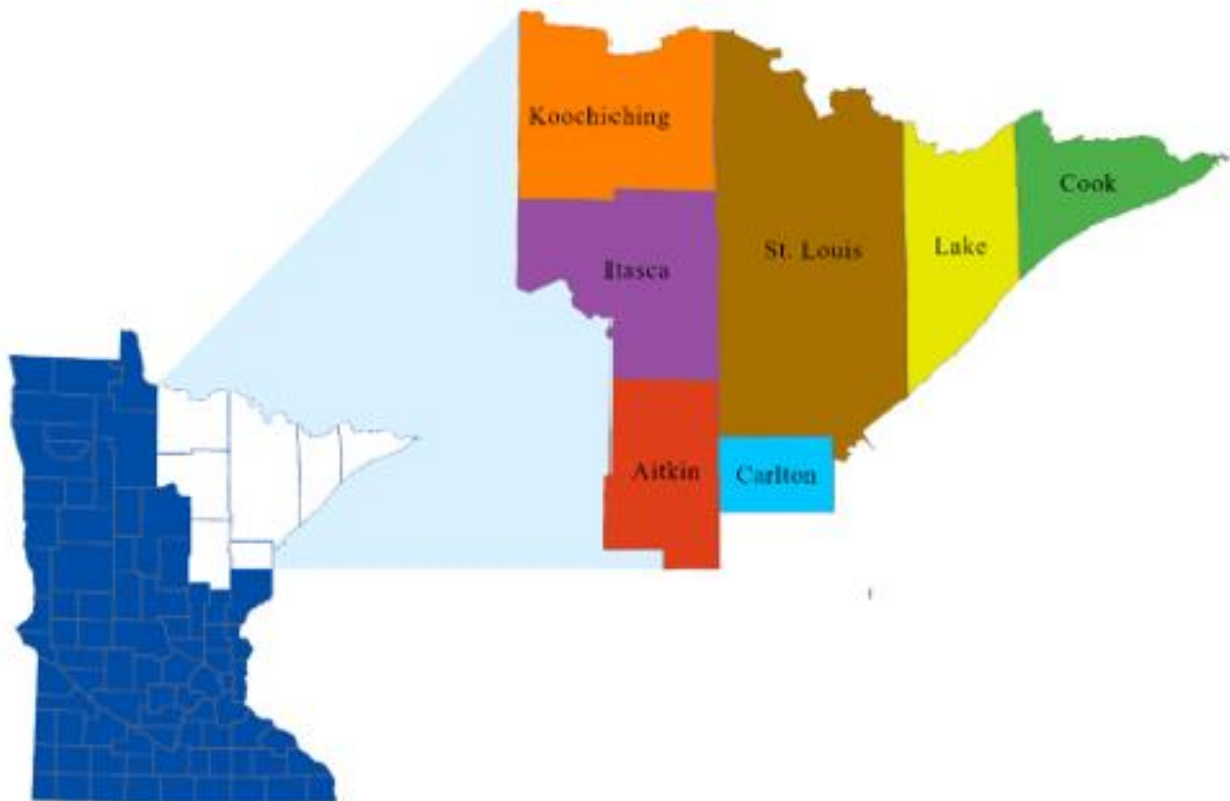# 2022 Region 3
Local Human Services-Transit Coordination Plan

Plan Prepared By:
   ARDC

In Cooperation with representatives and agencies from:
   Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, and St. Louis Counties.

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to evaluate existing transportation providers, identity the unmet needs and services, and establish transportation related goals for Region 3.The counties included in this arrowhead region are the Counties of Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, and St. Louis Counties., Minnesota. This documentation fulfills planning requirements for the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) signed into law December 4, 2015.

As a requirement of the FAST Act, grantees under the Section 5310: Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities program must have projects under a "locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan" (49 U.S.C. 5310) to receive federal funding. This plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation services as well as human services providers and the public.

The local human service transportation coordination planning process encourages participation from all local stakeholders and public in the region, especially within target populations. The purpose of this process is to improve human service and public transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes through coordinated transportation.

The plan contains demographic conditions, inventory of existing transportation providers, gaps in service, and unmet needs throughout the region that have been identified though analysis, committee input, and stakeholder outreach.

Major Plan Components
The plan has three major components:
- A demographic profile.
- A view of mobility today, analyzing existing transportation services, regional origins, and destinations, needs, gaps, and current coordination.
- A vision of mobility tomorrow, laying out goals and strategies to improve transportation services.

Outline Design
The plan is designed to outline:
- A comprehensive review of existing public transportation and human services coordination.
- A context for continuing and broadening communication between human service agencies and transportation providers.
- A platform to enhance transportation access for older adults, people with disabilities, and those with low incomes through identification of unmet needs and strategies to address them.

- An educational tool for human service agencies, transportation providers, and Regional Transportation Coordinating Councils (RTCCs) to identify coordination opportunities.

Table 1 below shows the suggested timeline for the processes that go along with plan completion.

Table 1: Suggested Timeline for Plan Completion:

	July	Aug-Sept	Oct	Nov-Dec	Jan-Feb	Mar-Apr	May	Jun
Contracts Executed	X							
Appoint Steering Committee	X							
Survey & Questionnaire Collection		X						
Previous Effort Evaluation		X						
Steering Committee Meeting 1		X						
Focus Groups			X					
Steering Committee Meeting 2				X				
Planning Workshop (Steering Committee Meeting 3)					X			
MnDOT Draft Review						X		
Steering Committee Meeting 4						X		
MCOTA Draft Review							X	
Plan Adoption								X

Covid 19 Impacts

Transportation and Resiliency During COVID-19 Pandemic

Transportation in rural areas contributes to systematic resiliency and social equity by increasing access to resources that make a community livable. The COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine throughout the state directly impacted transportation services in Northeast Minnesota with lasting effects. Several aspects of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated transportation gaps and access to basic needs such as food and medication were jeopardized for transit-dependent people. In face of these new challenges, transportation services in the region adapted their resources and services to transport essential items, increase vaccine access, and maintain safe and sanitized vehicles for riders.

From October 2020 thru December 2020, the Arrowhead RTCC engaged with the statewide COVID-19 positive patient transportation program and assisted in coordination of patient transportation. Statewide the program provided 692 trips to people COVID-19 positive or suspected positive to their medical appointments. The program utilized a central coordination center contracting with local transportation providers and filled the gaps in transportation access caused by COVID-19. The trips were no cost to the rider and covered by state-sponsored grant and cost an average of $300 less than using an ambulance for the same trip.

County	Total reported COVID cases to date (As of 9/26/2022)	Total reported COVID deaths to date (As of 9/26/2022)
Aitkin	3,402	63
Carlton	10,457	106
Cook	727	4
Itasca	12,707	158
Koochiching	3,380	41
Lake	2,413	32
St. Louis	55,796	575

SOURCES: CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION, STATE GOVERNMENTS, U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.

Big Wood Transit partnered with their tribal food distribution service and converted a decommissioned transit bus into a mobile food shelf. The mobile food shelf followed established transit routes in the Big Woods services area. It focused on distributing food boxes to people who are transit-dependent first and then general community members. The mobile food shelf is now a permanent part of the Big Wood services.

AEOA and Arrowhead Transit received a Hunger Solutions grant. Once a week they targeted some identified food deserts with a mobile food shelf that makes shelf stable meal kits available in those areas. In addition, AEOA hosted weekly food distribution resulting in over 4,000 boxes of food provided to those in need. Arrowhead Transit buses or freezer trailers were used for many of these deliveries if the partnering organization does not have their own means of transporting the goods. Arrowhead Transit partnered with Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center to deliver some of their farm fresh produce to food shelves in the area. Arrowhead Transit provided free rides to COVID testing facilities.

ARROWHEAD TRANSIT AND AEOA FOOD DISTRIBUTION. CREDIT: ARROWHEAD TRANSIT & MINNESOTA PUBLIC TRANSIT ALLIANCE

The DTA partnered with St. Louis County to host a COVID-19 vaccine event at the Duluth Transit Center. County health care workers had table with information and private room to administer vaccines. The General Manger of DTA reached out to organize this event with St. Louis County based on data showing location of vaccination sites missing urban Duluth populations and those transit dependent. Throughout the year, the DTA communicated to users around safety protocols and route changes, provided training of drivers on using PPE and barriers, along with training new drivers to bolster their team in the wake of pandemic-related staff shortages.

Several volunteer driver agencies in the region shifted services to provide food and essential item delivery in the region. The new focus has become a permanent priority for these agencies and are vital to ensuring older adults can remain in their homes. In response to COVID-19,

Volunteer Services of Carlton County, Inc. started Groceries-to-Go in March 2020 and received a Hunger Solutions grant to provide food distribution.

Additional services added to assisted transportation providers include Telephone Reassurance calls. This service helped continue a personal connection to program staff and volunteers and reduce isolation. Virtual support groups over zoom and other platforms were implemented to engaged with program participants and maintain their connection to services providers.

As the crisis response to the pandemic as shifted toward finding a new type of normalcy lasting challenges remain and jeopardize transit operations. Supply chain instability has halted the procurement of new busses and other vehicles. This is impacted route expansions and is applying more burden on the state of good repair for buses currently in use. Increased maintenance costs, increased fuel costs, and inability to obtain parts will negatively impact the operation of transit in our region. Low driver recruitment and retention rates have limited plans to increase or adjust service routes. Ridership has not been noted as a major challenge but attention should be paid to the continual trends of working from home, at home delivery of products, telehealth, and others. While these trends and other transportation alternatives can alleviate the need to expand transportation services while still meeting people's basic needs, there must still be a balance to maintain transit's operation capacity to meet the needs of those that need to transit to meet their needs.

BACKGROUND

Study Area Demographics

A key step in developing and evaluating transit plans is a careful analysis of the mobility needs of various segments of the population and the potential ridership of transit services. As part of the plan development process, an effort was undertaken to identify any concentrations of the following targeted population groups: elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities.

Transit demand analysis is the basic determination of demand for transportation in each area. There are several factors that affect demand, not all of which can be projected; however, demand estimation is an important task in developing any transportation plan and several methods of estimation are available for this purpose. The analysis makes intensive use of several demographic data and trends. In consideration of the limited resources available to prepare this plan, a decision was made to utilize the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) data to identify any concentrations of the targeted groups along with completing an analysis of the program demand. ACS data is also available and summarized at the Minnesota State Demographic Center.

This section provides information on individuals considered by the transportation and human services sectors to be dependent upon transit services. In general, the characteristics of these

individuals preclude them from driving, and thereby make carpooling and transit their only viable alternative of motorized transportation available.

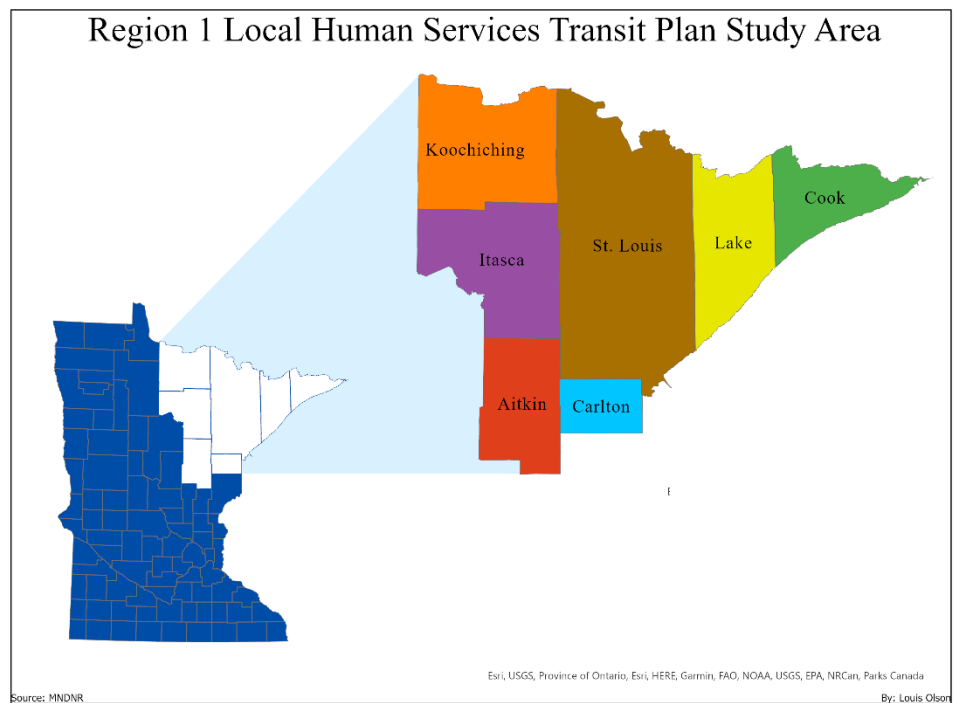The four types of limitations which preclude persons from driving are:

1. physical limitations
2. financial limitations
3. legal limitations
4. self-imposed limitations

Physical limitations may include permanent disabilities due to age, blindness, paralysis, or developmental disabilities and temporary disabilities such as acute illnesses and head injuries. Financial limitations include those persons unable to purchase or rent their own vehicle. Legal limitations generally refer to limitations for persons who are too young to drive (generally under age 16). Self-imposed limitations refer to those people who choose not to own or drive a vehicle (some or all the time) for reasons other than those listed in the first three categories. The Census is generally capable of providing information about the first three categories of limitation. The fourth category of limitation is currently recognized as representing a relatively small proportion of transit ridership but is still significant to this study.

Study Area

The study area includes seven counties in one. These counties include,

- Aitkin
- Carlton
- Cook
- Itasca
- Koochiching
- Lake
- St. Louis

Region 1 Local Human Services Transit Plan Study Area

Source: MNDNR   Esri, USGS, Province of Ontario, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NRCan, Parks Canada   By: Louis Olson

Total Population

The total population for the region is 325,716 people. Based on projections from the state Demographers office, the region is expected to shrink to 323,228 people over the next 5 years. You can see the distribution by county below. A map of the expected change has been included on the

Table 1 below shows the distribution of the regional population between each county and population change over the next 5 years.

Table 1: Population by County and projected change

County	Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	15,697	4.4%
Carlton	36,207	10.2%
Cook	5,600	1.6%
Itasca	45,014	12.7%
Koochiching	12,062	3.4%
Lake	10,905	3.1%
St. Louis	200,231	56.5%
	Population Change over next 5 years	Percentage of projected population change
Aitkin	15,481	-1.3%
Carlton	35,787	-1.2%
Cook	5,506	-1.7%
Itasca	45,167	0.1%
Koochiching	11,818	-2%
Lake	10,307	-5.5%
St. Louis	199,162	0.5%

Source: State Demographers Office

Population by Age

Every county in the study area has a higher proportion of individuals over 65 or over than the state of Minnesota, which is 16.3%. Carlton and St. Louis counties have the lowest proportion of people 65 or over, and Aitkin and Cook counties had the highest, with almost a third of the population in Aitkin County 65 or over. All counties also had youth populations below the Minnesota average. Cook County had the lowest percentage, with 15.3%, followed by Aitkin. Carlton County had the highest proportion of individuals under 18. Generally, counties with high proportions of under 18s had lower proportions of individuals over 65. Population in the region has higher percentage of people over 65 compared to state average.

Tables 2-4 show the number of youth, adults, and seniors within each county and the percent these populations make out of the total county population. Each table is accompanied by a map.

Table 2: Youth Population (17 years and younger)

County	Total Population	Youth Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	15,834	2,651	16.7%
Carlton	35,633	8,043	22.6%
Cook	5,376	823	15.3%
Itasca	45,141	9,486	21.0%
Koochiching	12,515	2,290	18.3%
Lake	10,560	1,854	17.6%
St. Louis	199,759	38,122	19.1%

Source: ACS 2019 5 Year

Arrowhead - Percent Youth Population

Koochiching

Itasca

Koochiching

St. Louis

Lake

Cook

Mississippi River

Aitkin

Carlton

Legend

Youth Population

≤16.5

≤19.0

≤20.5

≤22.5

≤27.0

Major River

MN Trunk Highway

US Highway

US Interstate

County

N

0   12.5   25   50   75   100
Miles
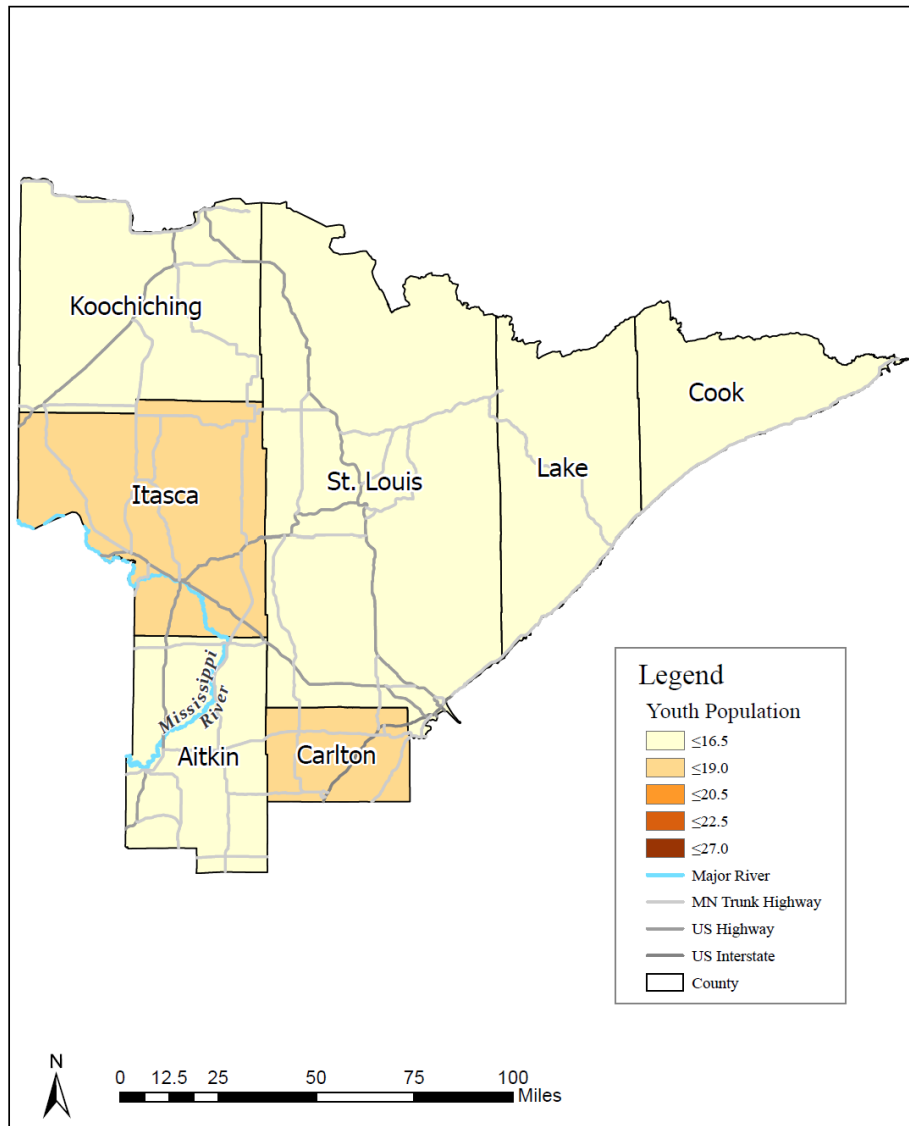
Table 3: Adult Population (18 to 64 years)

County	Total Population	Adult Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	15,834	8,039	50.8%
Carlton	35,633	21,533	60.4%
Cook	5,376	3,087	57.4%
Itasca	45,141	25,439	56.4%
Koochiching	12,515	7,171	57.3%
Lake	10,560	5,988	56.7%
St. Louis	199,759	124,010	62.1%

Source: ACS 2019

Arrowhead - Percent Adult Population
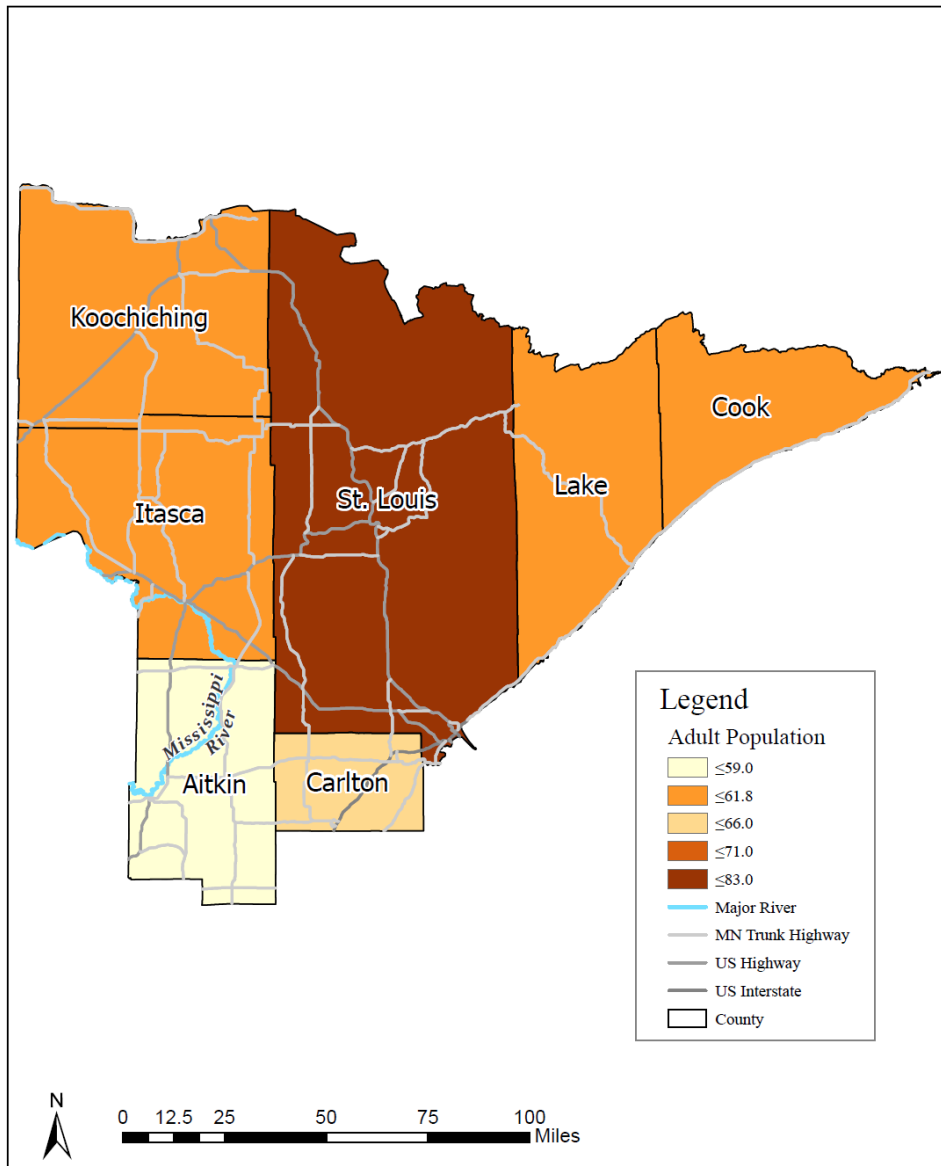
Table 4: Senior Population (65 years and over)

County	Total Population	Senior Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	15,834	5,144	32.5%
Carlton	35,633	6,057	17.0%
Cook	5,376	1,466	27.3%
Itasca	45,141	10,216	22.6%
Koochiching	12,515	3,054	24.4%
Lake	10,560	2,718	25.7%
St. Louis	199,759	37,627	18.8%

Source: ACS 2019

Arrowhead - Percent Senior Population
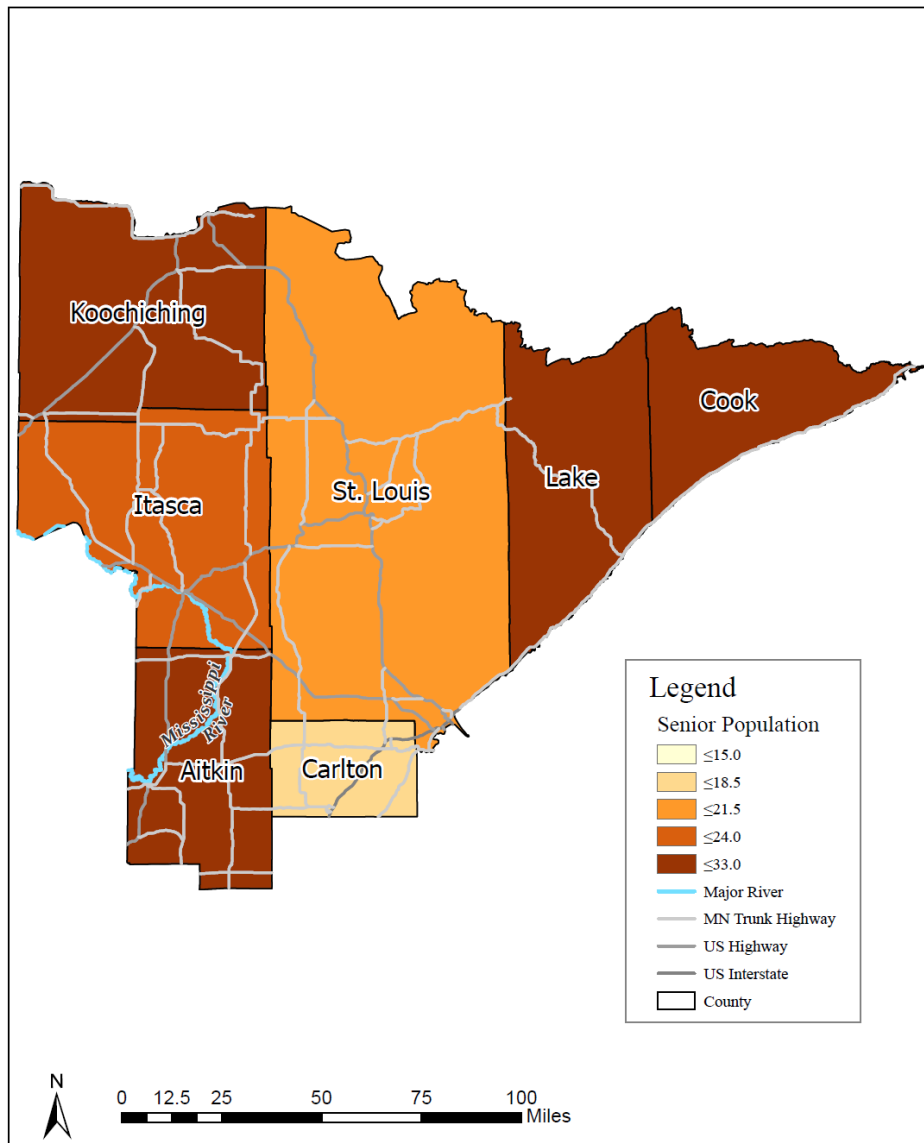
Populations with a Disability

The U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS) uses the following in its definition of 'disability' "In an attempt to capture a variety of characteristics that encompass the definition of disability, the ACS identifies serious difficulty with four basic areas of functioning – hearing, vision, cognition, and ambulation".

In the region just under 15% of the population are individuals with disabilities. This ranges from 13.4% in Carlton County to 18.1% in Aitkin County. The percentage of the population with a disability differs across age groups. Among those age 5 to 17, the percentage with disabilities is under 6.7% in all counties. Among those 65 and older, the lowest percentage is 26.1% in Cook County, and six of the eight counties have a proportion above 30%.

Table 5 contains the total county populations for individuals with disabilities, and the percent that population is of the total county population. Tables 6-8 break down that total population into youth, adults, and seniors with a disability.

Table 5: Populations with a Disability

County	Total Population	Disabled Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	**15,651**	**2,840**	18.1%
Carlton	**34,304**	**4,610**	13.4%
Cook	**5,338**	**721**	13.5%
Itasca	**44,359**	**6,949**	15.7%
Koochiching	**12,329**	**2,146**	17.4%
Lake	**10,391**	**1,563**	15.0%
St. Louis	**196,528**	**27,813**	14.2%

Source: ACS 2019

Arrowhead - Percent Pop. with Disabilities

Koochiching

Itasca

St. Louis

Lake

Cook

Mississippi River

Aitkin

Carlton

Legend

Pop. with Disabilities
- ≤38.0
- ≤43.0
- ≤47.0
- ≤53.0
- ≤60.5
- Major River
- MN Trunk Highway
- US Highway
- US Interstate
- County

N

0   12.5   25   50   75   100
Miles
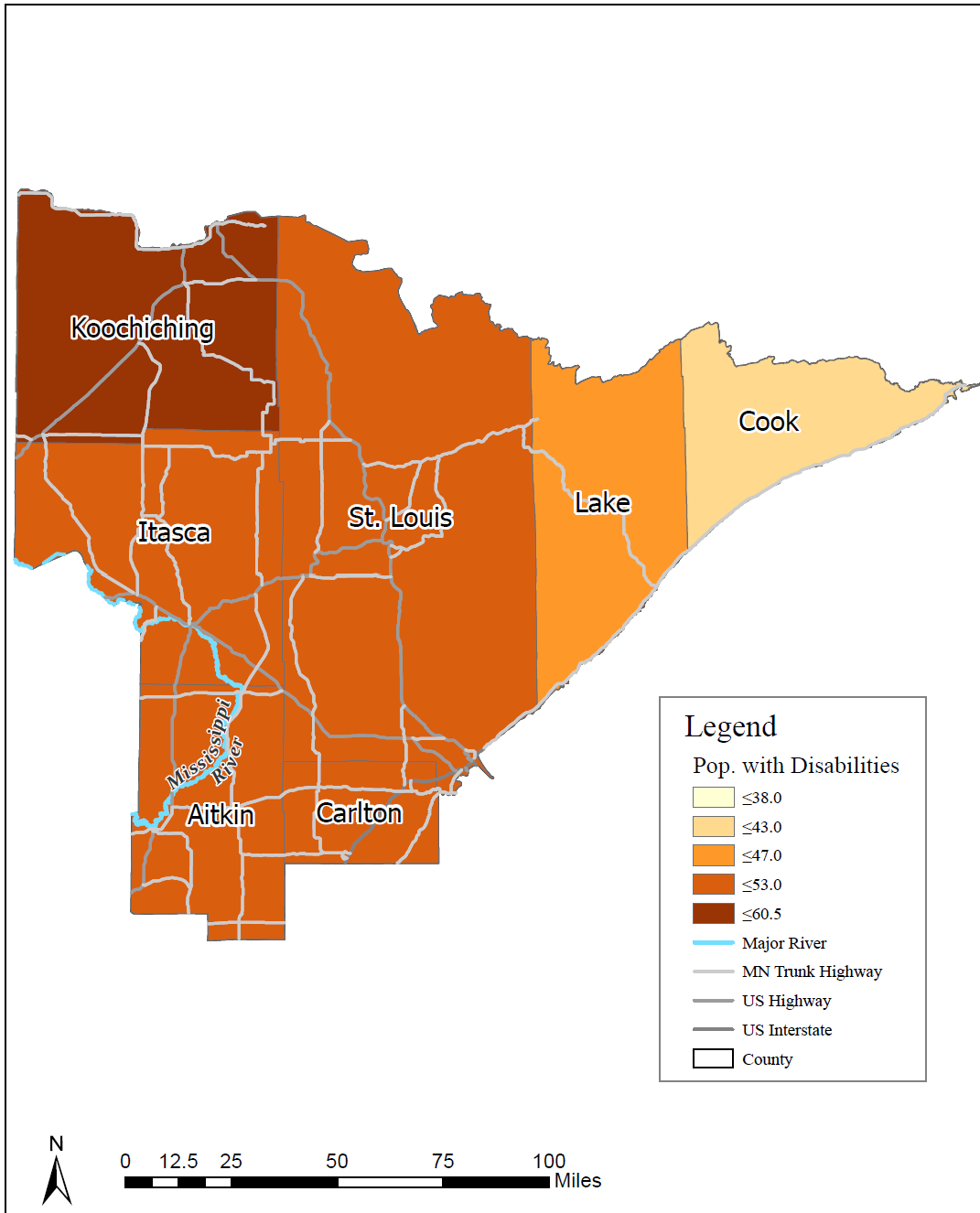
Table 6: Youth Population with a Disability (5 to 17 years)

County	Total Youth	Disabled Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	2078	113	5.4%
Carlton	6163	252	4.1%
Cook	586	24	4.1%
Itasca	6931	413	6.0%
Koochiching	1775	94	5.3%
Lake	1364	67	4.9%
St. Louis	27656	1833	6.6%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent Youth with Disabilities
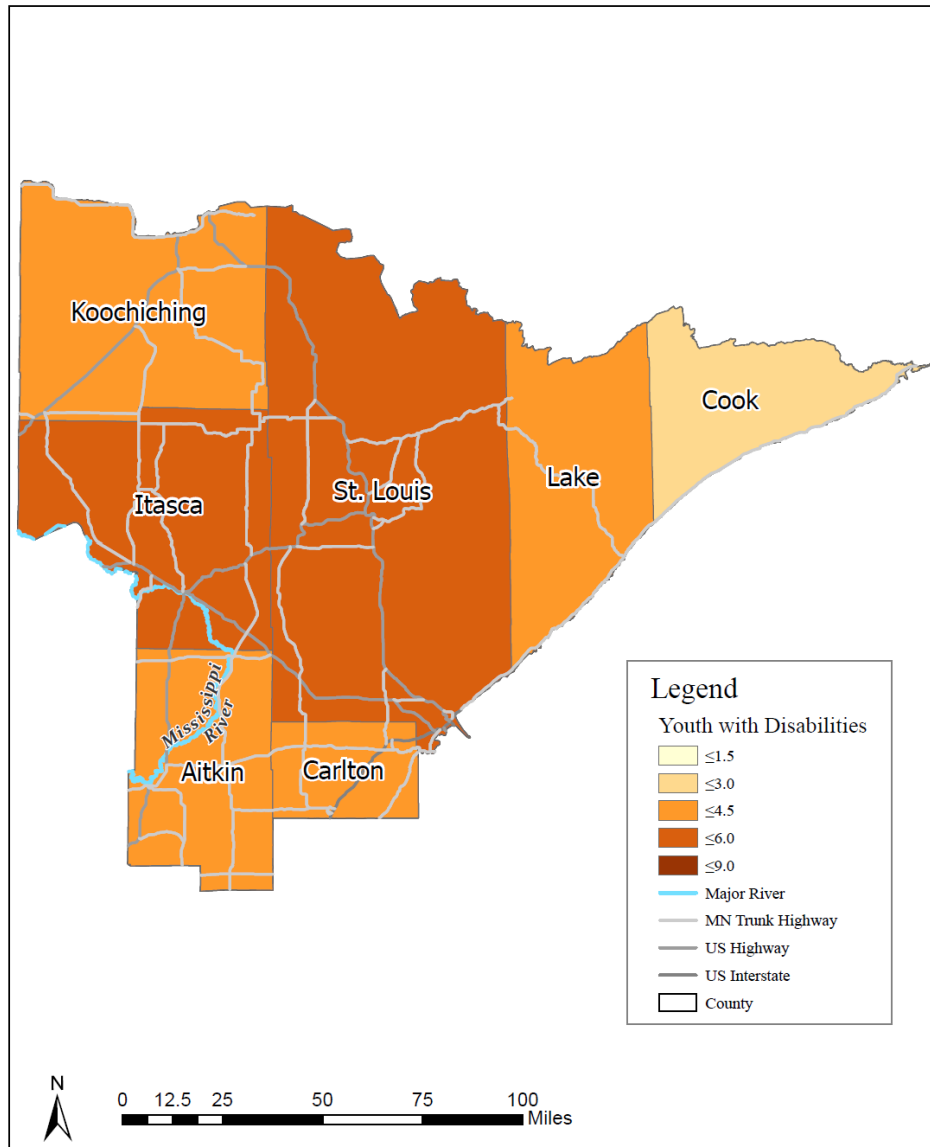
Table 7: Adult Population with a Disability (18 to 64 years)

County	Total Adult	Disabled Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	7954	1160	14.6%
Carlton	20505	2487	12.1%
Cook	3080	322	10.5%
Itasca	25249	3114	12.3%
Koochiching	7154	937	13.1%
Lake	5951	742	12.5%
St. Louis	122599	14594	11.9%

Source: U.S. ACS

Arrowhead - Percent of Adults with Disabilities
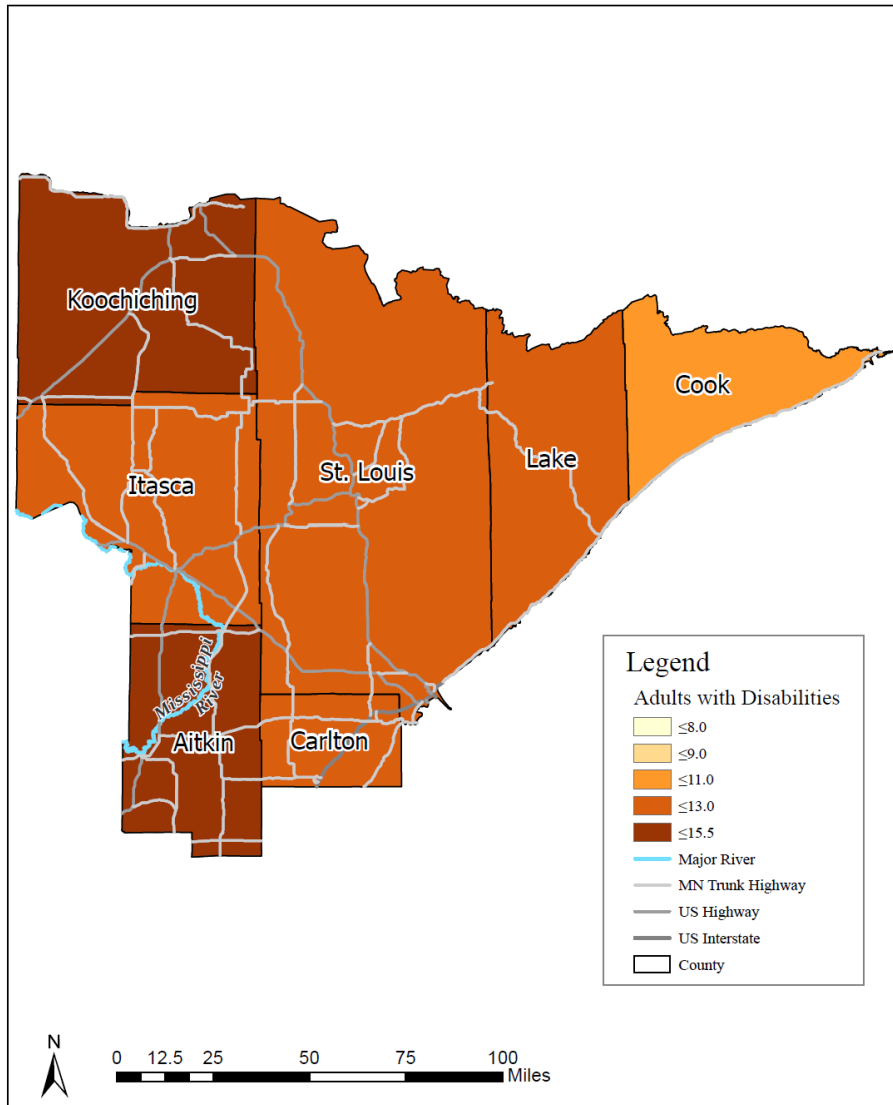
Table 8: Senior Population with a Disability (65 years+)

County	Total Seniors	Disabled Population	Percent of Total
Aitkin	5050	1567	31.0%
Carlton	5672	1871	33.0%
Cook	1435	375	26.1%
Itasca	9791	3359	34.3%
Koochiching	2892	1108	38.3%
Lake	2587	754	29.1%
St. Louis	36102	11273	31.2%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent Seniors with Disabilities
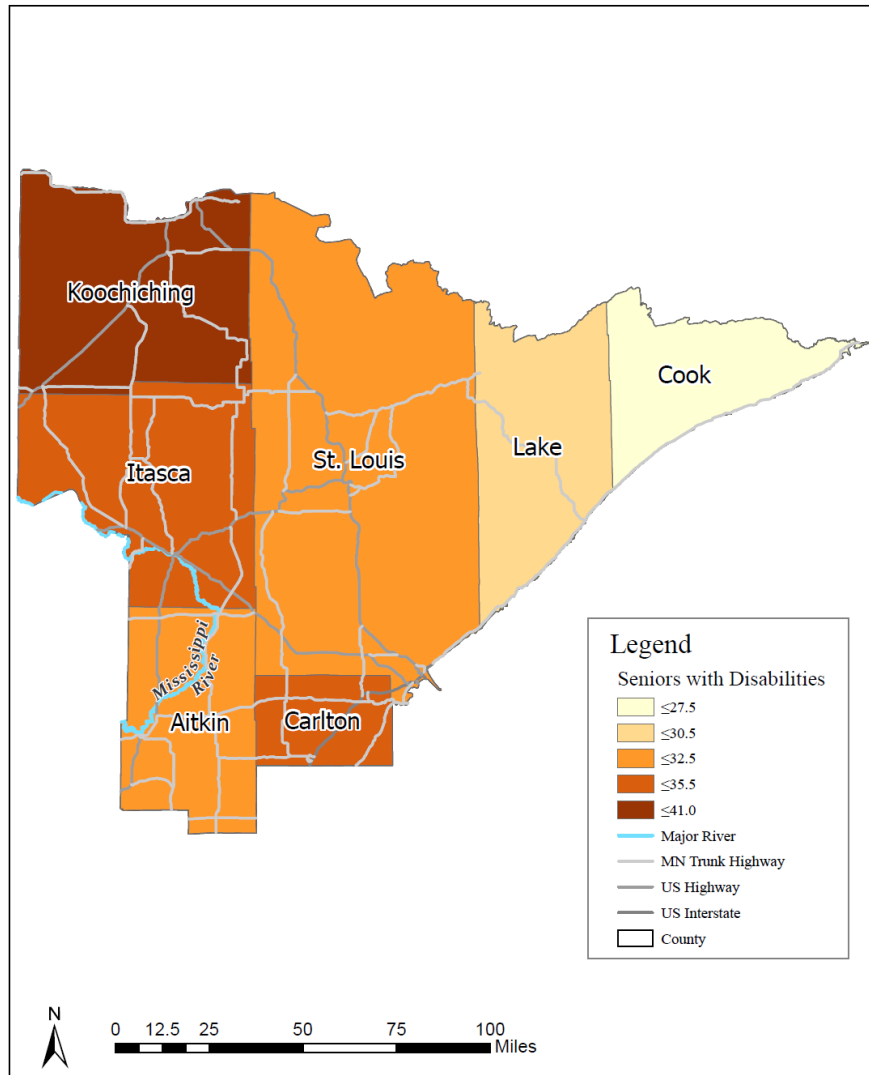
Low-Income Population

Region-wide 13% of the population lives below the poverty level. St. Louis County has the highest proportion, with just over 14% of the population living below the poverty line, and Lake County has the lowest, with 8.7% living below the poverty line. By age group, youth have a higher proportion of individuals living below the poverty line, ranging from 12.1% to 18%, and those over 65 are less likely to live below the poverty line, with percentages ranging from 5.1% to 10.3%. Overall the region has a higher rate of individuals living below the poverty line that the State of Minnesota at large.

As defined by the Department of Health and Human Services, an individual having an annual income of no more than $12,880 is considered to be living below the poverty level. Table 9 below shows the population of individuals living below the poverty level per county, and the percent that population represents of the total. Tables 10-12 describe this population in more detail by showing county populations for youth, adults, seniors, and individuals with a disability living below poverty. Notably St. Louis County and Koochiching County have the highest populations of individuals below the poverty level at 14.1% and 13.6% respectfully. Lake County has the lowest percentage per capita below the poverty level at 8.7%.

Table 9: Population Below Poverty Level

County	Total Population	Population Below Poverty Level	Percent of Total
Aitkin	15592	1896	12.2%
Carlton	34105	3851	11.3%
Cook	5322	670	12.6%
Itasca	44098	5376	12.2%
Koochiching	12237	1665	13.6%
Lake	10356	902	8.7%
St. Louis	191809	26991	14.1%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent of Pop. living in Poverty

Koochiching

Cook

Itasca

St. Louis

Lake

Mississippi River

Aitkin

Carlton

Legend

Pop. Living in Poverty
- ≤7.0
- ≤9.5
- ≤12.0
- ≤14.5
- ≤23.0

— Major River
— MN Trunk Highway
— US Highway
— US Interstate
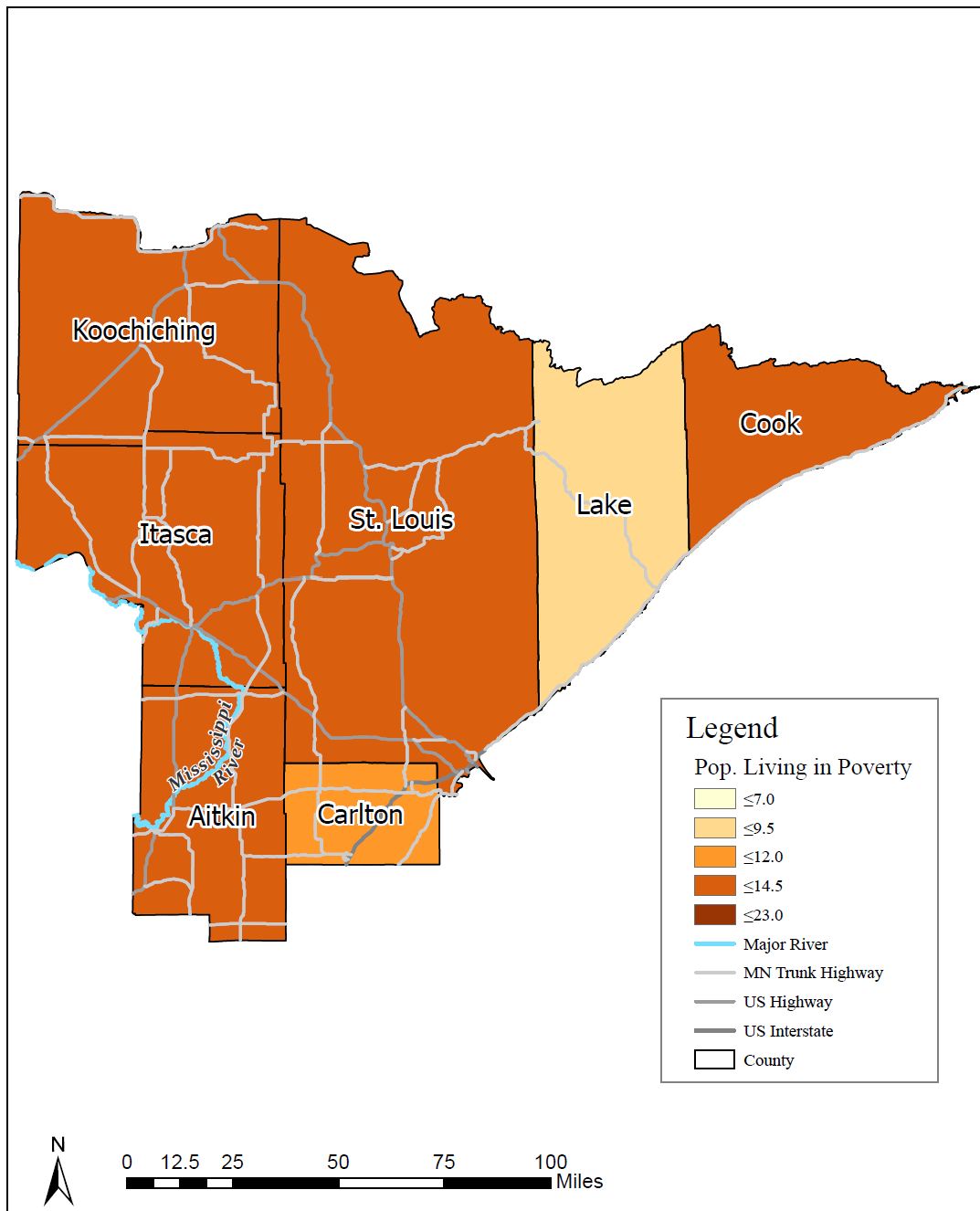☐ County

N

0   12.5   25   50   75   100
Miles

Table 10: Youth Below Poverty Level (17 years and younger)

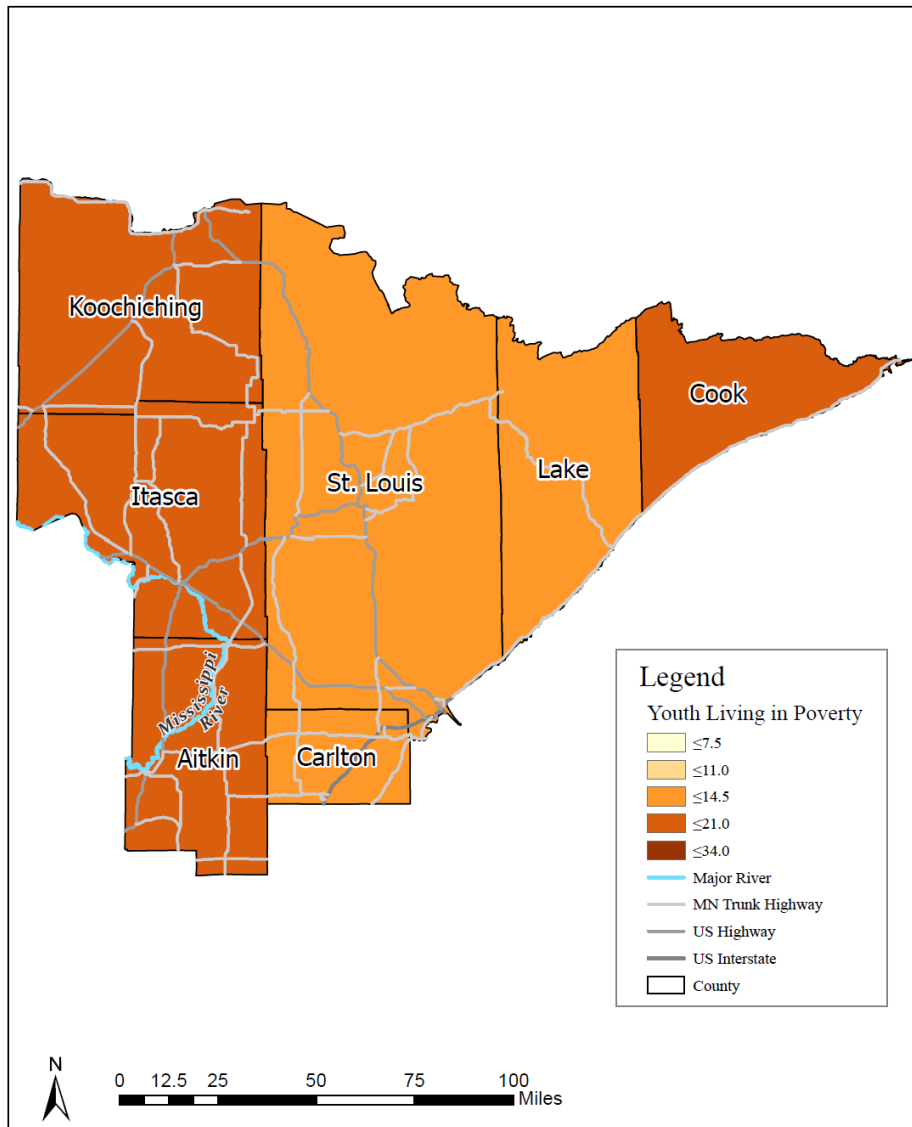| County	Total Youth	Population below Poverty Level	Percent of Total
Aitkin	2588	465	18.0%
Carlton	7886	948	12.0%
Cook	807	126	15.6%
Itasca	9146	1453	15.9%
Koochiching	2259	433	19.2%
Lake	1823	220	12.1%
St. Louis	36838	5338	14.5%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent of Youth living in Poverty

Table 11: Adults Below Poverty Level (18 to 64 years)

County	Total Adults	Population below Poverty Level	Percent of Total
Aitkin	7954	953	12.0%
Carlton	20547	2508	12.2%
Cook	3080	420	13.5%
Itasca	25161	3056	12.1%
Koochiching	7086	1022	14.4%
Lake	5946	551	9.3%
St. Louis	118869	18793	15.8%

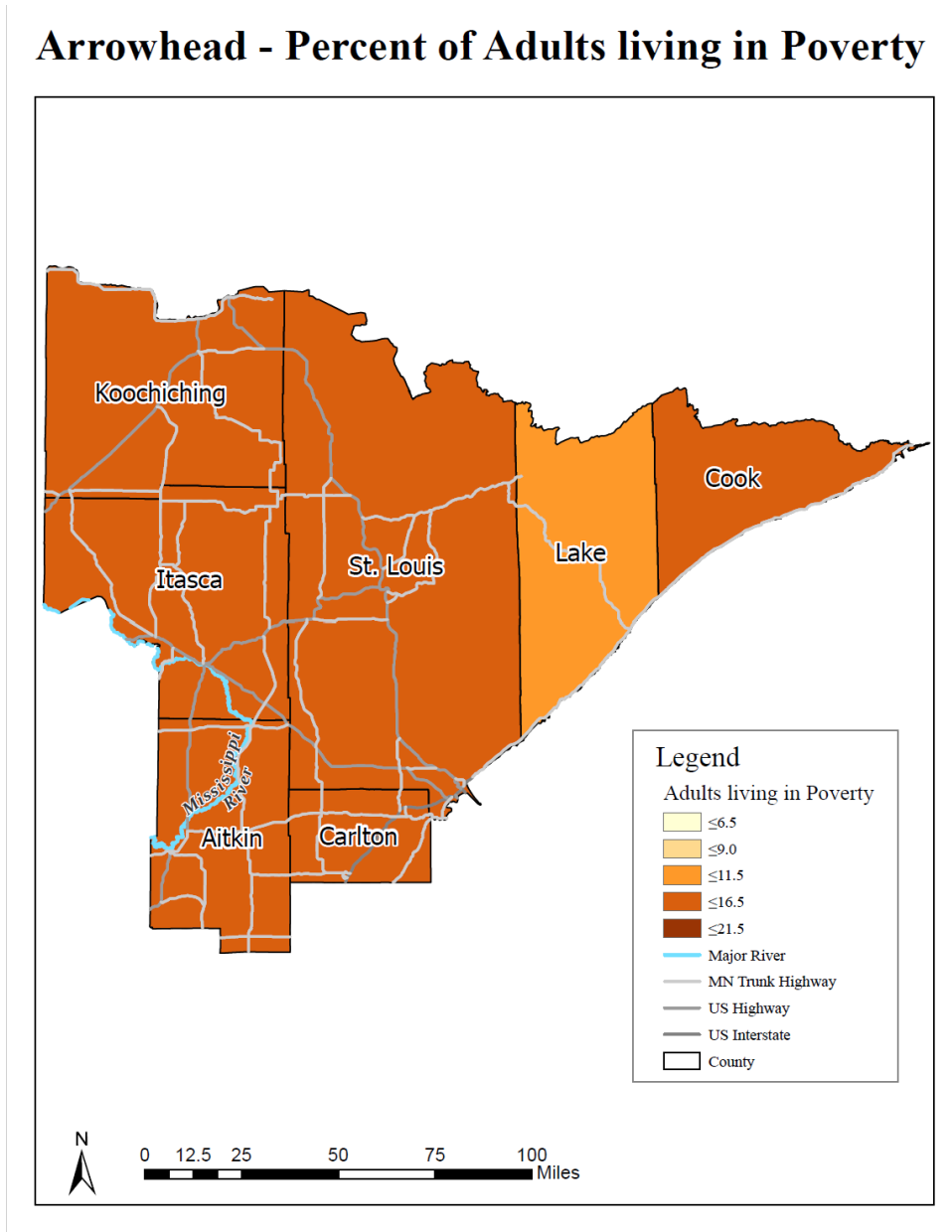Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent of Adults living in Poverty

Table 12: Seniors Below Poverty Level (65 years and over)

County	Number of Adults	Population below Poverty Level	Percent of Total
Aitkin	5050	478	9.5%
Carlton	5672	395	7.0%
Cook	1435	124	8.6%
Itasca	9791	867	8.9%
Koochiching	2892	210	7.3%
Lake	2587	131	5.1%
St. Louis	36102	2860	7.9%

Source: ACS

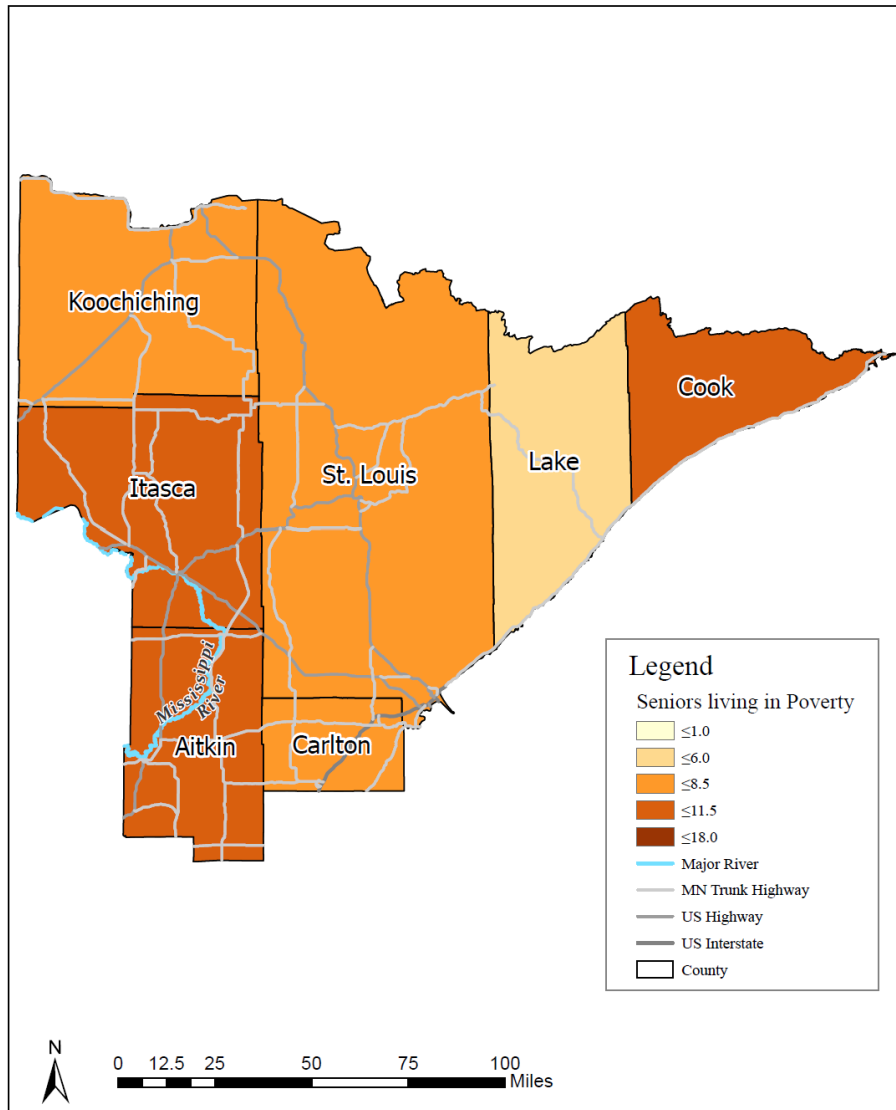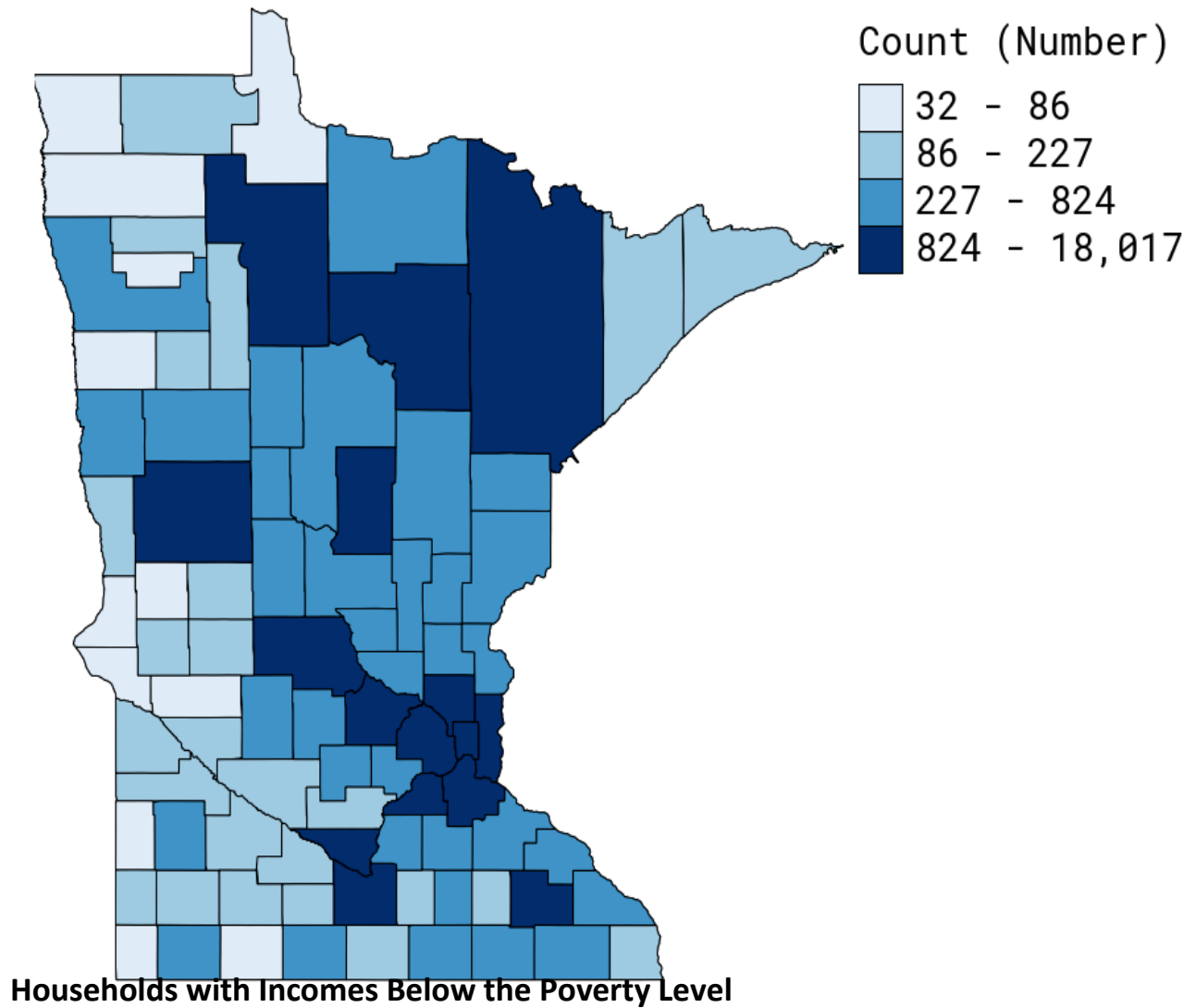# Arrowhead - Percent of Seniors living in Poverty

Table 13: Individuals with a Disability Below Poverty Level

County	Number of Persons with a Disability	Number of persons with a disability below Poverty Level	Percent of persons with a disability below the poverty level.
Aitkin	2,807	619	22%
Carlton	4,322	934	22%
Cook	719	202	28%
Itasca	6,860	1,562	23%
Koochiching	2,107	400	19%
Lake	1,479	259	18%
St. Louis	18,548	7,328	40%

Count (Number)

32 - 86
86 - 227
227 - 824
824 - 18,017

Households with Incomes Below the Poverty Level

Households below the federal poverty level are defined by the Department of Health and Human services as a household of four having an annual income of no more than $26,500. Table 14 below depicts the number of households below the poverty level and the percentage of households in the area that are living below the poverty level.

Just over 7%, of households in the region are below poverty level. Itasca and Koochiching counties have the highest proportion of households below poverty level, with 8.4% and 9.5% respectively. Lake county has the lowest proportion, with 5.2%. St. Louis and Itasca counties have the highest number of households living below poverty.

Table 14: Households Below Poverty

County	Households Below Poverty	Households Above Poverty	Percent Below Poverty of Total
Aitkin	384	4545	7.8%
Carlton	499	8739	5.4%
Cook	136	1589	7.9%
Itasca	1070	11673	8.4%
Koochiching	327	3117	9.5%
Lake	172	3130	5.2%
St. Louis	3590	44928	7.4%

Zero-Vehicle Households

Households without a motor vehicle are important to identify in human services transportation and transit plans. Households without access to vehicles rely more heavily on transit and alternative transportation options.

Households in St. Louis County, which contains the city of Duluth, are more likely to not have a vehicle. The county with the next highest proportion of zero-vehicle households is Lake County, with 6.8%, compared to St. Louis' 8.6%. In every county the plurality of households had two vehicles. Both Carlton and Pine Counties had the lowest number of zero-vehicle households, both with 4.6%.

Table 15 shows the number of vehicles per household and the percentage of households that contain zero-vehicles.

Table 15: Zero Vehicle Households

County	Total Households	Zero Vehicle Households	1 Vehicle	2 Vehicle	3 or More Vehicles	Percent Zero-Vehicle of Total
Aitkin	7681	424	2251	2961	2045	5.5%
Carlton	13613	624	3423	5269	4297	4.6%
Cook	2691	172	840	975	704	6.4%
Itasca	19506	1039	5321	7759	5387	5.3%
Koochiching	5538	367	1583	2284	1304	6.6%
Lake	5192	355	1400	2016	1421	6.8%
St. Louis	85807	7385	26307	31826	20289	8.6%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent of Zero Vehicle Households
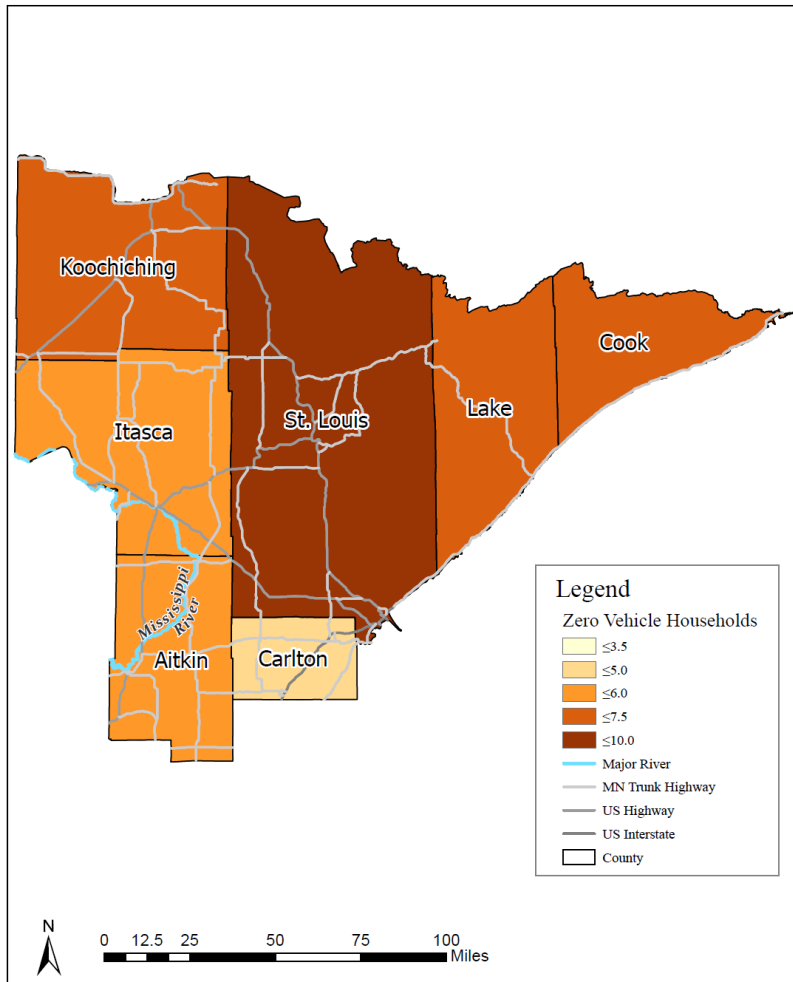
Commuting to Work

Most workers in the region commuted by driving to work alone, with this mode of transportation most prevalent in Carlton County. In all but two counties (Cook and Koochiching) the second most common mode of commute was in a carpool. This mode was least common in St. Louis County (7.5%). Between 4.7% (Carlton County) and 10.4% (Cook County) of worked from home in the region.

Walking and Biking together were most common in Cook and Koochiching counties; in Cook County a little under 11% of commuters were either walking or biking to work. In all counties walking is significantly more common than biking and is done at six times the rate regionwide. Public transit use is rare in the region. In St. Louis County, which contains Duluth, has the highest proportion of workers using public transit for commuting, with 1.9%. Cook County (1.3%) is the only other county where over 1% of workers use public transit to commute.

Table 16 below outlines the manner in which residents get to work per county. The modes of getting to work are split into six categories.

Table 16: Commuting to Work

County	Drove Alone	Carpooled	Public Transportation	Walked	Bicycle	Worked at Home
Aitkin	79.55%	8.95%	0.27%	2.24%	0.08%	7.46%
Carlton	83.14%	8.43%	0.43%	2.72%	0.14%	4.71%
Cook	66.77%	9.15%	1.26%	8.08%	2.63%	10.37%
Itasca	78.93%	10.30%	0.71%	2.05%	0.43%	6.09%
Koochiching	73.50%	8.60%	0.26%	5.02%	1.42%	9.57%
Lake	75.50%	10.29%	0.28%	4.03%	0.02%	9.52%
St. Louis	79.82%	7.51%	1.90%	4.30%	0.68%	5.29%

Place of Work

Knowing where current residents are working is useful in assessing the need of expanding transportation services. Below you see a breakdown of where people work by county. Notably, 43.60% of people in Carlton County and 36.10% of people in Aitkin County work outside of the County, while 96.32% and 92.20% work within Cook and Koochiching Counties respectively.

Table 16: Place of Work

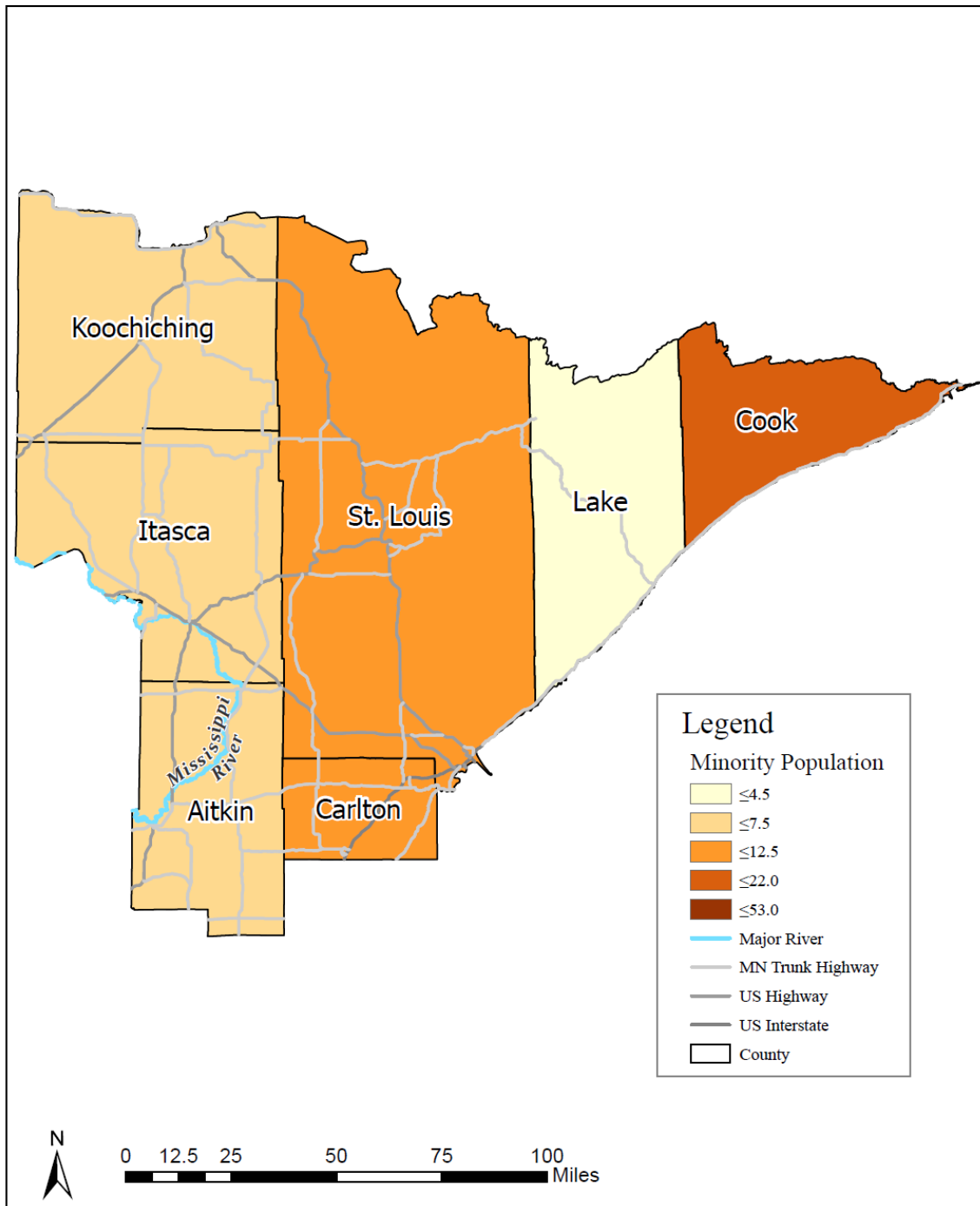| County	Works in County of Resident	Percent of Total Work Within County	Works Outside County of Residence	Percent of Total Works Outside
Aitkin	3,945	63.90%	2,229	36.10%
Carlton	9,350	56.40%	7,228	43.60%
Cook	2,459	96.32%	94	3.68%
Itasca	16,295	83.20%	3,290	16.80%
Koochiching	5309	92.20%	449	7.80%
Lake	3,460	74.39%	1191	25.61%
St. Louis	86,536	89.60%	10,045	10.40%

Minority Communities

While predominantly white, the region is still home to people with a diverse array of backgrounds. As depicted in the below table and map, you can see that Native American/Alaskan our the 2nd largest demographic in the region, followed by 2 or more races and Hispanic.

Table 17: Population by Race

County	White	Black	Native American/Native Alaskan	Asian	Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	Other	Two or More Races	Hispanic
Aitkin	94.75%	0.51%	2.06%	0.34%	0.09%	0.26%	1.99%	1.40%
Carlton	89.38%	1.88%	5.06%	0.58%	0.00%	0.06%	3.04%	1.78%
Cook	86.20%	0.07%	8.82%	0.93%	0.00%	1.45%	2.53%	2.31%
Itasca	92.77%	0.49%	3.71%	0.43%	0.01%	0.18%	2.42%	1.49%
Koochiching	93.58%	0.58%	3.12%	0.39%	0.00%	0.89%	1.44%	1.34%
Lake	96.91%	0.64%	0.87%	0.13%	0.18%	0.09%	1.17%	1.43%
St. Louis	92.08%	1.58%	1.83%	1.03%	0.05%	0.45%	2.98%	1.70%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent Minority Population

Legend

Minority Population
- ☐ ≤4.5
- ☐ ≤7.5
- ☐ ≤12.5
- ☐ ≤22.0
- ☐ ≤53.0
- — Major River
- — MN Trunk Highway
- — US Highway
- — US Interstate
- ☐ County

Limited English Communities

According to American community service data, there are not existing households in the region who primarily speak English 'less than very well. However, we question this projection.

Table 18: Limited English Population

County	Speak English only or speak English "very well"	Percent of Total	Speak English less than "very well"	Percent of Total
Aitkin	581	100%	0	0%
Carlton	568	100%	0	0%
Cook	242	100%	0	0%
Itasca	1,596	100%	0	0%
Koochiching	207	100%	0	0%
Lake	341	100%	0	0%
St. Louis	6,286	100%	0	0%

Source: ACS

Arrowhead - Percent Limited English Proficiency
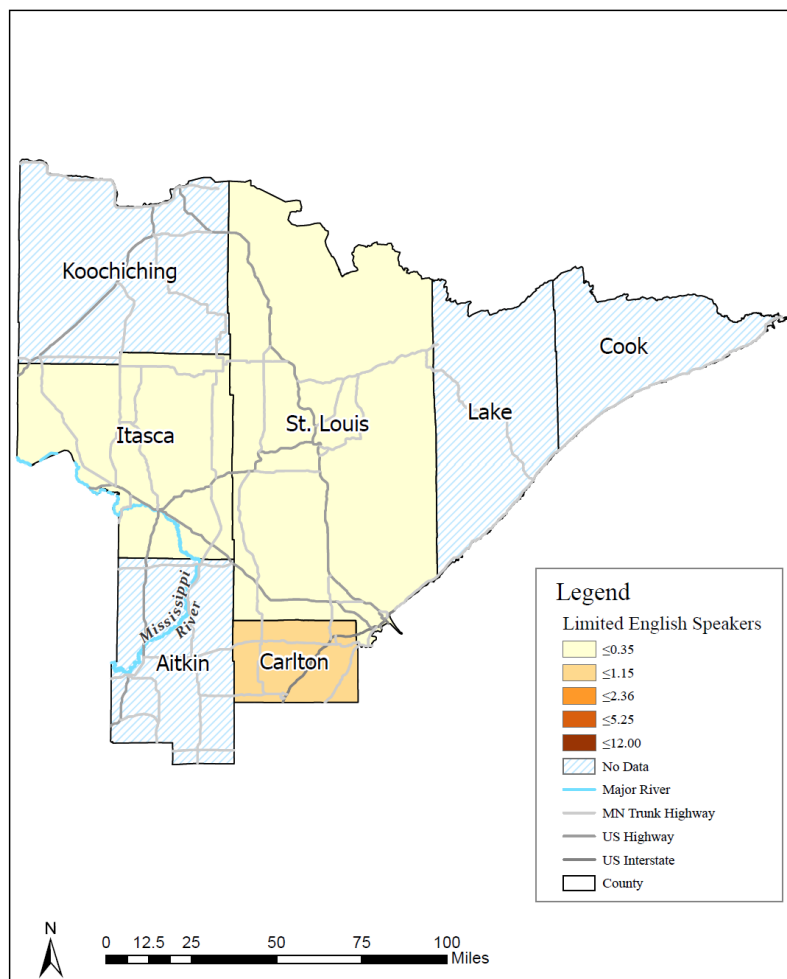
Economic Conditions

The following was provided via DEED's regional profile completed in 2022. According to DEED's Quarterly Census of Employment & Wages (QCEW) program, Northeast Minnesota was home to 8,930 business establishments providing 134,564 covered jobs through 2021, with a total payroll of over $7 billion (Table 13). That was 4.9% of total employment in the state of Minnesota, which is the smallest of the six planning regions. Average annual wages were $52,208 in the region, which was about $14,800 lower than the average annual wage statewide, but a 5.6% increase from 2020 and an 11.8% increase from 2019 wages.

St. Louis County is the largest employment center in the region with 91,499 jobs at 5,363 firms; followed by Itasca County and Carlton County with 15,558 and 12,671 jobs, respectively. Of the seven counties, only Aitkin added jobs between 2016 and 2021. Of the other six, Cook lost over 10% of jobs over five years. Lake and Itasca's percent and actual numeric losses were the smallest. Regional losses were driven by employment declines in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the year, employment rebounded slightly in 2021, growing by 2,639 jobs. Over the last year, employment grew in every county.

Northeast has seen employment ups and downs over the past decade but ended 2019 with 6,939 more jobs than it had in 2009, surpassing pre-Great Recession levels in 2015. However, a decade of employment gains was eliminated in a few months in 2020 as the economy finished the year with nearly 12,000 fewer jobs. Early pandemic losses in the region (-8.2%) exceeded the statewide losses, which amounted to a decline of -6.7%. Despite a recovery of 2,639 jobs over the year, 2021 employment remained below pre-pandemic levels, at 93.7% of 2019 levels.

With 32,821 jobs at 1,029 firms, Health Care & Social Assistance is the largest employing sector in the Northeast region, accounting for 24.4% of total jobs in the region. That is nearly 6.6 percentage points higher than the state's concentration of employment in the sector. As in most sectors, employment declined since 2016. However, that decline was relatively smaller than for all industries combined. Health Care & Social Assistance employment is one of the nine sectors that saw employment declines over the year into 2021, albeit at a slower rate. At $57,431 in 2021, average annual wages were about $5,000 higher in Health Care than all industries.

The next largest sectors were Retail Trade and Accommodation & Food Service as these two industries made up another 22.1% of all the jobs in the region. While both sectors lost jobs in the first year of the pandemic, Retail employment declined by 5.1%, relatively better than the 22.3% decline experienced by Accommodation & Food Services. With Accommodation & Food Service averaging under $20,000 a year and Retail paying an average of $31,400 per year, both sectors are among the lowest paying. Each added jobs over the year into 2021.

Employment in Educational Services and Public Administration comprise the fourth and fifth largest industries in the region, accounting for 16.4% of total employment. Since 2016, Public Administration lost 114 jobs, mostly in the last year. Educational Services saw even greater losses with a decline of 771 but had slight job growth into 2021.

Manufacturing was the 6th largest industry in 2021 – accounting for 6.2% of employment – and experienced a slight contraction since 2016. Perhaps the most well-known industry in the region is Mining, which offered 4,187 jobs (3.1% of total) at 34 firms. The Mining industry saw the largest employment gains between 2016 and 2021. Professional & Technical Services and Construction were the only industries other than Mining to gain jobs over the past five years. The largest percent declines since 2016 occurred in Information (-30.1%), Administrative Support (-25.5%), Finance & Insurance (-17%), and Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, & Hunting (-16.6%). These four industries also saw job declines from 2020-2021

Employment Status

Unemployed individuals need a mode of transportation to seek job opportunities.   Table 19 provides a county breakdown of the employment status in the region. Notably Koochiching County has the greatest unemployment percentage at 4.0, while Cook County has the slimmest at 1.6% of the population being unemployed.

Table 19: Regional Employment Status

County	Employed	Unemployed	Not in Labor Force	Percent of Total Population Unemployed
Aitkin	6,207	392	6,930	2.9%
Carlton	16,640	733	10,938	2.6%
Cook	2,614	74	1,939	1.6%
Itasca	20,192	1,111	15,613	3.0%
Koochiching	5,737	421	4,439	4.0%
Lake	4,874	225	3,836	2.5%
St. Louis	98,063	5,059	62,795	3.0%

Source: ACS

MOBILITY TODAY

Major Trip Generators

The **Arrowhead Region** is located in the northeastern part of the U.S. state of Minnesota, called so because of its pointed shape. The predominantly rural region encompasses 18,221.97 square miles of land area and includes Carlton, Cook, Lake, St. Louis, Koochiching, Itasca and Aitkin counties. This region is characterized by rugged terrain and dotted with thousands of lakes surrounded by boreal forest, and is home to Voyageurs National Park, the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, and the Superior Hiking Trail, which lie amidst the Superior National Forest. The Arrowhead also contains the Sawtooth Mountains. For these reasons, a large portion of the economy depends on tourism—the region is a common vacation destination for residents of the Minneapolis–Saint Paul metropolitan region. The other primary portion of the Arrowhead economy is the iron mining industry. Taconite is mined on the Mesabi Range, shipped by train to Duluth, Silver Bay, and Two Harbors, and shipped by freighter from these ports to major metropolitan areas farther down the Great Lakes and worldwide.

Each trip generator category represents the following:
- Employment – Top employers, employers with transit dependent populations.
  Essentia is the leading employer in the region, primarily in the Duluth area in which much of its campus is accessible via fixed route transit. Other locations have varied services.
- Shopping - Supermarkets and other grocery stores, department stores, and malls.
  All locations appear to have varied access options throughout the region.
- Education - Elementary and secondary schools, colleges, universities, and professional schools.
  The University of Minnesota Duluth, St. Scholastica, and Lake Superior College have regular fixed route transit connection opportunities in Duluth. Other connections are scheduled on demand.
- Public Service - Justice, public order, safety activities, and the administration of human resource programs.
  Most city Centers have access to transportation in the region.
- Medical - Outpatient care centers, hospitals, nursing care facilities, residential, intellectual, and developmental disability, mental health, and substance abuse facilities.
  All medical facilities are served by some sort of transportation.
- Specialty Services - Services for the elderly and persons with disabilities, museums, historical sites, and similar institutions.
  Historical sites and museums away from city centers and fixed bus routes are difficult to access.
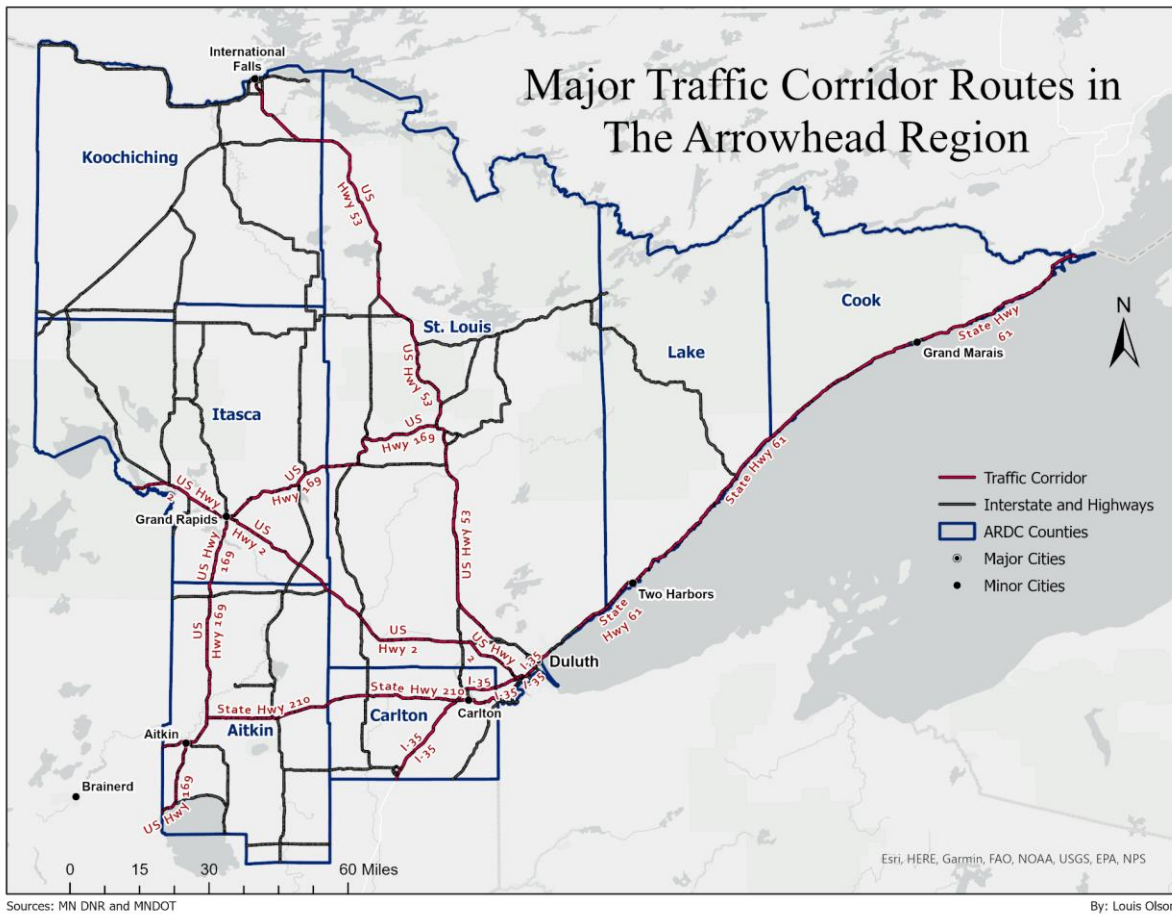
FIGURE 1 MAJOR TRAFFIC CORRIDORS IN THE ARROWHEAD REGION

Document notes:
- This document is not exhaustive of details and services provided in each county, but intended to provide a snapshot of
- Employment numbers are approximate, and when listed have been taken from https://www.northlandconnection.com/site-selection/top-employers/

St. Louis County

Population: 200,000
Area by square miles: 6,680
County Seat: Duluth
https://www.stlouiscountymn.gov/
Parts of the Bois Forte and Fond du Lac Indian reservations are in the county.
The city of Duluth has the United States furthest inland seaport.
(Note that due to its geographical size and population/service clusters that for certain purposes St. Louis county can be divided into north and south regions)

Top Employers by Employee Numbers:
Essentia Health, Health Care = 3,400
St. Luke's, Health Care = 2,240
Miner's Inc, Grocery/Retail = 1,000
St. Louis County, Public Administration = 1,900
Duluth Public Schools, Education = 1,450
Minnesota Taconite, Mining = 1,390
ALLETE, Electric Power Generation/Transmission = 1,300
Duluth Air National Guard Base, Public Administration = 1,070

Shopping:
Walmart-Duluth, Virginia Area
Target- Duluth, Virginia
SuperOne Grocery- Multiple locations in Duluth, Virginia, and Hibbing
Miller Hill Mall- Duluth

Education:
12 separate public school districts
University of MN, Duluth Campus
Lake Superior College, Duluth
The College of St. Scholastica, Duluth
Minnesota North College, Hibbing
Mesabi Range Technical and Community College, Virginia
Vermillion Community College, Ely

Medical:
The city of Duluth and the surrounding area contain a multitude of medical facilities, such as trauma care, dental, cosmetic, substance use treatment, and much more. Another notable hub of medical services in St. Louis county is the Iron Range area, such as Virginia, Chisholm, Hibbing, and Eveleth.

Transportation Options:
Duluth Transit, Fixed route, Duluth Specific
DTA Stride, Paratransit, Duluth Specific
Arrowhead Transit, Region-wide
Big Woods Transit, Bois Forte Reservation and surrounding area
Multiple Taxi Company's
Uber/Lyft, mostly Duluth Centric
Duluth International Airport
AgeWell Arrowhead, Assisted Transportation
Veteran Services

"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information visit:
https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/stlouis

Public Services:

There are a multitude of public services throughout St. Louis County, mostly centered around the county seat of Duluth and then in northern St. Louis County such as Virginia, Hibbing, and Ely.

Carlton County

Population: 35,000
Area by square miles: 875
County Seat: Carlton
https://www.co.carlton.mn.us/
Part of the Fond du Lac Indian Reservation lies in northeastern Carlton County.

Top Employers by Employee Numbers:
Fond du Lac Reservation, Public Administration = 840
SAPPI Fine Paper North America, Manufacturing = 700
Black Bear Casino Resort and Golf Course, Entertainment and Recreation = 670
Cloquet Public Schools, Education = 550
Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College, Education = 450
Essentia Health= 240

Shopping:
Walmart- Cloquet
Super One- Cloquet

Education:
Six public school districts
Fond Du Lac Tribal and Community College, Cloquet

Medical:
Community Memorial Health, Cloquet
Essentia Health, Moose Lake

Transportation Options:
Arrowhead Transit-Region wide
Fond du Lac Transit
Jefferson Lines
Volunteer Services of Carlton County
Veteran Services
"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information visit:
https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/carlton"
Public Services:
There are a variety of public service organizations in Carlton, Cloquet, and Moose Lake.

Lake County

Population: 10,000
Area by square miles: 2,991
County Seat: Two Harbors
https://www.co.lake.mn.us/

Top Employers by Employee Numbers and Top Industry:
SuperOne Foods: 67
Essentia Health: 30
Major industries in Lake County are mining, logging, wood products, shipping and transportation, manufacturing, healthcare, and tourism. Note that the popular brewery "Castle Danger Brewery" is located in Two Harbors.

Shopping:
SuperOne- Two Harbors
Zup's Food Market- Beaver Bay/Silver Bay

Education:
Lake Superior public school district

Medical:
Lakeview Medical and Urgent Care, Two Harbors

Transportation:
Arrowhead Transit-Region wide
Community Partners, Two Harbors
Northshore Area Partners, Silver Bay
Veteran Services

"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information go to: https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/lake"

Public Services:
Lake County Human Services Department, Two Harbors
Lake County Services Center, Silver Bay

Cook County

Population: 5,600
Area by square miles: 3,340
County Seat: Grand Marais
https://www.co.cook.mn.us/
The Grand Portage Indian Reservation is adjacent to this county.
Top Employers by Employee Numbers:
"Taken from https://datausa.io/profile/geo/cook-county-mn/#economy"
The largest industries in Cook County, MN are Accommodation & Food Services (487 people), Retail Trade (409 people), and Educational Services (311 people)
Hedstrom Lumber Mill is the largest employer in Grand Marais.

Note that Grand Marais is home to popular brewery Voyageur Brewing Company.
Note that Lutsen Ski Resort, the largest ski hill/resort in Minnesota and Wisconsin is located in Cook county.

Shopping:
Cook County Whole Foods Co-Op- Grand Marais
Tofte General Store- Tofte
Johnson's Foods, Grand Marais
Gene's Foods, Grand Marais

Education:
Cook county public school district
Cook County Higher Education, Grand Marais
UMN Extension Cook County, Grand Marais

Medical:
Northshore Health, Grand Marais
Sawtooth Mountain Clinic, Grand Marais

Transportation:
Care Partners of Cook County
Arrowhead Transit-Region wide
Grand Marais Cook County Airport and Seaplane Base
Veteran Services

"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information, go to: www.arrowheadrtcc.org/cook"

Public Services:
Cook County Public Health, Grand Marais
Cook County Social Services Department, Grand Marais

Koochiching County

Population: 12,000
Area by square miles: 3,154
County Seat: International Falls
https://www.co.koochiching.mn.us/
A portion of the Bois Forte Indian Reservation and Voyageurs National Park extends into this county, with Lake of the Woods County to its northwest.

Top Employer by Employee Numbers:

Packaging Corp. of America, Manufacturing = 580
SuperOne Foods= 40

Shopping:
SuperOne Foods- International Falls
County Market- International Falls
There is a Walmart SuperCenter just across the Canadian border that is shared with the town of St. Frances

Education:
Three public school districts
Rainy River Community College, International Falls

Medical:
Essentia Health, International Falls Clinic
WE Health Clinic, International Falls
Burntside Consultant LLC, International Falls

Transportation:
Arrowhead Transit-Region wide
Big Woods Transit Bois Forte Reservation and surrounding area
Koochiching Aging Options
Veteran Services
Falls International Airport

"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information, go to:
https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/koochiching"

Public Services:
Public Health and Human Services, International Falls

Itasca County

Population: 45,000
Area by square miles: 2,928
County Seat: Grand Rapids
https://www.co.itasca.mn.us/
Portions of the Bois Forte and Leech Lake Indian reservations are in the county.
Lake Itasca is the source for the Mississippi River, the longest river in North America and 4th in the world.
Grand Rapids is also the hometown of late actress Judy Garland.

Top Employers by Employee Numbers:
Grand Rapids Public Schools= 650
Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital, Health Care and Social Assistance= 575
Keewatin Taconite (US Steel), Metal Ore Mining = 400
Minnesota Diversified Industries, Manufacturing = 388

Shopping:
Super One- Grand Rapids
Walmart- Grand Rapids
Central Square Mall- Grand Rapids
Target- Grand Rapids

Education:
Three public school districts
Itasca Community College, Grand Rapids

Medical:
Grand Itasca Clinic and Hospital, Grand Rapids
Essentia Health- Grand Rapids Clinic

Transportation:
Arrowhead Transit-Region wide
ElderCircle
Leech Lake Transit
Veteran Services

"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information, go to: https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/itasca"

Public Services:
Itasca County Human Services

Aitkin County

Population: 15,000
Area by square miles: 1,995
County Seat: Aitkin
https://www.co.aitkin.mn.us/
Part of the Mille Lacs Indian Reservation is in the county.

Top Employers/Industrys:
 Its largest industries are tourism, forest products, and agriculture, but there is a growing base of metal fabrication and other manufacturing.

Shopping:
Super One- Crosby
Paulbeck's County Market- Aitkin

Education
Three public school districts

Medical:
Riverwood Healthcare Center Hospital, Aitkin
McGregor Clinic, McGregor
Aitkin Clinic, Aitkin
Garrison Clinic, Garrison

Transportation:
Arrowhead Transit-Region wide
Jefferson Lines
Aitkin County CARE
ANGELS of McGregor

"Note that this list is not exhaustive and ever changing. For more information, go to:
https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/aitkin"

Public Services:
Aitkin County Health and Human Services, Aitkin County
Aitkin County CARE
ANGELS of McGregor

List of Human Service Program Providers Impacted by Transportation

The following is a list of human service program providers identified Transportation Resource Questionnaire. This is not a complete list as many human service providers in the region are impacted by transportation

Agency Name: Floodwood Services & Training, Inc.
Transportation Service Type: Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips
Other Services Provided: n/a
Contact Information: dlamping@fst2b.org – 218 476 2230
Hours: Monday-Friday
Service Area: Floodwood, Cloquet, Wright, Canyon, Meadowlands,
Eligibility Requirements: Referral from county human service agency or Passenger must be agency client/consumer
Website: http://www.fst2b.org/

Agency Name: LAKES MEDI-VAN INC.
Transportation Service Type: Demand Response (call-in to book a ride)
Other Services Provided: Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips
Contact Information: dlmedivan@medivan.com - 2188471729
Hours: 24 hours 7 days a week.
Service Area: Statewide, MN and Fargo, ND
Eligibility Requirements: fee for service
Website: https://www.medi-van.org/

Agency Name: Koochiching Aging Options
Transportation Service Type: Demand Response (call-in to book a ride)
Other Services Provided: N/A
Contact Information: 218-283-7084 **/** douglas.skrief@co.koochiching.mn.us
Hours: Mon-Fri
Service Area: Koochiching County
Eligibility Requirements:
Website: http://www.KoochichingAgingOptions.org

Agency Name: Volunteer Services of Carlton County, Inc
Transportation Service Type: Demand Response (call-in to book a ride)
Other Services Provided: Medical and essential rides only
Contact Information: 218-879-9238
Hours: Mon-Sun depending on appointments.
Service Area: Volunteer Drivers serving residents of Carlton County
Eligibility Requirements:
Website: https://vscci.com/

Agency Name: ElderCircle
Transportation Service Type: Demand Response (call-in to book a ride)
Other Services Provided: Medical and essential rides only
Contact Information: renee@eldercircle.org / 218-999-9233
Hours: Mon-Sun depending on appointments.
Service Area: Itasca County, Northern St. Louis County (to anywhere in MN within one day)
Eligibility Requirements: Passenger must be agency client/consumer
Website: www.eldercircle.org

Agency Name: Rides for Health
Transportation Service Type: Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips
Other Services Provided: n/a
Contact Information: 218 927 4077
Hours: 8-4 Monday – Friday
Service Area: Pickup in Aitkin County to anywhere in MN
Eligibility Requirements: Adults
Website: N/A

Agency Name: Care Partners of Cook County
Transportation Service Type: Volunteer assisted, based on client need
Other Services Provided: N/A
Contact Information: 2183873788 / kay@carepartersofcookcounty.org
Hours: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday- Friday
Service Area: Cook County pickup to Grand Portage or Duluth/Superior (WI)
Eligibility Requirements: Age of Passenger
Website: https://carepartnersofcookcounty.org/

Agency Name: Udac
Transportation Service Type: Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips
Other Services Provided: N/A
Contact Information: kherman@Udac.org / 218 623 1703
Hours: Monday-Friday
Service Area: Duluth, Hermantown, Proctor and surrounding area
Eligibility Requirements: Passenger must be agency client/consumer
Website: www.Udac.org

Agency Name: Itasca Life Options
Transportation Service Type: Transportation
Other Services Provided: N/A
Contact Information: llassen@itascalifeoptions.com / 218-322-6501
Hours: N/A
Service Area: Rural Grand Rapids
Eligibility Requirements: N/A
Website: www.itascalifeoptions.org

Program Demand Analysis

Program Trips are defined as those trips that would not be made without the existence of a specific social-service program or activity. The distinguishing factor is that the trip time and destination are set not by the traveler, but by the agency sponsoring the trip. Equations were presented in Transit Cooperative ReseArch Program (TCRP) Report 3 for use in estimating Program Trip demand based on specific Census data. These formulas can be accessed from TCRP Report 3 online.

Given the high variance in program trip demand that was observed in data obtained since the publication of TCRP Report 3, it is recommended that better estimates can be derived by using specific information collected directly from individual programs. To develop an estimate of the demand for program trips begin by listing the known programs in your area. Obtain from the agencies providing these services the following data using Table 20 below:

- Number of program participants
- Number of days per week that the program meets
- The number of weeks per year the program is offered
- The proportion of program participants who attend the program on an average day
- The proportion of program participants who require transportation service. (It has been observed that some people use provided transportation even though they can drive and own a vehicle because the ride is considered a part of the social aspect of the program. These individuals should be included in the proportion figure.)

Unfortunately, our provider survey contained incomplete data sets for programs submitted. The Bois Forte Volunteer driver program did submit complete data, resulting in approximately2,265 annual trips.

Table 20: Program Transportation Data

Program Name	Bois Forte Volunteer Driver
Number of Participants	66
Number of Events per Week	11
Percent of Participants who Attended on and Average Day	3
Percent of Participants who are Transit Dependent or Likely to use Transit	100
Number of Weeks the Program is Offered per Year	52
Results x 2	2,265

Existing Transportation Services

The following information is based on tabulations from the survey and interview results. The total of 5 organizations provided information about their services are listed below. A complete list of transportation providers can be found at https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/transit .

List of Transportation Service Providers

Agency Name: City of Hibbing/Hibbing Area Transit
Transportation Service Type:
Other Services Provided:
Contact Information: ehusmann@ci.hibbing.mn.us / 218 262 3486
Hours: M-F 6-8 S-S 9-6
Service Area: Hibbing
Eligibility Requirements: None
Web-site: www.ci.hibbing.mn.us

Agency Name: Bois Forte Band of Chippewa, Big Woods Transit
Transportation Service Type: Deviated Fixed Route (established route with deviations for pick-ups), Demand Response (call-in to book a ride), Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips)
Other Services Provided: Commuter Bus
Contact Information: jrowland@boisforte-nsn.gov / 218-248-0264
Hours: Monday – Sunday

Service Area: Nett Lake, Palmquist, Indian Point, Orr, Crane Lake, Buyck, Gheen, Greaney, Cook, Togo, Angora, Virginia, Eveleth, Mountain Iron, Tower, Ely, Soudan, Vermilion, Peyla
Eligibility Requirements: none
Web-site: www.bigwoodstransit.com

Agency Name: Jefferson Lines
Transportation Service Type: Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips
Other Services Provided: N/A
Contact Information: nzelle@jeffersonlines.com / 612 709 6608
Hours: Monday – Sunday (varies based on route)
Service Area: In Arrowhead Region: Pine City, Hinckley, Sandstone, Moose Lake, McGregor, Aitkin, Cloquet, Duluth, Virginia, Hibbing, Grand Rapids
Eligibility Requirements: None
Web-site: www.jeffersonlines.com

Agency Name: Arrowhead Transit
Transportation Service Type: Demand Response (call-in to book a ride), Route Deviations
Other Services Provided: n/a
Contact Information: colette.hanson@aeoa.org / 218-735-6814
Hours: Mon-Sunday Times vary.
Service Area: Aitkin, Itasca, Cook, Lake, St Louis, Carlton, Koochiching, Chisago, and Isanti Counties
Eligibility Requirements: none
Web-site: www.arrowheadtransit.com

Agency Name: Duluth Transit Authority (DTA)
Transportation Service Type: Fixed Route (public transportation w/ complimentary paratransit)
Other Services Provided: Demand Response (call-in to book a ride)
Contact Information: cbelden@duluthtransit.com / 218 623 4316
Hours: Weekdays - 4am-12am, Sat 6am-12am, and Sun 7am-11pm
Service Area: Duluth, Proctor, Hermantown, Rice Lake
Eligibility Requirements: none
Web-site: www.duluthtransit.com

Transportation Resources and Technology

Transportation Resources in the region consist of financial assistance in obtaining transportation, informal rider training and education, direct services to agency clients, and transportation for specific clientele. In addition, most transit agencies in the region will provide rider education per request.

Note-this is not a complete list. Please see https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/referrals for more information and links to the programs listed below.

Table 21: Transportation Assistance Resources

Transportation Resource	Service	Service Area
American Cancer Society in Minnesota	The American Cancer Society Road To Recovery program provides transportation to and from treatment for people with cancer who do not have a ride or are unable to drive themselves.	Statewide
Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging	Seeks to help older adults age successfully by developing and coordinating community care options, advocating for aging issues, maximizing service effectiveness, and linking people with information.	Region wide
Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA)	Provides crisis support, anti-poverty services, and partner referral	Region wide
Arrowhead Regional Transportation Coordinating Council	Online transportation directory	Region wide
Community Action Duluth	Coaching to obtain a license, navigate insurance, purchase a reliable car, or get a bicycle.	Duluth
ConnectAbility of Mn	Nonprofit organization that provides coordination of services and programs to people with any disability of any age anywhere in Minnesota. We also serve elderly citizens in our communities	Statewide
Dementia Friendly Duluth	The transportation committee completed a transportation resource document that outlines all the transportation options available for older adults in the Duluth area	Duluth
Disability Hub MN	A free statewide resource network that helps you solve problems, navigate the system and plan for your future.	Statewide
DTA Bus guide	https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/referrals	DTA Service
Go Go Grandparent	Membership based service transportation concierge for older adults. Services include arrangement and monitoring of Lyft and Uber transportation.	Statewide
IMCare	Health Care Program Administered by Itasca County Health and Human Service that provides health care coverage for people who are eligible for Minnesota Health Care Programs and live within the IMCare service area.	

KOOTASCA Community Action, Inc.	Provides crisis support, anti-poverty services, and partner referral.	Koochiching and Itasca counties
Lakes and Pines Community Action Council	Vehicle Donation Program is to assist people to develop a plan and the skills to maintain and afford a car on going and to obtain reliable transportation so they can get to work. This program matches donated vehicles to eligible families	Aitkin, Carlton, Chisago, Isanti, Kanabec, Mille Lacs and Pine
Minnesota Ride Link	Minnesota Ride Link provides quick and easy information about transportation services by linking veterans, military families, and others to a single source of information for trips in their local area. Uses MN Help	Statewide
Salvation Army	Can provide bus cards and gas money. To request transportation assistance, schedule an appointment at your local Worship and Service Center.	Region wide
Senior LinkAge Line	Provides expert assistance to older adults, helping them live well and age well in a variety of areas. Specialty areas include health insurance counseling, Long Term Care Options Counseling, and achieving independent living in the community.	Statewide
The Arc Northland	The Arc Northland provides individual and systems advocacy with a focus on person centered practices and principles. We can assist in navigating systems and connecting to resources, and referral services.	Duluth and surrounding area.
UCare Health Ride	UCare Health Ride provides no-cost transportation, for those on eligible plans, to and from your covered medical, dental and pharmacy visits.	
United Way	Community Resource Specialists to get connected to community health and social services in your area.	Statewide
Veterans Linkage Line	Provides assistance and referral services to veterans and their family members seven days a week. A detailed interactive answer bank is available to support veterans and provides information regarding benefits, claims and outreach, and education benefits.	Statewide

The following table would contain the technology used by each transportation provider for scheduling, dispatching and/or GPS tracking. Unfortunately, we were unable to gather any information from our providers in these areas.

Table 22: Technology

Agency Name	Name of Scheduling Software	Do you have an App for Transportation (Y/N)?	Name of Dispatching Software	AVL System/GPS (Y/N)?
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Vehicles

All the reporting transportation providers provide at least some wheelchair accessible vehicles, while some organizations have an entire fleet of wheelchair accessible vehicles. As vehicles age, they require additional maintenance, may break down more often, and become costlier to operate. Vehicle replacement, based on age and condition, is vital to the overall cost effectiveness of the transportation services provided. Access to maintenance persons has been identified as a barrier by our providers. Additionally, reporting in general has been a difficulty providers given the additional pressures Covid has placed on transportation providers. Unfortunately, our survey respondents only contained estimates of total numbers and no detailed information regarding their fleets. For this reason, Table 23 is incomplete.

Table 23: Vehicle Utilization Table

Vehicle #	Make	Model	Year	Vin #	Capacity/ Wheelchair Capacity	Days of the Week Vehicle is in Service	Service Hours	Program to which Vehicle is Assigned (if applicable)	Service Area
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

OUTREACH EFFORTS

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee guides the plan development. Steering Committee duties included:

- Evaluating strategies and assessing outcomes of projects identified in the 2017 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan.
- Developing project ideas and identifying priority strategies as part of the public workshop of the draft plan.
- Prioritizing project ideas identified at the public workshop for inclusion in the final plan.

The Steering Committee was made up of representatives from county human service agencies, area agency on aging representatives, centers for independent living representatives, passengers, Metropolitan Planning Organizations, and others. The table below lists the members of the Steering Committee.

Table 24: Steering Committee Membership

The Arrowhead Regional Transportation Coordinating Council members also attended steering committee meetings and provided input. List of those members can be found https://www.arrowheadrtcc.org/about.

| Members	Organization
Chris Belden	Duluth Transit Authority
Sheena Mulner	Hibbing Transit
Colette Hanson	Arrowhead Transit / AEOA
Jennie Rowland	Big Woods/Bois Forte
Tammy Anderson	Fond Du Lac
Karen Herman	Udac
Toni Rothmeier	Pinewood
Dana Thewis/Deb Scott	Community Partners
Laurie Berner	The Arc Northland
Liza Williamson	Community Action Duluth
Nick Zelle	Jefferson Lines
Brian Brown	Northern Access
Georgia Lane	Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
Martina Johnson	Cook County Health and Human Services
Derek Foss	Koochiching County Health and Human Services
Myrna Kay Peterson	Mobility Mania/Grand Rapids
Meghann Levitt	Carlton County Health and Human Services
Janet Nilsen	St. Louis County Health and Human Services
Kimberly Scanlon	Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
Gavin Bukovich	Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging
Beverly Sidlo-Tolliver	ARDC/RTCC Coordinator
Carla Pehl	Arrowhead Transit

Client Experience

A user survey was conducted to help identify needs and strengths from a user's perspective. A summary of the results has been included below:

- 47 total responses Race: >90% white
- Sex: ~⅔ female
- Age: most common is 45-54
- Disability status: about ⅔ report having a disability
- But 80% reported not needing assistance to use the transit service
- Only about 60% reported having a driver's license

People lived in 18 Zip Codes. The most common were 55616 (Two Harbors), 55806 (Duluth) and 55803 Rice Lake Twp.   Most respondents use DTA (18) and Arrowhead Transit (14) No respondents used Big Woods Transit, or Fond Du Lac Transit and four respondents noted use of more than one transit service. Additional questions have been summarized below:

Work and Shopping were the most popular destinations

For what primary purpose do you most frequently ride the bus?
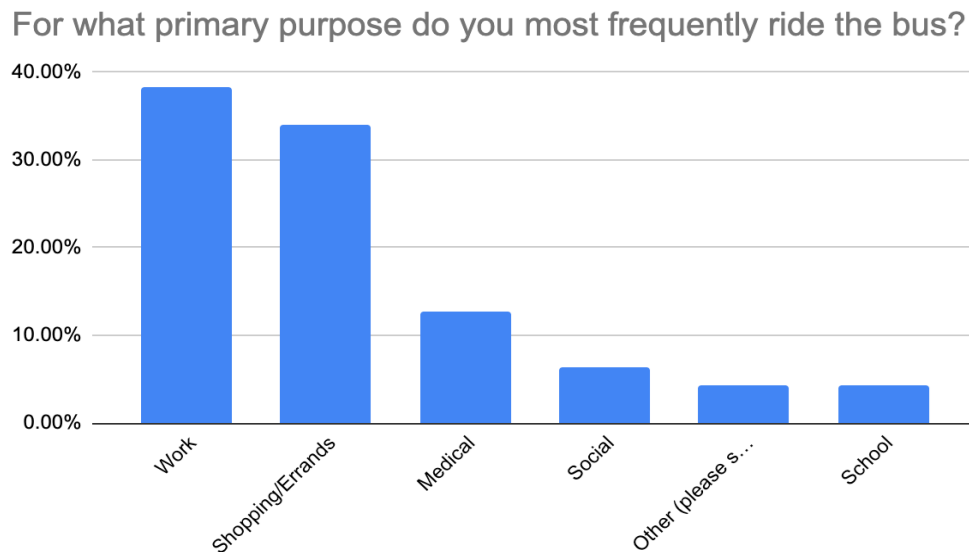
Overall, 75% of respondents were satisfied with the service. More than half of respondents have been using the service for five or more years

Satisfaction and need to travel outside transit service area

Legend: ■ Yes ■ No
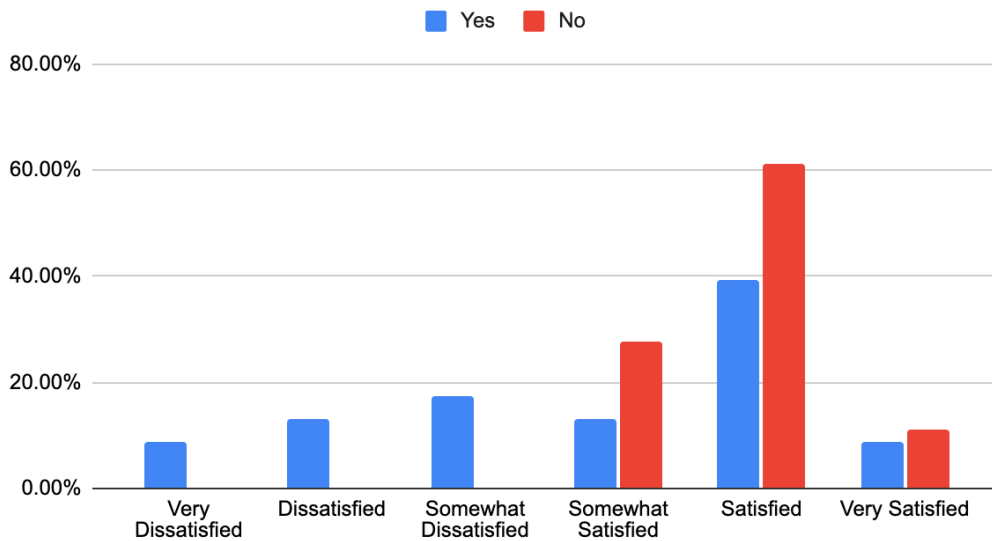
Half of respondents noted there was a destination that they needed to travel to that was inaccessible by transit.

Approximately 60% of respondents used the service once a week or more, But 5-7 times per week was tied with once a month or less as the most common response (~30% each) Suggestions for improvements included: The most common responses were: Longer service hours (30%) Shorter travel time (12%) Reliability (10%). Those who expresses dissatisfaction with the service listed service hours as the most common needed improvement
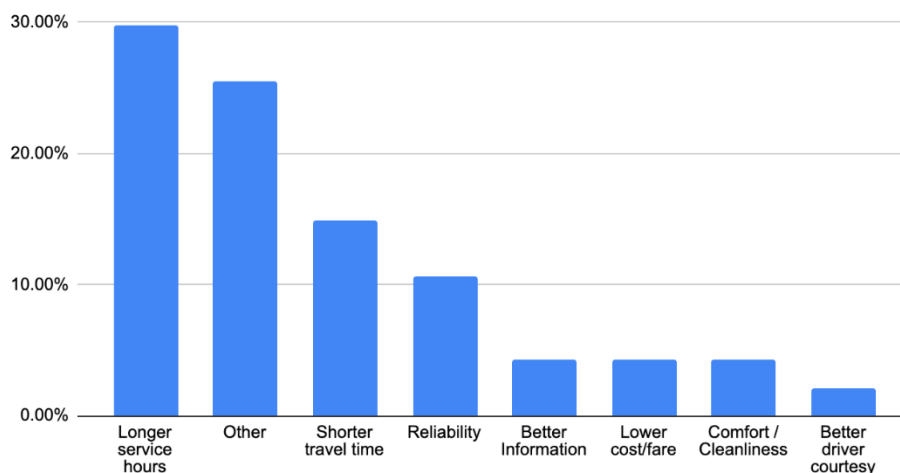
Many people answered "other", these responses included: "Better organizational skills for phone services" "For drivers to notice you at the bus stop without having to wave em down especially at 59th ave w" "no more pandemic" "A discount for senior citizens" Some "other" answers reflected concerns about frequency and specific routing.

Finally, suggestions for new destinations were also requested from survey respondents. Below is a summary of those results:

> Duluth was a popular suggestion, mentioned in 21% of responses
>
> Other suggestions include shopping destinations (Costco, Walmart)
>
> Cloquet, Ely, Hermantown, and Superior, WI were also mentioned
>
> The most common expected use of these new routes was "once a month or less" and "almost every day" (22% each)

How often do you think you would ride the bus to this location
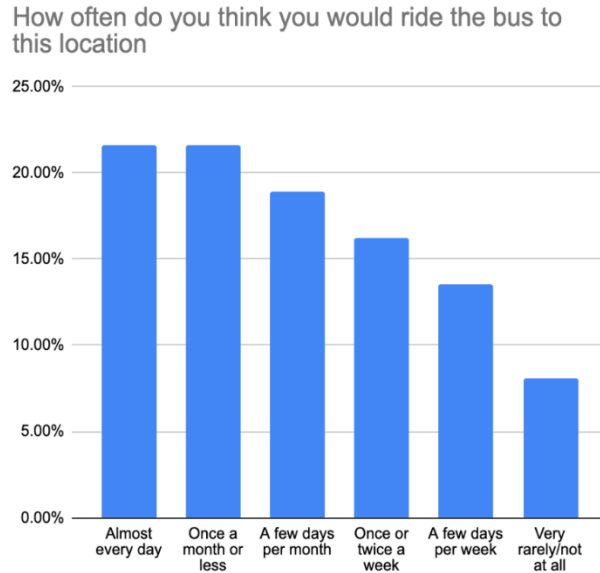
Focus Group

Focus groups of both riders and providers were conducted in early 2022. For riders, volunteers from multiple agencies interviewed riders from different geographic locations to broaden the input, with approximately 10 results. MnDOT provided the focus group questions. Some themes identified from the rider focus groups included: Desire for expanded (earlier) hours, and area, and connecting to other communities/locations, and Desire for more up to date information (i.e. where are drivers) for reliability and convenience.

The provider focus groups was conducted between January 31st and February 4th and included about 4 different provider's inputs. Similarly MnDOT provided focus group questions. Some of the themes identified through the provider focus group included: Service hours, access/service area, and lack of drivers were issues; difficulty reaching individuals in rural areas, desire for additional transit 'hubs' similar to DTA transit center to allow for easier regional connections, and rider qualification limitations
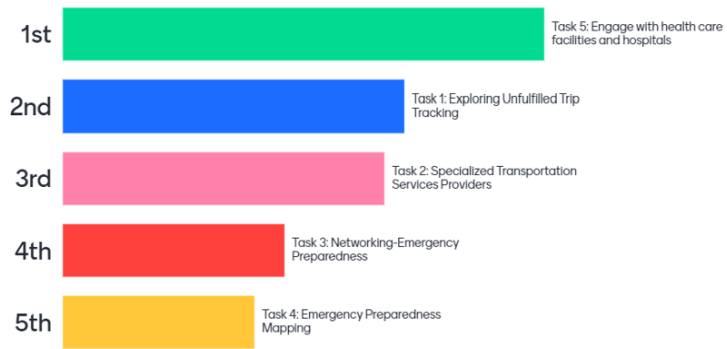
Planning Workshop

The planning workshop on February 7th, 2022 had 18 attendees and incorporated a summary of all the aforementioned data collection opportunities (focus group, surveys, etc.). 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. In addition, a survey was sent out late December 2022 to stakeholders asking them to rank the short term (the next 18-24 months) urgency of priorities. Using input gathered at this workshop and survey, the Steering Committee prioritized the strategies and projects included in the final plan. These can be found in the 'Mobility Tomorrow' section of this plan. Below included some of the results from an interactive activity conducted during the workshop:

Please Rank the priority of following Projects/Tasks from the 2017 plan

Rank	Project
1st	Project #2: Regional Transit Planning
2nd	Project #3: Transit Infrastructure Improvements
3rd	Project #5: Transit Volunteer Coordination
4th	Project #7: Sharing of Transit Vehicles
5th	Project #4: Transit Rider Training

Please Rank the priority of following new Projects/Tasks

Rank	Task
1st	Task 5: Engage with health care facilities and hospitals
2nd	Task 1: Exploring Unfilled Trip Tracking
3rd	Task 2: Specialized Transportation Services Providers
4th	Task 3: Networking-Emergency Preparedness
5th	Task 4: Emergency Preparedness Mapping

Strengths and Weaknesses

At the public workshop, participants identified strengths and weaknesses of existing coordination efforts in Region 3. Combined with the plan's technical findings, these strengths and weaknesses form the basis for identifying strategies to address transportation coordination in this region. See table 25 below:

Table 25: Public Workshop Outcomes

Strengths	Weaknesses
Existing RTCC actively collaborating.	Funding inflexibility and availability to adapt to changing community needs and program capacity.
Services that reach throughout the region via transit, volunteer drivers, STS, private providers, and other services.	Meaningful communication about desired system changes and needs does not take place among transit providers and stakeholders regularly. (This is improving with the RTCC.)
Positive relationships between transit agencies and stakeholders.	Unfulfilled rides throughout the region.
Regional transportation and other agencies willingness to share vehicles.	Inflexible transit boundaries.
New transportation models developed in response to COVID-19 pandemic, including mobile food shelve, vaccine services at mobility hubs, vehicle sharing for mobile vaccine units, and FTA policy shifts to allow for transit to deliver essential items.	New and upgraded transit vehicles are a constant need, particularly for transit programs in rural areas, but capital is often not available to accommodate these needs.
Centralized transportation directory developed by RTCC available online.	Driver recruitment and retention for buses, volunteers, and others.
Community oriented transportation providers.	Low reimbursement rates for NEMT and volunteer drivers.
	No reimbursement for unloaded miles.

COORDINATION, NEEDS, GAPS, and BARRIERS

Coordination

Coordination between transportation providers aims to enhance transportation access by minimizing duplication of services and facilitating the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. Integrating all transportation stakeholders into coordination with transit providers produces reciprocal relationships between health and

human service agencies, agencies for older adults, day treatment and rehabilitation services, schools, and other direct clients service agencies traditionally serve people who are transit dependent.

In the fall of 2017, the Arrowhead Regional Development Commission (ARDC) and the Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency (AEOA) began discussions about developing a Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) in Northeastern Minnesota and seeking a Phase 1: 2018 Organizational Planning Grant from the Minnesota Department of Transportation. A process was designed to help local stakeholders within the 8 participating counties (Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, Pine, St. Louis) develop a structure and process to ensure transportation needs are met in Northeastern Minnesota and to support successful implementation of the 2017 regional local human service transit coordination plan.

 ARDC is the designated transportation planning agency for the Arrowhead region and has completed numerous transit planning processes, including the 2017 local human service transit coordination plan, which calls for better coordination of transportation options for citizens, particularly those with low incomes, disabilities, increased age and other mobility challenges. Other ARDC advisory committees include the Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging Advisory Committee and the Northeast Minnesota Area Transportation Partnership (NEMNATP).

he RTCC Council membership represents the following sectors or agencies:
• Area Agency on Aging
• Centers for Independent Living
• County Representatives (elected and staff)
• Funders (public/private)
• Health Systems
• Human Service Agencies
• MN Continuum of Care Coordinators
• Transportation and Human Service Advocates
• Transportation Providers
• Transportation Users
• Tribal Representatives (Bois Forte, Fond du Lac, Grand Portage, Leech Lake)
• Veterans Service Organizations
• Workforce Development

Regional Needs & Gaps

Service needs and gaps persist despite on-going efforts to improve the quality of community transportation services by transportation and human service providers. This section identifies needs revealed by stakeholder input.

Service Limitations, Gaps & Unmet Needs

- Inability to travel outside of service area/boundaries/cross county lines
- Financial restraints on rural distance rides utilizing large bus
- New and upgraded vehicles for rural public transportation providers that are appropriate for the intended use
- Connections between cities in or near the Duluth metropolitan area, but outside of Duluth (i.e. among Cloquet, Proctor, Hermantown, and Rice Lake)

Centralized Information

- Universal payment option across all transit providers
- Universal scheduling app across all transit providers
- Searchable transportation directory
- State sponsored regional Transportation Management Coordination Centers

Spatial Limitations

- Filling gaps of first and last mile
- Bus stop accessibility and snow clearing in winter

Temporal Limitations

- Early a.m., later p.m., and weekend service unavailability

Program Eligibility and Trip Purpose Limitations

- Communication between regional healthcare centers and transit providers to coordinate appointment scheduling of transit-reliant clients, particularly from rural areas, with transit schedules
- Lack of wheelchair accessible transportation outside of transit hours of operation
- Lack of wheelchair accessible transportation for trip outside of medical needs

Service Quality and Miscellaneous Issues

- Under employment issues with hiring adequate amount of drivers including bus drivers, volunteer drivers, private transportation providers leading to driver shortages industry wide.
- Reduced service area coverage of Specialized Transportation Service providers
- Short notice for NEMT trips canceled by providers

MOBILITY TOMORROW

Goals & Strategies

The purpose of formulating goals and objectives is to determine what direction planning efforts should take, independent of timeframe and individual projects. A goal is defined as an end state that will be brought about by implementing this.

In addition to the five-year goals, the stakeholders identified three goals to focus on in the next 18-24 months.

1. Goal 1: Regional Transit Planning
2. Goal 6: Regional Transportation Coordination Council
3. Goal 4: Volunteer Driver Coordination and Recruitment

Table 26: Goals and Strategies

Goal 1:	Regional Transit Planning: Engage communities and the public to further identify gaps in service, accessibility needs in the existing transit system, and strategies to improve transit in Northeast Minnesota.		
Strategy	**Action**	**Progress**	**Notes**
1.1: Expand services, including but not limited to additional routes, extended hours of service, and additional vehicles, to enhance mobility throughout the region	Maintain transit providers' representation on the RTCC. Engage with transit planning stakeholder groups and committees. Advocate for ADA Accessible LYFT®/Rideshare vehicles.	RTCC staff was member of DTA 'Better Bus Blueprint' steering committee, and Arrowhead Transit IMI steering committee. Several transit providers are member and regularly attend the RTCC.	IMI project was unable to launch due to lack of drivers.
1.2: Engage in comprehensive planning strategies to advocate for access transportation to and from major trip generators.	Engage with local leaders, MnDOT staff and planners. Develop a set of transit analysis questions for communities to answer as they conduct local comprehensive planning processes.		

| 1.3 | Consult with direct client service providers, human services, and client help lines (Senior LinkageLine, Disability Line, VA Services Line) on their knowledge, data, and feedback on requests for help with transportation. | Meet with staff from human services and client help lines. Maintain human services' representation on the RTCC | St. Louis County, Cook County, and Carlton County PHS staff are on the RTCC. | |

Goal 2:	Transit Infrastructure Improvements: Improve safety, accessibility, and weather mitigation at transit stop locations.			
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
2.1:	Address identified system gaps and accessibility needs with new or upgraded infrastructure at and around select transit stops, shelters, depots, and more; pursue improvements using transit-oriented development principles at significant destinations throughout the region.	Maintain transit providers' representation on the RTCC. Engage with transit planning stakeholder groups and committees. Engage with Minnesota Towards Zero Death.	RTCC staff was member of DTA 'Better Bus Blueprint' steering committee, and Arrowhead Transit IMI steering committee. Several transit providers are member and regularly attend the RTCC.	IMI project was unable to launch due to lack of drivers.
2.2:	Enhance infrastructure at and around public transit stops, shelters, and depots to be compliant with standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act and be usable by all potential transit users.	Assessment of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) at all transit stops, shelters, depots, etc. in the Arrowhead Region, and development of an ADA transition plan to address identified needs.		

2.3:	Identify opportunities for new locations for transit hubs, expansion of mobility options at existing hubs, and identify spaces for non-traditional hubs (i.e. libraries, public meeting spaces).	Develop maps identifying existing transit hub and point data on locations that could fit criteria for potential transit/mobility hub.	Transit stops currently mapped though GIS and GTFS.	

Goal 3:		Transit Rider Training: Increase confidence and knowledge of potential riders of transit and regional transportation options.		
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
3.1:	Increase training opportunities for drivers on interacting with riders that are differently abled and/or experiencing anxiety when riding the transportation service.	Partner with Local Mental Health providers, Dementia Friendly, disability services, and others to provide trainings. Encourage appropriate agencies to apply for Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) scholarship funds to support training outside of operating budget.		
3.2:	Make information about existing transportation providers in the region, and how to use these services, more accessible to the public.	Identify groups/communities with high potential for ridership. Perform meetings/interviews with community groups. Use results to guide outreach, rider education, and awareness focus.		

3.3	Development of universal payment system across the region's transportation services.	Engage with state level efforts to develop transportation management coordination center(s) models. Advocate for statewide broadband access.		

Goal 4:		Volunteer Driver Coordination and Recruitment: To have supportive resources to develop and sustain volunteer driver programs.		
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
4.1:	Provide assistance to re-start and/or increase service post Covid-19.	Maintain outreach campaign promoting volunteer driver recruitment. Disseminate outreach material on established timeline. Identify opportunities to provide technical assistance to agencies.	RTCC staff facilitated focus group with regional vol. driver agencies to identify areas of need. Three Newspaper ads and one outreach brochure developed.	
4.2:	Seek funding and collaboration for opportunities to purchase and share vehicles for regional providers through the Section 5310 program and other sources	Engage with MnDOT's 5310 program staff. Identify community and host agency(ies) to purse procurement of vehicle(s) to be used by volunteers.		

4.3:	Maintain outreach campaign promoting volunteer driver recruitment.	Engage with employers to create community service programs that allow their employees to volunteer drive a certain number of hours/year. Advocate for legislation supporting volunteer driver including increased mileage reimbursement and others as identified by the Volunteer Driver Coalition.	RTCC staff remains member of MCOTA Volunteer Driver Work Group, members of Statewide Volunteer Driver Coalition and engage in advocacy efforts recommended by Statewide Volunteer Driver Coalition and MCOTA.	
4.4	Disseminate information on technologies that can streamline volunteer coordination and sharing of volunteers between agencies.	Participate in educational webinars and MCOTA volunteer driver forum.	RTCC staff is co-lead of the MCOTA Vol. Driver work team.	

Goal 5:	Sharing of Vehicles: Continue to seek funding and collaboration for opportunities to purchase and share vehicles for regional providers through the Section 5310 program and other sources.			
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
5.1:	Maintain sharing hub of policies, procedures, legal agreements/contracts to support limited-scope vehicle sharing to address identified need. Develop agency profiles outlining availability of vehicles and/or need to borrow.	Survey non-profits, faith-based organizations, and others including information on vehicles sharing and question(s) on any transportation services they offer.	Using BaseCamp, a vehicle sharing resources subsection was developed and is facilitated by RTCC staff.	

5.2:	Ask MnDOT for expansion of definition of 5310 to include vans/minivans/etc.	Formally address members of MCOTA and MnDOT staff on this issue.		
5.3:	Seek funding and collaboration for opportunities to purchase and share vehicles for regional providers through the Section 5310 program and other sources	Invest in vehicle sharing coordinator to work across the region to assist entities in implementing and coordination the sharing of their vehicles. Engage with MnDOT's 5310 program staff. Identify community and host agency(ies) to purse procurement of vehicle(s) to be used by volunteers. Identify solutions for real and perceived barriers to vehicle sharing.		

Goal 6:		Regional Transportation Coordination Council: Continue to convene Regional Transportation Coordination Council and support coordination of transit projects across the Arrowhead Region.		
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
6.1:	Continuously implement and tasks identified by Regional Transportation Coordination Council and update annually.	Continue to provide organization support to the regional network of transit providers and stakeholders**.**	Full RTCC meets every other month.	

Goal 7:	Intersection of Transportation and Health Care: Increase communication and collaboration between health care facilities and hospitals with private transportation providers.		
Strategy		**Action**	**Progress**	**Notes**
7.1:	Educate community and state leaders on the impact of transportation as a social determinant of health.	Participate in local and state public meetings. Provide action items including advocacy for legislation supporting transportation access.	RTCC staff and council members attend meeting, planning events, conferences, and other activities with opportunities to educate and engage with community and state leaders.	
7.2:	Engage in comprehensive planning strategies to advocate for access transportation to and from health care facilities, hospitals, and assisted living facilities.	Maintain health care member representative(s) on the RTCC.		
7.3:	Explore the impact and possible solutions for transportation service gaps during off hours of transit and volunteer driver services.	Engage with hospital staff that previously reported issues and gauge level of current need.		
7.4	Provide facilitation and technical assistance to creating partnerships to increase transportation access. Maintain streamlined transportation directory.	Engage with hospitals and health care social worker or discharge planners.	Paper and web-based transportation directory have been developed.	

Goal 8:	Emergency Preparedness Facilitation: To facilitate networking with all emergency response units and all transportation providers within the region.		
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
8.1:	Identify and meet with local and county level emergency response entities. Inquire to regional transportation providers on their level of engagement with emergency preparedness entities.	Identify and meet with local and county level emergency response entities including non-profit entities such as The Red Cross. RTCC staff to attend FEMA Incident Command System training.	Inquired to regional transportation providers on their level of engagement with emergency preparedness entities.	
8.2:	Locate service areas of transportation providers in relation to emergency response shelters and other resource hubs. Create list of indirect emergency response resources, such as food shelf sites.	Determine level of need for additional mapping based on resources already available and used by emergency preparedness entities. Locate service areas of transportation providers in relation to emergency response shelters and other resource hubs. Create list of indirect emergency response resources, such as food shelf sites.	Point mapping of noted locations on ADRC/RTCC transportation provider map. Cross referenced information of noted locations and transportation service areas understood.	

Goal 9:	Improve transportation access for workforce: Engage with employers and workforce support agencies to identify needs and opportunities for transportation access and improvements.		
Strategy		Action	Progress	Notes
9.1:	Perform needs assessment with workforce support agencies in region to identify transportation needs to better connect and sustain people with employment.	Connect with existing needs assessments structures such as, DHS Gaps Analysis, to develop and implement.		
9.2:	Identify and meet with employers and workforce support agencies in region to gauge current efforts for coordinated transportation (carpooling, transit vouches, etc)	Identify and meet with employers and workforce support agencies.		
9.3	Facilitate communication with workforce support agencies and regional transportation providers on opportunities to fill identified gaps.	Maintain workforce support agency representation on the RTCC.		
9.4	Explore feasibility for pilot project based on needs assessment to fill gaps. Implement pilot project as appropriate.	Identify host agency(ies) and funding source(s).		

Priority of Projects

Table 27: Priority of Projects over next 5 years as decided through planning workshop and following discussions.

Goal, Strategy	Long-term Priority
Intersection of Transportation and Health Care: Increase communication and collaboration between health care facilities and hospitals with private transportation providers.	1
Regional Transit Planning: Engage communities and the public to further identify gaps in service, accessibility needs in the existing transit system, and strategies to improve transit in Northeast Minnesota.	2
Transit Infrastructure Improvements: Improve safety, accessibility, and weather mitigation at transit stop locations.	3
Volunteer Driver Coordination and Recruitment: To have supportive resources to develop and sustain volunteer driver programs.	4
Sharing of Vehicles: Continue to seek funding and collaboration for opportunities to purchase and share vehicles for regional providers through the Section 5310 program and other sources.	5
Regional Transportation Coordination Council: Continue to convene Regional Transportation Coordination Council and support coordination of transit projects across the Arrowhead Region.	6
Improve transportation access for workforce: Engage with employers and workforce support agencies to identify needs and opportunities for transportation access and improvements.	7
Emergency Preparedness Facilitation: To facilitate networking with all emergency response units and all transportation providers within the region.	8
Transit Rider Training: Increase confidence and knowledge of potential riders of transit and regional transportation options.	9

Appendix A Focus Group Questions

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR RIDERS

2022 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

Introduction

    A. Plan Overview: The plan will guide future transportation coordination.

    B. Purpose of focus groups: to discuss current perceptions of transportation services, opportunities, short and longer-term needs, trends and challenges. Your input will help us understand the types and levels of transportation services that will best meet the needs of the state's residents.

    C. Individuals may speak to us in confidence. Any quoting of outcomes will be done anonymously. Our main purpose is to allow stakeholders to speak freely about their concerns.

Questions/Topics *(Note: not all topics or questions will be relevant for all stakeholders)*

Participant Name:

Contact Information:

Transportation Services

1. What are the major challenges you face regarding transportation?

2. What is your opinion of transportation service in your area? What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing service (s)?

    • Specifically: service availability, quality, ease of use and connectivity

3. Are there any groups of people or people in certain areas that you think could be better served? Do you have specific suggestions for serving them? Are there any populations that are over-served?

4. What comments do you have regarding access to transportation? What opportunities do you see for improving accessibility and connectivity? Are there suggestions you have for enhancing amenities/facilities and/or infrastructure improvements?

5. Do you see a need to expand transportation service beyond what exists today? To which cities or communities? To other neighboring counties?

Transportation Needs

6. What do you think are the primary gaps in service?

7. What do you see as the top three transportation needs in your county/city?

8. What are your top 3 - 5 priorities for transportation?

Transportation Funding

9. If there were more funds for transportation, how should these funds be used? (For example, provide later evening service, weekend service, connections to neighboring counties, etc.)

Other

10. What haven't we covered that's important to you?

11. Do you have any other comments, questions, or concerns?

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

2022 Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan

Introduction

Plan Overview: The plan will guide future transportation coordination.

Purpose of focus groups: to discuss current perceptions of transportation services, opportunities, short and longer-term needs, trends and challenges. Your input will help us understand the types and levels of transportation services that will best meet the needs of the state's residents.

Individuals may speak to us in confidence. Any quoting of outcomes will be done anonymously. Our main purpose is to allow stakeholders to speak freely about their concerns.

Questions/Topics *(Note: not all topics or questions will be relevant for all stakeholders)*

Stakeholder Name:

Organization/Role:

Contact Information:

Transportation Services

1. What are the major challenges in your community for people to get from point a to point b?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of existing service(s)?

3. What is/should be the role of human service transportation with respect to:
   - Service availability
   - Service quality
   - Consumer familiarity with service
   - Ease of use for the rider
   - Connectivity to major destination / activity centers?

4. Are there any potential markets (groups of people, types of people, people in certain areas) that you think could be better served? Do you have specific suggestions for serving them? Are there any populations that are over-served?

5. What comments do you have regarding access to the transportation network? What opportunities do you see for improving accessibility and connectivity for riders? Are there suggestions you have for enhancing amenities/facilities and/or infrastructure improvements?

6. Do you see a need to expand transit service beyond what exists today? To which cities or communities? To other neighboring counties?

Transportation Gaps & Needs

7. What do you think are the primary gaps in service? Do you have tools to assess gaps, service duplication, or underused assets?

8. What do you see as the top three transportation needs in your county? For your city/organization? What are the primary transportation-related concerns that you have /hear from your constituents/clients/consumers?

9. In general, what do you believe are the top 3-5 priorities for transportation for this area within the short-term? Long-term?

Transportation Funding and Partnerships

10. If there were more funds for transportation, how should these funds be used? (For example, provide later evening service, weekend service, connections to neighboring counties, etc.)

11. Do you have ideas about partnership opportunities between your organization and other transportation providers?

Other

12. Do you have any advice for involving the public in this planning process? Are there any specific stakeholders or groups you think we should talk with?

13. What haven't we covered that's important to you?

14. Do you have any other comments, questions or concerns?

Appendix B Transportation Resource Questionnaire

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. The information you provide will be used to develop an inventory of transportation resources available to Minnesota citizens. Please take approximately 15 minutes to provide detailed information on your agency's transportation service.

Agency Background

1. **Contact Information**

   Agency/Transit System Name:

   Mailing Address:

   Address 2:

   City:

   ZIP:

   Contact Name:

   Contact Title:

   Contact Phone Number:

   Website:

2. **What best describes your agency?**

   Drop-down: Public, Private non-profit, Private for-profit

3. **Your agency is primarily a ...?**

   Drop-down: Transportation Provider (e.g. public transit, school bus, taxi/shuttle, etc.), Human Services Provider (day training & habilitation, nursing home, area agency on aging, center for independent living, hospital, etc), Volunteer

4. **What population does your agency serve? Check all that apply**

   General public

   Individuals with intellectual disabilities

   Individuals with physical disabilities

   Individuals with sensory disabilities

   Individuals with mental health issues

   Individuals with addictions

   Homeless individuals

   Elderly

   Children and families

   Low-income individuals

   Other (Please specify)

Transportation Service

5. If your agency operates transportation, what are the hours of service? If no service is offered on some days, leave that day blank. If your agency does not operate transportation, insert N/A.

	Time
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednes	
Thursda	
Friday	
Saturday	
Sunday	

6. Please list the CITIES, TOWNS, or TOWNSHIPS where you PICK UP passengers.

Text Box

7. Please list the CITIES, TOWNS, or TOWNSHIPS where you DROP OFF passengers. (This may include the same locations listed above as locations where you pick up passengers.)

Text Box

8. How many clients do you serve at your facility?

Text Box

9. Do your provide client services beyond transportation? If so, fill out the information below:

Name of program:

Number of Participants

Number of Events per Week

Percent of Participants who Attended on an Average Day

Percent of Participants who are Transit Dependent or Likely to use Transit

Number of Weeks Program is Offered per Year

10. On average, how much do passengers pay for one ride on your transportation service?

Fare for single ride

11. How far in advance must a passenger schedule a trip? Check all that apply.

Schedule is fixed, no advance notice required

Less than 1 hour

Between 1 and 24 hours

Between 24 and 48 hours

2 or more days

12. How are your tips scheduled?

Text Box

13. What type of service does your agency provide? Check all that apply

Fixed Route (public transportation w/ complimentary paratransit)

Deviated Fixed Route (established route with deviations for pick-ups)

Demand Response (call-in to book a ride)

Scheduled (established routes for specific purposes ex. Client routes, out-of-town trips

Ambulance (emergency transportation)

14. What level of service does your agency provide to passengers? Check all that apply.

Curb to curb

Door to door

Door through door

Other (please specify)

15. Are there any eligibility requirements for using your agency's transportation services? Check all that apply.

Passenger must be agency client/consumer

Age of passenger

Cultural affiliation of passenger

Income level of passenger

Cost of providing ride to individual passenger

Referral from county human service agency

Other (please specify)

16. If you checked any responses in Question 12, please describe the process for qualification to receive rides from your agency.

Text Box

Vehicles

17. If your agency owns or leases vehicles, how many do you own or lease within each vehicle category? If your agency does not own or lease vehicles, skip this question.

	Total Owned	Total Leased	Total Lift-Equipped	Total STS-certified
Sedans/Station Wagons				
Minivans				
Small bus/vans (<10 passengers)				
Medium bus (11-20 passengers)				
Large bus (20+ passengers)				
Large heavy duty bus (20+ passengers)				

18. If your agency shares vehicles with other agencies, how many do you share and what is the passenger capacity within each vehicle category? If your agency does not share vehicles, skip this question.

	Total Shared	Total Lift-Equipped	Total STS-certified
Sedans/Station Wagons			
Minivans			
Small bus/vans (<10 passengers)			
Medium bus (11-20 passengers)			
Large bus (20+ passengers)			
Large heavy duty bus (20+ passengers)			

19. If your agency shares vehicles with other agencies, with whom does your agency share vehicles and for what purpose? Please describe your vehicle sharing arrangement. If your agency does not share vehicles, skip this question.

20. How many personal vehicles does your organization's staff use to transport people? If your agency does not transport passengers in personal vehicles, skip this question.

	Total Vehicles	Total Lift-Equipped	Total STS-certified
Sedans/Station Wagons			
Minivans			
Small bus/vans (<10 passengers)			

21. Additional Vehicle Information:

Make, Model, Year, VIN# Capacity/Wheelchair Capacity, Days of the Week in Service, Service Hours, Program Assigned to, Service Area

Passengers

22. For what types of passenger needs does your agency provide accommodation? Check all that apply.

    Car seats or booster seats

    Physical disabilities

    Mental impairments

    Interpreters

    Personal care attendants

    Escorts for elderly/frail people

    Children

    Discounted service for seniors or low-income groups

    Other (please specify)

23. What percentage of your passengers require assistance getting on and off your vehicles?

    Text Box

Coordination

24. What other organizations do you coordinate with to provide transportation service? Check all that apply.

    Churches

    Day Training and Habilitation

    Educational institutions

    Elder day care

    Intercity carrier (e.g. Amtrak, Greyhound, Jefferson Lines)

    Private regional shuttles

    Airports

    Head Start

    HMO or PMAP

    Occupational training center

County human service agency or MNET

Tribal agency

My agency does not coordinate transportation services with other agencies

Other (Please name the agency and describe how you coordinate.)

25. Please describe the coordination that takes place between your agency and each agency category checked above.

Text Box

26. What issues have you encountered in coordinating or attempting to coordinate transportation services? RANK these barriers in order of greatest concern. (1=Highest Concern, 9=Lowest Concern)

Billing and payment

Cost

Staff time requirements

Insurance

Driver qualifications

Scheduling conflicts

Limited service area boundaries

Limited service hour availability

Passenger security

Have you encountered other issues not specified above? Please describe.

27. Who is your vendor for commercial vehicle insurance?

Text Box

28. What changes are most needed to improve transportation coordination in your service area?

Text Box

29. What are the top three destinations you provide transportation to, in terms of number of trips provided?

Text Box

Text Box

Text Box

30. How are the transportation services you provide funded? (Select all that apply)

Fares/user fees

Private insurance

Medicare/Medicaid

Disability Waiver funding

Other state or local government funds

Federal funds

Community organizations

Grants

Other (Please specify)

31. Which of the following are the most significant barriers to providing your transportation service? (Select all that apply)

Funding availability

Vehicle maintenance

Staff training

Maintaining ridership

Driver hiring and retention

Other staff hiring and retention

Other (Please specify)

32. If your agency or organization has reduced or eliminate service in response to COVD-19, when do you anticipate that your service will return to pre-pandemic levels (similar span of service, service area or number of routes, etc.)?

Less than 3 months from now

3-6 months from now

6 months to 1 year from now

More than 1 year from now

Our service will likely never return to pre-pandemic levels

N/A

33. Thinking primarily about the populations your agency or organization serves, what will be the most significant unmet transportation needs following the COVID-19 pandemic? This could include geographic areas

without sufficient service, population groups that are underserved, types of service that are not provide, days and times when service is needed but not available, etc.

Thank You

Thank you for completing this questionnaire!

Questionnaire results will be analyzed in a regional Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify strategies for improved coordination of publicly and privately funded transportation resources in this region. For more information on transit coordination in Minnesota, visit www.coordinatemntransit.org

Appendix C Human Services Client Survey

Local Human Service Transit Plan - Human Service Client Survey

Thank you for completing this survey. The information you provide will be used to develop the Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan for the Arrowhead Region. Please take approximately 5 minutes to provide information regarding transportation services.

About Your Trips

1. When you ride the bus, where do you usually go?

   Work

   School

   Shopping or other Errands (like bank or post office visits)

   Doctor, dentist, counseling or other medical or mental health appointments

   Visits with friends or family

   Special events (like concerts, festivals, sporting events

2. How often do you use an agency transportation service?

   5-7 days per week

   2-4 days per week

   Once a week

   A few days per month

   Once a month or less

3. How long have you been using this transportation service?

   Less than 1 month

   1 month to 1 year

   1-5 years

   More than 5 years

4. How satisfied are you with the availability of transportation services from the agency?

   Very Satisfied

   Satisfied

   Somewhat Satisfied

   Somewhat Dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

5. Do you have any other means of transportation?

Yes

No

6. In the past week, what percentage of your transportation needs have been met by the agency?

_____ %

7. What improvements to this service would make it most likely that you would ride more frequently? Check all that apply.

Reliability (on-time)

Longer service hours (earlier or later)

Better Information

Better driver courtesy

Lower cost/fare

More comfortable/cleaner vehicle

Shorter travel time

Other (explain)_____

_____

8. Is there anywhere you need to travel that you cannot get to by using the transportation service?

Yes

No

Other (explain)

_____

If additional service was added, where should it go?

_____
_____

_____
_____

9. How often do you think you would ride the bus to the location listed above?

   Almost every day

   A few days per week

   Once or twice a week

   A few days per month

   Once a month or less

   Very rarely/not at all

About You

10. What is your age?

   Under 18

   18-24

   25-34

   35-44

   45-44

   55-64

   65 or older

11. What is your gender?

   Female

   Male

   Non-Binary

   Other (specify) _____

12. Do you have a driver's license?

   Yes

   No

   Prefer not to answer

13. What is your race/ethnicity?

African/African American

Asian

Hispanic/Latino

White

Mixed/Other

14. What language do you primarily speak at home?_____

15. Do you identify as someone with a disability?

Yes

No

Prefer not to Answer

16. Do you have any conditions that require assistance to use this transportation service?

No, none

Difficulty hearing

Difficulty walking

Require lift device

Visual impairments

Other (specify) _____

17. What is your zip code: _____

18. Which service provider do you utilize? (Select all that apply)

Duluth Transit Authority

Hibbing Area Transit

Arrowhead Transit

Fon Du Lac Transit

Big Woods Transit

Other (specify) _____

Thank You

Thank you for completing this survey!

Please return to where you received this survey, or 221 W. First Street Duluth, MN 55804

Survey results will be incorporated into the Local Human Service Transit Coordination Plan. The purpose of this plan is to identify strategies for improved coordination of publicly and privately funded transportation resources in this region. For more information on transit coordination in Minnesota, visit www.coordinatemntransit.org