

## **CHAPTER FOUR: Framework for Action Strategies**

## DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES

The United We Ride Framework for Action was the tool used as the basis for the region’s assessment and planning process. The ultimate is to move toward building a fully coordinated transportation system. This planning process allows individuals that lack a shared perspective (all the stakeholders) to move forward and tackle coordination and define solutions together. The state used this framework in developing the state plan. The Framework for Action uses a straightforward planning and action process of planning, assessing, prioritizing and setting an action plan. These four steps lay the foundation for ACTION. The five areas assessed were the following:

1. Making things happen by working together. Agencies and organizations working together to support a coordinated transportation system.
2. Taking stock in community needs. Identifying inventory, strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, barriers and gaps to move forward.
3. Putting customers first. Gathering input from users and representatives of users on a fully coordinated transportation system.
4. Adapting funding for greater mobility.
5. Moving people efficiently. Service is user-friendly, cost efficient, coordinated and provides choices – a seamless system.

At a half day planning workshop in Region 6W the group developed the following strategies and action plan for each of the five areas from the Framework for Action Tool.

## ACTION PLAN

### MAKING THINGS HAPPEN BY WORKING TOGETHER

**Strategy #1: Create a local (regional) transportation coordination council (TCC) made up of transit providers and human service providers to encourage inter-agency coordination to improve the transportation network and its service within the region.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
1. Select membership and the lead agency to facilitate the TCC for Region 6W providers.	UMVRDC	January-February 2007
2. Determine role, mission and goals of the TCC using this transit – human service coordination plan as the foundation for moving forward.		
3. Seek funding for TCC plan of action. Discuss the mobility management model of the state and feasibility of applying for funds for the region.		March - July 2007
4. Move toward a seamless model of delivering transportation services within the region.		

**Strategy #2: Identify and seek solutions to barriers at the local level that stop coordination from happening and share with policy makers at all levels – local, state and federal.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
1 Additional assessment of the regional transportation network’s needs and barriers.	TCC	July 2007

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2 Conduct planning sessions on barriers to coordination— whether perceived or reality. Seek assistance of MnDOT and DHS for clarification on regulations.</li> <li>3 Tabulate list of barriers (i.e. liability regulations, insurance, service boundaries, program regulations) and share with policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels as applicable.</li> <li>4 Work with state agencies (i.e. MnDOT, DOC and DHS) to establish a legislative work plan or agenda to deal with these barriers.</li> <li>5 Look specifically at certification of Specialized Transportation Systems at possible different levels or types of certification and crossing geographical boundaries for service of transportation systems.</li> </ol>		<p>August – September 2007</p> <p>November – December 2007</p> <p>January 2008</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>
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**Strategy #3: Develop a coordinated system for delivery of transportation services in the region.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meet regularly to discuss options and foster cooperation and coordination.</li> <li>2. Identify service gaps.</li> <li>3. Discuss the pros and cons of a single point of access within the region.</li> <li>4. Begin implementation of regional coordination strategies and support projects that fill gaps and provide choices.</li> <li>5. Discuss coordination between systems beyond the region.</li> <li>6. Conduct marketing and awareness campaign.</li> <li>7. Explore use of technology-based tools that would enhance the regional transportation system (i.e. software, GPS systems, mobile data computers, Fare Media).</li> </ol>	<p>TCC Mobility Manager</p>	<p>On-going</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p> <p>2008</p>

**TAKING STOCK IN COMMUNITY NEEDS AND MOVING FORWARD**

**Strategy #1: Prioritize rides or target service in the event funding is not adequate and needs to be cut back.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Canvass providers and customers.</li> <li>2. Establish service priorities.</li> <li>3. Identify alternatives.</li> <li>4. Maintain a resource list.</li> </ol>	<p>TCC Mobility Manager</p>	<p>July 2007</p>

**Strategy #2: Identify ways that extended service hours could be implemented within the region.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying non-traditional service programs that currently exist within the region.</li> <li>2. Develop a list of potential providers and increase</li> </ol>	<p>TCC Mobility Manager</p>	<p>July 2007</p>

<p>awareness.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Consider memorandums of agreement or contracts to provide extended service outside of current scope.</li> <li>4. Seek funding - private and public.</li> <li>5. Consider development of volunteer/informal networks or programs to meet the needs. Encourage projects that address this need.</li> </ol>		
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**Strategy #3: Continue to assess community needs.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Seek on-going feedback of customers and communities (i.e. random on-board or telephone surveys).</li> <li>2. Conduct forums for community input.</li> <li>3. Work with civic organizations, faith based communities, the corporate or businesses community and city government.</li> <li>4. Seek solutions at the same time as identifying needs.</li> <li>5. Prioritize the needs and decide what feasibly the network can address.</li> </ol>	TCC Mobility Manager	On-going  ↓

**PUTTING THE CUSTOMER FIRST**

**Strategy #1: Further implement and support volunteer driver programs as an intricate and vital part to the transportation network in our rural region.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Support the development and utilization of volunteer drivers and volunteer programs.</li> <li>2. Seek corporate or business sponsorship.</li> <li>3. Focus volunteer service in smaller underserved areas of the region.</li> <li>4. Seek ways to coordinate resources – physical inventory and volunteers between programs.</li> <li>5. Acknowledge/recognize volunteers as a valued asset.</li> </ol>	TCC Mobility Manager	January 2008  ↓  Annually

**Strategy #2: Increase utilization by providing passenger assistants, escorts and/or “first time helpers” to ease first time or infrequent users fear of the unknown or how to use the current systems.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Consider the development of volunteer programs to fill this customer service gap.</li> <li>2. Work with service providers to identify where responsibility lies with this issue. Clearly define and agree on parameters.</li> <li>3. Market to family members, neighbors and service providers to encourage use (i.e. vouchers, gift certificate).</li> <li>4. Promote the use of transportation services as being user friendly, easy to use, and cost effective – “the right thing to do”.</li> </ol>	TCC Mobility Manager Aging Program Director	January 2008 On-going  ↓

**Strategy #3: Market services to dispel misconceptions, identify what is available, and how to use systems.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the issues/misconceptions consumers have with the service.</li> <li>2. Develop strategies to address the issues.</li> <li>3. Conduct education and awareness marketing campaign promoting the available transportation system and their use as being user friendly, easy to use and cost effective (i.e. directories, magnets, phone numbers, ads, gift certificates, promotions, flyers).</li> <li>4. Work to improve sources of information available through other sources than the regional stakeholders (i.e. websites, databases and phone directories).</li> <li>5. Document increased utilization of transportation following marketing efforts.</li> </ol>	<p>TCC Mobility Manager Aging Program Director</p>	<p>On-going</p> 

**ADAPTING FUNDING FOR GREATER MOBILITY**

**Strategy #1: Provide more employer incentives or subsidies to cost-share rides or develop ride share programs for the workforce.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assess the business community – what do they do, do they perceive a need, what are feasible options and who could they partner with.</li> <li>2. Identify the benefits to employer and employee as a win-win effort.</li> <li>3. Educate the business community on best practices and brainstorm new ideas.</li> <li>4. Provide TA and support to projects addressing workforce transportation issues.</li> <li>5. Encourage increased coordination within the business communities to work together.</li> <li>6. Encourage policy makers to develop incentives for transportation of their workforce.</li> </ol>	<p>TCC Mobility Manager Aging Program Director</p>	<p>July 2008 On-going</p> 

**Strategy #2: Identify potential options to defray cost of trips and keeping transportation affordable for the consumer.**

Action Steps	Responsible Party	Timeline
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop potential options (i.e. sliding fee scale, vouchers, ride share) to assist low-income or near poverty population.</li> <li>2. Encourage sponsorships.</li> <li>3. Consider bartering of services between providers (i.e. trade volunteer/drivers hours for cost of trip).</li> <li>4. Increase levels of service – economies of scale.</li> <li>5. Encourage efficiencies in operating costs (i.e.</li> </ol>	<p>TCC</p>	<p>July 2008 On-going</p> 

smaller vehicles, use of renewable fuels, coordination, volunteers).		
6. Encourage increased coordination to cut costs.		
<b>MOVING PEOPLE EFFICIENTLY</b>		
<b>Strategy #1: Advocate that MnDOT fund alternative vehicles that are more fuel-efficient and are low-passenger size (vans, mini-vans, cars) rather than only cutaway vehicles.</b>		
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage/endorse downsizing of vehicles to correspond to need.</li> <li>2. Support flexibility of funding for smaller vehicles.</li> <li>3. Explore new technologies as they are developed and research best practices in vehicle efficiencies.</li> <li>4. Advocate for development and use of more fuel-efficient vehicles.</li> <li>5. Encourage more flexibility in regulations to facilitate more efficient vehicle capital purchases and use.</li> </ol>	TCC Mobility Manager	July 2008 On-going  ↓
<b>Strategy #2: Encourage all funding sources to convert to electronic billing.</b>		
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify who is not using electronic billing and why.</li> <li>2. Identify the components and costs associated for electronic billing.</li> <li>3. Provide technical assistance to implement electronic billing.</li> <li>4. Seek funding to assist with implementation.</li> </ol>	TCC Mobility Manager	September 2008
<b>Strategy #3: Identify “true costs” of systems for equity in funding and reimbursement.</b>		
<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Timeline</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create a more uniform reporting system, comparing apples to apples, etc. to identify true costs.</li> <li>2. Advocate for more equality in funding and equity in reimbursement by working with state agencies and funding sources.</li> <li>3. Work toward the development of level playing fields between systems – the perception is that there is disparity between the public and private systems.</li> <li>4. Coordination is difficult when players do not feel they are equals.</li> <li>5. Work with third party payors (i.e. Blue, U-Care, etc) to identify the issues and clarify reality.</li> </ol>	TCC Mobility Manager	On-going  ↓

## PRIORITY STRATEGIES

1. Create a local (regional) transportation coordination council (TCC) made up of transit providers and human service providers to encourage inter-agency coordination to improve the transportation network and its service within the region.

2. Identify ways that extended service hours could be implemented within the region.
3. Identify and seek solutions to barriers at the local level that stop coordination from happening and share with policy makers at all levels – local, state and federal.
4. Further implement and support volunteer driver programs as an intricate and vital part to the transportation network in our rural region.
5. Identify potential options to defray cost of trips and keeping transportation affordable for the consumer.

## **COORDINATION OPPORTUNITIES**

Coordination in its truest sense is “working together to solve an issue” and can happen at many levels or any level. It usually does take a catalyst to facilitate the process. Mobility managers could be these catalysts and Region 6W advocates it happen at the regional level through the Regional Development Commission and/or local office of the Area Agency on Aging. Larger models would not be as effective in getting the cooperation and coordination needed, would have a more difficult time getting their “arms around the system” and would not be as attuned to the pulse of the local network. The overwhelming message from the TAC, participants at the workshop and those completing the questionnaire was “keep these functions at the lowest possible common denominator” – they felt that was regionally for Region 6W.

- There may be ways to use vehicles and drivers in down times if regulations and rules allowed it.
- Playing fields have to be equal between private providers and public providers before any coordination will take place.
- Creating multi-purpose transportation permits would allow systems to provide different types of service.
- Education is critical in coordination - education identifying limitations and what is available.
- Local providers in the region are willing to coordinate.
- Providers are willing to come together and strategize.
- There are economies of scale if coordination can take place – this region has low population per square mile, which is a barrier to delivery of services.
- Physical inventory in the region is available if more coordination could be done.
- Reality versus perception needs to be clarified. Identify real barriers versus the ones that are perceived or made up.
- Stakeholders need to be more legislatively active on funding and regulations. Support issue papers and “day on the hill” activities.
- Providers are willing to address mobility issues and shifting some of the responsibilities to the local level.
- Use of volunteers and insurance liability issues are barriers that need to be addressed.
- Fewer regulatory agencies would simplify the system – either under one roof or at a one-stop-shop.

- School transportation is very untapped and has potential for coordination if regulations can be flexible.
- Nursing home vehicles have huge down times and have potential coordination opportunities.
- Elimination of territorial boundaries would help with coordination.
- Funding sources need to provide opportunities to reimburse the individual if they drive their own vehicle or if they have someone else drive for them rather than to hire the service and require a receipt and pre-authorization.
- Systems could tap community programs, service organizations, companies or businesses as sponsors for special rides to help cover costs.
- The use of advance technology by providers could facilitate better coordination and efficiencies (i.e. GPS systems).
- Increase information sharing between agencies, providers and the public.
- Encourage creating formal agreements between agencies, providers and/or the community to deliver services more cost effectively (i.e. sharing, rides, vehicles or drivers).
- Management of transportation (mobility managers) is a primary goal of the region to increase coordination of transportation services at the local level. Dispatching rides is **not** perceived as a role for the mobility managers.
- Coordination with the third party payors must be facilitated to allow more flexibility in choosing providers and payment of providers. They need to have a better understanding of transportation at the local level – not all regions or communities are alike. Moving toward a less complicated model should be the goal.
- Coordination with the Upper Sioux Community (an active stakeholder) to deliver services needs to be considered.