<b>Percent Growth</b>
<b>Kandiyohi</b>	42,239	44,180	1,941	5
<b>Meeker</b>	23,300	27,510	4,210	18
<b>McLeod</b>	36,651	45,610	8,989	25
<b>Renville</b>	15,730	17,660	1,930	12
<b>Region 6E</b>	117,920	134,990	17,070	14
<b>Minnesota</b>	5,303,925	6,446,270	1,142,345	22

Table 2 highlights that Region 6E’s population is expected to continue growing by 2035 by an estimated increase of just over 17,000 people, or at a rate of 14 percent (14%). The two largest projected increases come from McLeod (25%) and Meeker (18%) Counties, largely due to their close proximity to the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area. It is worth noting in Table 2 that, although Kandiyohi County’s projected growth rate is only 5 percent (5%), Kandiyohi County has far outpaced the other three counties in growth rates over the last 40 years. In addition, Renville County is projected to gain approximately 12 percent (12%) new residents by 2035, despite the fact they have consistently lost population over the last 40 years.

Table 3 shows Region 6E’s 2010 population and 2035 projected population by age category. This information helps to highlight the national trend of our aging population. According to Table 3, Region 6E’s population aged 65 and older will nearly double from 19,315 in 2010, to approximately 34,600 people by 2035. In addition, notice the percentage of people aged 65 and older grows substantially in each of Region 6E’s four counties. These predictions are especially important to this Plan since the increase in senior population represents the largest potential increase of public transit users over the next 25 years.

<sup>1</sup> Information based on the 2010 Census as provided by the Minnesota State Demographer

**Table 3: Region 6E 2010 Population by Age Category and  
Projected 2035 Population<sup>2</sup> Age 65+**

<b>Area/Year Population</b>	<b>2010 0-17</b>	<b>2010 18-24</b>	<b>2010 25-44</b>	<b>2010 45-64</b>	<b>2010 65+</b>	<b>2035 65+</b>	<b>2035 Total</b>
Kandiyohi 42,239	10,157 (24%)	4,027 (10%)	9,553 (23%)	11,670 (28%)	<b>6,832 (16%)</b>	<b>11,970 (27%)</b>	44,180
Meeker 23,300	5,920 (25%)	1,553 (7%)	5,252 (23%)	6,740 (29%)	<b>3,835 (16%)</b>	<b>6,790 (25%)</b>	27,510
McLeod 36,651	9,265 (25%)	2,708 (7%)	9,275 (25%)	9,800 (27%)	<b>5,603 (15%)</b>	<b>11,130 (24%)</b>	45,610
Renville 15,730	3,656 (23%)	1,015 (6%)	3,349 (21%)	4,665 (30%)	<b>3,045 (19%)</b>	<b>4,710 (27%)</b>	17,660
Region 6E 117,920	28,998 (25%)	9,303 (8%)	27,429 (23%)	32,875 (28%)	<b>19,315 (16%)</b>	<b>34,600 (26%)</b>	134,960
Minnesota 5,303,925	1,284,063 (24%)	502,799 (10%)	1,396,680 (26%)	1,437,262 (27%)	<b>683,121 (13%)</b>	<b>1,399,960 (22%)</b>	6,446,270

<sup>2</sup> Information provided by the Minnesota State Demographer

## Needs Assessment

### *Outcomes since the 2006 Public-Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan*

Another component of the needs assessment is an analysis of the 2006 Public-Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan. That 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, projects, and an assessment of their outcomes is summarized.

*Strategy 1: Targeted application for funds.*

*Plan Actions: Increase Availability of Operating Funds.*

#### **2006 Plan Assessment: High Activity**

- Contact was made with various legislators, state, counties, and cities for local funding & at this point has made a minimal difference.
- MVST funding was dedicated to transportation with a 60/40 split between Highway and Transit.
- Education of legislator to increase transit funding in rural Minnesota.
- Two transit systems were awarded JARC grant dollars to provide work route transportation.
- Local legislative forums have been held in the region to inform legislators the needs for transit funding in greater Minnesota.
- The Transportation Amendment was passed.
- Human services directors from the four counties meet each Spring with local legislators.

- Kandiyohi Area Transit applied for and received an additional transit vehicle for the elderly and disabled through the 5310 program.
- Kandiyohi Area Transit applied for and received Federal JARC Transportation funding for an additional transit vehicle and operational support for a new work route.
- Started the groundwork for partnerships between transit and local adult day services and day treatment facilities.
- Created KAT Job Access Route.
- KAT Carriage for Elderly and Disabled Coordinated Group transportation.

***Continuing Needs:*** Work needs to continue with legislators to increase needed programs and the availability of funding.

***Strategy 2:*** Promote utilization of consumer directed funding for families.

***Plan Actions:*** Relax rules for consumer utilization of Minnesota Department of Human Services funding, and promote utilization of flexible funds for riders.

***2006 Plan Assessment:*** **Moderate Activity**

- This is still a difficult process, the Department of Human Services is still questioning the cost of transportation of their clients in rural areas where trips are long and may include deadhead miles.
- All four County Human Services agencies with direction from DHS have developed and made available Consumer Directed Community Support (CDCS) services to seniors.
- MA Access transportation & STS transportation.

- As budgets have declined, it seems as though the funds and rules for transportation have become more rigid and less flexible to the user.

***Continuing Needs:*** Work needs to continue with legislators to change rules to meet the needs of local agencies and citizens, including the need to put decision making for use of funds at the consumer level.

***Strategy 3:*** *Promote, where practical, the easing or elimination of transportation funding rules that inhibit coordination and cooperation.*

***Plan Actions:***

- Inform state and federal departments that provide funding for transportation about barriers their rules create in trying to better serve the public.
- Encourage state and federal departments to make changes in their internal rules that would allow better coordination opportunities.
- When rule changes are made, help inform organizations that provide transportation services about these changes, and how such changes may open the way for them to look at coordination opportunities.

***2006 Plan Assessment: Moderate Activity***

- Begin discussion with the Department of Commerce, the Department of Human Services, and others to provide education regarding barriers to coordination.
- Meetings were held but no conclusive action has been achieved to date.
- Testified at the capital about the positive impact of investing in RURAL transit.
- Attended workshops with MnDOT to discuss coordination and funding.

- Communicated with AAA contacts how administratively cumbersome III-B grants have become with the understanding it would be passed on to the Federal legislators and officials.

***Continuing Needs:*** Proper listing of all e-mail addresses, websites, and phone numbers are still needed. The promotion of relaxing the rules for transportation funding has begun, but more work needs to be continued in this area.

***Strategy 4:*** *Increase education, awareness and promotion of public transportation.*

***Plan Actions:***

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

***2006 Plan Assessment: Moderate Activity***

- **Every action item has been implemented to some degree on a regular basis**
- Marketing of transit by the transit systems continues
- Need to participate in open houses for schools
- It would be helpful to provide first time riders with a volunteer and/or allow a guest/parent to ride with new/young riders
- Quarterly meetings are held with the district project manager and transit systems to share information
- A language assistance plan has been completed by each transit system to encourage minorities to use public transit
- A buddy system was initiated in some of the transit systems to help 1<sup>st</sup> time transit users to feel more comfortable.
- Attended Senior Expos
- Put public transit buses in parades.
- Provided How to Use Transit Workshops.
- Coordinated with Faith in Action.
- Various transit web pages were constructed and maintained.
- Developed and maintained relationships with the local media.
- Attended coordination seminars
- Provided shuttle service for state baseball championship games.



- Advertising continues in local newspapers, radio stations, and public bulletin areas. Presentations at local nursing homes, residential providers, apartment complexes, fairs, and community gatherings.
- Promote transportation for new riders to other local social service agencies.
- Coordination between school districts and the public transit system began, however, as other budgets decreased so did the programs such as after school programs.

*Strategy 5: Meet the needs of transportation before 7am and after 5pm Monday through Friday and additionally during Weekends. Currently there is limited transportation available at these times and days.*

***Plan Actions:***

- Provide transportation for medical appointments, shopping, second, and/or third shift workers.
- Keep marketing materials easy to understand-brochures.
- Provide education regarding schedules. Be sensitive to public perception. regarding over-lapping of two buses at same location for two people.
- Coordinate transportation between counties to meet consumer needs.
- Provide additional staff, additional vehicles (more money).
- Promote increase in inter-agency coordination of scheduling
- Look for creative public and private partnerships to expand needed service.
- Maximize use of technology to achieve electronic scheduling where appropriate.

- Link websites between agencies, such as city websites, agency websites, and bus shelters.
- Provide bus schedules with list of scheduled stops
  - Expansion available
  - Most transit providers report that they currently are meeting capacity and would face concerns regarding safety issues
- Support expansion of the volunteer and dial-a-ride programs
- Encourage agency networking. A semi-annual schedule was suggested at the workshop; and the method and frequency of networking between agencies is limited only by technology. The purpose of the communications was to coordinate bus scheduling (routes, schedules, needs, etc.).

***2006 Plan Assessment: High Activity***

- Websites were linked for better rider/user access
- Technology improvements were made. Increased technology helps transit become more efficient when scheduling trips for both bus and volunteer driver programs
- Technology is being used in three of the four transit systems in Region 6E, all have computers but others have software to help with bus location, dispatching and record keeping of information.
- Better coordination between transit providers was made...but more can be accomplished
- Created new transit service to complement and coordinate with public transit system.

- Trailblazer created SMART RIDE program, which includes bus, minivan, and volunteer driver service. Service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week as long as there is a driver willing and able to work or volunteer.
- KAT has added its Job Access Route from 5:30am-8:15am weekdays, to enhance all routes before 7:00am. More individuals are able to use the transportation available for work, medical, etc.
- KAT started an evening taxi program for residents in the City of Willmar and within 10 miles by using a handicapped accessible vehicle Monday through Friday for 4 hours each night. The route was discontinued in 2010 due to the lack of use. During that time there was not a local taxi provider available. Currently, there is a local taxi provider available to provide evening transportation for individuals.
- KAT evening taxi program and the KAT JARC Program were created

*Strategy 6: Equip transit providers with flexibility in service provision in order to the needs of long distance, isolated, varied age population base.*

***Plan Actions:***

- Providers require smaller handicapped accessible vehicles in order to better serve specialized populations
  - One option for purchase is an electric lift that converts a regular van into wheelchair accessible available from a company from North Dakota for non-public transit provider
- Expand coordination of church based groups such as Common Cup in McLeod County
- Expand resources available to Rideshare Programs
- Provide resources available to agencies to expand car loan/donated car programs.

- Partner with technical college to borrow auto bay to repair donated automobiles.
- Increase availability of transportation for all populations living in rural/deep
  - For shopping or errand needs (store- to-store)
  - For increased transportation pick-up service (door-to-door)

***2006 Plan Assessment: Moderate Activity***

- More flexible demand response was accomplished
- Special straps were purchased to accommodate transporting scooters and other mobility devices
- Trailblazer currently has a van and a Sprinter vehicle.
- Renville has a Turtle Bus, which is more compact than the Class 400 buses.
- Created new transit service to complement and coordinate with public transit system.
- Hours of service for public transit have increased, creating more transit options for individuals living in rural areas.

***Summary of Region 6E's Strengths and Weaknesses***

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 6E. Combined with the plan's technical findings, these strengths and weaknesses form the basis for identifying strategies to address transportation coordination in this region.

### ***Strengths***

- The variety of transportation options seems to be fitting the needs of the Region.
- The public-private cooperation has improved dramatically over the years.
- There are a variety of access options, including the Dial-A-Ride Program, which has greatly improved overall service.
- There seems to be very good communication between providers and stakeholders.
  
- People of all ages and disabilities are able to use the available services.
- User group contracts have improved transportation service for nursing homes and other specialized groups.
- Board members have a wide-variety of backgrounds, which has improved the overall understanding of transportation needs.
- Overall, transportation options continue to be affordable to the consumers.
- The car donation program has greatly assisted in keeping down operation costs.

### ***Weaknesses***

- The primary weakness is that funding is not adequate. This includes the lack of money for replacement vehicles, technology, marketing, operations, and staff.
- No-load miles have greatly reduced the quality of the volunteer driver program. As a result, volunteer drivers have become increasingly scarce.
- There still remain both underserved populations and geographic areas. In addition, political boundaries often impair and limit consumer needs.
- There still remains a large void in the knowledge base of residents on transportation options.
- Communication and interagency coordination still needs to improve among transportation stakeholders.

- Government mandates continue to present limitations on being innovative and creates unnecessary costs.
- Rules greatly need updating, especially surrounding provider rate inequities (new vs. existing provider fees).
- Lack of Special Transportation Services (STS) and tough to establish.
- Still need to better coordinate with Veteran Services.
- Gas prices and other costs continue to outpace revenues.
- Cultural differences need to be better addressed.
- Technology improvements are expensive and hard to implement.

## Strategy and Project Identification

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 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.

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 D and is explained below: The strategies and projects listed below represent those ideas the steering committee prioritized as having the most potential to improve transit coordination in Region 6E.

### ~ Easy To Do Projects with Major Improvement ~

- 1. Advertise and Promote** the Region’s transportation options including all forms of traditional media (i.e., newspaper and radio) and innovative forms of direct marketing (i.e., presentations to businesses, senior centers, etc.).

***Clients Served:*** All people and businesses using transportation services

***Communities Served:*** Region 6E and Sibley County

***Agency Responsible:*** Transportation Providers

***Strategy Addressed:*** Educate people of transportation options

- 2. Centralized Call Center/Number** to share trip dispatch information under a single entity within a single organization either Region or Statewide. The central, statewide number would then coordinate rides with the various transportation providers.

***Clients Served:*** All people using transportation services

***Communities Served:*** Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County

***Agency Responsible:*** Minnesota Department of Transportation

***Strategy Addressed:*** Coordinate Dispatch & Consolidate Business Functions

- 3. Maintaining the Vehicles** and better resources to educate the Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) on transportation issues.

*Clients Served:* Transportation stakeholders and Region 6E's ATP  
*Communities Served:* Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Minnesota Department of Transportation  
*Strategy Addressed:* Maintain existing vehicle fleet

- 4. Establish Transportation Ambassadors (Bus Buddies)** to assist riders with understanding how to best use local transportation options.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Transportation providers  
*Strategy Addressed:* Offer customer travel training

- 5. Merge Day Training & Habilitation Transportation with Transit.** One of the most logical expansions of public transit is to organize and provide transportation for the various Day Training and Habilitation services throughout the Region.

*Clients Served:* All Day Training & Habilitation participants  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Transportation providers  
*Strategy Addressed:* Contract between agencies

- 6. Regional Forum for Transportation/Transit Stakeholders.** This would be accomplished by identifying an organization to organize and facilitate this type of annual or semi-annual meetings, using the existing steering committee members.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* MnDOT and/or Mid-Minnesota Development Commission  
*Strategy Addressed:* Educate regional professionals of transportation options



~ **Difficult To Do Projects with Major Improvement** ~

7. **Develop new programs such as SMART Ride.** Due to restrictions in Public Transit Providers service plans, programs such as SMART (Sibley McLeod Auxiliary Regional Transit) Ride have been developed to provide transit services to riders who would not be served by traditional transit options. This allows riders to go places where and/or at times when Public Transit options are not available.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services

*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County

*Agency Responsible:* Transportation providers

*Strategy Addressed:* Improve service convenience

8. **Smart Card Technology** refers to issuing a credit or driver license type identification card that is unique to each transportation user. Up-to-date information on the user and their program eligibilities would be available upon scanning or typing in the person's identification number. The primary reason this project would be difficult, it that it represents an extraordinarily commitment on the various agencies involved with funding transportation services, to have current up-to-date information on all of the various clients and their corresponding program eligibilities.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services

*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County

*Agency Responsible:* Minnesota Department of Transportation

*Strategy Addressed:* Implement tools that support data management

9. **Better Dispatch/Support Technology.** This may include hiring a mobility manager but does for sure include continuously making all necessary improvements to dispatch.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services

*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County

*Agency Responsible:* Minnesota Department of Transportation

*Strategy Addressed:* Coordinate Dispatch

- 10. Statewide Committee to examine rules & regulations,** which would include both elected and non-political members.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Minnesota State Legislature  
*Strategy Addressed:* Educate public of transportation options

- 11. Cover no-load volunteer driver miles.** Currently drivers are not reimbursed for trips/millage traveled without a recipient in the vehicle (i.e., no load miles). There are a variety of logical situations when this occurs, and the volunteer drivers should be reimbursed for actual miles driven.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Minnesota Department of Human Services  
*Strategy Addressed:* Establish/Enhance volunteer driver programs

- 12. Expand the Volunteer Driver Program.** Many gaps in transportation services are currently filled by Volunteer Driver Programs. These individuals use their own vehicle to transport individuals primarily when traditional transportation options are not available. As additional investments in public transit are made, the volunteer driver may someday become obsolete. Until public transit is fully operational to meet all transportation needs, however, the Volunteer Driver Program will continue to play an important role in providing transportation options.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Transportation Providers  
*Strategy Addressed:* Establish/Enhance Volunteer Driver Programs

**13. Expand service areas for counties.** This would include service both within and outside of Region 6E.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Transportation Providers  
*Strategy Addressed:* Improve Service Convenience

**~ Easy To Do Projects with Minor Improvement ~**

**14. Improve convenience, safety, and comfort at bus stops.** Improvements made with the common pick-up and drop off locations. Coordinate efforts with the business community.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* County Economic Development Authorities  
*Strategy Addressed:* Improve access to transit stops

**15. Web coordination with providers for users.**

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Transportation providers  
*Strategy Addressed:* Educate public of transportation options

**16. Better Centralized Information.** Create and maintain a reliable centralized list of regional transportation services.

*Clients Served:* All people using transportation services  
*Communities Served:* Statewide or Region 6E and Sibley County  
*Agency Responsible:* Minnesota Department of Transportation  
*Strategy Addressed:* Centralized Information

### ***Other Strategies***

The following other strategies were discussed at some point during the planning process but did not have any specific project ideas attached to them:

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

- Allow Joint Purchasing – Coordinating purchasing such as vehicle maintenance, insurance, driver training and substance abuse testing.
- Outsource Business Functions – Contract with external agencies for business services such as accounting, billing, or dispatching.
- Coordinate Volunteer Driver Training – Merge volunteer driver training across programs.
- Coordinate Agency Schedules – Coordinate connections between transit services.

#### ***Mobility Strategies***

- Establish/Enhance Assisted Transportation Programs – Train volunteers to help riders who are unable to use transit services without personal assistance
- Establish/Expand Taxi Subsidy Programs – Provide vouchers to partially or completely pay for taxi services

#### ***Communication, Training, and Organizational Support***

- Provide Technical Training for Coordination Staff – Obtain technical training on background skills needed to implement coordination strategies.

### *Existing 2006 Plan Strategies and Implementation*

This Plan represents an update to Region 6E's 2006 Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan. The following 2006 action items are hereby incorporated into the 2011 Plan:

- Targeted application for funds – Transit providers are facing deficits in funding operational costs of programs.
- Promote utilization of consumer directed funding for families – This would increase the opportunities to use funds available to families for more services, such as getting to work, attending children's school functions, and keeping appointments.
- Promote the easing or elimination of transportation funding rules that inhibit coordination and cooperation.
- Meet the needs of transportation options outside of traditional operating hours.
- Equip transit providers with flexibility in service provision.

## **Adoption and Approval of Plan**

The draft Region 6E 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan began its public review period on November 14, 2011, and ended during the Mid-Minnesota Development Commission's public meeting held on the Plan on December 7, 2011 (7:00 p.m. in the Meeker County Courthouse).

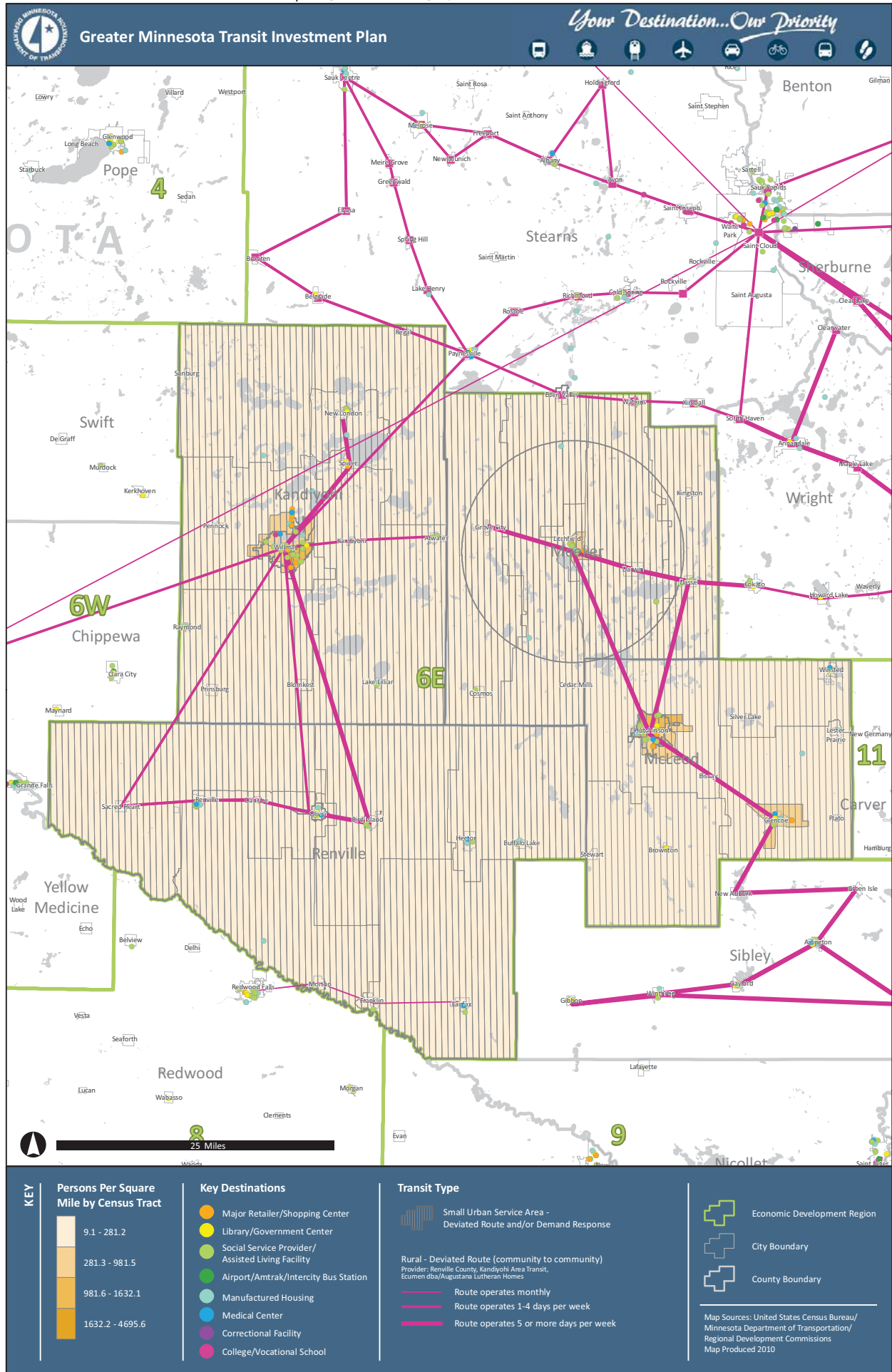
An electronic version of the draft Plan was posted on MMDC's website during the public review and public press releases were sent to the following newspaper and radio stations:

- ✓ HUBIN PUBLISHING CO INC ~ HECTOR MN
- ✓ HUTCHINSON LEADER ~ HUTCHINSON MN
- ✓ REDWOOD FALLS GAZETTE ~ REDWOOD FALLS MN
- ✓ SILVER LAKE LEADER ~ SILVER LAKE MN
- ✓ INDEPENDENT REVIEW ~ LITCHFIELD MN
- ✓ EDEN VALLEY WATKINS JOURNAL PATRIOT ~ EDEN VALLEY MN
- ✓ THE JOURNAL ~ NEW ULM MN
- ✓ GLENCOE ENTERPRISE ~ GLENCOE MN
- ✓ RENVILLE COUNTY STAR FARMER ~ RENVILLE MN
- ✓ MCLEOD COUNTY CHRONICLE ~ GLENCOE MN
- ✓ KNUJ RADIO STATION ~ NEW ULM MN
- ✓ KLGR RADIO STATION ~ REDWOOD FALLS MN
- ✓ KWLM KQIC RADIO STATION ~ WILLMAR MN
- ✓ KRSW RADIO STATION ~ WORTHINGTON MN
- ✓ KYRS RADIO STATION ~ WILLMAR MN
- ✓ HERALD JOURNAL ~ WINSTED MN
- ✓ WEST CENTRAL TRIBUNE ~ WILLMAR MN
- ✓ RAYMOND PRINSBURG NEWS ~ RAYMOND MN
- ✓ FAIRFAX STANDARD-GAZETTE ~ FAIRFAX MN
- ✓ KDUZ KKJR RADIO STATION ~ HUTCHINSON MN
- ✓ KDJS RADIO STATION ~ WILLMAR MN
- ✓ KLFD RADIO STATION ~ LITCHFIELD MN 55355

## Appendix A- Public Workshop Participants

May 23, 2011 ~ Willmar Public Library

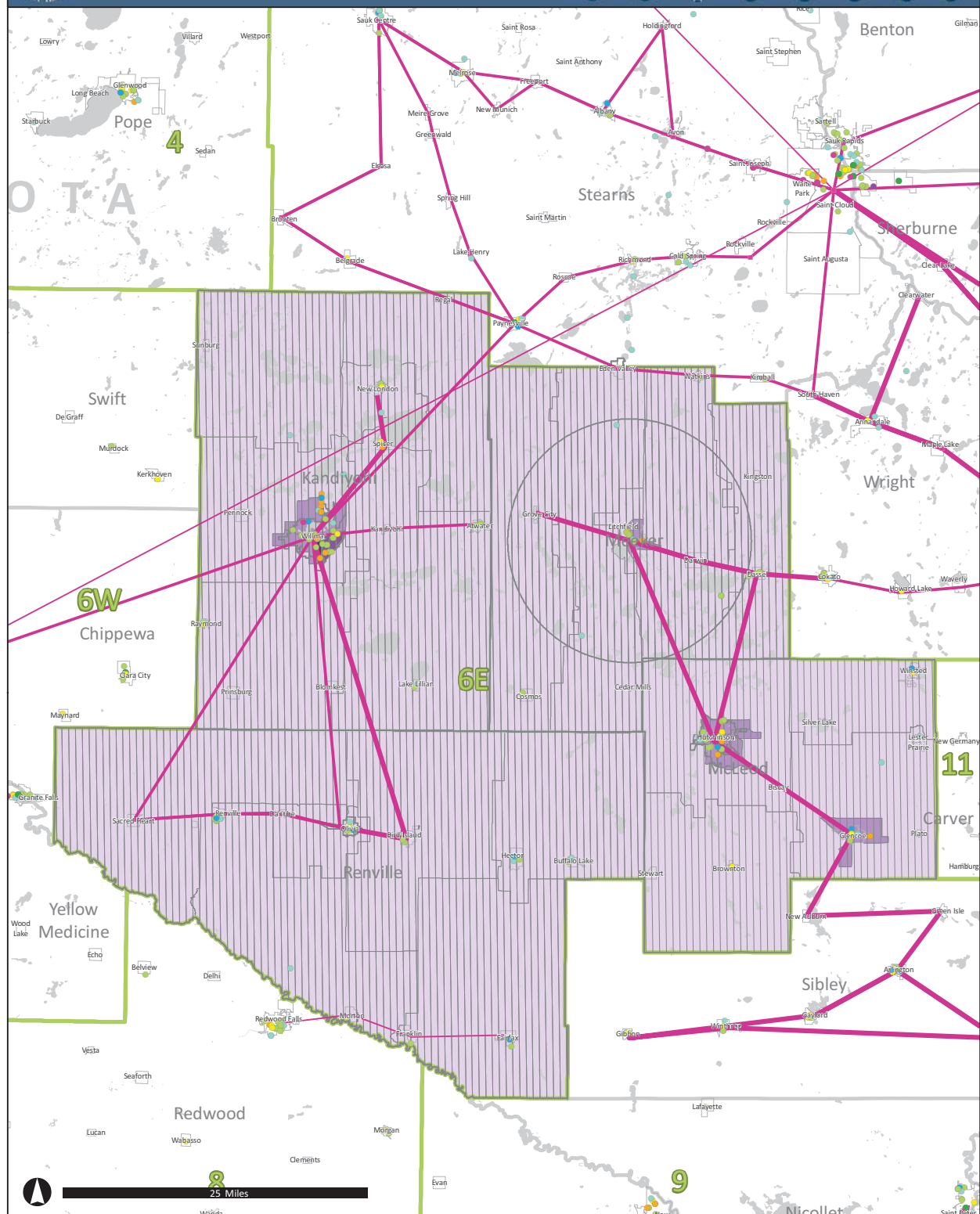
<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
Clark Gustafson	Meeker County Social Services
Amy Wilde	Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
John Stahl	Renville County Board of Commissioners
Bev Werder	Compassionate Care/Cottage
Charly Leuze	West Central Integration Collaborative
Donn Winckler	Mid-Minnesota Development Commission
Becky Alper	Minnesota Department of Transportation
Donna Anderson	Meeker County Public Transit
Rachel Schneiderman	Renville County Public Transit
Tiffany Collins	Kandiyohi Area Transit (KAT)
Mike Kubesh	Willmar Bus Service
Dean Shuck	Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners
Darlene Schroeder	Minnesota Department of Human Services – Aging
Cindy Wilkens	Bethesda Daybreak
Sue Leal	Kandiyohi County Family Services
DuWayne Underthun	Mid-Minnesota Development Commission Board
Jim Schafer	Renville County Disabled Citizen
Mike Schadauer	Minnesota Department of Transportation – Transit
Ron Kutzke	Meeker County Board of Commissioners
Debi Brandt	Heartland Community Action Agency
Kenneth Anderson	School Board Member
Sheri Nordmeyer	Willmar Community Senior Network
Gary Ludwig	Trailblazer Transit (McLeod & Sibley Counties)
Matthew Johnson	Mid-Minnesota Development Commission





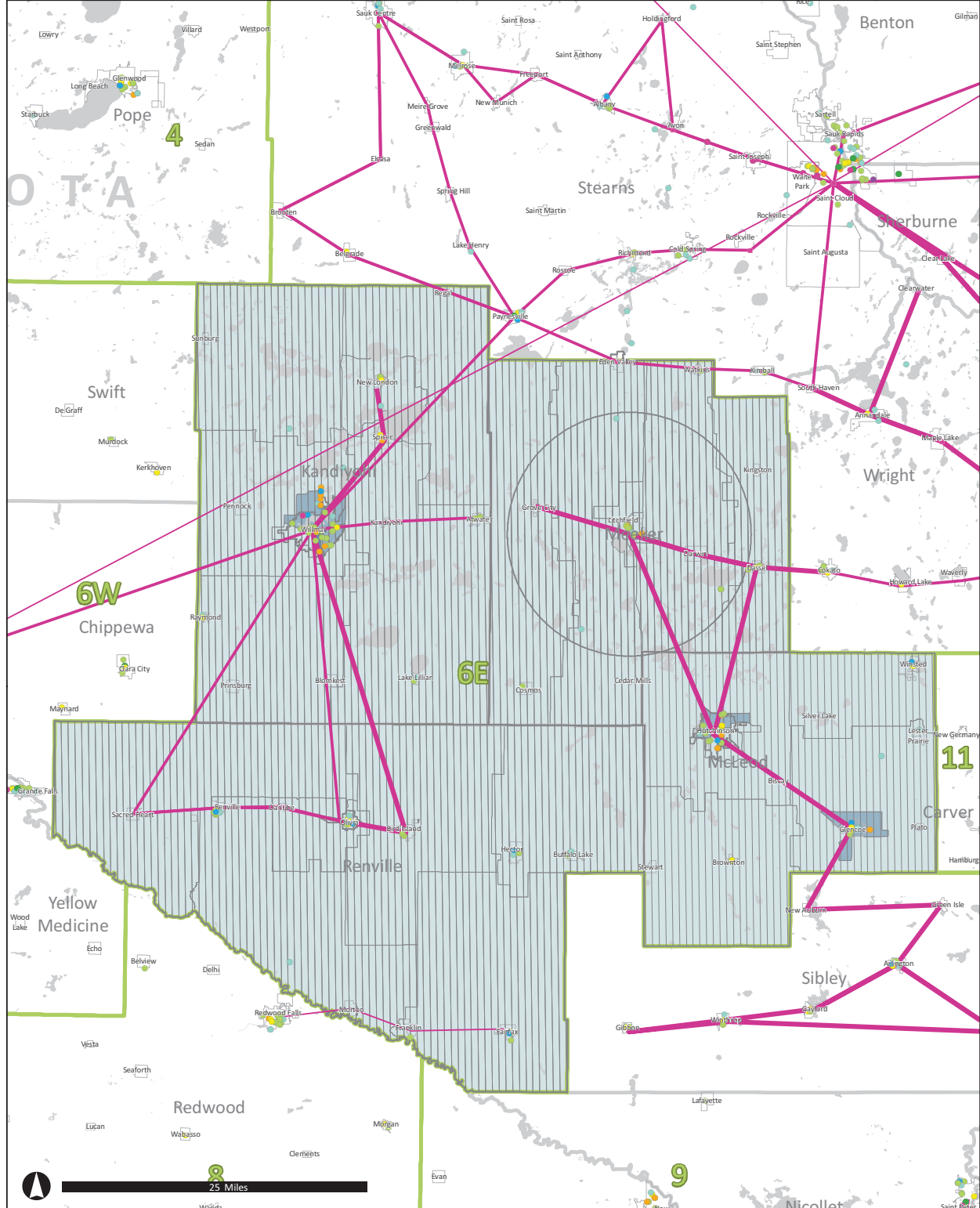
Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan

Your Destination...Our Priority



<b>KEY</b> Households in Poverty Per Square Mile by Census Tract 0.6 - 25.4 25.5 - 101.8 101.9 - 195.1 195.2 - 641.4	<b>Key Destinations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major Retailer/Shopping Center</li> <li>Library/Government Center</li> <li>Social Service Provider/ Assisted Living Facility</li> <li>Airport/Amtrak/Intercity Bus Station</li> <li>Manufactured Housing</li> <li>Medical Center</li> <li>Correctional Facility</li> <li>College/Vocational School</li> </ul>	<b>Transit Type</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small Urban Service Area - Deviated Route and/or Demand Response</li> </ul> Rural - Deviated Route (community to community) Provider: Renville County/ Kandiyohi Area Transit/ Ecumenical/Augustana Lutheran Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Development Region</li> <li>City Boundary</li> <li>County Boundary</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Route operates monthly</li> <li>Route operates 1-4 days per week</li> <li>Route operates 5 or more days per week</li> </ul>	Map Sources: United States Census Bureau/ Minnesota Department of Transportation/ Regional Development Commissions Map Produced 2010	



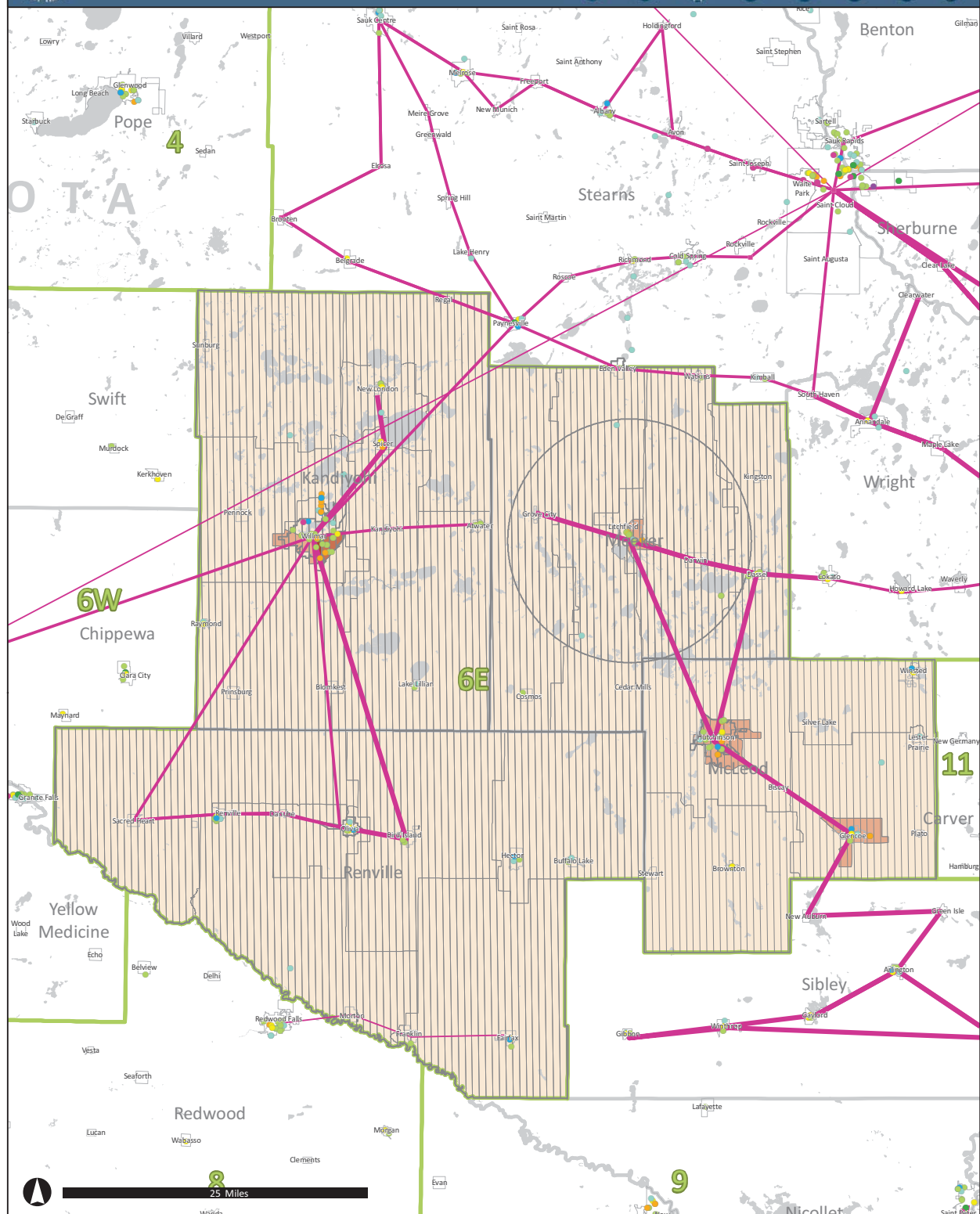


KEY	LEP Population Per Square Mile by Census Tract	Key Destinations	Transit Type	Economic Development Region
	0.1 - 12.6	Major Retailer/Shopping Center	Small Urban Service Area - Deviated Route and/or Demand Response	
	12.7 - 66.4	Library/Government Center	Rural - Deviated Route (community to community) <small>Provider: Renville County, Kandiyohi Area Transit, Ecumen dba/Augustana Lutheran Homes</small>	City Boundary
	66.5 - 171.5	Social Service Provider/ Assisted Living Facility	Route operates monthly	County Boundary
	171.6 - 393.6	Airport/Amtrak/Intercity Bus Station	Route operates 1-4 days per week	
		Manufactured Housing	Route operates 5 or more days per week	
		Medical Center		
		Correctional Facility		
		College/Vocational School		

Map Sources: United States Census Bureau/ Minnesota Department of Transportation/ Regional Development Commissions  
Map Produced 2010

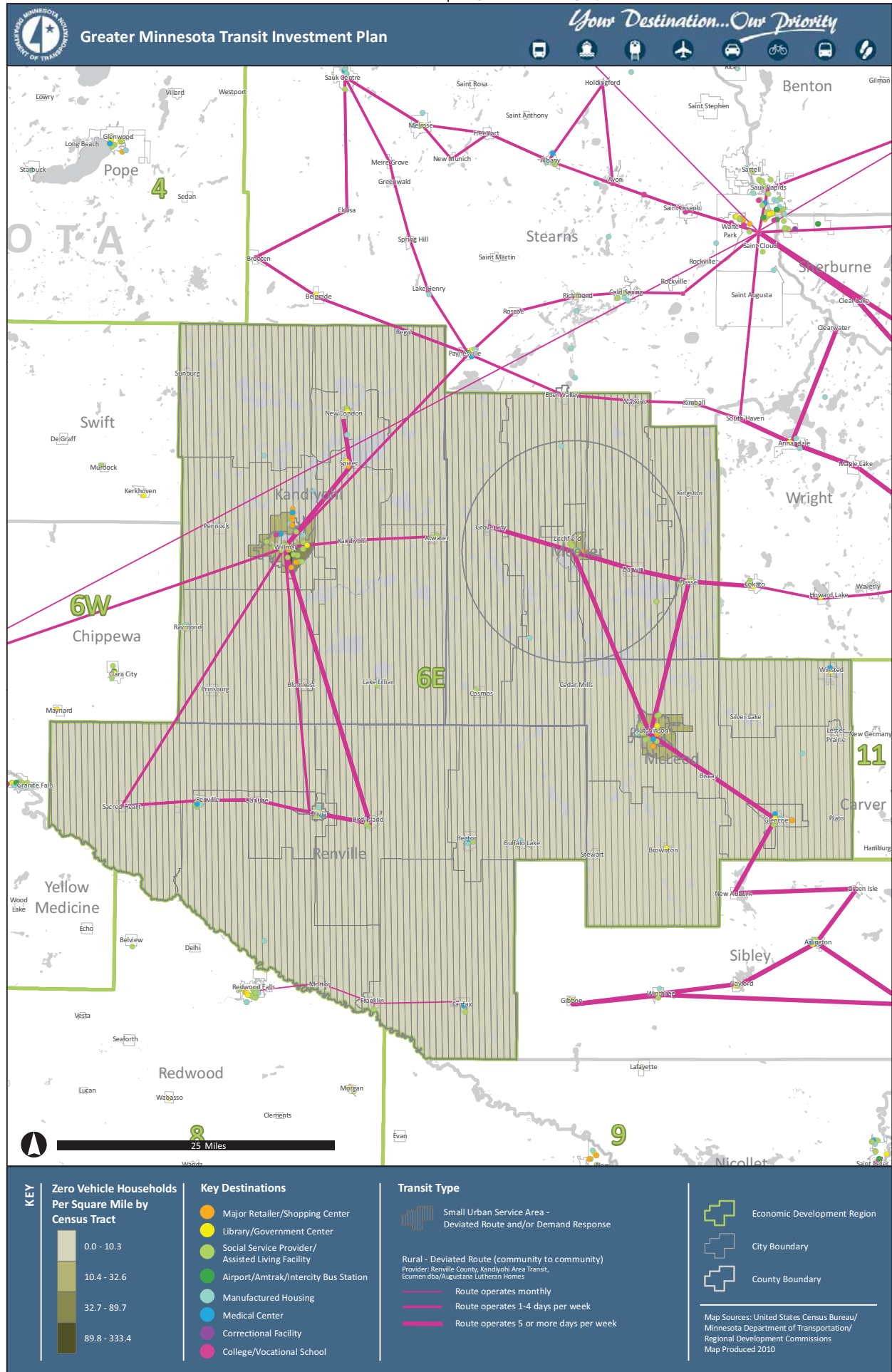
Greater Minnesota Transit Investment Plan

Your Destination...Our Priority



KEY	Persons 65 and Older PerSquare Mile by Census Tract	Key Destinations	Transit Type	Economic Development Region
	1.5 - 43.3	Major Retailer/Shopping Center	Small Urban Service Area - Deviated Route and/or Demand Response	
	43.4 - 240.6	Library/Government Center	Rural - Deviated Route (community to community) Provider: Renville County, Kandiyohi Area Transit, Ecumen dba/Augustana Lutheran Homes	City Boundary
	240.7 - 516.3	Social Service Provider/ Assisted Living Facility	Route operates monthly	County Boundary
	516.4 - 1126.7	Airport/Amtrak/Intercity Bus Station	Route operates 1-4 days per week	
		Manufactured Housing	Route operates 5 or more days per week	
		Medical Center		
		Correctional Facility		
		College/Vocational School		

Map Sources: United States Census Bureau/ Minnesota Department of Transportation/ Regional Development Commissions  
Map Produced 2010



## Appendix C- Transportation Provider Directory

The following directory includes contact information for all regional transportation providers who responded to an inventory questionnaire sent in spring 2011. **This is not a complete list of providers in Region 6E.**

<b>Kandiyohi County</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	Central Minnesota Christian Schools
<b>Address:</b>	204 School Street; Prinsburg, MN 56281
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 978-8700
<b>Web:</b>	www.cmcschool.org
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Heartland Community Action Agency
<b>Address:</b>	200 SW 4 <sup>th</sup> Street; Willmar, MN 56201
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 235-0850
<b>Web:</b>	www.heartlandcaa.org
<b>Service Type:</b>	Non-Profit Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Kandiyohi Area Transit (KAT)
<b>Address:</b>	1320 22 <sup>nd</sup> Street SW; Willmar, MN 56201
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 214-7433
<b>Web:</b>	www.katbus.org
<b>Service Type:</b>	Public Transit Dial a Ride
<b>Name:</b>	Kerkhoven-Murdock Sunburg Schools
<b>Address:</b>	302 N 15 <sup>th</sup> Street; Kerkhoven, MN 56252
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 264-1411
<b>Web:</b>	www.kms.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	New London – Spicer Schools
<b>Address:</b>	101 4 <sup>th</sup> Avenue SW
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 354-2252
<b>Web:</b>	www.nls.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Palmer Bus Service
<b>Address:</b>	153 4 <sup>th</sup> St N; Kandiyohi, MN 56251
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 382-6421
<b>Web:</b>	www.palmercharterservice.com
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation

<b>Name:</b>	Willmar Bus Service
<b>Address:</b>	1308 SE 7 <sup>th</sup> Street; Willmar, MN 56201
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 235-6230
<b>Web:</b>	www.willmarbus.com
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Willmar Community Senior Network
<b>Address:</b>	200 SW 4 <sup>th</sup> Street; Willmar, MN 56201
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 214-7140
<b>Web:</b>	www.willmarseniornetwork.com
<b>Service Type:</b>	Non-Profit Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Willmar Community Schools
<b>Address:</b>	611 5 <sup>th</sup> Street SW; Willmar, MN 56201
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 231-8510
<b>Web:</b>	www.willmar.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation

### McLeod County

<b>Name:</b>	Glencoe Silver Lake Bus Service
<b>Address:</b>	1621 16 <sup>th</sup> Street; Glencoe, MN 55336
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 864-3032
<b>Web:</b>	None
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Glencoe Silver Lake Public Schools
<b>Address:</b>	1621 E 16 Street; Glencoe, MN 55336
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 864-2498
<b>Web:</b>	www.gsl.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Hutchinson Public Schools
<b>Address:</b>	30 Glen Street; Hutchinson, MN 55350
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 587-2860
<b>Web:</b>	www.hutch.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Linder Bus Company
<b>Address:</b>	435 Franklin Street SW; Hutchinson, MN 55350
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 587-1122
<b>Web:</b>	None
<b>Service Type:</b>	Private Bus Transportation

<b>Name:</b>	New Discoveries Montessori Academy
<b>Address:</b>	1000 Fifth Avenue SE; Hutchinson, MN 55350
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 234-6362
<b>Web:</b>	www.newdiscoveries.org
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Trailblazer Transit
<b>Address:</b>	207 West 11 <sup>th</sup> Street; Glencoe, MN 55336
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 864-1000
<b>Web:</b>	www.trailblazertransit.com
<b>Service Type:</b>	Public Transit Dial-A-Ride

### Meeker County

<b>Name:</b>	Dassel-Cokato Schools
<b>Address:</b>	4852 Reardon Ave SW; Cokato, MN 55321
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 286-4100
<b>Web:</b>	www.dc.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Hicks Bus Line
<b>Address:</b>	102 N Gorman Avenue; Litchfield, MN 55355
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 693-3292
<b>Web:</b>	www.hickstruckingcompany.com
<b>Service Type:</b>	Private Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Howard Lake-Waverly Winsted Public Schools
<b>Address:</b>	801 8 <sup>th</sup> Avenue; Howard Lake, MN 55349
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 543-3521
<b>Web:</b>	www.hlww.k12.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	School Transportation
<b>Name:</b>	Meeker County Social Services
<b>Address:</b>	114 N Holcombe Ave; Litchfield, MN 55355
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 693-5301
<b>Web:</b>	www.meeker.mn.us
<b>Service Type:</b>	Volunteer Driver
<b>Name:</b>	Meeker Public Transit
<b>Address:</b>	812 E Ripley; Litchfield, MN 55355
<b>Phone:</b>	(320) 693-7794
<b>Web:</b>	www.ecumenoflitchfield.org
<b>Service Type:</b>	Public Transit Dial-A-Ride



## Renville County

**Name:** Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart Public Schools  
**Address:** 220 3<sup>rd</sup> St West; Hector, MN 55342  
**Phone:** (320) 848-2233  
**Web:** www.blhsd.org  
**Service Type:** School Transportation

**Name:** Central Minnesota Jobs & Training Services  
**Address:** 1005 W Elm Avenue; Olivia, MN 56277  
**Phone:** (320) 523-1007  
**Web:** www.cmjts.org  
**Service Type:** Non-Profit Transportation

**Name:** MACCRAY Schools  
**Address:** 711 Wolverine Drive; Clara City, MN 56222  
**Phone:** (320) 847-2154  
**Web:** www.maccray.k12.mn.us  
**Service Type:** School Transportation

**Name:** Palmer Bus Service  
**Address:** 22 S Division Street; Clara City, MN 56222  
**Phone:** (320) 847-3109  
**Web:** www.palmercharterservice.com  
**Service Type:** School Transportation

**Name:** Renville County Heartland Express  
**Address:** 612 E Lincoln; Olivia, MN 56277  
**Phone:** (320) 523-3550  
**Web:** www.co.renville.mn.us  
**Service Type:** Public Transit Dial-A-Ride

**Name:** Renville County Human Services  
**Address:** 105 S 5<sup>th</sup> Street; Olivia, MN 56277  
**Phone:** (320) 523-3564  
**Web:** www.co.renville.mn.us  
**Service Type:** Non-Profit Transportation

**Name:** Renville County West  
**Address:** 301 NW 3<sup>rd</sup> Street; Renville, MN 56284  
**Phone:** (320) 329-8362  
**Web:** www.rcw.k12.mn.us  
**Service Type:** School Transportation

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

~ Projects listed on the following page ~

<p><b>Difficult to do/Minor Impact Projects</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">None</p>	<p><b>Difficult to do/Major Impact Projects</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">7    8    9    10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11    12    13</p>
<p><b>Easy to do/Minor Impact Projects</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">14    15    16</p>	<p><b>Easy to do/Major Impact Projects</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">1        2        3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4        5        6</p>

**Easy To Do / Major Improvement** ~ These projects are perceived to not take a lot of effort by the agency responsible *and* are perceived to have a large impact on the clients/agencies served by the project.

**Easy To Do / Minor Improvement** ~ These projects are perceived to not take a lot of effort by the agency responsible *and* are perceived to have a small impact on the clients/agencies served by the project.

**Difficult To Do / Major Improvement** ~ These projects are perceived to take a major effort by the agency responsible *and* are perceived to have a large impact on the clients/agencies served by the project.

**Difficult To Do / Minor Improvement** ~ These projects are perceived to take a major effort by the agency responsible *and* are perceived to have a small impact on the clients/agencies served by the project.

**~ Easy To Do Projects with Major Improvement ~**

1. Advertise and Promote
2. Centralized Call Center/Number
3. Maintaining the Vehicles
4. Establish Transportation Ambassadors (Bus Buddies
5. Merge Day Training & Habilitation Transportation with Transit.
6. Regional Forum for Transportation/Transit Stakeholders.

**~ Difficult To Do Projects with Major Improvement ~**

7. Develop new programs such as SMART Ride.
8. Smart Card
9. Better Dispatch/Support Technology
10. Statewide Committee to examine rules & regulations
11. Cover no-load volunteer driver miles.
12. Expand the Volunteer Driver Program.
13. Expand service areas for counties.

**~ Easy To Do Projects with Minor Improvement ~**

14. Improve convenience, safety, and comfort at bus stops
15. Web coordination with providers for users.
16. Better Centralized Information.

**Appendix E:**  
**Steering Committee Meeting (June 12, 2012)**  
**& Five Year Implementation Work Plan**

~ Adopted by MMDC on June 27, 2012 ~

**Steering Committee Meeting**

The Region 6E Steering Committee met on June 12, 2012, at the Litchfield Public Library (216 North Marshall Avenue ~ Litchfield, MN) beginning at 1:00 p.m. with the following agenda:

1. Review status of local coordination activities
2. Synthesis of projects from local coordination plans statewide (provided by MnDOT)
3. Identification of potential local projects for 2013 under funding sources:
  - Job Access Reverse Commute/New Freedom/5310
  - Department of Human Services Community Service/ Community Services Development Grants
  - Other sources, such as private foundations
4. Identification of how potential local projects impact veterans' and military service organizations
5. Five Year Implementation Work Plan

**Five Year Implementation Work Plan**

At the June 12, 2012, Steering Committee meeting, committee members identified the following implementation items, which shall serve as Region 6E's Five Year Implementation Work Plan. The items are listed in the same order as presented in Strategy and Project Identification section of the Plan:

- 1. Advertise and Promote** the Region's transportation options including all forms of traditional media (i.e., newspaper and radio) and innovative forms of direct marketing (i.e., presentations to businesses, senior centers, etc.).

**Implementation:** Each transportation provider will continue to market their services. In addition, a new brochure will be developed for consumers, outlining

the transportation options and key phone numbers listed by county. Information will also be provided on the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative.

2. **Centralized Call Center/Number** to share trip dispatch information under a single entity within a single organization either Region or Statewide. The central, statewide number would then coordinate rides with the various transportation providers.

*Implementation:* Each of the transportation providers would like to learn more about how to participate in the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative's One-Call Project, which will serve 27 counties in Southwestern Minnesota. This One-Call Project will be set by augmenting the existing MinnesotaHelp Network with key transportation information, customized by individual consumer needs. The Steering Committee, including the Region's various transportation providers, will attend one of the two demonstrations planned for Southwestern Minnesota in the summer of 2012.

3. **Maintaining the Vehicles** and better resources to educate the Area Transportation Partnership (ATP) on transportation issues.

*Implementation:* The issues surrounding maintaining the vehicles is part of ongoing educational and decision-making efforts. The implementation item was listed in the Plan to place an emphasis on maintaining rather than replacing vehicles whenever feasible.

4. **Establish Transportation Ambassadors (Bus Buddies)** to assist riders with understanding how to best use local transportation options.

*Implementation:* Transit providers will explore establishing Transportation Ambassadors to help customers better understand their transportation options. The Region's new transportation brochure will be explained, first-time riders will be accompanied (when requested and feasible), and Veterans will be targeted through each of the County's Veterans Services.

5. **Merge Day Training & Habilitation Transportation with Transit.** One of the most logical expansions of public transit is to organize and provide transportation for the various Day Training and Habilitation services throughout the Region.

*Implementation:* Transit Providers will be working towards contracts that will merge transportation services. Veterans who met the admission criteria will directly benefit from this implementation strategy.

6. **Regional Forum for Transportation/Transit Stakeholders.** This would be accomplished by identifying an organization to organize and facilitate this type of annual or semi-annual meetings, using the existing steering committee members.

*Implementation:* The Mid-Minnesota Development Commission will assist with organizing ongoing regional forums, workshops, and Steering Committee meetings relating to transportation and transit issues. Veterans Services will be invited to participate.

7. **Develop new programs such as SMART Ride.** Due to restrictions in Public Transit Providers service plans, programs such as SMART (Sibley McLeod Auxiliary Regional Transit) Ride have been developed to provide transit services to riders who would not be served by traditional transit options. This allows riders to go places where and/or at times when Public Transit options are not available.

*Implementation:* Each transit provider will continue to work towards delivering services to riders who are not served by traditional transit options. The participation in the One-Call Project may enhance these opportunities.

8. **Smart Card Technology** refers to issuing a credit or driver license type identification card that is unique to each transportation user. Up-to-date information on the user and their program eligibilities would be available upon scanning or typing in the person's identification number. The primary reason this project would be difficult, it that it represents an extraordinarily commitment on the various agencies involved

with funding transportation services, to have current up-to-date information on all of the various clients and their corresponding program eligibilities.

**Implementation:** The transit providers would like to see smart card technology advance to the point where it contains current data on the customer and can be used as a prepaid fee card. Service vehicles would need to be equipped with card reading machines. This would also help speed up transactions as no money would need to be exchanged.

- 9. Better Dispatch/Support Technology.** This may include hiring a mobility manager but does for sure include continuously making all necessary improvements to dispatch.

**Implementation:** Participating in Southwestern Minnesota’s One-Call Project may accomplish this implementation step. Each transportation provider will decide how best to cooperate once more information becomes available.

- 10. Statewide Committee to examine rules & regulations,** which would include both elected and non-political members.

**Implementation:** A Region 6E Steering Committee Member would like to sit on a statewide committee if one becomes formed.

- 11. Cover no-load volunteer driver miles.** Currently drivers are not reimbursed for trips/millage traveled without a recipient in the vehicle (i.e., no load miles). There are a variety of logical situations when this occurs, and the volunteer drivers should be reimbursed for actual miles driven.

**Implementation:** The Minnesota Senate has established a Nonemergency Medical Transportation Advisory Committee. One of the policy areas the Committee will examine is “Policies and a funding source for reimbursing no-load miles (H.F. No 2294 – Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill Conference Committee Summary ~ April 23, 2012).

**12. Expand the Volunteer Driver Program.** Many gaps in transportation services are currently filled by Volunteer Driver Programs. These individuals use their own vehicle to transport individuals primarily when traditional transportation options are not available. As additional investments in public transit are made, the volunteer driver may someday become obsolete. Until public transit is fully operational to meet all transportation needs, however, the Volunteer Driver Program will continue to play an important role in providing transportation options.

*Implementation:* No decisions were made on this implementation step.

**13. Expand service areas for counties.** This would include service both within and outside of Region 6E.

*Implementation:* No decisions were made on this implementation step.

**14. Improve convenience, safety, and comfort at bus stops.** Improvements made with the common pick-up and drop off locations. Coordinate efforts with the business community.

*Implementation:* No decisions were made on this implementation step.

**15. Web coordination with providers for users.**

*Implementation:* Each transit provider is going to provide links to adjacent transportation providers.

**16. Better Centralized Information.** Create and maintain a reliable centralized list of regional transportation services.

*Implementation:* This will be accomplished with the implementation of using smart card technologies, partnering in the One-Call Project, and developing the Transportation brochure for the Region.