

Region 6W 2017 Local Human Service – Public Transit Coordination Plan

What Is This For?

This plan update is required by Federal transit law to access federal funding for transit. The goal of transit coordination is to enhance transportation access by minimizing duplication of services and facilitating the most appropriate and cost-effective transportation possible with available resources. The purpose of coordination between human services and public transit coordination is to improve transportation services for all, but with special focus on persons with disabilities, older adults, and individuals with low incomes. Under Minnesota Statutes, MnDOT must meet 90 percent of total transit service needs in Greater Minnesota by 2025.

Data Collection Tools

- Organizational Questionnaire
- Rider Survey
- Organizational Focus Group
- Individual Focus Group

What Was Done?

A steering committee was convened and met three times to provide guidance on the plan update. A full-day transit workshop was also hosted by the RDC. The following data collection tools were utilized throughout the process: an organizational questionnaire, a rider survey, an organizational focus group and an individual focus group.

What Was Learned?

- 87% of the respondents surveyed indicated that they do not have any other means of transportation than their transportation service
- The most common purpose for transportation services was medical (50%), followed by work (30%), other (29%) and shopping/errands (21%)
- When asked what would allow them to ride the transportation services more frequently, 74% selected longer service hours. On-time service and reliability was the next most popular desired improvement
- The largest age category of transit ridership in Region 6W is the 35-44 age category (see Table 1)

87% of the respondents surveyed indicated that they do not have any other means of transportation

Age Group	Percentage
Under 18	0%
18-24	23%
25-34	14%
35-44	36%
45-54	14%
55-64	0%
65 or older	14%

Table 1 – Region 6W Transit Ridership

- The high volume of clients needing door-through-door service could be a challenge as the public transit systems currently serving the region do not officially provide door-through-door service but have historically provided it with their regional ride service
- Common threads throughout all the data collected were the need for weekend and evening service and increased reliability. Reliability is a broad topic but some common themes included:
 - Service bottlenecks during peak times
 - Scheduling errors
 - Delays in getting transportation in a timely enough fashion to meet the need

What's Next?

The steering committee for the plan update identified several projects aimed at improving transit coordination in Region 6W. The projects identified are listed in Table 2.

Explore supplemental transportation options (such as ride-sharing services like Liberty Mobility, Uber)	Expand the hours and days that public transit is offered	Increase coordination between providers to ensure the appropriate ride service is being utilized	Improve proactive communication between transit providers and riders	Create an informational and marketing hub for the region	Improve notification times of confirmed rides
Increase the driving staff of the current transportation organizations	Implement a discount for first-time riders	Continue ongoing marketing strategies for the region	Increased communication between hospitals, human service agencies and public transit providers	Increased cooperation and coordination between hospital staff leadership and public transit leadership	Utilize local 5310 vehicles during evenings and on the weekend when they are not being utilized by their agency
Increase driver pay at our current transportation organizations	Partner with churches to explore additional options for weekend service and create a volunteer ride directory	Continue prepay cards that offer discounted rates to riders	Increase the van fleet of the region (providers and city-owned)	Incentivize volunteer drivers to increase the number and availability of volunteer drivers	Continue to refine systems used for scheduling rides far in advance

Table 2 – Plan Update Projects

Region Transportation Coordination Council (RTCC)

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are working with the Metropolitan Council and other local governments and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils as appropriate throughout Minnesota. Coordination between transportation providers and service agencies has been a goal and strategy to fill transportation gaps, provide more service with the same or fewer resources, streamline access to transportation and provide customers more options of where and when to travel. The RTCC serving Region 6W is expected to be convened early 2018 and will be tasked with assisting with projects identified in the 2017 plan update.

