

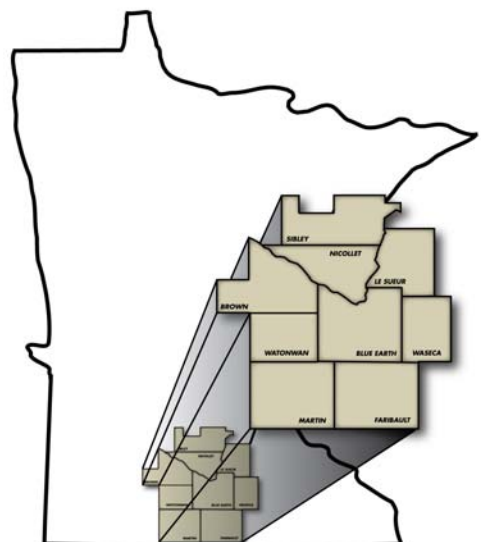
# Region Nine 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

---

Prepared by:  
Ronda Allis  
Region Nine Development Commission  
10 Civic Center Plaza, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
PO Box 3367  
Mankato, MN 56002-3367

Adopted by:  
Region Nine Development Commission  
January 2012

Amended by:  
Region Nine Development Commission  
July 2012



# Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Introduction .....	4
Plan Process .....	5
Regional Background/ Needs Assessment.....	8
Transportation Provider Inventory Findings.....	16
Outcomes since the 2006 Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination Plan .....	18
Summary of Existing Conditions and Needs .....	21
Strategy and Project Identification.....	22
Adoption and Approval of Plan .....	35
Appendix A- Public Workshop Participants.....	38
Appendix B- Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region Nine .....	40
Appendix C- Transportation Provider Inventory .....	47
Appendix D- Project Idea Summary.....	57
Appendix E- Project Analysis: Effort versus Impact Assessment.....	63
Appendix F – 1 – 3 year work plan.....	64

## Executive Summary

Region Nine Development Commission has developed a public transit and human services transportation coordination plan in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, local providers and stakeholders. The plan is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU, the current federal surface transportation bill, and will allow the release of certain future federal transit dollars to the state, local agencies and providers.

The plan is comprised of three key components:

1. public involvement through creation of a steering committee, stakeholder workshop, and a provider survey;
2. an inventory of transportation services within the region;
3. identification of strategies to enhance coordination and address gaps in service.

Strategies that ranked high throughout the planning process include:

1. Regional Transportation Linkage Line (central location for information)
2. Centralized Mobility Manager (dispatch center)
3. Diversification of vehicle fleet
4. Extension of evening and weekend service hours

There is a definite need for the creation of one point of contact for people to access all transportation services available, whether to public, private or volunteer transit providers. There also appears to be a great need for an extension in hours and service areas. The public needs to become more educated about the transportation services available so that they are utilized more. Though volunteer and para-transit services address many community needs, they still have their limitations. For example, it is difficult to utilize volunteer services unless one qualifies and can schedule at least 24 hours ahead of time. Para-transit services tend to stay in local areas and cannot transport people to large inter-regional areas such as Minneapolis/St. Paul or Rochester.

Currently, there is some minor coordination between the various public, private, and volunteer agencies that provide transportation services. The limited coordination especially affects vulnerable adults, immigrants, the elderly, and the working poor in rural parts of Region Nine without access to para-transit or volunteer services. It is believed that coordination will be vital in providing adequate transit resources for the public and marginalized populations. Region Nine Development Commission believes that by pooling resources, transportation providers can come up with solutions to all these issues as well as making the system more efficient and easier for the average citizen to navigate.

Throughout the planning process three key themes kept emerging as deterrents to transit coordination:

1. Funding
2. Provider “buy-in”
3. Regulations/policies

Providing transit, especially in less populated, rural areas, is not always cost-effective. Furthermore, as state and federal dollars become more difficult to access, it will become increasingly more challenging to provide services in Greater Minnesota. There are currently funds available; however, success in receiving those funds has proven to be more difficult.

Change is also difficult. Providers become comfortable with their service provision. Routes are established. Drivers are hired. Convincing providers to change the way things are being done (or have been done) is also a test. In order to be successful with transit coordination, there has to be “buy-in” by the providers.

Finally, some of the current policies and regulations have made transit coordination difficult. Finding ways to work around insurance challenges, crossing county boundaries, and hefty driver requirements (certification, drug and alcohol testing, training, etc...) have placed an undue burden on transit coordination.

## **Introduction**

The goal of transit coordination is to enhance 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 Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination Plan and will assist stakeholders as they determine ways to coordinate transit services in Region Nine. The 2011 Region Nine Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan documents technical analysis that evaluates existing transportation services in Region Nine 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 Nine.

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 Nine. 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 Nine.

## **Plan Process**

The goal of the 2011 Region Nine 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 Nine. An overview of the plan's key elements is described here.

### ***Needs Assessment***

The needs assessment establishes baseline conditions in Region Nine 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 informed the strategies and projects identified in this plan. Public outreach occurred during two steering committee meetings held on April 28, 2011 and June 15, 2011 and a public workshop held on May 24, 2011.

The plan steering committee closely guided plan decision-making. Steering committee duties included:

- Evaluating strategies and assessing outcomes of projects identified in the 2006 Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination 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**

Shelly Barnett	Aging Services for Communities
Bob Apitz	Brown County Heartland Express
Carol Clark	VINE
DeAnn Boney	Blue Earth County Human Services
Elaine Spain	Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Jan Klassen	MNDOT District 7 Transit Project Mgr
Kevin Burns	Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital
Laura Bealey	MRCI
Mark Anderson	Mankato Transit
Sylvia Perron	Nicollet County Human Services
Dalaine Remes	Minnesota Disability Law Center
Sue Clayton	Waseca County Human Services
Karen Wagner	DEED Workforce Center
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission

---

***Strategy Identification and Plan Adoption***

In addition to the steering committee, Region Nine Development Commission hosted a public workshop on May 24, 2011 to incorporate input from all interested stakeholders. A total of 29 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 included in the final plan. A draft plan was distributed to stakeholders for public comment between September 14, 2011 and October 31, 2011, prior to a public meeting held December 14, 2011. Presentations were made to the Region Nine Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) on September 14, 2011 and to Region Nine staff on September 26, 2011. This plan was adopted by the Region Nine Development Commission on January 11, 2012.

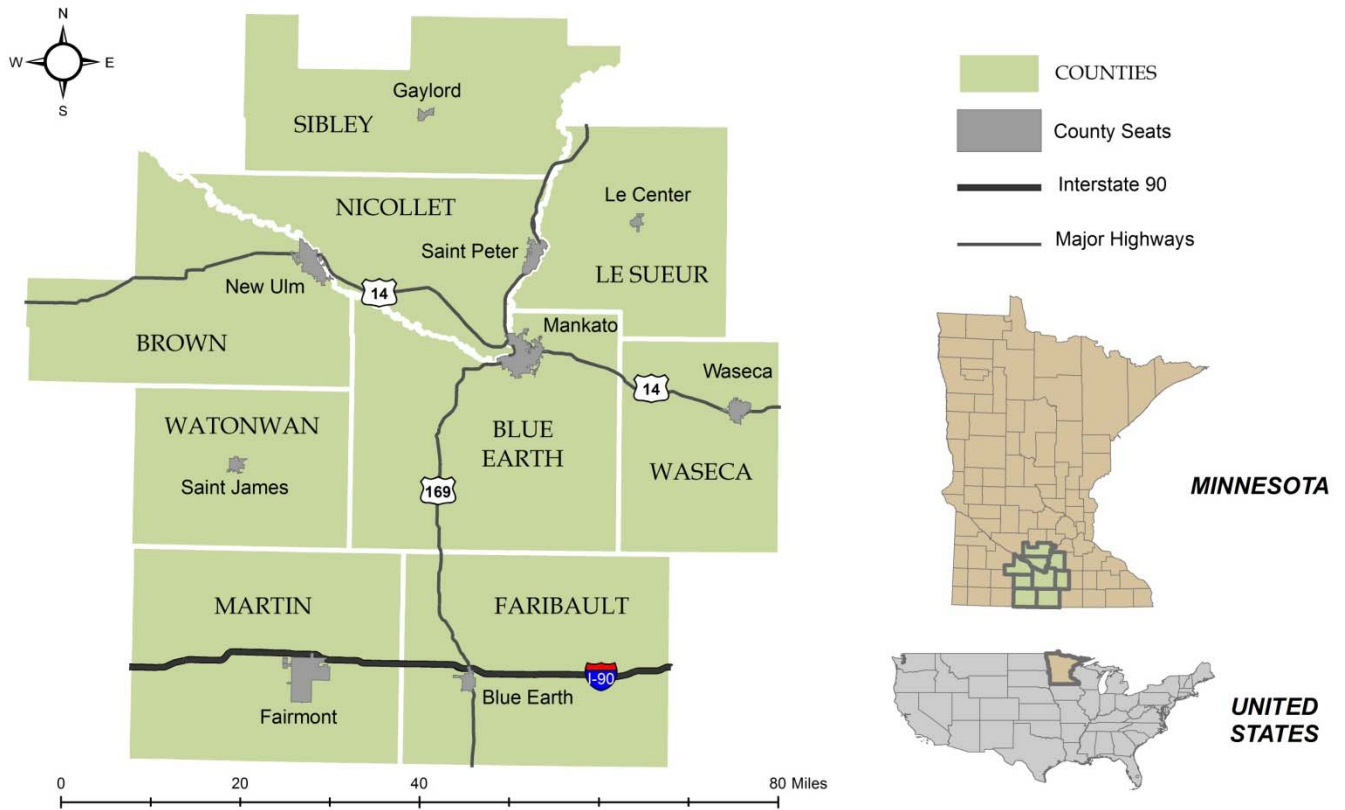
On July 11, 2012 the Region Nine Development Commission adopted the revised 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan, which included modifications to the plan as a result of the May 9, 2012 and June 14, 2012 Steering Committee meetings. The main modification included the additional of the 1 – 3 year work plan, which can be found in Appendix F (added July 2012).



# Needs Assessment

## *Regional Background<sup>1</sup>*

South Central Minnesota covers a nine-county region and consists of Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan counties. The region accounts for six percent of the Minnesota’s total area, or approximately 5,064 square miles. The counties vary in size from Blue Earth, with 752 square miles, to Waseca, with 415 square miles.



The region includes 72 cities and 147 townships. There are five cities in the region with populations exceeding 10,000. These cities include Mankato (39,309), New Ulm (13,522), North Mankato (13,394), Saint Peter (11,196), and Fairmont (10,666). Mankato serves as South Central Minnesota’s main Regional Trade Center. The Mankato-North Mankato area was recently designated as a Metropolitan Statistical Area and is home to a diversified mix of medical, educational, industrial and retail activities.

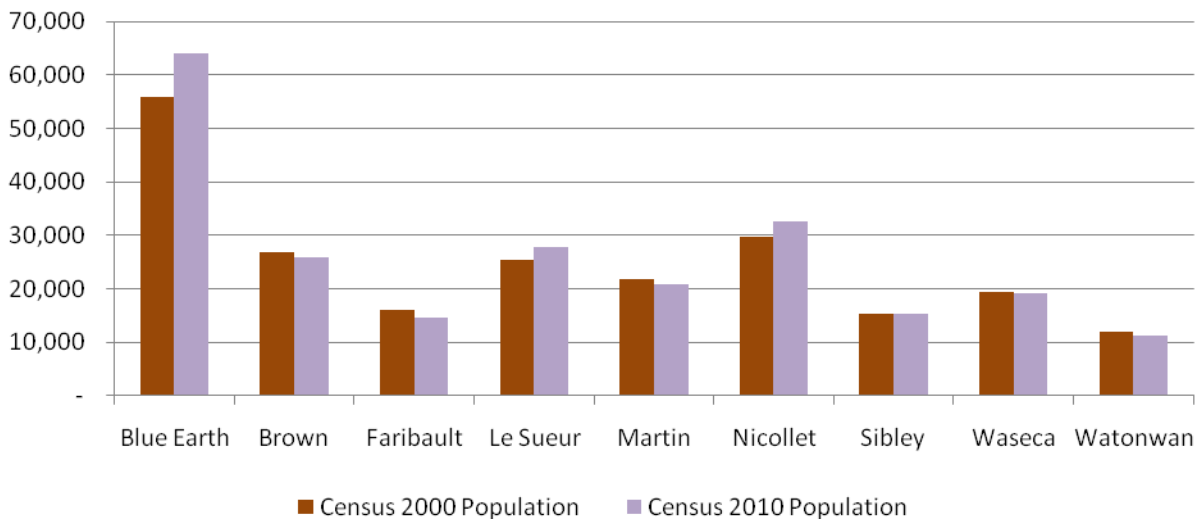
<sup>1</sup> Information for the “Needs Assessment” section was compiled by Region Nine Development Commission staff for the *Heading Home: South Central Minnesota project*.

Other Regional Trade Centers include the cities of New Ulm, Saint Peter, Fairmont, and Waseca.

Outside of the region’s trade centers the local character is primarily rural. The region is part of the Midwest farm belt and contains some of the most productive farmland in the world; the region’s counties consistently rank among the nation’s leaders in the production of corn, soybeans, hogs, and other agricultural commodities. With approximately 85% of the region under cultivation and an additional 6% used as pastureland and open space, agriculture is the predominant land use within the region.

According to the 2010 Census, the population of the region is 231,302. Seventy-five percent of the region’s population currently lives within an incorporated area, or municipality. The remaining 25% of the population currently lives within an unincorporated area, or township.

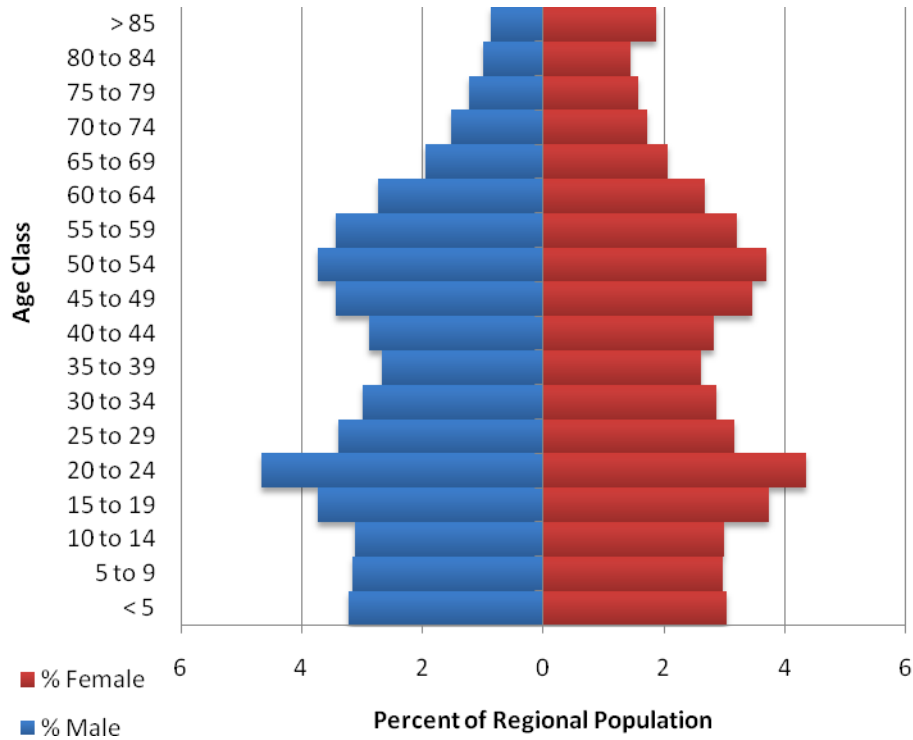
The region’s total population increased by 4% between 2000 and 2010. During the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, 9% of the region’s population shifted from an unincorporated area to an incorporated area. This pattern is reflective of the larger national trend of generalized urbanization and rural outmigration. However, this pattern is not uniform across the region. While six of the region’s counties and 41 cities experienced population decline over the last decade, 3 counties and 31 cities experienced a population increase.



In general, cities and townships nearer to the Twin Cities metropolitan area were more likely to see a population increase, while those further away were more likely to see a decrease. This uneven pattern of growth is expected to continue over the next 25 years, with a projected net increase in population of 11% by 2035. Those counties closer in proximity to the metro and those containing larger urban populations are projected to grow, while the more distant, more rural counties are expected to decline in population.

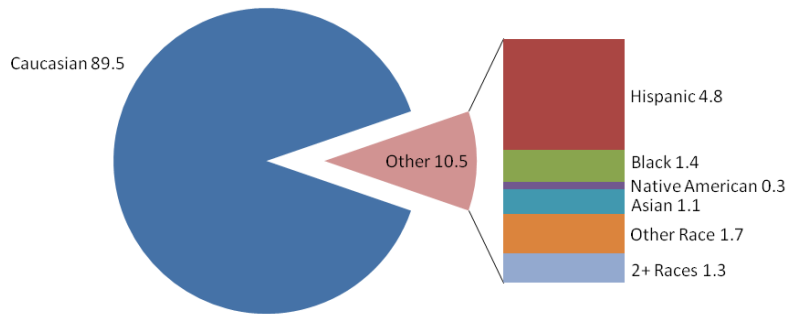
The region has virtually the same number of men as women, 49.8% and 50.2% of the total population respectively. The region’s population pyramid, shown below, indicates a

relatively stable population. There are two notable features present in the pyramid. The first contains the baby boomer cohort, present in the age classes approximately between the years 40 to 64. The second contains the college and university student cohort, present in the age classes approximately between the years 15 to 29.



Ethnically, the region is predominantly Caucasian (white non-Hispanic) – although there is considerable variation between counties. The Caucasian majority ranges from 94.2% in Brown County to 66% in Watonwan County. The second largest ethnicity is Hispanic/Latino, which ranges from 20.1% in Watonwan County to 2.5% in Blue Earth County.

**Regional Ethnicity  
(Percent)**



Source: US Census 2010

The region is noticeably less ethnically diverse than the state (89.5% Caucasian vs. 80.6% Caucasian) and considerably less diverse than the nation (89.5% Caucasian vs. 56.1% Caucasian). A more elaborate breakdown of regional, state and national ethnicity is presented below.

	Region	Minnesota	United States
<b>Caucasian</b>	89.5%	80.6%	56.1%
<b>Hispanic</b>	4.8%	4.7%	16.3%
<b>Black</b>	1.4%	5.2%	12.6%
<b>Native American</b>	0.3%	1.1%	0.9%
<b>Asian</b>	1.1%	4.0%	4.8%
<b>Native Pacific</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%
<b>Other Race</b>	1.7%	1.9%	6.2%
<b>2+ Races</b>	1.3%	2.4%	2.9%

According to updated population projects, the region will experience an increase in minority populations between 2010 and 2035. Currently, minority populations make up approximately 9% of the total population of the region. By 2035, that percentage is expected to increase to approximately 16%. This same period of time will actually see a slight reduction in the number of Caucasian residents. The largest concentration of minority populations is in the southwest portion of the City of Mankato. There are currently 31 different languages spoken in the Mankato school system. The three most common languages are Somali, Spanish, and Nuer.

The cities of St. James (Brown County) and Waseca (Waseca County) also have higher levels of minority populations. In St. James this can be attributed to the large meat packaging industry in that community, and in Waseca, a major employer is Brown Printing, a manufacturer of paper products.

The number of Minnesotans age 65 and older will explode in coming decades. Aging is the dominant demographic trend in MN and across the country. The number of Minnesotans over the age of 65 will more than double over the next 25 years. Region 9 already has a large proportion of 65+ residents due to the outmigration of youth in this area. It is anticipated that the only overall population growth in Region 9 will be in the 65+ age category.

Within Region 9 the 65+ population is anticipated to increase from 34,270 (in 2010) to 59,370 by 2035 (from 14% of the population to 23% of the population).

Most communities throughout the region will experience an increase in the 65+ age group, with the exception of some of the “metro fringe” communities, which will actually see a larger increase in the younger population. This trend will more likely occur in communities such as New Prague and Le Sueur, where easier access to the metropolitan job market makes these communities more attractive to younger families.

The region had an average annual employment of 99,593 in 2010. The largest employment concentrations were in the manufacturing (18,303); health care and social assistance (17,470); and retail trade (11,882). Also important to note, is that while the region employs only 3.9% of the state’s total workforce, the region employs 13.7% of the state’s agricultural workforce and 6.3% of the state’s manufacturing workforce.

<b>Major Industry Category<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Regional Employment by Sector</b>	<b>State Employment by Sector</b>	<b>% of State Workforce in Region</b>
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	2,538	18,541	13.7%
Accommodation and Food Services	7,340	203,467	3.6%
Administrative and Waste Services	2,486	122,878	2.0%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	963	48,392	2.0%
Construction	3,979	95,005	4.2%
Educational Services	9,249	215,249	4.3%

<sup>2</sup> This section utilized data from the Department of Employment and Economic Development’s Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, [www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/qcew/AreaSel.aspx](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/qcew/AreaSel.aspx).

Finance and Insurance	2,961	134,591	2.2%
Health Care and Social Assistance	17,470	419,731	4.2%
Information	2,117	57,830	3.7%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	1,048	70,617	1.5%
Manufacturing	18,303	292,044	6.3%
Mining	226	5,220	4.3%
Other Services, Ex. Public Admin	2,931	82,764	3.5%
Professional and Technical Services	2,257	124,090	1.8%
Public Administration	5,450	125,370	4.3%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	800	36,000	2.2%
Retail Trade	11,882	278,063	4.3%
Transportation and Warehousing	3,099	91,759	3.4%
Utilities	518	14,077	3.7%
Wholesale Trade	3,973	123,558	3.2%
<b>Total, All Industries</b>	<b>99,593</b>	<b>2,559,597</b>	<b>3.9%</b>

According to the latest Economic and Agricultural Censuses, the region has approximately \$14.6 billion worth of economic activity annually. This accounts for 5.1% of the state's total annual economic activity. Blue Earth County has the largest economy in the region and, with a total of \$5.7 billion in goods and services, and is responsible for over one-third of regional economic activity. The most profitable segment of the regional economy was the manufacturing sector, which is responsible for nearly half of the region's economic activity.

The vast majority of key destinations in Region 9 are located within the City of Mankato. Mankato is a major regional center that has been designated as the 14th Most Livable Micropolitan City in the Nation. Mankato has a population of 36,240 with a contiguous population area of 49,175. There is a trade area population of more than 300,000 and there are 1.6 million people who live within 60 miles of Mankato. Other areas within the region that show significant levels of concentration include the cities of New Ulm (pop. 13,473), St. Peter (pop. 10,884), Fairmont (pop. 10,686), and Waseca (pop. 9,789).

Major regional destinations in Mankato include shopping at River Hills Mall, medical care at Immanuel St Joseph's Hospital, and post-secondary education at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Equally as important are the more than 32,000 persons that

commute into Blue Earth County each day for employment purposes; with the vast majority of those commuters coming to Mankato. The three largest employers in Mankato include Taylor Corporation (4,500 employees), Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital (2,500 employees), and Minnesota State University, Mankato (1,800 employees).

While the City of Mankato does operate a transit service within city limits, there are only two other systems within the region accesses the regional center. The Watonwan County service coordinates rides for county residents providing access to the medical facilities in Mankato and Aging Services for Communities, located in LeSueur County, transports clients from Le Sueur County to Mankato several times a day.

The “persons per square mile by census tract” clearly shows that the largest concentration of population in the region is in the City of Mankato, and is concentrated in and around the Minnesota State University, Mankato campus and downtown area. It is interesting to note that while this area is currently served by the Mankato transit system, a recent survey conducted on campus shows only 8% of students using the public transit system.

Residential development is booming on both the north side of Mankato as well as the southern edge; however, transit services in these two growing areas is relatively non-existent.

Within a 25 mile radius of Mankato, 23% of the population is currently living below 185% of the poverty level. The largest concentration within the region appears to be in the City of Mankato and centered around the downtown/college campus area. Residents in these areas are typically college age students and members of minority communities.

There also appears to be a trend in the region where the county seats, which typically experience a higher concentration of residents, have experienced a larger portion of households living in poverty. This can be seen in the communities of Blue Earth (Faribault County), Fairmont (Martin County), St. James (Watonwan County), Waseca (Waseca County), and New Ulm (Brown County). Many of these communities have experienced a large “youth exodus” over the past 20 – 30 years, thereby experiencing larger than normal concentrations of “elderly” residents. This demographic, who are liable to live on fixed incomes, are likely the reason why there are higher levels of households in poverty within the higher population areas.

Overall, the major concentration areas for households in poverty, minority populations, Limited English Proficiency (LEP) populations and senior citizens appear to be concentrated in the regional center of Mankato. Located within a 25 mile radius of Mankato (the county seat for Blue Earth County) are 125,798 people, or almost one-half of the region's population. Of the 125,798 residents located within the 25 mile radius of Mankato, 72,831 are classified as “urban” and 52,967 or classified as “rural”. Mankato serves as a regional hub, offering access to major employers, shopping centers, and medical services, and yet, other than the Mankato transit service, no other public transit services exist within Blue Earth County. In fact, there are four contiguous counties: Blue Earth, Nicollet, Le Sueur, and Waseca, that all lack a county-wide transit system.

Only one system within the region has scheduled transit stops in Mankato, and that is the Watonwan County system.

Mankato will continue to serve as the hub of activity for the region. Region Nine encompasses 72 cities, and 59 of those cities, or 82%, are under 2,500 in population. These smaller communities rely on Mankato to provide top notch medical services, as well as employment and shopping opportunities. As our region's population ages, and we continue to see an upward trend in new immigrants to our region, there will be more of a demand for public transit. We need to make sure that Greater Minnesota residents have every opportunity to access medical services and employment opportunities, so that they continue to enjoy the quality of life that they deserve.



### ***Transportation Provider Inventory Findings***

Throughout March and April 2011, Region Nine Development Commission 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, Region Nine sent an on-line questionnaire to over 200 of the region's transportation providers in spring 2011. 50 responses were returned. A full record of responses is available at <http://www.rndc.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/transit-survey-results.pdf>. A directory listing of providers is available in Appendix C.

Of the 50 responses that were received, approximately 35% were from public transit providers, which included counties, cities and school districts. Another 15% of the responses were from DT&H (Day Training & Habilitation) providers and 12% were from health care providers. These responses made up the majority of the total responses received. There were also a small number of responses from Private and Non-Profit Transportation Providers, Senior Services, and County Human Service Agencies.

With the exception of the public school busing systems, most public transit providers operated on a "dial-a-ride" system, with a few fixed route systems existing (most common in the larger Mankato/North Mankato MSA area). It was easily noted through the questionnaire responses that townships throughout the region are greatly underserved.

Results also indicated a good mix of small, medium and large buses operating throughout the region, with a majority of those buses/vehicles indicating they have ambulatory capacity. Many of the systems also noted their ability to work with clients that possess physical disabilities or mental impairments.

System responses varied when it came to "service type". The largest service type provided, of those systems that responded, was "door to door" service, with 20 of the 50 respondents providing this type of service. Seventeen of the 50 respondents offered "curb to curb" service and only eight indicated a "stop to stop" service type. Most services provided regular hours, Monday through Friday; however, very few of the respondents indicated availability on Saturday and/or Sunday.

From the survey responses it appears that there is some agency coordination currently taking place. The most common public transit coordination activities were occurring with educational institutions, DT&H providers, elder day care programs, county human service agencies, churches, and occupational training centers.

Common barriers to coordination included:

- ▶ Cost
- ▶ Driver qualifications
- ▶ Limited service area boundaries
- ▶ Scheduling
- ▶ Staff time requirements
- ▶ Insurance
- ▶ Billing and payment
- ▶ Limited service hour availability

According to survey respondents, the most needed change(s) to improve transportation coordination are:

1. Relaxing some of the regulations.
2. Awareness of the program.
3. Funding.
4. “Better communication and their willingness to change appointments to meet our schedule”.
5. Political boundaries need to be eliminated.
6. Need to establish positive working relationships.
7. “Good coordination of rides can only be achieved at the expense of quality of service.”

***Outcomes since the 2006 Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination Plan***

Another component of the needs assessment is an analysis of the 2006 Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination Plan. The 2006 Human Service and Public Transportation Coordination 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.

<b>Strategy #1 – Mobility Management &amp; Tech. Enhancement</b>		
	Mobility Manager/Coordinator	Action
	Clearinghouse of information	Some action
	Incorporate Technology (billing, fleet management, dispatch, brokerage)	Some action
<b>Strategy #2 – Options, Obstacles, Opportunities</b>		
	Tying funding to decision-makers	No action
	Coordinating funding using efficiency best practices	No action
	Dedicated and earmarked funding	No action
	Pursuing new moneys (ie: Transportation Amendment Funds)	Some action
	Pooling of external funds	No action
<b>Strategy #3 – Agency to Agency Coordination</b>		
	Centralized Management of all systems by county	No action
	Developing protocol for coordination	No action
	Coordination of all inter-county (regional) rides	Some action
	Communication among individual agencies	Some action
<b>Strategy #4 – Policy and Local Regulations and Standards</b>		
	Utilize local expertise and education	No action
	Create an oversight board of elected officials	Some action
	Continue on-going assessment of local practices	No action
	Ensuring quality driver training	Some action
	Excellent customer service	Some action
	Large-scale marketing and awareness campaign	No action
<b>Strategy #5 – Adapting to Federal and State Regulations/External Factors</b>		
	Waivers of funding requirements and regulations	Some action
	Identify all funding streams	Action
	Coordinate funding options when possible	Some action
	Communicate with elected officials and state and federal policy makers	Some action

<b>Strategy #6 - Others</b>		
	Using appropriate vehicles for rides	Action = Volunteer driver programs Some Action = “other” programs No Action = Public transit
	Matching needs to resources vs. resources to need	Some action
	Developing one systems per defined geographic area	Some action

**Strategy #1 - Mobility Management & Tech. Enhancement projects**

Progress made in the region since 2006 plan:

Mobility Management has been implemented through VINE Faith in Action (non-profit in Mankato). VINE received technical assistance from MNRAAA (Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging) on a proposal to access funding through a Community Service/Service Development grant from DHS for transit scheduling software. VINE submitted a proposal for the purchase of a vehicle through the JARC (Job Access Reverse Commute) grant and funding through a New Freedom grant for the support of their Mobility Manager. Service area covers Blue Earth & Nicollet counties, and the project provides rides to work and child care for low income workers and new immigrant populations. VINE also coordinates and provides cross county medical rides through their volunteer driver program.

**Strategy # 2 – Options, Obstacles, Opportunities**

Progress made in the region since 2006 plan:

Little to no progress has been made in the region on Strategy #2 due in large part to a lack of leadership in the region to move this strategy forward. There is a perception that some motor carrier rules/regulations may inhibit the pooling of external funds and/or coordinating funding. Any progress made in this area was done on an individual agency level. Any large scale effort needs regional leadership to establish process and standards. Turf conflict is another barrier to collaboration among transit agencies (public and private) as well as a lack of funds to develop a collaborative system.

**Strategy #3 – Agency to Agency Coordination**

Progress made in the region since 2006 plan:

The non-profit sector has made some progress in the Agency to Agency Coordination strategy, mainly through the coordination of inter-county rides for medical appointments. Several non-profit agencies offering volunteer driver programs have made a concerted effort to coordinate long distance rides to Rochester or the Twin Cities metro for medical appointments. The lack of regional leadership to develop standards and policies impedes this effort. Other issues that impede transit coordination include “turf protection” and a lack of funds for system development.

#### **Strategy #4 – Policy and Local Regulations and Standards**

Progress made in the region since 2006 plan:

Little to no progress made in the region in the area of standardizing policies and local regulations. Individual agencies (public and non-profit) developed their own standards for their programs for ensuring quality driver training and customer service. There is no oversight board of elected officials due to the lack of regional leadership and there is a lack of understanding as to how this should be developed. Public transit systems are locally controlled and governed and this has resulted in some turf conflict issues. Individual transit programs continue to operate in silos, which are controlled by their funding sources. There is a lack of necessary funds to develop a coordinated system.

#### **Strategy # 5 – Adapting to Federal and State Regulations/External Factors**

Progress made in the region since 2006 plan:

Since the 2006 plan, there has been little to no progress made in the region in the area of adapting to federal and state regulations/external factors. There has been some progress made in identifying funding streams, but there is no technical assistance available to assist agencies in accessing funding streams or expertise in how to coordinate funding options. There also exists a lack of education/knowledge regarding regulations that pertain to various funding streams. Again, a lack of regional leadership to develop standards and policies impedes this effort. The lack of necessary funds to develop a coordinated system remains an issue.

#### **Strategy #6 – Other Projects**

Progress made in the region since 2006 plan:

Strategy #6 has had little to no progress made in region since the adoption of the 2006 plan. Public transit agencies site state regulations governing vehicle size as a barrier in using appropriate vehicles for rides. Volunteer driver programs in the region are making efforts to coordinate rides, but are limited in their ability to provide rides to people who need special assistance with mobility (not able to transport people who are wheel chair dependent). The lack of education/knowledge regarding regulations that pertain to various funding streams, a lack of regional leadership to develop standards and policies, and a lack of necessary funding to develop the system all play a part impeding this effort.

Overall, the general consensus was that little to no progress was obtained on many of the identified strategies due to a lack of leadership, lack of funding, failure to achieve provider buy-in, and numerous policies/regulations that hindered coordination efforts.

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

During the May 24, 2011 Region Nine Local Coordination Plan Public Workshop participants identified the top strengths and weaknesses for Human Service Transit Coordination in Region Nine as well as statewide. The following table summarizes the results of that activity:

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
Existing systems are working well with available funding/means	*Little funding
Most agency-served clients are served well	Lack of technology/central dispatch
Some political support	*Barriers = insurance, laws, criteria, etc..
Central coordinator between facility and transit	*Limited hours of service
Crossing county lines	Need for carpooling services
Cost effective affordability of rides	Vehicle size
Mankato transit hosts training	Barriers in boundaries
Blue Earth County, United Way, VINE all work together to transport to jobs and daycare	Marketing/education/awareness
Existing efforts to improve resources	
Needs assessment	

\*identified by more than one person

It became clear throughout this process that some systems were further along than others when it came to certain coordination efforts. For example, some systems noted that one of the strengths of coordination within their service area was their ability to cross county boundaries, while others noted that a weakness was the fact that there were still barriers in crossing county boundaries.

While many participants believed that systems were able to accommodate clients within their current funding limits, they also noted that a barrier to providing additional service/extended service was limited funding. Other barriers/weaknesses to transit coordination included regulations related to insurance, etc... and a lack of leadership in moving coordination efforts forward.

One bright spot appeared to be the growing political support for transit coordination. As our population ages, and more demands are placed on transit systems, there appears to be a growing support at the state level to provide ubiquitous transit across Minnesota’s 87 counties.

## 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 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 Nine.

### *Prioritized Strategies*

<b>Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>		
Allow joint purchasing	Contract between agencies	Contract with common transportation service provider
Share resources	Coordinate dispatch	Consolidate functions
Implement tools that support data management	Coordinate agency schedules	

<b>Mobility Strategies</b>		
Improve service convenience	Establish/enhance volunteer driver programs	Establish/enhance taxi subsidy programs
Improve accessibility at transit stops	Maintain existing vehicle fleet	Establish/enhance assisted transportation programs
<b>Communication, Training and Organizational Support</b>		
Centralize information	Hire mobility manager	Provide technical training for coordination staff
Offer customer travel training	Convene regional coordination body	Educate public of transportation options
Educate regional professionals of transportation options		
<b>Additional Strategies</b>		
Outsource business functions		

*Other Strategies*

<b>Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>		
Coordinate volunteer driver training		
<b>Communication, Training and Organizational Support</b>		
Understand transportation funding sources		



## ***Prioritized Project List***

### ***Easy to do/Major Improvement***

#### **1. Overview of Project:**

Funding streams – identify new potential funding streams that could offset cuts being made through DHS and the legislature. The one comment made regarding this strategy is that the funding identification is easy; however, securing the funding is much more difficult.

#### Clients served by Project:

Finding additional funds would benefit all clients throughout the region, since it would allow providers to look at expanded hours, additional days of service, etc.

#### Communities Served:

Additional funding would potentially benefit all residents within the nine county region.

#### Type of Agency Responsible:

MNDOT; Transit systems; Region Nine Development Commission; Non-profits; Volunteer Driver programs

#### Strategy Addressed:

Contract between agencies.

#### **2. Overview of Project:**

Hub for public and private transportation providers – Co-locate with Land to Air at a new facility. House Intra-state and Inter-state transportation options out of one facility/hub, which would include a bus station and a garage/maintenance facility. This would also allow for a centralized maintenance facility, which would ultimately result in more cost savings.

#### Clients served by Project:

Co-locating public and private transportation providers in a centralized facility would benefit residents that use the Mankato Transit Systems, but would also potentially benefit residents region-wide since private providers would also be involved in this strategy.

#### Communities Served:

Residents of the City of Mankato, North Mankato, Nicollet County and Blue Earth County. This would also benefit residents of other communities in Blue Earth and Nicollet counties as well as the other seven counties in the Region Nine area.

#### Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; For-profits; Non-profits; local units of government.

Strategy Addressed:

Share resources.

**3. Overview of Project:**

Regular routes for public transit – Develop one standard schedule that people can count on.

Clients served by Project:

There are currently four counties in Region Nine that do not have a county-wide public transit system (Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet, and Waseca); however, three of the four counties (Blue Earth, Le Sueur, and Nicollet) have a city that operates public transit within the county. It would be the goal that all counties and cities within the region would benefit from regular routes on public transit systems.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems.

Strategy Addressed:

Improve service convenience.

**4. Overview of Project:**

Begin route service with mobility bus – provide route service to Mayo clinic, several nursing homes and assisted living centers.

Clients served by Project:

Clients with disabilities/medical clients.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems.

Strategy Addressed:

Improve service convenience.

**5. Overview of Project:**

Education roundtables – hold meetings where local transportation agencies, human service agencies, advocates and community members can meet regarding issues/concerns. A lot of people are not aware of public transit availability, especially in

rural areas. Educate the public about the available options (agencies, routes, schedules, etc.).

Clients served by Project:

This would benefit the transportation providers as well as those who would potentially use their respective services.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

MNDOT; Region Nine Development Commission.

Strategy Addressed:

Educate public of transportation options; educate regional professionals of transportation options.

**6. Overview of Project:**

Regional Coordination Access Council – Develop an “oversight” council (steering committee members), made up of public and private providers as well as those who require service. This group would help direct a transit vision for the region. The steering committee would meet annually (at a minimum) to review/modify the project list. This session would be hosted by Region Nine Development Commission and would be held prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>, or in coordination with applicable state and federal deadlines.

Clients served by Project:

This would serve all clients that currently use transit within the Region Nine area as well as those who are unaware of current services.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Region Nine Development Commission.

Strategy Addressed:

Convene Regional Coordination Access Council.

**7. Overview of Project:**

Region Nine Transportation Open House – Invite all transportation providers to come together and meet with customers/potential customers.

Clients served by Project:

This would serve all clients that currently use transit within the Region Nine area as well as those who are unaware of current services.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
Region Nine Development Commission.

Strategy Addressed:  
Educate public of transportation options.

***Easy to do/Minor Improvement***

***1. Overview of Project:***

Affordable town to town transportation within the same county – provide service for transit dependent populations (ie: elderly or low income) between communities within the same county (ie: Le Sueur to Le Center).

Clients served by Project:  
All residents within Region Nine.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
Transit systems.

Strategy Addressed:  
Improve service convenience.

***2. Overview of Project:***

Carpooling website – create a place where people can communicate and connect with others to get to where they need/want to go. Post notices within job sites. Include starting and ending points.

Clients served by Project:  
All residents within Region Nine.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
Transit systems; Non-profits; MNDOT; Regional Nine Development Commission.

Strategy Addressed:  
Improve service convenience; consolidate business functions; centralize information.

**3. Overview of Project:**

Staff training on defensive driving and abuse prevention – assure all staff are trained in the areas listed on a regular basis (once per year). Currently systems have to close their program for the day or pay overtime to do it on a Saturday. Look into the possibility of having the training available on-line, especially for the refresher courses. This would allow staff to complete training as time allows.

Clients served by Project:

This would benefit the disabled community as well as the staff who are required to obtain the training.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs.

Strategy Addressed:

Provide technical training for coordination staff.

***Difficult to do/Major Improvement***

**1. Overview of Project:**

Regional Transportation Linkage Line (central location for information) and Regional Centralized Mobility Manager (dispatch center) – Within the region employ three Regional Trade Center dispatchers (Mankato, Fairmont, New Ulm). Human Service Care Coordinators could be relieved of trying to run transportation services. Could include all riders. Corridor transportation services would be readily available. Various sizes of vehicles used as well as volunteer drivers and private providers. Have one place for customers to call to receive service, building in cost-efficiencies, increase ridesharing to reduce costs. Coordination should be regionalized with the ability to link to other regional systems; this should not be a statewide system.

Clients served by Project:

All residents within Region Nine.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs; Non-profits; For-profits.

Strategy Addressed:

Coordinate dispatch; share resources; consolidate functions; centralize information; hire Mobility Manager.

**2. Overview of Project:**

Shared driver database (CDL, volunteer-paid and unpaid, etc..) – create a database of drivers and figure out a way to use them across agencies. Perhaps have a way for them to submit when they are available to help. Implement an active volunteer driver recruitment campaign. Get more than 1-2 volunteers available to county residents. Develop/incorporate paid and non-paid drivers.

Clients served by Project:

All residents within Region Nine.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs; Non-profits; For-profits.

Strategy Addressed:

Share resources; establish/enhance volunteer driver programs.

**3. Overview of Project:**

Corridor services – Establish regular routes on highways between counties/towns. Could look at possible corridor route from Waseca to New Ulm. Use existing systems as “feeder systems”. Have regular services for those individuals that make “repetitive” trips (ie: dialysis).

Clients served by Project:

All residents within Region Nine.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs; Non-profits; For-profits; local units of government; MNDOT (Land to Air is already in the process of doing this).

Strategy Addressed:

Share resources.

**4. Overview of Project:**

Inventory and assess available resources. Create an Omnibus Transportation Resource website – know what is available. Share services to reduce costs and more effectively utilize the available vehicles. Coordinate services between nursing homes,

assisted living facilities, foster care homes, etc. Help resolve no-load miles expense by utilizing current transportation system (public and volunteer drivers) so more than one client is transported.

Clients served by Project:

All residents within Region Nine.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs; Non-profits; MNDOT; Region Nine Development Commission.

Strategy Addressed:

Share resources; centralize information.

**5. Overview of Project:**

Services for elderly and disabled – A minimum of one 5310 vehicle per county to coordinate schedules (with nursing homes, assisted living facilities, senior housing, churches, etc.) to take residents on trips to local or non-local areas (county or state fair).

Clients served by Project:

Elderly and disabled populations. Focus on clients in long term care facilities, assisted living, nursing homes, senior housing, churches, etc.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Non-profits; Nursing homes/assisted living facilities; For-profits; transit systems .

Strategy Addressed:

Coordinate agency schedules.

**6. Overview of Project:**

Allow joint purchasing – coordinate purchases such as vehicle maintenance, insurance, driver training and substance abuse testing.

Clients served by Project:

Transit systems and drivers throughout the region.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
MNDOT and federal government.

Strategy Addressed:  
Allow joint purchasing.

**7. Overview of Project:**

Technology improvements – fund improved technology to each of the county systems so that they can be accessed and supervised by a central regional transit coordinating office. Look at diverse sizes of transportation vehicles with GPS systems. This would allow for a more efficient system that could respond in a faster and more reliable manner.

Clients served by Project:  
County transit systems throughout the region and ultimately the user of the system.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
MNDOT.

Strategy Addressed:  
Implement tools that support data management.

**8. Overview of Project:**

Diversify size of vehicles/maintain existing fleet – replace large buses with cars. Use buses only for time periods of heavy use. Use cars for rural areas and times of lower usage. Have established routes to/from small towns. Have more cost effective vehicles in operation. Replace 10-year old buses with wheelchair lift vehicles. Have more options for receiving funding to repair/replace existing vehicles, not necessarily purchasing of bus or smaller vehicles.

Clients served by Project:  
Transit systems throughout the region and ultimately the user of the system.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
MNDOT and Federal government.

Strategy Addressed:  
Improve service convenience; maintain existing vehicle fleet.



*NOTE: This was identified as a “Category C” project = difficult to implement, but major impact, but steering committee members noted that without state regulations this could, and should, be in “Category A” = easy to implement, major impact.*

**9. Overview of Project:**

After hours/weekends/nighttime services – expand hours to evenings and weekends to accommodate shift/weekend work. Encourage users and non-users to try transit.

Clients served by Project:

All residents within the region.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

Transit systems; Volunteer Driver Programs; Non-profits; For-profits.

Strategy Addressed:

Improve service convenience.

**10. Overview of Project:**

AVL (automatic vehicle locators) with downloadable app – allow potential passengers to locate bus relative to their location (real time).

Clients served by Project:

All residents within the region.

Communities Served:

All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:

MNDOT; Transit systems.

Strategy Addressed:

Improve service convenience.

*NOTE: This would have a major impact on the MSU campus and students users, but would have less of an impact on other areas of the region. Funding is also a major barrier.*

***Difficult to do/Minor Improvement***

**1. Overview of Project:**

Watonwan County/Brown County/Cottonwood County Coordinated Services – better serve county residents living on the fringe by providing them access to public transit.

Clients served by Project:  
General public.

Communities Served:  
Watonwan County, Brown County and Cottonwood County.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
Transit systems; Volunteer Driver Programs; Non-profits; For-profits (Take Me There transit may have some of this covered).

Strategy Addressed:  
Share resources; Improve service convenience; establish/expand driver programs; establish/expand taxi subsidy programs.  
*NOTE: This strategy was listed as both a Category C and a Category D. The steering committee felt it was important (Category C); however, they felt that overall, it would impact a smaller # of people, thereby also placing it into Category D.*

**2. Overview of Project:**

Pod transit (Jetsons) – develop a system similar to that used in the futuristic cartoon the Jetsons. Don't let mainstream thinking stop you from being creative.

Clients served by Project:  
All residents within the region.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
Federal government; MNDOT; transit systems; local units of government.

Strategy Addressed:  
Improve service convenience.

**3. Overview of Project:**

After hours transportation from ER (emergency room) – coordinate transportation for individuals not admitted to the ER, but who are unable to ride back to the facility or home via taxi or car.

Clients served by Project:  
All residents within the region.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
Non-profits; For-profits.

Strategy Addressed:  
Improve service convenience.

**4. Overview of Project:**

Establish or expand taxi cab subsidy with vouchers or pay taxi cab service – provide vouchers to partially or completely pay for taxi services when no other transportation services options are available.

Clients served by Project:  
DHS (Department of Human Services) clients.

Communities Served:  
All cities and counties within Region Nine.

Type of Agency Responsible:  
DHS; MNDOT; Transit systems.

Strategy Addressed:  
Establish/expand taxi subsidy programs.

## **Adoption and Approval of Plan**

On September 14, 2011 Region Nine Development Commission placed the draft plan on their website and comments were sought. The draft plan was also sent to members of the Region Nine Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), the Local Coordination Plan Steering Committee members, and the attendees of the public workshop. Public comment was accepted through October 31, 2011.

### **Comments included:**

**October 24, 2011** – Peggy Evenson, Township in Sibley County – We have to figure out a way to reach out to those in rural areas (not only residents in the small towns but those who live in the country and have no way of getting around-widows/widowers/persons with disabilities and also persons who just don't drive or can't afford to have a vehicle/insurance). Many people need transportation to and from appointments in the Twin Cities and Rochester. One person suggested to me that someone should bring back bus service to the small towns (they used to run on Highway 14 to Rochester and Highway 19 to the Twin Cities). (Action: This will be reviewed by the Steering Committee at their next meeting.)

**October 24, 2011** – Shelly Barnett, Aging Services, Le Sueur County – Page 13: paragraph 2 – Our agency transports clients from LeSueur County to Mankato several times a day. (Action: This was updated on Page 13 of the Plan.)

**October 31, 2011** – Jay Walters, Lake Crystal, Blue Earth County – We need to make sure that the systems connect to each other and cross county boundaries. (Action: This will be reviewed by the Steering Committee at their next meeting.)

**October 31, 2011** – Drew Campbell, Blue Earth County Commissioner - Transit Shelter Planning: One issue that I feel is many times ignored and not addressed while talking transit services is that there is a lack of adequate pick-up and drop-off site shelters. This is a “weather” and “seasonal” related concern. It is not only very important to handicapped and elderly, it is important for all people who are dependent on transit services. To include federal, state and local funding as well as planning for architecturally pleasing as well as practical transit shelter is a very important element. While routes, times and places all are important to transit needs, the ability to wait for rides in Minnesota both during freezing cold winters, storms and hot summer days are all important concerns for those using any form of transit. (Action: This will be reviewed by the Steering Committee at their next meeting.)

**October 31, 2011** – Jason Mekalson, Land to Air Express, Mankato – As of November 30, Jefferson Lines will no longer serve these counties, but Land to Air Express will serve the following: Blue Earth, Nicollet, Brown, Le Sueur, Waseca. If we could be added to the inventory in those counties that would be fantastic. (Action: In Appendix C, Jefferson Lines was removed from the five counties listed about and Land to Air was added.)

**October 31, 2011** – Lisa Black, rural Gibbon, Sibley County – I believe the Plan Process was fairly well studied regarding the regional background. However, I wish that there would have been more public comment involved as I don't believe the true needs have been fully assessed.

From my point of view, the Coordination Plan is a good one. The two biggest Strategies that need to be addressed are 1. Linkage Line and 2. Centralized Mobility Manager. The public needs to be educated about what is out there from one central location for all the information. With my traumatic brain injury I find it difficult to find the proper information: Who do I call? Where do I call? When do I call, I want to be able to be given all the information on the initial call. I get easily confused trying to find information from more than one source.

In addition to the need to get to the economic center of Mankato, I also need to be able to get beyond the Region 9 area for both economical and social reasons as well as political reasons. I need to be able to get for example to Minneapolis, St. Paul, St. Cloud, or Rochester. I'm sure there are others who would also benefit from this as there are Shopping, Medical, Educational, and Employment opportunities in each of these regions. This is also the reason I think transportation information needs to be centralized to coordinate transportation systems between and beyond individual counties and into other Regions.

Our Townships are underserved. We have a growing elderly population everywhere. In addition there are many disabled persons out in the rural areas. With 20% of Minnesota's economic activity stemming from Agriculture, the townships and rural areas dare not continue to be ignored or underserved. There is a real need to serve the unincorporated and townships areas.

I also believe that once the transportation services from the growing and disabled populations are improved and better established, they would also prove effective and worthwhile for others to use. There are many who would be interested in using a public transportation system for fuel efficiency and because they just don't like to drive in some of the metropolitan areas. Established routes would then also increase demand, which would increase profitability.

According to the Transit Coordination Plan, Watonwan County has had some success in getting its transit needs coordinated with the Mankato City Transit Service. This is fabulous news! Copy their efforts. I believe the current turf conflicts arise due to the

organization of funding sources. We need stronger Regional Leadership in coordinating current systems in order to broaden transportation services as well as funding sources. This would also show a higher action status on more of the strategies in the Transit Coordination Plan. Another idea would be establish more park and ride lots. Give me then a central office for transit information from those lots to where I need to go! Help Me Get There! (Action: This will be reviewed by the Steering Committee at their next meeting.)

**November 4, 2011** - Jan Klassen, MNDOT - I don't know if we addressed it in the coordination plan. Would it be appropriate to think about how to educate us out here on how to use existing systems and their connection? Examples would be Land to Air to the Metro area and connections to taxi or Metro Transit as well as connecting and using the Sioux Falls transit system. (Action: This could possibly be added as an "Inventory & assess available resources. Create an Omnibus Transportation Resource website" or an educational project. This will be reviewed by the Steering Committee at their next meeting.)

In 2013 the Local Coordination Steering Committee, along with County Veterans Service Officers met on two separate occasions (May 9 and June 14). The first meeting, held on May 9<sup>th</sup>, focused on the newly funded Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative. The purpose of the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative is to "improve access to transportation resources for veterans, military families and other clients by connecting customers in one place to rides and transportation options available from a variety of transportation providers and programs in their area<sup>3</sup>"(added July 2012).

Steering Committee members met again on June 14<sup>th</sup> and spent a majority of the time identifying projects that should be carried forward over the next one to three years. Steering Committee members prepared a "1 – 3 year work plan", which can be found in Appendix F. During the June 14<sup>th</sup> meeting Steering Committee members also spent time identifying how the various coordination projects that had been identified in the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan would benefit our veteran community. This information is also available in the 1-3 year work plan found in Appendix F (added July 2012).

Steering Committee members will continue to meet in 2013 to continue their work and possibly move toward the idea of a Regional Coordinating Council (added July 2012).

---

<sup>3</sup> Information gleaned from the "Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative: Phase I" document prepared by MnDOT.

## Appendix A- Public Workshop Participants

---

### May 24, 2011 Workshop Participants

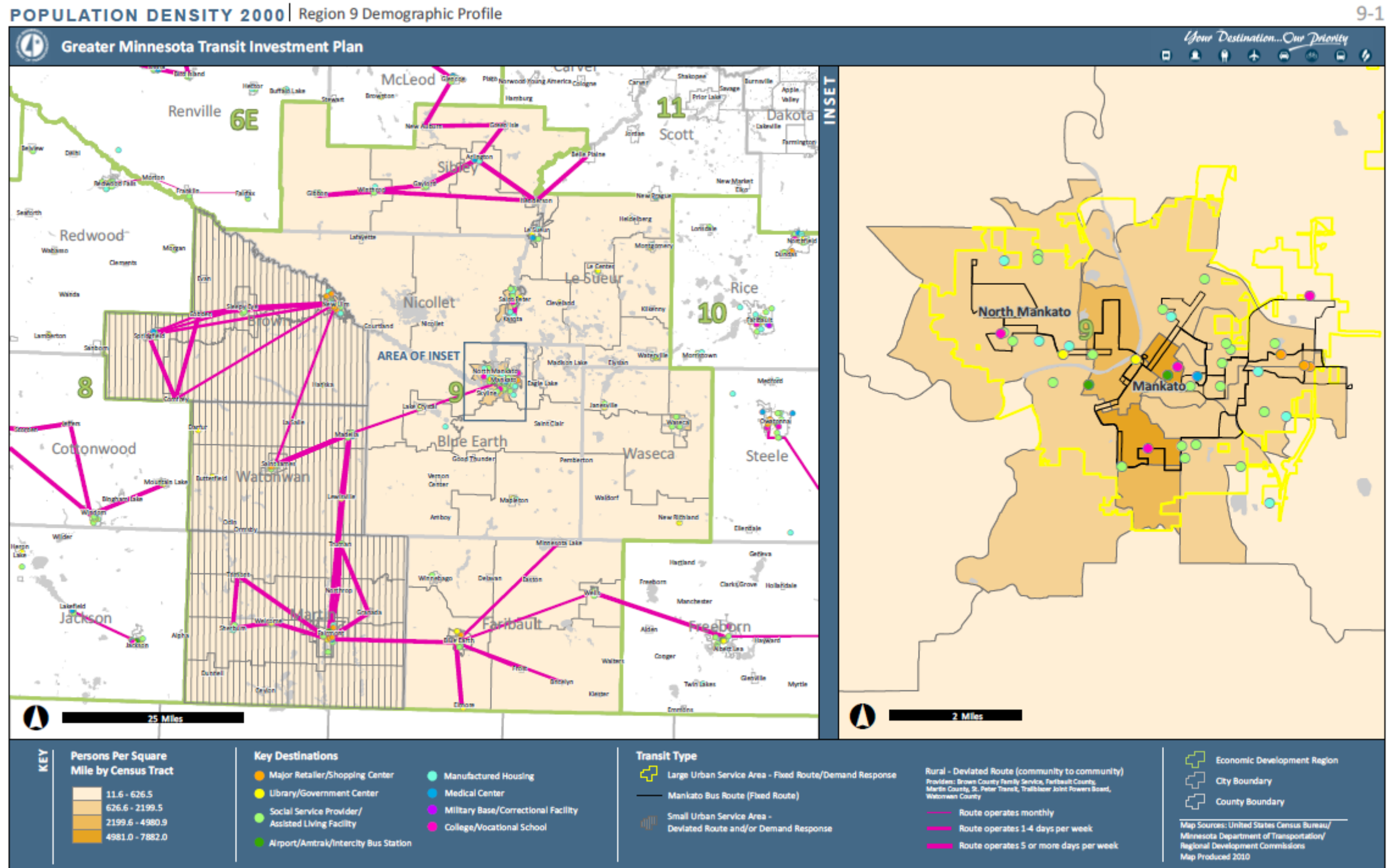
---

NAME	REPRESENTING
Mary Olson	Ecumen Sand Prairie
Sharon Bornholdt	Rivers Edge
Lanny Cox	MRCI
Janice Klassen	MNDOT
Katie Neegaard	Jobs Plus
Sandy Pinney	Le Sueur County Public Health
Lisa Black	Interested citizen
Greg Young	Faribault County Commissioner
Evan Hedwall	MN State University, Mankato MSSA
Carol Larson	Sibley County Human Services
Lisa Eue	MVHC
Mark Pauly	Sibley County DAC
Mike Pinske	AMV
Sharon Chader	Elder Care Services
Juanita Krull	Human Services of Faribault & Martin Counties
Carol Clark	VINE Faith In Action
Angela Holmen	Watonwan County Human Services
Sandy Chadderdon	MVAC
Bob Apitz	Brown County Heartland Express
Mark Anderson	Mankato Transit
Elaine Spain	MN River Area Agency on Aging
DeAnn Boney	Blue Earth County Human Services

Dalaine Remes	Minnesota Disability Law Center
Michelle Hansen	American Cancer Society
Dave Byro	Dave's Provide A Ride
Tom Tetzloff	Jobs Plus
Dwile Kwasniewski	St. Peter Transit
Sylvia Perron	Nicollet County Volunteer Transportation
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission



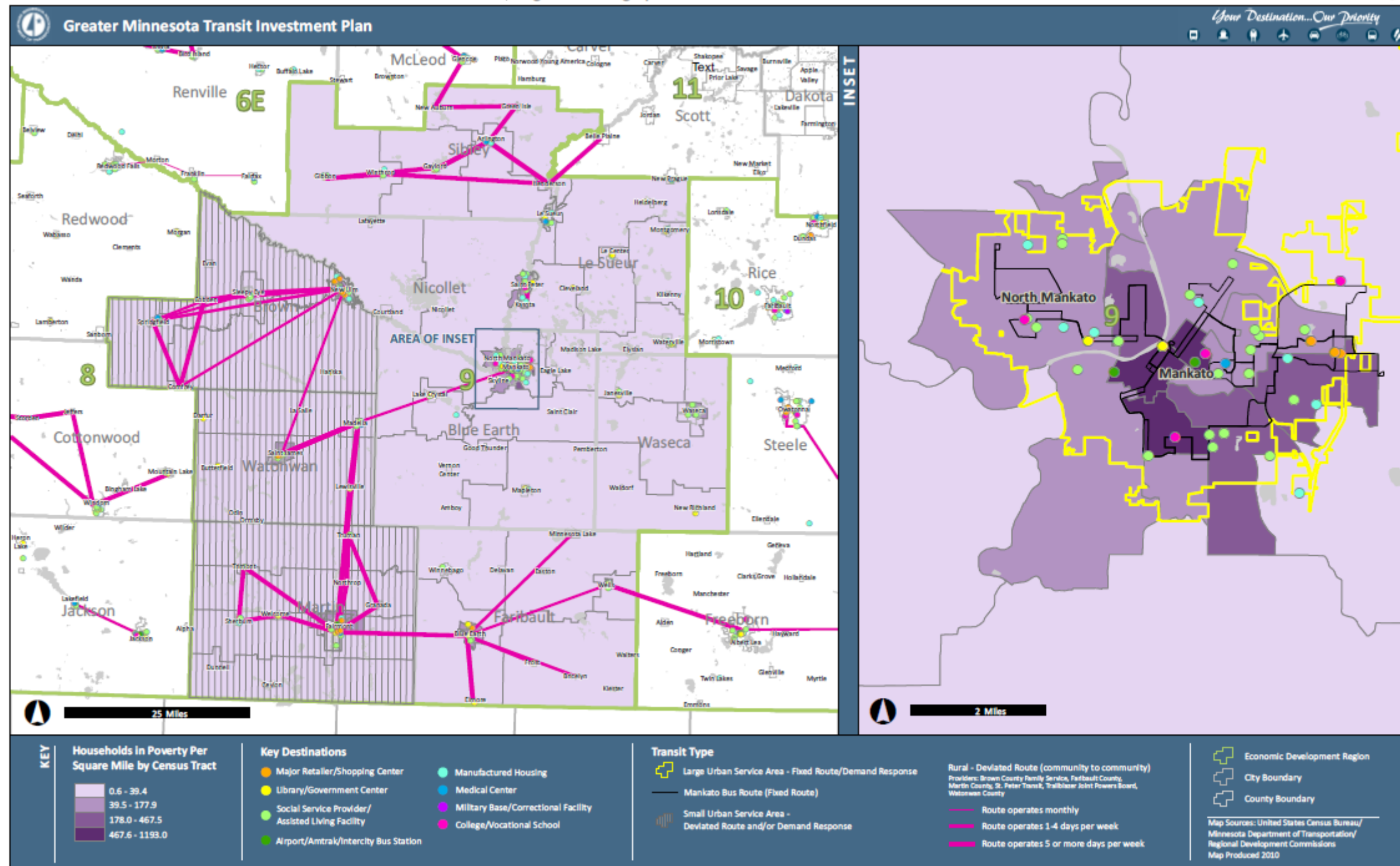
# Appendix B- Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region Nine



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

DENSITY OF HOUSEHOLDS IN POVERTY IN 2000 | Region 9 Demographic Profile

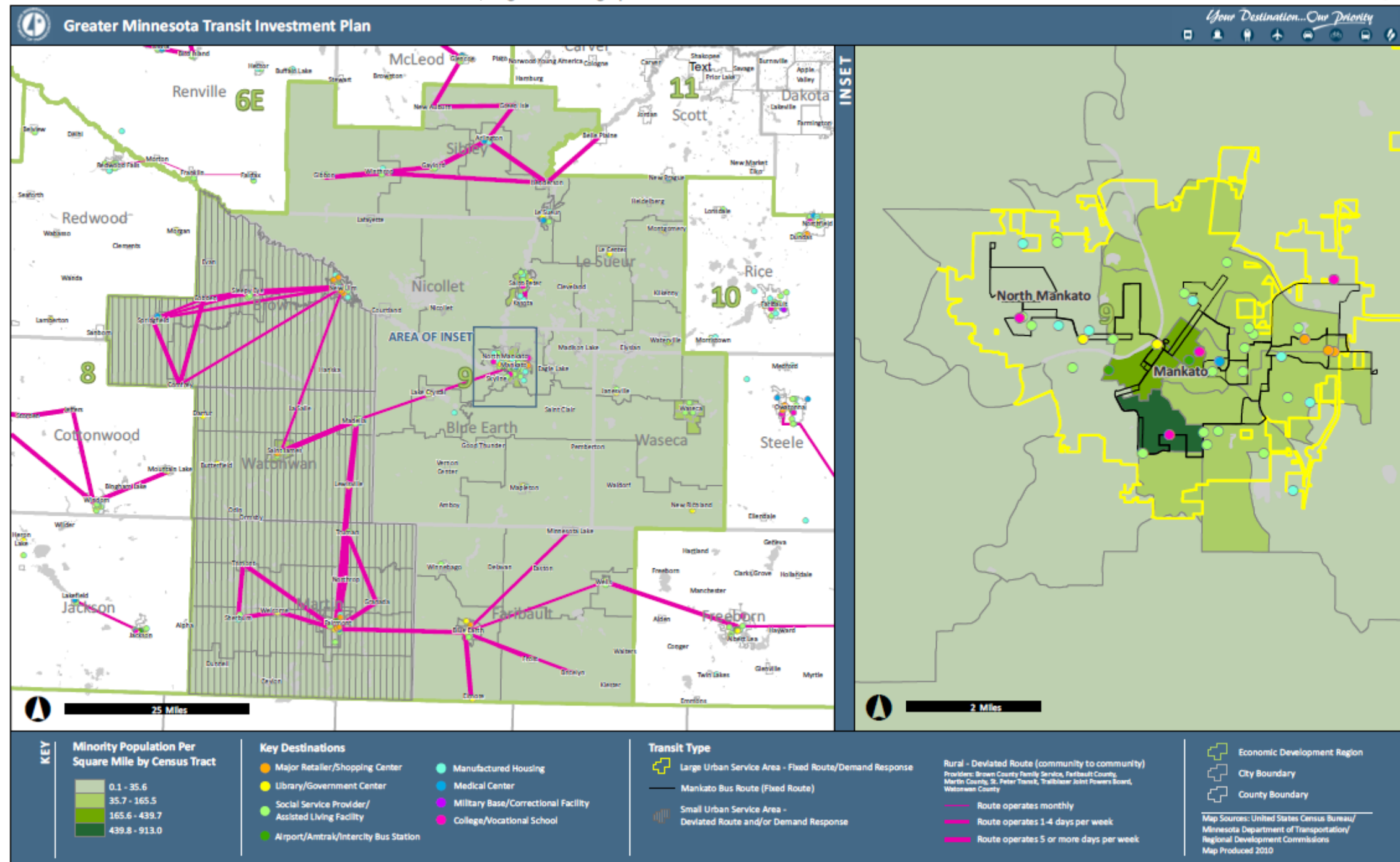
9-2



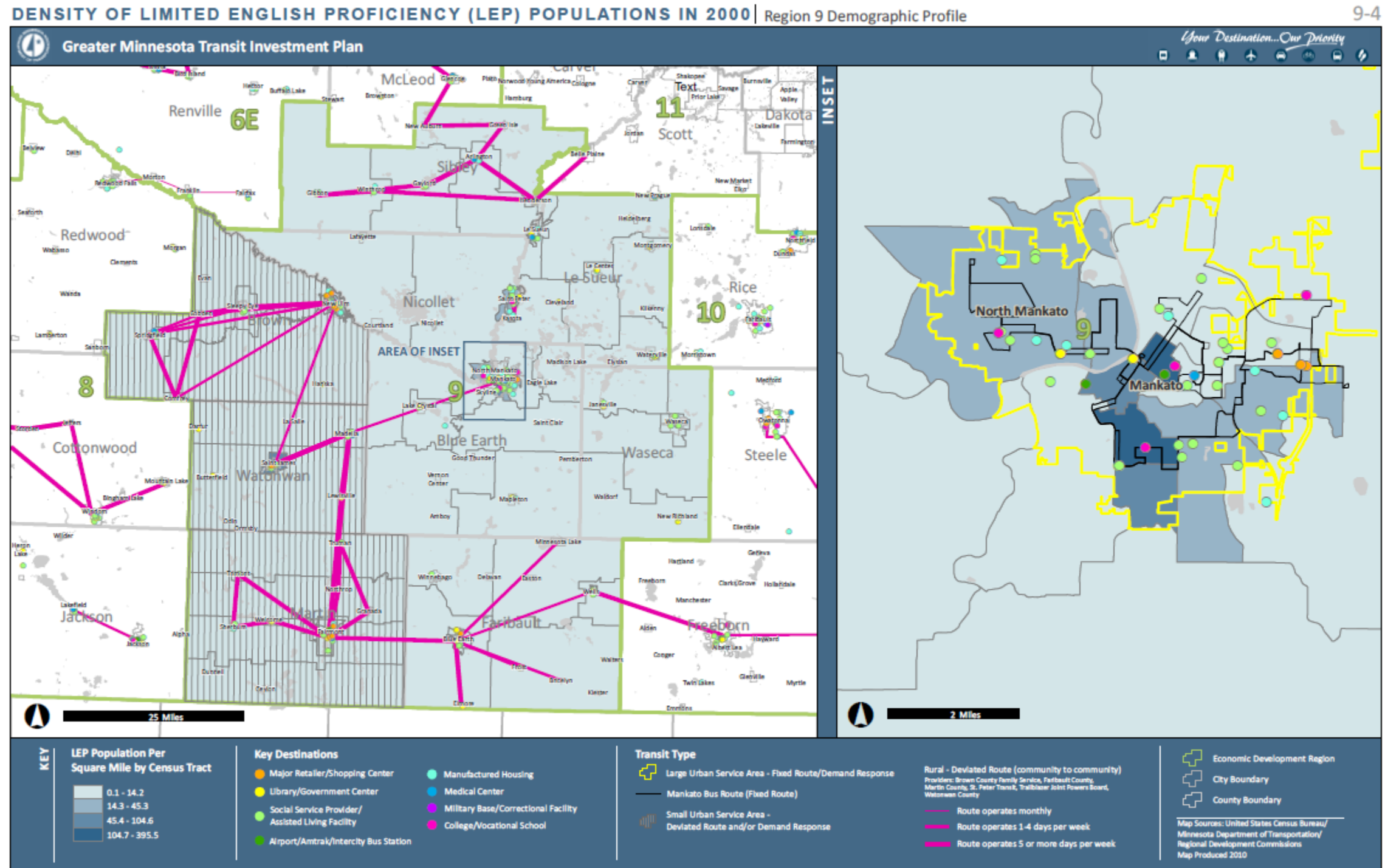
# Appendix B- Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region Nine

DENSITY OF MINORITY POPULATIONS IN 2000 | Region 9 Demographic Profile

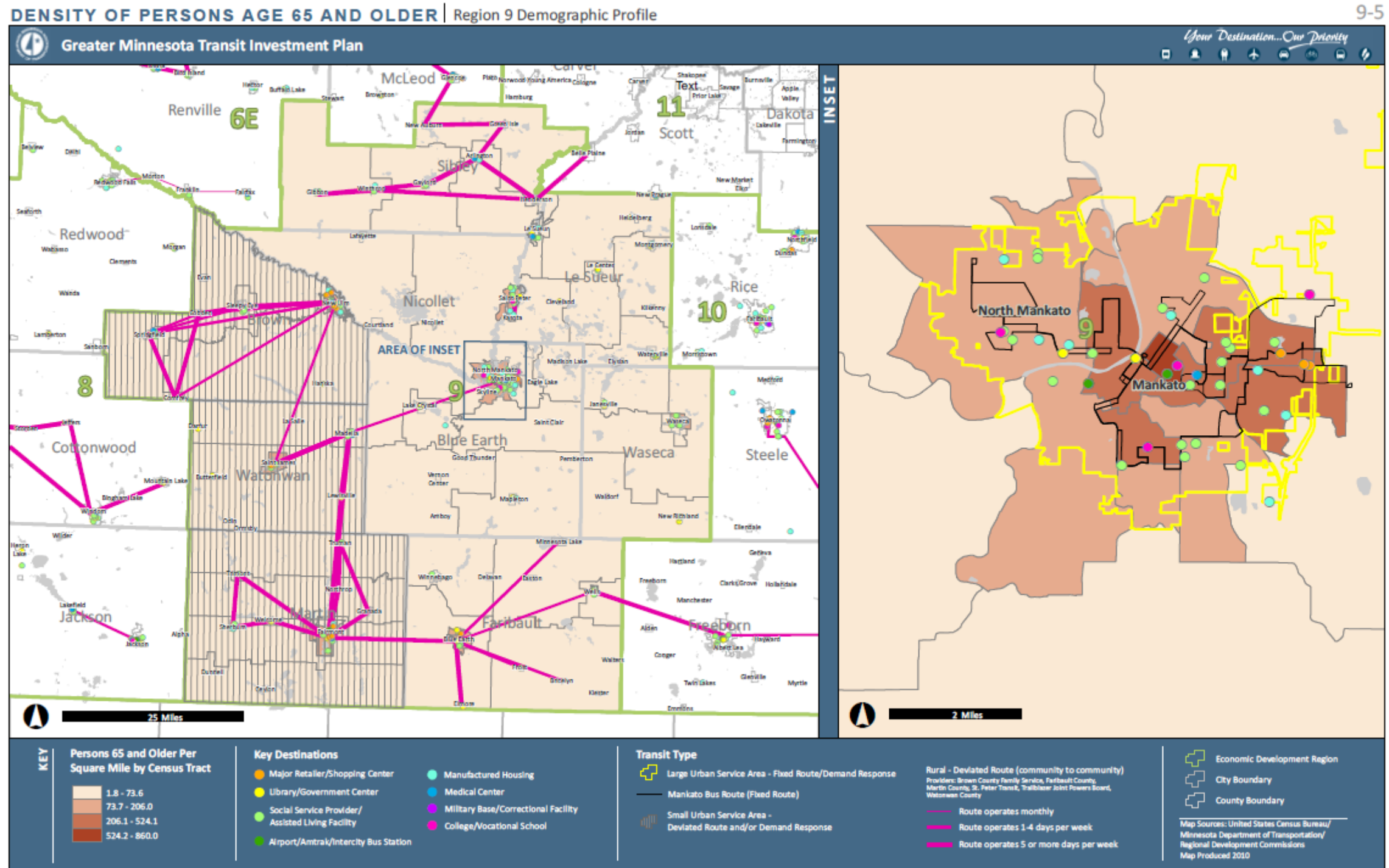
9-3



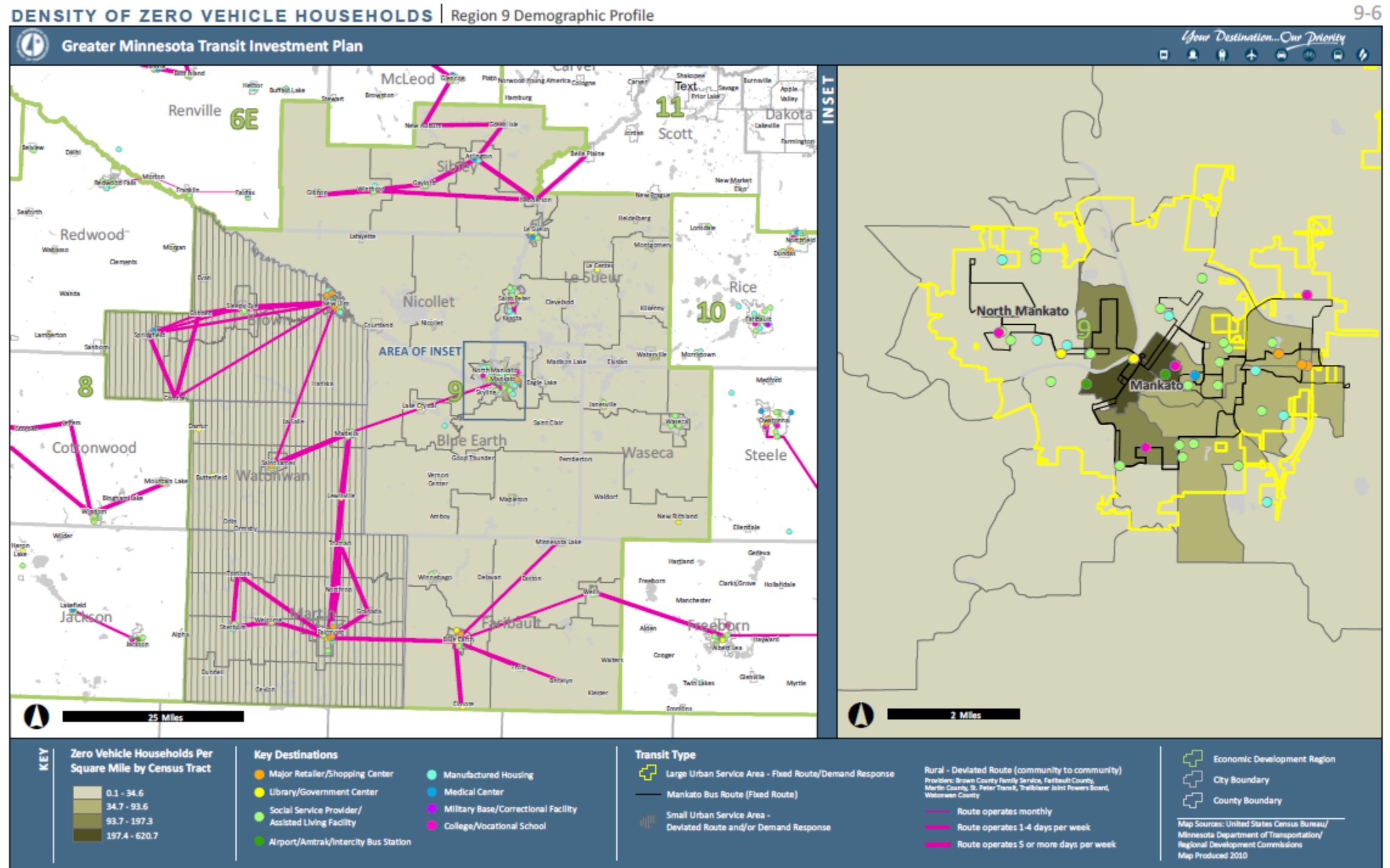
# Appendix B- Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region Nine



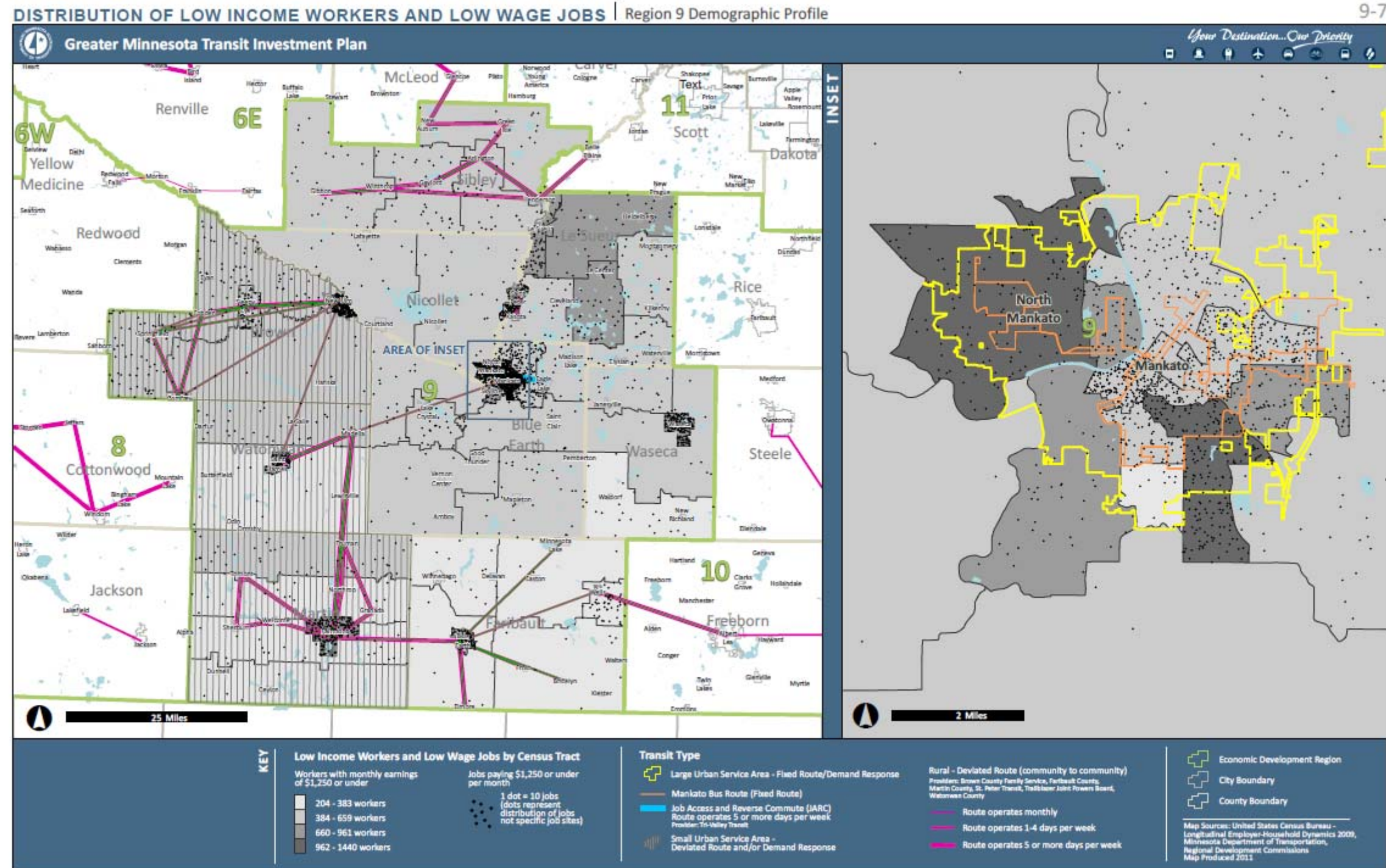
# Appendix B- Transit Services, Transit-Dependent Populations, and Key Destinations in Region Nine



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



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



## 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 the region.

<b>Blue Earth County</b>
<p><b>Affordable &amp; Accessible Van Inc.</b> 1717 Bassett Drive Mankato, MN, 56001 <b>507-304 - 5304</b> <a href="mailto:aavvanservic@yahoo.com">aavvanservic@yahoo.com</a> Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Americare Mobility Van (AMV)</b> 703 S. 2nd Street Mankato, MN <b>1-800-963-7233</b> <b>507-625-6741</b> <a href="http://www.amvan.com/">http://www.amvan.com/</a> Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>City of Mankato Public Transit</b> Mass Transit 224 Lamm Street Mankato, MN 56001 <b>(507) 625-7422</b> <a href="http://www.mankato-mn.gov/Bus-Routes/Page.aspx">http://www.mankato-mn.gov/Bus-Routes/Page.aspx</a> Bus routes and schedules <a href="http://www.mankato-mn.gov/Bus-Fare/Page.aspx">http://www.mankato-mn.gov/Bus-Fare/Page.aspx</a> Bus fare information Public Transit Fixed Route</p>
<p><b>City of Mankato Public Transit</b> <b>Mobility Bus Service</b> 224 Lamm Street Mankato, MN 56001 <b>507-625-7422</b> <a href="http://www.mankato-mn.gov/MTS_MobilityBus/Page.aspx">http://www.mankato-mn.gov/MTS_MobilityBus/Page.aspx</a> Public Transit Dial a Ride</p>



<p><b>Country Neighbors Home, Inc.</b>  206 3rd Avenue NE, PO Box 365  Mapleton, MN  <b>507-524-4990</b>  <a href="http://countryneighbors.org/">http://countryneighbors.org/</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Elder Care Services, Inc.</b>  1110 Park Rd  Madison Lake, MN, 56063  <b>507-243-3603</b>  <a href="http://www.eldercareservicesmn.com">http://www.eldercareservicesmn.com</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Kato Cab</b>  722 1/2 N Riverfront Dr.  Mankato, MN 56001  <b>(507) 388-7433</b>  <a href="http://katocab.net/">http://katocab.net/</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Land to Air Express</b>  434 Patterson Avenue  Mankato, MN 56001-2309  <b>(507) 625-3977</b>  <a href="http://landtoairexpress.com/">http://landtoairexpress.com/</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Mankato Area Living At Home /Block Nurse Program</b>  PO Box 4314  Mankato, MN 56002  507-345-2985  <a href="http://www.athome-mankato.org/index.html">http://www.athome-mankato.org/index.html</a>  Volunteer Driver Program</p>
<p><b>MRCI</b>  15 Map Drive  Mankato, MN 56001  <b>507-386-5600</b>  <a href="http://www.mrciworksource.org/">http://www.mrciworksource.org/</a>  Private Transportation</p>

**SMILES Center for Independent Living**

Address:

709 S Front St. Ste. 7

Mankato, MN, 56001

**507-345-7139**

<http://www.smilescil.org>

Private Transportation

**TAXI PROS, Mankato MN**

101 D Street

Mankato, MN 56001

**507-344-TAXI (8294)**

[www.mankatotaxi@yahoo.com](mailto:www.mankatotaxi@yahoo.com)

Private Transportation

**Veterans Services**

Government Center, Lower Level

410 S. 5th St.

P.O. Box 8608

Mankato, MN 56002-8608

**Phone: (507) 304-4246**

<http://www.co.blue-earth.mn.us/dept/veterans.php#trans>

Transportation to VA Hospital

**(507) 304-4246**

Volunteer Driver Program

**VINE Faith in Action**

1618 Third Ave, Mankato, MN 56001

**Phone: 507-387-1666**

[www.vinevolunteers.com](http://www.vinevolunteers.com)

Volunteer Driver Program

**Brown County**

**Affordable & Accessible Van Inc.**

1717 Bassett Drive

Mankato, MN, 56001

**507-304 - 5304**

[aavvanservic@yahoo.com](mailto:aavvanservic@yahoo.com)

Private Transportation

**Americare Mobility Van (AMV)**

703 S. 2nd Street

Mankato, MN

**1-800-963-7233**

**507-625-6741**

<http://www.amvan.com/>

Private Transportation

<p><b>Heartland Express/Brown County</b>  1117 Center St., PO Box 788  New Ulm  <b>507-359-2717</b>  <a href="http://www.co.brown.mn.us/index.php/heartland-expresstransit">http://www.co.brown.mn.us/index.php/heartland-expresstransit</a>  Public Transit Dial a Ride</p>
<p><b>Brown County Veterans Hospital</b>  14 S. State St.  New Ulm  <b>507-233-6636</b>  <a href="http://www.co.brown.mn.us/index.php/veterans-home">http://www.co.brown.mn.us/index.php/veterans-home</a>  Volunteer Driver Program</p>
<p><b>Land to Air Express</b>  434 Patterson Avenue  Mankato, MN 56001-2309  <b>(507) 625-3977</b>  <a href="http://landtoairexpress.com/">http://landtoairexpress.com/</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>New Ulm, MN Taxi and Limousine Services</b>  1626 N Jefferson St.  New Ulm, MN 56073  <b>507-354-6319</b>  <a href="http://www.taxiandlimoservicenewulm.com/">http://www.taxiandlimoservicenewulm.com/</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Services for Seniors in Brown &amp; Sibley Counties</b>  1100 First Avenue South  Sleepy Eye, MN 56085  <b>507-507-354-5370</b>  <a href="http://www.servicesforseniorsmn.com">www.servicesforseniorsmn.com</a>  Volunteer Driver Program</p>
<p><b>SMILES Center for Independent Living</b>  1618 S Broadway  New Ulm, MN, 56073  <b>888-676-6498</b>  <a href="http://www.smilescil.org">http://www.smilescil.org</a>  Private Transportation</p>

**Veterans Services of Brown County**

14 S State Street  
New Ulm, MN56073-3154  
**507-233-6636**  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Faribault County**

**Affordable & Accessible Van Inc.**

1717 Bassett Drive  
Mankato, MN, 56001  
**507-304 - 5304**  
[aavvanservic@yahoo.com](mailto:aavvanservic@yahoo.com)  
Private Transportation

**Americare Mobility Van (AMV)**

703 S. 2nd Street  
Mankato, MN  
**1-800-963-7233**  
**507-625-6741**  
<http://www.amvan.com/>  
Private Transportation

**Bethany Evangelical Lutheran Church – Frost**

48332 40th St  
Frost, MN, 56033  
**507-653-4565**  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Faribault County Prairie Express**

415 N. Main  
Blue Earth  
**507-526-7433**  
[http://www.co.faribault.mn.us/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=27](http://www.co.faribault.mn.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12&Itemid=27)

**Interfaith Caregivers-Faith In Action**

415 S Grove St Ste. 5  
Blue Earth, MN, 56013  
**507-526-4684**  
<http://interfaithcaregivers.net>  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Faribault County Veterans Office**

412 N. Nicollet  
Blue Earth  
**507-526-6268**  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Le Sueur County**

**Aging Services for Communities**

212 South 1st St.  
Montgomery, MN 56069  
**Phone 507-364-5663**  
[www.aging-services.org](http://www.aging-services.org)  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Land to Air Express**

434 Patterson Avenue  
Mankato, MN 56001-2309  
**(507) 625-3977**  
<http://landtoairexpress.com/>  
Private Transportation

**Le Sueur County Veterans Services**

88 South Park Avenue  
Le Center MN, 56057  
**507-357-8279**  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Le Sueur Heartland Express**

601 South 5th St.  
Le Sueur, MN 56058  
**Phone: (507) 665-6211**  
<http://www.cityoflesueur.com/transit/>  
Public Transit Dial a Ride

**Martin County**

**CREST - Caregiver Response Effort and Service Team**

610 Summit Dr.  
Fairmont, MN, 56031  
**507-235-3833**  
<http://www.fianationalnetwork.org/index.php/component/sobi2/?sobi2Task=sobi2Details&catid=3&sobi2Id=290>  
Volunteer Driver Program

<p><b>Fairlakes Taxi Service</b>  227 S. State St.  Fairmont, MN 56031  <b>507-235-5558</b>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Jefferson Lines Bus Service</b>  Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce  323 E Blue Earth Ave  Fairmont, MN 56031  <b>507-235-5547 – ticket sales</b>  Freedom Valu Center  407 E Blue Earth Ave  Fairmont, MN 56031  <b>507-238-9392 – bus stop</b>  <a href="http://jeffersonbus.localplacement.net/">http://jeffersonbus.localplacement.net/</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Martin County Express</b>  201 Lake Ave Courthouse Room 100  Fairmont, MN, 56031  <b>800-382-7433</b>  <a href="http://www.co.martin.mn.us/Countyinfo/mcexpress">http://www.co.martin.mn.us/Countyinfo/mcexpress</a></p>
<p><b>SMILES Center for Independent Living</b>  820 Winnebago Ave, Ste. 1  Fairmont, MN, 56031  888-676-6498  <a href="http://www.smilescil.org">http://www.smilescil.org</a>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Sonny’s Taxi Cab</b>  1009 N. Hampton St.  Fairmont, MN 56031  <b>507-236-4543</b>  Private Transportation</p>
<p><b>Martin County Veterans Office</b>  115 W 1st St, Ste 306  Fairmont, MN 56031  <b>507-238-3220</b>  Volunteer Driver Program</p>

## Nicollet County

### **City of St. Peter Transit System**

227 S Front Street  
St. Peter, MN, 56082  
**507-934-6070**

<http://ci.st-peter.mn.us/transit/>

Public Transit Dial a Ride

### **Land to Air Express**

434 Patterson Avenue  
Mankato, MN 56001-2309  
**(507) 625-3977**

<http://landtoairexpress.com/>

Private Transportation

### **Lifeworks**

1804 Commerce Drive  
North Mankato, MN 56003  
**507-625-7522**

<http://mankato.lifeworks.org/lifeworks/default.asp>

Private Transportation

### **Nicollet County Volunteer Transportation**

501 S Minnesota Avenue Government Center  
St. Peter, MN, 56082  
**507-934-0484**

<http://www.co.nicollet.mn.us/>

Volunteer Driver Program

### **Nicollet County Veterans Services**

Nicollet County Government Center  
501 S. Minnesota Ave.  
St. Peter, MN 56082  
**507-934-0413**

Volunteer Driver Program

## Sibley County

### **Services for Seniors in Brown & Sibley Counties**

108 NW 4th Avenue  
Arlington, MN 55307  
**507-964-2676**

[www.servicesforseniorsmn.com](http://www.servicesforseniorsmn.com)

Volunteer Driver Program

**Trailblazer Transit**

112 Fifth Street  
Gaylord, MN 55334

**888-743-3828**

<http://www.trailblazertransit.com/>

Public Transit Dial a Ride

**Sibley County Veteran Services**

Sibley County Service Center

111 8<sup>th</sup> St.

Gaylord, MN 55334

507-237-4090

Volunteer Driver Program

**Waseca County****Ican, Inc. - Independent Counseling & Advocacy Network**

100 N State St.

Waseca, MN, 56093

**507-835-9140**

<http://www.icaninc.org/>

Private Transportation

**Land to Air Express**

434 Patterson Avenue

Mankato, MN 56001-2309

**(507) 625-3977**

<http://landtoairexpress.com/>

Private Transportation

**SMILES Center for Independent Living**

505 State St S Ste 6

Waseca, MN, 56093

**888-676-6498**

<http://www.smilescil.org>

Private Transportation

**Taxi Connection**

604 7th Ave SW

Waseca, MN

**507-833-5588**

Private Transportation

**Waseca County Transportation**

108 10th Ave. SE

Waseca, MN, 56093

**507-835-4551**

[http://www.mnvac.org/mvac\\_main.php](http://www.mnvac.org/mvac_main.php)

Public Transit Dial a Ride



**Waseca County Veterans Services**

307 N. State St.  
Waseca, MN 56093  
507-835-0630  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Watonwan County**

**Jefferson Lines Bus Service**

Rogers BP & Service  
610 Haynes Ave NE  
Madelia, MN 56062  
**507-642-3711**  
<http://jeffersonbus.localplacement.net/>  
Private Transportation

**Senior Transportation**

Leona Shellum  
375-3780  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Watonwan County TMT**

1304 7th Ave S  
St. James, MN, 56081  
**507-375-7385**  
<http://www.co.watonwan.mn.us/department.aspx?Id=da3feb89-4ee9-4325-80ff-0819b393d293>  
Public Transit Fixed Route

**Watonwan County Veteran Services**

St. James, MN 56081  
**507-375-1254**  
Volunteer Driver Program

**Wellspring Faith In Action**

108 8th Street South  
St. James  
**507-375-1276**  
Volunteer Driver Program

## Appendix D- Project Idea Summary

<b>Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>				
	<b>Notes</b>	<b>Title of Project</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>	<b>Strategy Projects Fulfills</b>
	<b>#</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION INCLUDES COMMUNITY AND POPULATION SERVED</b>	<b>USE WORDING DIRECTLY FROM STRATEGY MENU</b>
1	34	Regional Transportation Linkage Line (central location for information) and Centralized Mobility Manager (dispatch center)	Within the region employ 3 Regional Trade Center dispatchers (Mankato, Fairmont, New Ulm). Human Service Care Coordinators could be relieved of trying to run transportation services. Could include all riders. Corridor transportation services would be readily available. Various sizes of vehicles used as well as volunteer drivers and private providers. Have one place for customers to call to receive service, building in cost-efficiencies, increase ridesharing to reduce costs.	Coordinate dispatch; share resources; consolidate functions
2	11	Shared driver database (CDL, volunteer – paid and unpaid, etc...)	Create a database of drivers and figure out a way to use them across agencies. Perhaps have a way for them to submit when they are available to help. Implement an active volunteer driver recruitment campaign. Get more than 1-2 volunteers available to county residents. Develop/incorporate paid and non-paid drivers.	Share resources; establish/enhance volunteer driver programs
3	10	Funding streams	Identify new potential funding streams that could offset cuts	Contract between

			being made through DHS and the legislature	agencies
4	9	Corridor services	Regular routes on highways between counties/towns. Could look at possible corridor route from Waseca to New Ulm. Use existing systems as “feeder systems”. Have regular services for those individuals that make “repetitive” trips (ie: dialysis).	Share resources
5	6	Inventory & assess available resources. Create an Omnibus Transportation Resource website.	Know what is available. Share services to reduce costs and more effectively utilize the available vehicles. Coordinate services between nursing homes, assisted living facilities, foster care homes, etc... Help resolve no-load miles expense by utilizing current transportation system (public and volunteer drivers) so more than one client is transported.	Share resources
6	5	Hub for public and private transportation providers	Co-locate with Land To Air at new facility. House Intra and Inter transportation options out of one facility.	Share resources
7		Watsonwan Co/Brown Co/Cottonwood Co Coordinated Services	To better serve county residents living on the fringes by providing them access. This would serve the general public.	Share resources
8		Field Trip Rides	One vehicle to coordinate schedules with nursing homes, assisted living facilities to take residents on field trips to local or non-local areas (county or state fair). Serve clients in long term care facilities, assisted living and nursing	Coordinate agency schedules

			homes in Le Sueur County	
9		Diverse size of transportation devices with GPS	A more efficient system that could respond in a faster and more reliable manner	Implement tools that support data management
10		Allow joint purchasing	Coordinate purchases such as vehicle maintenance, insurance, driver training and substance abuse testing.	Allow joint purchasing
11		Technology improvements	Fund improved technology to each of the county systems so that they can be accessed and supervised by a central regional transit coordinating office	Implement tools that support data management
<b>Category 2: Mobility Strategies</b>				
12	21	Diversify size of vehicles/maintain existing fleet	Replace large buses with cars. Use buses only for time periods of heavy use. Use cars for rural areas and times of lower usage. Have established routes to/from small towns. Have more cost effective vehicles in operation. Replace 10-year old buses with wheelchair lift. Have more options for receiving funding to repair/replace existing vehicles, not necessarily purchasing of bus or smaller vehicles.	Improve service convenience; maintain existing vehicle fleet
13	20	After hours/weekends/nighttime adventures	Expand hours to evenings and weekends to accommodate shift/weekend work. Encourage users and non-users to try transit by hosting nighttime or weekend “adventures”.	Improve service convenience
14	2	Pod transit (Jetsons)	Develop a system similar to that used in the futuristic cartoon the Jetsons. Don’t let	Improve service convenience

			mainstream thinking stop you from being creative.	
15		After hours transportation from ER	Transportation for individuals not admitted to the ER, but who are unable to ride back to the facility or home via taxi or car.	Improve service convenience
16		Affordable town to town transportation with the same county	Providing service for transit dependent populations (ie: elderly or low income) between communities within the same county (ie: Le Sueur to Le Center)	Improve service convenience
17		Regular routes for public transit	Develop one standard schedule that people can count on	Improve service convenience
18		Begin route service with mobility bus	Begin providing route service to Mayo, several nursing homes and assisted living centers	Improve service convenience
19		Establish or expand taxi cab subsidy with vouchers or pay taxi cab service	Provide vouchers to partially or completely pay for taxi services. Assist senior citizens or others who have no families available to support their needs while at medical appointments and reporting back to families out of state, if any, regarding prescriptions. Keep clients in their home longer.	Establish/expand taxi subsidy programs
20		AVL with downloadable app.	Allow potential passengers to locate bus relative to their location (ie: real time)	Improve service convenience
<b>Category 3: Communication, Training, and Organizational Support</b>				
21	10	Carpooling website	Create a place where people can communicate and connect with others to get to where they need/want to go. Post notices within job sites. Include starting and ending	Improve service convenience; consolidate business functions; centralize information

			point.	
22	4	Education roundtables	Hold meetings where local transportation agencies, human service agencies, advocates and community members can meet regarding issues/concerns. A lot of people are not aware of public transit availability, especially in rural areas. Educate the public about the available options (agencies, routes, schedules, etc...).	Educate public of transportation options; educate regional professionals of transportation options
23	1	Regional Coordination Access Council	Develop an “oversight” council, made up of public and private providers as well as those who require service. This group would help direct a transit vision for the region.	Convene regional coordination body
24	0	Region 9 Transportation Open House	Invite all transportation providers to come together and meet with customers/potential customers.	Educate public of transportation options
25		Staff training on defensive driving and abuse prevention	Assure all staff are trained in the above areas on a regular basis (1 time/year). Currently systems have to close their program for the day or pay overtime to do it on a Saturday. Neither option is feasible. This would benefit the disabled community as well as the staff who are required to obtain the training.	Provide technical training for coordination staff
<b>Category 4: Miscellaneous projects identified outside of the planning process</b>				
26		Outside 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
27		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
28		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
29		Consolidate business functions	Merge various operating functions, such as a call center or service delivery, from several agencies under single entity	Improves program access; creates cost efficiencies
30		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 routes services; increases consumers’ transportation options; means to offer culturally specific training to target groups
31		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
32		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

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

<p><b>Difficult to do/Minor impact projects</b></p> <p>#7 – impacts a smaller number of people</p> <p>#14</p> <p>#15</p> <p>#19</p>	<p><b>Difficult to do/Major impact projects</b></p> <p>#1                      #8                      #13</p> <p>#2                      #9                      #17 – depends on location – rural vs. regional center</p> <p>#3 –                      #10                      #20 – MSU = big impact; others = less impact; \$ is barrier identifying is easy; getting it is difficult</p> <p>#4 – Land to                      #11                      #25 – depends upon the system – public transit = easy/minor Air in progress</p> <p>#5                      #12 – should be easy, but state regulations make it difficult</p>
<p><b>Easy to do/Minor impact projects</b></p> <p>#16</p> <p>#21 – gas prices will affect this</p>	<p><b>Easy to do/Major impact projects</b></p> <p>#6 – assuming \$ is available for facility</p> <p>#18 – funding dependent</p> <p>#22</p> <p>#23</p> <p>#24</p>

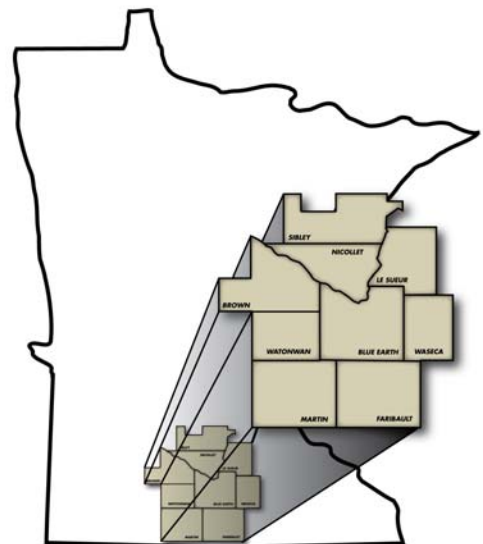


# Region Nine 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination – 1 – 3 year Work Plan

---

Prepared by:  
Ronda Allis  
Region Nine Development Commission  
10 Civic Center Plaza, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
PO Box 3367  
Mankato, MN 56002-3367

July 2012



## **Background**

In January 2012, Region Nine Development Commission adopted the 2011 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan in conjunction with the Minnesota Department of Transportation, local providers and stakeholders. The plan was a requirement of SAFETEA-LU, the current federal surface transportation bill, and allows for the release of certain future federal transit dollars to the state, local agencies and providers.

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.

Beyond fulfilling federal requirements, this planning process encouraged representatives of diverse organizations to join together in articulating specific projects that could advance coordination strategies throughout Region Nine. Throughout the planning process, Steering Committee members felt strongly about the need to continue efforts to move transit coordination forward.

## Steering Committee Membership

---

Steering Committee Membership	
Shelly Barnett	Aging Services for Communities
Bob Apitz	Brown County Heartland Express
Carol Clark	VINE
DeAnn Boney	Blue Earth County Human Services
Elaine Spain	Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Jan Klassen	MNDOT District 7 Transit Project Mgr
Kevin Burns	Immanuel St. Joseph's Hospital
Laura Bealey	MRCI
Lanny Cox	MRCI
Ron Decker	MRCI
Dalaine Remes	Minnesota Disability Law Center
Mark Anderson	Mankato Transit
Karen Wagner	DEED Workforce Center
Sue Clayton	Waseca County Human Services
Marilee Reck	Waseca County Human Services
Sylvia Perron	Nicollet County Human Services
Anne Murray	SMILES
Dave Hanson	Faribault County Veterans Service Officer
Jim Goltart	Le Sueur County Veterans Service Officer
Greg Peterson	Brown County Veterans Service Officer
Lisa Klenk	Sibley County Veterans Service Officer
Doug Landsteiner	Martin County Veterans Service Officer
Ronda Allis	Region Nine Development Commission

## Strategy and Project Identification

The priority strategies and projects that were identified through the initial planning process in 2011 (see chart below) were reviewed by the Steering Committee during follow up meetings held on May 9, 2012 and June 14, 2012. Members reviewed the 25 projects and narrowed it down to three projects that they would like to see move forward in the next one to three years. The three projects that were identified actually covered six different projects; however, the committee felt that, in some cases, projects could be combined into a single project. The shaded areas represent the projects that the Steering Committee identified, and those that they wanted to combine are shaded in like color.

<b>Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>				
	<b>Votes</b>	<b>Title of Project</b>	<b>Description of Project</b>	<b>Strategy Projects Fulfills</b>
	<b>#</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION INCLUDES COMMUNITY AND POPULATION SERVED</b>	<b>USE WORDING DIRECTLY FROM STRATEGY MENU</b>
1	34	Regional Transportation Linkage Line (central location for information) and Centralized Mobility Manager (dispatch center)	Within the region employ 3 Regional Trade Center dispatchers (Mankato, Fairmont, New Ulm). Human Service Care Coordinators could be relieved of trying to run transportation services. Could include all riders. Corridor transportation services would be readily available. Various sizes of vehicles used as well as volunteer drivers and private providers. Have one place for customers to call to receive service, building in cost-efficiencies, increase ridesharing to reduce costs.	Coordinate dispatch; share resources; consolidate functions
2	11	Shared driver database (CDL, volunteer – paid and unpaid, etc...)	Create a database of drivers and figure out a way to use them across agencies. Perhaps have a way for them to submit when they are available to help. Implement an active volunteer driver recruitment campaign. Get more than 1-2 volunteers available to county residents. Develop/incorporate paid and non-paid drivers.	Share resources; establish/enhance volunteer driver programs

**Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources**

3	10	Funding streams	Identify new potential funding streams that could offset cuts being made through DHS and the legislature	Contract between agencies
4	9	Corridor services	Regular routes on highways between counties/towns. Could look at possible corridor route from Waseca to New Ulm. Use existing systems as “feeder systems”. Have regular services for those individuals that make “repetitive” trips (ie: dialysis).	Share resources
5	6	Inventory & assess available resources. Create an Omnibus Transportation Resource website.	Know what is available. Share services to reduce costs and more effectively utilize the available vehicles. Coordinate services between nursing homes, assisted living facilities, foster care homes, etc... Help resolve no-load miles expense by utilizing current transportation system (public and volunteer drivers) so more than one client is transported.	Share resources
6	5	Hub for public and private transportation providers	Co-locate with Land To Air at new facility. House Intra and Inter transportation options out of one facility.	Share resources
7		Watowwan Co/Brown Co/Cottonwood Co Coordinated Services	To better serve county residents living on the fringes by providing them access. This would serve the general public.	Share resources
8		Field Trip Rides	One vehicle to coordinate schedules with nursing homes, assisted living facilities to take residents on field trips to local or non-local areas (county or state fair). Serve clients in long term care facilities, assisted living and nursing homes in Le Sueur County	Coordinate agency schedules
9		Diverse size of transportation devices with GPS	A more efficient system that could respond in a faster and more reliable manner	Implement tools that support data management

<b>Category 1: Coordinate and Consolidate Transportation Services and Resources</b>				
10		Allow joint purchasing	Coordinate purchases such as vehicle maintenance, insurance, driver training and substance abuse testing.	Allow joint purchasing
11		Technology improvements	Fund improved technology to each of the county systems so that they can be accessed and supervised by a central regional transit coordinating office	Implement tools that support data management
<b>Category 2: Mobility Strategies</b>				
12	21	Diversify size of vehicles/maintain existing fleet	Replace large buses with cars. Use buses only for time periods of heavy use. Use cars for rural areas and times of lower usage. Have established routes to/from small towns. Have more cost effective vehicles in operation. Replace 10-year old buses with wheelchair lift. Have more options for receiving funding to repair/replace existing vehicles, not necessarily purchasing of bus or smaller vehicles.	Improve service convenience; maintain existing vehicle fleet
13	20	After hours/weekends/nighttime adventures	Expand hours to evenings and weekends to accommodate shift/weekend work. Encourage users and non-users to try transit by hosting nighttime or weekend “adventures”.	Improve service convenience
14	2	Pod transit (Jetsons)	Develop a system similar to that used in the futuristic cartoon the Jetsons. Don’t let mainstream thinking stop you from being creative.	Improve service convenience
15		After hours transportation from ER	Transportation for individuals not admitted to the ER, but who are unable to ride back to the facility or home via taxi or car.	Improve service convenience
16		Affordable town to town transportation with the same county	Providing service for transit dependent populations (ie: elderly or low income) between communities within the same county (ie: Le Sueur to Le Center)	Improve service convenience

<b>Category 2: Mobility Strategies</b>				
17		Regular routes for public transit	Develop one standard schedule that people can count on	Improve service convenience
18		Begin route service with mobility bus	Begin providing route service to Mayo, several nursing homes and assisted living centers	Improve service convenience
19		Establish or expand taxi cab subsidy with vouchers or pay taxi cab service	Provide vouchers to partially or completely pay for taxi services. Assist senior citizens or others who have no families available to support their needs while at medical appointments and reporting back to families out of state, if any, regarding prescriptions. Keep clients in their home longer.	Establish/expand taxi subsidy programs
20		AVL with downloadable app.	Allow potential passengers to locate bus relative to their location (ie: real time)	Improve service convenience
<b>Category 3: Communication, Training, and Organizational Support</b>				
21	10	Carpooling website	Create a place where people can communicate and connect with others to get to where they need/want to go. Post notices within job sites. Include starting and ending point.	Improve service convenience; consolidate business functions; centralize information
22	4	Education roundtables	Hold meetings where local transportation agencies, human service agencies, advocates and community members can meet regarding issues/concerns. A lot of people are not aware of public transit availability, especially in rural areas. Educate the public about the available options (agencies, routes, schedules, etc...).	Educate public of transportation options; educate regional professionals of transportation options
23	1	Regional Coordination Access Council	Develop an “oversight” council, made up of public and private providers as well as those who require service. This group would help direct a transit vision for the region.	Convene regional coordination body

<b>Category 3: Communication, Training, and Organizational Support</b>				
24	0	Region 9 Transportation Open House	Invite all transportation providers to come together and meet with customers/potential customers.	Educate public of transportation options
25		Staff training on defensive driving and abuse prevention	Assure all staff are trained in the above areas on a regular basis (1 time/year). Currently systems have to close their program for the day or pay overtime to do it on a Saturday. Neither option is feasible. This would benefit the disabled community as well as the staff who are required to obtain the training.	Provide technical training for coordination staff

### **Project Idea Worksheet**

Once committee members had identified the projects they wanted to see included in a one – three year work plan, they completed a “Project Idea Worksheet” for each identified project. The worksheet provides more detail about the project, including Project Champion, Responsible for Project Implementation, Actions Steps, and Resources needed. They also identified how this particular project will benefit the Veteran community. The committee will meet again over the next few months to complete a “Project Idea Worksheet” for those projects that were not identified in the one – three year work plan.



# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 1:

Project # 6	Project Title:	Hub for public and private transportation providers
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Co-locate with Land To Air at new facility. House Intra and Inter transportation options out of one facility, which would include a bus station and a garage/maintenance facility. This would also allow for a more centralized maintenance facility, which would ultimately result in more cost savings.
Clients Served:		Residents that use the Mankato Transit System. Could also potentially benefit residents region-wide since private providers would also be involved.
Communities Served:		Mankato; North Mankato; Blue Earth County; Nicollet County; potentially all communities within the nine-county region.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Share resources.
Easy to do/Major Improvement		

## Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	City of Mankato; MnDOT
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Transit systems; For Profits; Non-profits; Local units of government;
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term (years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

Part 3:

<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>Authorization to Issue RFP for A/E Services on Project Aug. 13, 2012            City Council Contract Award for A/E Services by City Sept. 10, 2012            Authorization to Issue RFP for General Construction Feb 14, 2013            City Council Contract Award for Construction March 25, 2013            Estimated Start of Construction April 1, 2013            Estimated Completion of Construction February 15, 2014</p>
<p>Resources Needed:</p>	<p>All funding is secured</p>
<p>How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The hub would allow for the transport of Veterans to a single facility, where they would then be able to make other connections (for example, Land to Air).</li> <li>• CVSO's could possibly contract with the City of Mankato to provide service on their vans. This service could be coordinated with the transport of clients.</li> <li>• Multiple CVSO's could meet at the "hub" and then condense to a single vehicle for travel</li> <li>• Coordinating trips with other providers, out of a central hub, would allow Veteran's the opportunity to make a return trip sooner, rather than having to wait for other clients to complete their medical visits.</li> </ul>

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 1:

Project # 22	Project Title:	Education roundtables
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Hold meetings where local transportation agencies, human service agencies, advocates and community members can meet regarding issues/concerns. A lot of people are not aware of public transit availability, especially in rural areas. Educate the public about the available options (agencies, routes, schedules, etc.)
Clients Served:		This would benefit the transportation providers as well as those who would potentially use their respective services.
Communities Served:		All cities and counties within Region Nine.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Educate public of transportation options; educate regional professionals of transportation options.
Easy to do/Major Improvement		

## Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	MnRAAA; Region Nine Development Commission; Steering Committee members/CVSO's
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Mn/DOT; Region Nine Development Commission
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term (years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

Part 3:

<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>Work with Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA) and Region Nine Development Commission to coordinate education roundtables throughout the region. Consider holding sessions two times per year. Bring together providers, users, and non-users to educate the public on available options.</p>
<p>Resources Needed:</p>	<p>This event will require staff time to coordinate, funds to cover the expenses, and volunteers to help staff the event.</p>
<p>How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate veterans on the different options/opportunities for transportation</li> <li>• Provides veterans information on ways to connect within their county or with county counties</li> <li>• Open houses could be held at multiple locations so that they are more accessible to veterans</li> <li>• Solicit feedback from current users, to determine what works and what doesn't work, so that the information is more useful to veterans</li> <li>• Use this information at sessions such as the MN Assistance Council for Veterans, which will be held in Mankato in November</li> </ul>

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 1:

Project # 23	Project Title:	Regional Coordination Access Council
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Develop an “oversight” council (steering committee members), made up of public and private providers as well as those who require service. This group would held direct a transit vision for the region. The steering committee would meet annually (at a minimum) to review/modify the project list. This session would be hosted by Region Nine Development Commission and would be held prior to June 1 <sup>st</sup> , or in coordination with applicable state and federal deadlines.
Clients Served:		This would serve all clients that currently use transit within the Region Nine area as well as those who are unaware of current services.
Communities Served:		All cities and counties within Region Nine.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Convene Regional Coordination Access Council.
Easy to do/Major Improvement		

## Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	MnRAAA; Region Nine
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Region Nine Development Commission.
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term(years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

Part 3:

<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>Work with Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA) and Region Nine Development Commission to organize a Regional Coordination Access Council. The Council would meet, as needed, to discuss transit coordination and move coordination efforts forward.</p>
<p>Resources Needed:</p>	<p>This will require staff time to coordinate, funds to cover the expenses, and volunteers to serve on the Coordination Council.</p>
<p>How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:</p>	<p>The County Veterans Service Officers would have representation on the Access Council and would serve as a liaison between the work of the Council and the Veteran community.</p>

# Project Idea Worksheet

Part 1:

Project # 24	Project Title:	Region Nine Transportation Open House
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Invite all transportation providers to come together and meet with customers/potential customers.
Clients Served:		This would serve all clients that currently use transit within the Region Nine area as well as those who are unaware of current services.
Communities Served:		All cities and counties within Region Nine.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Educate public of transportation options.
Easy to do/Major Improvement		

Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	MnRAAA; Region Nine Development Commission
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Region Nine Development Commission.
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term (years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 3:

<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>Work with Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging (MNRAAA) and Region Nine Development Commission to organize a Region Nine Transportation Open House. This could be combined with the education roundtables and be hosted by the Regional Coordination Access Council.</p>
<p>Resources Needed:</p>	<p>This event will require staff time to coordinate, funds to cover the expenses, and volunteers to help staff the event.</p>
<p>How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate veterans on the different options/opportunities for transportation</li> <li>• Provides veterans information on ways to connect within their county or with county counties</li> <li>• Open houses could be held at multiple locations so that they are more accessible to veterans</li> <li>• Solicit feedback from current users, to determine what works and what doesn't work, so that the information is more useful to veterans</li> <li>• Use this information at sessions such as the MN Assistance Council for Veterans, which will be held in Mankato in November</li> </ul>



# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 1:

Project # 21	Project Title:	Carpooling website
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Create a place where people can communicate and connect with others to get to where they need/want to go. Post notices within job sites. Include starting and ending points.
Clients Served:		All residents within Region Nine.
Communities Served:		All cities and counties within Region Nine.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Improve service convenience; consolidate business functions; centralize information.
Easy to do/Minor Improvement		

## Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	MnRAAA; MnDOT; Region Nine Development Commission; Transportation providers
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Transit systems; Non-profits; Mn/DOT; Region Nine Development Commission
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term (years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

Part 3:

<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>The Steering Committee discussed combining this with the Hub for public and private transportation providers. The “carpooling website” or bulletin board could be housed at the Hub and users of the various transportation systems could access the bulletin board on site, or the website from any location.</p>
<p>Resources Needed:</p>	<p>Funds and staff time to develop the system. On-going staff time to update the site.</p>
<p>How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate veterans on the different options/opportunities for transportation</li> <li>• Provides veterans information on ways to connect within their county or with county counties</li> <li>• Use this information at sessions such as the MN Assistance Council for Veterans, which will be held in Mankato in November</li> </ul>

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 1:

Project # 1	Project Title:	Regional Transportation Linkage Line (central location for information) and Regional Centralized Mobility Manager (dispatch center).
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Within the region employ three Regional Trade Center dispatchers (Mankato, Fairmont, New Ulm). Human Service Care Coordinators could be relieved of trying to run transportation services. Could include all riders. Corridor transportation services would be readily available. Various sizes of vehicles would be used as well as volunteer drivers and private providers. Have one place for customers to call to receive service, building in cost-efficiencies, increase ridesharing to reduce costs. Coordination should be regionalized with the ability to link to other regional systems; this should not be a statewide system.
Clients Served:		All residents within Region Nine.
Communities Served:		All cities and counties within Region Nine.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Coordinate dispatch; share resources; consolidate functions; centralize information; hire Mobility Manager.
Difficult to do/Major Improvement		

## Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	MnRAAA; Region Nine Development Commission; MnDOT
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs; Non-profits; For-profits.
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term (years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 3:

<p>Action Steps:</p>	<p>Continue the work that already began under the Veteran’s Transportation Initiative, by establishing relationships with the existing Linkage Lines. Work with the League of Mn Cities and Association of Mn Counties to help market the services.</p>
<p>Resources Needed:</p>	<p>The Linkage Line technology already exists, but there would be some technology expenses associated with this process.</p>
<p>How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a “one-stop” resource for veterans</li> <li>• Also serves as an important resource for County Veterans Service Officers</li> <li>• Leads to better coordination and immediate access for veterans</li> </ul>

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 1:

Project # 2	Project Title:	Shared driver database (CDL, volunteer-paid and unpaid, etc.).
Project Description and Objective (what do you want to accomplish):		Create a database of drivers and figure out a way to use them across agencies. Perhaps have a way for them to submit when they are available to help. Implement an active volunteer driver recruitment campaign. Get more than 1 – 2 volunteers available to county residents. Develop/incorporate paid and non-paid drivers.
Clients Served:		All residents within Region Nine.
Communities Served:		All cities and counties within Region Nine.
Strategy Addressed by Project:		Share resources; establish/enhance volunteer driver programs.
Difficult to do/Major Improvement		

## Part 2:

Project Champion(s):	MnRAAA; Region Nine Development Commission; MnDOT
Responsible for Project Implementation:	Transit systems; Volunteer driver programs; Non-profits; For-profits.
Timing: Short-Term (year 1 of Plan) Medium-Term (years 2 – 3) Long-Term (years 4-5)	1 – 3 years

# Project Idea Worksheet

## Part 3:

Action Steps:	This project could easily be a part of the Regional Transportation Linkage Line (central location for information) and Regional Centralized Mobility Manager (dispatch center) project. The shared driver database could be a tool available through the linkage line or the minnesotahelp.info website.
Resources Needed:	Staff time to develop and update the database.
How will this project benefit Veterans specifically:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides a “one-stop” resource for veterans</li> <li>• Also serves as an important resource for County Veterans Service Officers</li> <li>• Leads to better coordination and immediate access for veterans</li> </ul>