December 1, 2009

The Honorable Tim Pawlenty  
Governor, State of Minnesota  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard  
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination 2009 Report

Dear Governor Pawlenty:

As Chair of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination, it is my pleasure to forward the Committee’s annual report. The Committee continues to be dedicated to enhancing coordination and working together to remove obstacles that prevent successful coordination of transportation services in Minnesota. In the last year the Committee has: added three new member agencies; reviewed and adopted some of the proposed Council on Transportation Access coordination strategies and activities; and established several topic specific work groups.

Future plans include activities to remove coordination obstacles such as insurance regulations, investigation into State Agency program guidelines that support coordination such as planning requirements and contracting templates, and implementation of coordinated service delivery models in the form of demonstration projects.

Please feel free to contact Mike Schadauer, Director, Office of Transit, at (651) 366-4161, with any questions you may have regarding activities of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination.

Sincerely,

Tim Henkel
Modal Planning and Program Management Division Director

Enclosure: Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination Report to the Governor

Copies: Tom Sorel, Commissioner of Transportation
Members of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination

An equal opportunity employer
Report of the
Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination (ICTC)

To Governor Tim Pawlenty

December 1, 2009
ICTC Members
November 2008 – June 2009

MN Department of Health
Doug Benson, Supervisor, Office of Rural Health

MN Department of Human Services
Brian Osberg, Assistant Commissioner of Health Care

MN Department of Employment & Economic Development
Bonnie Elsey, Senior Administrative Officer

MN Department of Education
Kelly Wosika, Program Finance

MN Department of Transportation
Tim Henkel, Director, Modal Planning and Program Management Division

Metropolitan Council
Gerri Sutton, Assistant Director, Contracted Transit Service

University of MN
Robert Johns, Director, Center for Transportation Studies

MN Board on Aging
Mary Koep, Chair

MN State Council on Disability
Joan Willshire, Executive Director
ICTC Members
July 2009 - Present

MN Department of Veteran Affairs
Michael Pugliese, Deputy Commissioner

MN Public Transit Association
Tony Kellen, President

MN Department of Commerce
James Pearson, Assistant Commissioner

MN Department of Health
Doug Benson, Supervisor, Office of Rural Health

MN Department of Human Services
Billi Jo Zielinski, Assistant Commissioner of Health Care

MN Department of Employment & Economic Development
Bonnie Elsey, Senior Administrative Officer

MN Department of Education
Kelly Wosika, Program Finance

MN Department of Transportation
Tim Henkel, Director, Modal Planning and Program Management Division

Metropolitan Council
Gerri Sutton, Assistant Director, Contracted Transit Service

University of MN
Gina Baas, Assistant Director, Center for Transportation Studies

MN Board on Aging
Mary Koep, Board Member

MN State Council on Disability
Joan Willshire, Executive Director
Introduction

Transportation is a lifeline for persons to access work, school, medical care, and other daily needs. Health and human service organizations have established a variety of transportation systems and the State of Minnesota makes a substantial investment in public transit. In 2006, the total dollars spent in Minnesota on health and human service transportation, public transit, and public school transportation totaled approximately 1 billion dollars. Even with this level of investment, transportation services are often fragmented, underutilized, or difficult to navigate, and can be costly because of inconsistent, duplicative, and often restrictive federal and state program rules and regulations. And, in some cases, narrowly focused programs leave service gaps, and transportation services are simply not available to meet certain needs.

One of the major initiatives to address the shortcomings with transportation services at the Federal and State level is advancing the concept of “transportation coordination”. Coordination in this case is the process through which representatives of different agencies and client groups involved in transportation programs work together to achieve the following goals: increased capacity to serve unmet needs; improved quality of service; improved understanding and access to services by the public; and, more cost-effective service delivery.

Background

Formation of the ICTC

In 2005, recognizing the fundamental importance of transportation and the continuing need to reduce barriers between State and federally-funded human service programs and Minnesota’s public transportation systems, Governor Tim Pawlenty issued a directive for agencies to work together to ensure that transit services are effective and accessible. Representatives from the Departments of Transportation (Mn/DOT), Health, Human Services (DHS), Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Education, and the Metropolitan Council, Minnesota Center For Transportation Studies, Board on Aging, and State Council on Disability are members of the Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination (ICTC). Governor Pawlenty has charged this Committee with:
1. Surveying existing transportation alternatives, best practices and coordination strategies that have worked in Minnesota and other states, and

2. Developing a series of recommendations for improving the level of transportation coordination.

**Council on Transportation Access**

In 2009, the MN State Legislature proposed establishing a Council on Transportation Access to further the efforts of the State in fostering and implementing transportation coordination. While not enacted, legislation proposed the addition of three new member organizations to the ICTC (Department of Commerce, Veterans Affairs, Minnesota Public Transit Association) and representatives from these organizations became part of the ICTC in July 2009. The specific activities and objectives proposed for such a Council are included in Appendix A.

**Coordination at the Federal Level**

As part of Congress’s reauthorization of the surface transportation act (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005, grantees under the New Freedom Program, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program, and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program must be part of a “locally developed coordinated public transit/human service transportation plan” in order to receive funding for fiscal year 2007 and beyond.

These plans are intended to help state and community leaders, agencies, and stakeholders develop programs and action plans for coordinated services. Key elements include:

- An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes
- An inventory of available services that identifies redundant service and gaps in service
- Strategies to address the identified gaps in service
- Actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies for more efficiently using resources
- Prioritized strategies for implementation
ICTC Mission and Vision

Mission Statement:
The mission of the Minnesota Interagency Committee on Transit Coordination is to work together to remove obstacles that prevent the successful coordination of transportation programs and resources among their respective customers.

Vision Statement:
Minnesotans will have access to coordinated transportation services to meet their mobility needs.

Activities and Accomplishments

The work activities of the ICTC over the past five years have been guided by extensive research conducted by Mn/DOT in 2004-2005. The 2006 Minnesota Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Coordination Study identified critical strategies for improving both effectiveness and efficiency in transportation programs, across public funders and providers in Minnesota. In 2007 each region of the state developed a regional coordination plan (See www.coordinatemntransit.org) that further identified and clarified opportunities for improved coordination and barriers to coordination at the local level. Annually the ICTC reviews and revises its work activities based on the ICTC Workplan.

Several of the identified current and future activities of the ICTC were derived from activities defined for the Council on Transportation Access. These activities include:

- Identify best practices and strategies that have been successful in Minnesota and in other states for coordination of local, regional, state, and federal funding and services
- Design and develop a contracting template for providing coordinated transportation services;
- Recommend guidelines for developing transportation coordination plans throughout the state.
- Develop a standard method for addressing liability insurance requirements for transportation services purchased, provided, or coordinated;
The Committee met seven times over the course of the past year. The following is a brief overview of the accomplishments and activities in progress by the Committee, categorized by key issue areas identified in the ICTC Workplan. These key issue areas are:

- Client/Vehicle Sharing
- Cost Sharing/Purchasing
- Communication/Coordinated Planning
- Reporting and Evaluation
- Research/Demonstration Projects

**Key Issue Area: Vehicle/Client Sharing**

*In order to reduce duplicative transportation services, as well as idle time for drivers and vehicles, the ICTC recommends that vehicles used in human service transportation be made available to other State, Federal and/or publicly-funded programs and that State agencies not restrict grantees to serving only their own program participants.*

**Accomplishments**

- The ICTC convened a meeting with Metro Area human service transportation providers to discuss insurance issues when sharing vehicles across programs and to offer potential solutions to these problems. Many organizations are interested in coordinating, but because of complicated insurance regulations, cost, and availability of coverage, they cannot.

- Mn/DOT staff convened meetings with the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations to discuss the confusion that transit providers have over the for hire status and Special Transportation Services (STS) certification. The meetings have allowed all participants to understand what the issues are and identified potential strategies for overcoming the barriers to transit coordination.
• ICTC staff met with personnel from the Mn/DOT Office of Freight and Commercial Vehicle Operations to share information on STS certification at in Bemidji, Mankato and the Metro Area.

• The ICTC Committee invited the Minnesota Head Start Association to discuss coordination issues jointly with all agency representatives in August. Under federal regulations head start programs are required to make reasonable attempts to coordinate transportation resources with other human services agencies in their communities in order to control costs and to improve the quality and availability of transportation services.

• ICTC staff reviewed the process for establishing an insurance consortium in Minnesota with a firm that provides similar program services to transit insurance consortiums in Iowa and Illinois. The concept of Insurance Consortiums was one of the strategies identified by the Department of Commerce to address insurance barriers to coordination.

• The ICTC’s Insurance subcommittee was asked to identify possible solutions to volunteer driver insurance issues facing a transit system that is a private non-profit agency. Several inter-related issues were identified: lack of available coverage; complications resulting from STS for-hire regulations, and reimbursement rates for no-load and loaded trip rates.

• An informational report from Department of Education on the subject of transporting the general public by school bus on the coordination was posted on the website www.coordinatemntransit.org. While school buses are not prohibited for transporting others, there are many rules and regulations that make it not a viable option.

Current and Future Activities

• In partnership with Department of Commerce and provider agencies initiate an Insurance Risk Assessment Study. This study will discuss a joint purchase type insurance arrangement for vehicles of human service transportation providers.
• Create a model contract for use by local agencies contracting with external organizations to provide transportation services. In addition, this subcommittee will develop and utilize common contract terms and definitions to further enhance consistency among agencies.

• Research, interpret, and clarify the following issues: insurance requirements for volunteer drivers, organizational liability related to sharing clients and vehicles, and school bus transport of non-pupils.

Key Issue Area: Cost Sharing/Purchasing

In order to ensure that adequate resources are available for transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, and to encourage the shared use of vehicles and existing public transportation services, the ICTC recommends State agencies work together to create funding mechanisms that support shared ownership of funding responsibilities while completing reporting and tracking requirements for various funding streams.

Accomplishments

• The ICTC heard an update by the Department of Human Services, Disability Services Division (DSD) regarding a study to develop and recommend a payment structure for bundled services such as Day Supports and Employment Supports which include a transportation component. The new payment structure will respond to federal expectations to have a statewide payment structure and methodologies that assure access, equity and quality as well as to better understand the costs of the separate service components, including transportation.

• Reviewed results of the Transit Route Coordination and Billing System Integration Project. The recently completed project was a multi-purpose approach designed to integrate research of coordinated billing methods, coordinated transportation efforts, and software designed to accommodate both. The research included in the project was guided by the vision that any rider can utilize any public transit service at any location across the state with uniform ease,
regardless of how their ride would be funded. The information submitted in this report was gathered over an 8-month span and includes the details of the work completed, project parameters, approach, project timeline and budget.

Current and Future Activities

- Create a Cost Sharing subcommittee to further the efforts of the Transit Route Coordination and Billing System Integration Project.

Key Issue Area: Communication/Coordinated Planning

*In order to effectively promote the development and delivery of coordinated transportation services, the ICTC recommends that state agencies consider participation in a community transportation planning process for human service transportation programs*

Accomplishments

- ICTC member agencies participated in a Hennepin County transportation workshop the administered by the University of Minnesota Center for Transportation Studies.

- Met with the Assistant Commission of Veterans Affairs to discuss their coordination issues. Each county transports veterans down to the Veterans hospital in the Twin Cities area and they are interested in seeing if they can get some scheduling software to give them the capability to coordinate with other type agencies to share rides and save money.

- Reviewed the planning models that the states of Wisconsin and Colorado are using in their efforts to improve coordination between the local and state levels. The identification of potential planning models and recommendation of the most appropriate method was assigned to the Planning Guidance subcommittee.
• Reviewed the usage of the Minnesota Coordination website. From September 1 through June 30 of 2009, the Coordination website, coordinatemntransit.org, received 15,625 visits, an average of 52 visits a day.

Current and Future Activities

• Produce a planning guidance document that will suggest a model for locally developed and coordinated planning across the state of Minnesota. The Planning Guidance subcommittee will review and improve upon the planning guidance that Mn/DOT created for its locally developed transportation coordination plans in 2006.

**KEY ISSUE AREA: Reporting and Evaluation**

*In order to ensure that adequate resources are available for transportation services for people with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, and to encourage the shared use of vehicles and existing public transportation services, the ICTC recommends that state agencies dealing with transportation services agree upon a common measurement and definitions for tracking and reporting the costs of transportation services.*

Current and Future Activities

• Produce a model contract for use by local agencies contracting with external organizations to provide transportation services. In addition, this activity will develop and utilize common contract terms and definitions to further enhance consistency among agencies.

**Key Issue Area: Research/Demonstration Projects**

*In order to test the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of a new approach to meeting the full range of transportation needs of people with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, the ICTC recommends that State agencies conduct demonstration projects to investigate coordinated planning, vehicle/client sharing and cost sharing.*
Accomplishments

- Reviewed other state’s examples of Mobility Management. Mobility Management is creating partnerships between providers to coordinate transportation resources and enhance customer service.

- Prepared an application for a United We Ride (UWR) mobility management grant to enhance transportation coordination capacity and capabilities of local or regional human service networks. While the grant was not successful, the process did result in the identification of mobility management components by the ICTC member agencies.

Current and Future Activities

- Creation of a subcommittee that can be charged with researching coordination strategies and recommending the most viable ones for possible statewide deployment.

- Identify a potential demonstration project on coordination that incorporates mobility management attributes.

Next Steps for the ICTC

In 2009 the ICTC established subcommittees to bring recommendations back to the overall Committee. The subcommittees are established around major topics that are subject specific. The subcommittees are:

- Insurance,
- Special Transportation Services (STS),
- Contract Template,
- Planning Guidance,
- Local Coordination Committee, and
- Legislation.
Each of the subcommittees is developing a detailed work plan to accomplish specific action items. The action items are derived from the Council on Transportation Access activities and objectives, contained in Appendix A.

Each year more support from the member agencies is seen and collectively the agencies are willing to tackle increasingly difficult challenges to coordination. Member agencies continue to work collaboratively to ensure that policy and funding strategies are coordinated. Some additional benefits created by this group are:

- More effective interagency communication;
- More comprehensive identification of transportation stakeholders and;
- Increased awareness and knowledge of transportation impacts to member agency programs.

At this time, threatened cuts in funding for community transportation programs as a result of the current economic climate, as well as the fluctuating costs of fuel, create ever-increasing pressure to get the best possible transportation service out of available dollars. As we look toward a future with increasing numbers and proportions of transit-dependent elderly and persons with disabilities, as well as persons who can no longer afford private auto ownership, the success of the ICTC’s efforts are critical.
APPENDIX A
Council on Transportation Access
Calendar Year 2009
Activities and Objectives

- Compile information on existing transportation alternatives for the transit public, and serve as a clearinghouse for information on services, funding sources, innovations, and coordination efforts;
- Identify best practices and strategies that have been successful in Minnesota and in other states for coordination of local, regional, state, and federal funding and services;
- Recommend statewide objectives for providing public transportation services for the transit public;
- Identify barriers prohibiting coordination and accessibility of public transportation services and aggressively pursue the elimination of those barriers;
- Recommend policies and procedures for coordinating local, regional, state, and federal funding and services for the transit public;
- Identify stakeholders in providing services for the transit public, and seek input from them concerning barriers and appropriate strategies;
- Recommend guidelines for developing transportation coordination plans throughout the state;
- Encourage all state agencies participating in the council to purchase trips within the coordinated system;
- Facilitate the creation and operation of transportation brokerages to match riders to the appropriate service, promote shared dispatching, compile and disseminate information on transportation options, and promote regional communication;
- Encourage volunteer driver programs and recommend legislation to address liability and insurance issues;
- Recommend minimum performance standards for delivery of services;
- Identify methods to eliminate fraud and abuse in special transportation services;
- Develop a standard method for addressing liability insurance requirements for transportation services purchased, provided, or coordinated;
- Design and develop a contracting template for providing coordinated transportation services;
• Recommend an interagency uniform contracting and billing and accounting system for providing coordinated transportation services; encourage the design and development of training programs for coordinated transportation services;

• Encourage the use of public school transportation vehicles for the transit public;

• Develop an allocation methodology that equitably distributes transportation funds to compensate units of government and all entities that provide coordinated transportation services;

• Identify policies and necessary legislation to facilitate vehicle sharing; and

• Advocate aggressively for eliminating barriers to coordination, implementing coordination strategies, enacting necessary legislation, and appropriating resources to achieve the council's objectives.