

2011 Local Human Service-Public Transit Coordination Plan Public Meeting Summary

June 8, 2011, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm
Appleton Civic Center, 323 West Schlieman Ave., Appleton MN

Attendance

9 attendees (see attached sign in sheet) representing healthcare, family services, Area Agency on Aging, DACs, Workforce Council/Private Industry Council, elected officials, DHS, regional transit system

Regional Background

The overall population of the region is declining and aging. Over twenty percent of the regional population is aged 65 years or older, prompting growing demand for healthcare and social service assistance services. The area is home to an aging workforce and a consistently declining population.

The attendees reviewed the following large maps and noted questions, comments and ideas.

- Map 1 Population Density
- Map 2 Household in Poverty
- Map 3 Minority Populations
- Map 4 Limited English Proficiency
- Map 5 Density of Persons 65+
- Map 6 Zero Vehicle Households
- Map 7 Low Income Workers & Jobs

Other Facts

- Big Stone, Swift, Chippewa, Lac qui Parle, Yellow Medicine County cover 3,346 square miles
- 37 cities and 99 townships in the region. 70% of cities have populations of less than 500.
- There are 3,300 self-employed businesses in Region 6W, with \$116 million in total sales receipts in 2008.
- Region 6W's unemployment rate has stayed below the state and national rate during the recession, ending 2010 a full 3.0 percent below the U.S. rate (6.6% vs. 9.6%).
- The turnover rate for workers in Region 6W was 7.7%, as compared to 8.5% statewide.
- The average one-way commute time to work for workers in Region 6W was just 16.9 minutes, as compared to 22.2 minutes in Minnesota and 25.2 minutes in the United States. Over half (54.8%) of workers in Region 6W had commutes under 15 minutes, as compared to one-third (33.7%) of workers in Minnesota and 28.8% in the U.S.
- There are four unemployed workers competing for every job vacancy in Region 6W in the 4th quarter of 2010, as compared to one job for every six unemployed workers statewide and one job for every 12 unemployed workers in Central Minnesota.
- Southwest Minnesota's employment base is projected to grow 5.0% from 2009 to 2019.
- Region 6W's high school graduation rate is 85.6%, as compared to 78.4% statewide.

| 2010 Total Population | 0-17 | 18-24 | 25-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Big Stone | 5,269 | 1,105 | 297 | 972 | 1,571 | 1,324 |
| Chippewa | 12,441 | 2,914 | 885 | 2,717 | 3,525 | 2,400 |
| Lac qui Parle | 7,259 | 1,534 | 370 | 1,333 | 2,296 | 1,726 |
| Swift | 9,783 | 2,183 | 674 | 2,112 | 2,848 | 1,966 |
| Yellow Medicine | 10,438 | 2,475 | 756 | 2,259 | 2,917 | 2,031 |

Transportation Provider Inventory

In March of 2011, the UMRDC surveyed all 44 transit providers that serve the region for the purpose of creating a single, comprehensive look at all transportation services.

- *44 providers included all types: public, private, non-profit, school districts, churches, etc.*
- *16/44 completed the survey*

Transportation Provider Inventory Findings

- 120 vehicles reported at 16 of 44 providers listed for our region.
 - 42 small buses <10 passengers
 - 28 minivans
- 2 providers served our entire 5-county region.
- Physical & mental assistance were the most common passenger needs that are accommodated.
- Most provided door to door service.
- Service hours range from 5am to 10pm M-F
- Only 1 provided Saturday service
- Most had fixed route service

Top 5 barriers identified by providers:

1. Limited service area boundaries
2. Billing and payment
3. Cost
4. Scheduling
5. Limited service hour schedule

2006 Coordination Plan Review

The recommendations from the 2006 Coordination plan for the region were reviewed. UMRDC staff shared the analysis of the strategies completed by the 2011 Coordination Plan Steering Committee.

Some action was taken on the following 2006 strategies:

- Considered the development of volunteer passenger assistance programs to fill the customer service gap.
- Promoted transportation services as easier to use because of passenger assistants.
- Worked to identify misconceptions consumers have about transit in the region.
- To try keep costs down, systems reviewed using smaller vehicles, alternative fuels and volunteers.
- Encouraging coordination between providers.
- Encouraged MnDOT to consider funding/endorsing alternative and smaller vehicles.

Strategies recommended to no longer pursue:

- *Look into specialized transportation systems at different levels and certifications and crossing service boundaries.*
- *Establishing service priorities*
- *Identifying non-traditional service programs that exist in region to extend service hours.*
- *Seek private sponsors to fund volunteer driver programs.*
- *Increase levels of service to see if a larger scale would keep costs down.*

2011 Upper Minnesota Valley Rider Analysis Activity:

1. Who are our riders?

| Characteristics suggested by attendees | # of similar suggestions |
|--|--------------------------|
| Elderly | 6 |
| Low Income | 3 |
| Live in town | 5 |
| White | 4 |
| Women | 3 |
| Disabled | |
| 50% kids 50% seniors | |
| Kids with mental illness | |
| Male | |
| Age 28-50 | 2 |
| Middle income | |
| 2% minority | |

2. Where are they going?

| Destination | # of similar suggestions |
|--|--------------------------|
| Medical appointments | 8 |
| Special schooling | |
| Grocery Store | 2 |
| Kids ride to events/activities/home | |
| Beauty Shop | |
| Meal Site | |
| Shopping | 5 |
| Church | |
| Work | 3 |
| Socializing/visiting friends | 4 |
| School | 2 |
| Family services/workforce center/education opportunities | |
| Riding bus only in bad winter weather | |

3. What destinations are NOT served or are underserved?

| Destination | # of similar suggestions |
|--|--------------------------|
| Movie in the evening or weekend | |
| Out of town locations | |
| Employer locations with multiple shifts | |
| Evening activities at school or in community | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Work destinations outside of home community | |
| Emergency room at night | |
| Church | |
| Out of state | 2 |
| Education sites in other communities | |
| Airport | |

2011 Weaknesses

Hours of service/scheduling

- Doesn't provide service for weekend and evening activities
- No evening options
- Not operating on evening and weekends
- Lack of extended hours for non-medical rides
- Very little weekend rides
- Scheduling for specific times on a regular basis
- Last minute service to areas where transportation service is not currently provided
- Larger employers with shift work scheduling
- Regular routes between towns

Destinations

- Hard to get to airport and back
- Does not go where needed to go
- No afterschool service
- Buses don't reach rural customers
- Lack of transit in upper Big Stone County
- Rides outside of town

Rules

- Rules are barriers: volunteers must be available to serve all customers and can't choose a sub-population to serve
- There is a need for escorts for children for special purposes
- Lack of recognition that rural areas have different issues than urban ones
- No-load miles reimbursement

Coordination

- Lack of coordination between providers, multiple small entities all have vehicles
- Working with other providers is difficult

Other

- Lack of marketing about cost, where you can and can't go and what is the process to get a ride
- Cost of services for private pay persons (professional medical vans)
- Accessibility for those with disabilities- need more wheelchair tie downs than currently available.

2011 Strengths

Hours

- Daytime routes in town
- Those who have appointments during 9-5 are served well
- Demand responsive
- There is service to most people for 9-5 appointments
- Timely response to ride requests
- Medical appointments needs

Political Support

- Good financial and political support from all cities and counties
- Sen. Franken "Rides Bill"

Coordination

- Prairie 5 is easy to work with in setting up rides
- Working with Human Services to provide needed rides
- Public assistance clients have access to Prairie % Rides to most medical appointments
- Providers know who to call to assist clients in getting rides

Funding

- MnDOT reimburses for some vehicle costs for elderly and disabled
- \$850,000 in federal funds accessed for rides in 2010
- Area Agency on Aging Title III funds help pay for elderly rides

Other

- Safe
- Disabled/vets/low income are served well
- Inexpensive
- Volunteerism is strong and hopefully will grow with retirement of boomer generation
- Allows people to stay in their homes longer and stay independent
- We have a transit system that covers the five- county region
- We have transit

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| | Name | Organization | Address | Email |
|----|---------------|--|--|------------------------|
| 1 | Sherry Jipson | Essential Health Care | Grassville | slipson@health.net |
| 2 | Reg Heglund | Yellow Medicine County Family Service Center | | |
| 3 | Arby Schwab | Granite Falls Living At Home | | |
| 4 | Kate Selsoth | MN River Wrecking, on the way | Willmar | kate.selsetl@mnrdc.org |
| 5 | Gwen Boulder | Chippewa Enterprises Inc | PO Box 155 Montrose MN 202 N. 1st St SE 100 | boulder129@gmail.com |
| 6 | Julie Dammann | SW MN PIC, Monte | office montrose, MN 2225 36th Ave Montrose | jdammann@swmnpic.org |
| 7 | Harold Solem | RDC | | |
| 8 | Bob Ries | DHS | St Paul, MN | Bob.Ries@state.mn.us |
| 9 | Ted Nelson | Prairie Fire Rides | 704 University St Montrose, MN 56258 | Ted@prairiefire.com |
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