Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordination Council Concept:
Stakeholder Workshop Results

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Minnesota Council on Transportation Access

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Introduction

The transportation system is complex; there is no single network, but rather multiple networks that may or may not connect smoothly to each other. Coordination of transportation services offers many benefits for transportation users and for providers—cost savings, better service delivery, and greater mobility. Fostering communication and cooperation among different governmental agencies and stakeholder groups can enhance transportation services and enable the more efficient use of public resources. To better coordinate public transit and human service transportation activities, most states have created coordinating councils at one or more levels of government.

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. The purpose of regional transportation coordination councils is to help transportation providers and service agencies fill transportation gaps by helping them provide more rides using the same or fewer resources, making transportation easier to use, and giving customers more options of where and when to travel. Coordination includes, but goes beyond, ADA transportation services.

The MnDOT, DHS, and Metropolitan Council Program Management Team (PMT) recognized that RTCCs might be a great way to improve transit coordination and services, but that they needed to be created with active participation and input from local stakeholders. The PMT requested funding from MCOTA to conduct initial stakeholder engagement to get feedback on the initial concept. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops were held across the state in spring 2015 and three more in fall 2015. Participants (primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies) were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. See Figure 1 for the types of organizations represented at each workshop location. A summary of these conversations is provided here.

The Minnesota Council on Transportation Access, or MCOTA, the state-level coordination council charged with improving transportation coordination throughout Minnesota, hosted a webinar on April 16, 2015 that outlined the concept of regional coordination councils and several examples of them. The recording is available on the CoordinateMNTransit.org website; it provides helpful background about the concept.

The purpose of the workshops was for participants to share their perspectives on what activities potential regional coordination councils might undertake to implement and/or oversee the provision of coordinated transportation. Altogether, the results and feedback from these meetings will inform MnDOT, DHS, and the Metropolitan Council as they

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1 The workshop outcomes of the spring 2015 workshops were presented at the Minnesota Age and Disabilities Odyssey Conference, June 15-16, 2015.
develop application criteria for the creation and operation of regional coordinating councils.

Coordination councils, or collaboratives, in the seven-county Twin Cities metropolitan area may look different than they do in greater Minnesota. For example, Dakota, Washington, and Scott and Carver counties have started coordination councils using 5310 funds.

Workshops took place in:

- Duluth: April 23, 2015 (25 participants)
- St. Cloud: April 30, 2015 (35 participants)
- Mankato: May 13, 2015 (44 participants)
- Twin Cities: May 14, 2015 (49 participants)
- Marshall: October 5, 2015 (18 participants)
- Rochester: October 26, 2015 (12 participants)
- Bemidji: November 2, 2015: (20 participants)
Introductory Questions

Participants at each workshop answered three initial questions about their reasons for attending the workshop. Highlights of the representative responses are given below; see Appendix C for the full list.

Q1. “What issue or concern brought you here today?”
   - Concerns about under-and unserved people in rural areas (in Greater Minnesota workshops)
   - Unequal access
   - Concerns about better transportation options for specific county areas and outer-ring suburbs (in Twin Cities workshop)
   - Available and affordable transportation for older adults, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals, as well as others with specific barriers
   - “The fact that this meeting is actually about coordination”
   - Coordination that includes private transportation providers
   - Not being bound by county lines
   - Lack of fluidity and creative options
   - The desire to move from concepts and strategy to action and results
   - Regulatory road blocks to coordination

Q2. “What is the most important issue for coordination in your area?”

Duluth
   - “Public transit can’t do it all. We need to develop other options.”
   - State funding silos makes programs hard to coordinate
   - Cooperation of existing providers

St. Cloud
   - Politics: “Who’s going to fix the politics?”
   - “Local share $ = local decisions, local walls, local taxes, and local politics”
   - Concerns re: costs and funding

Mankato
   - Crossing geographic boundaries
   - Limited resources that are over regulated so they are too difficult to share
   - Coordinated, timely and available transportation for low income people (elderly, people with disabilities) to get work and appointments
Twin Cities

- Diversified/expanded options for older adults and those with disabilities
- Communication between service providers
- Coordination with private carriers/DT&H’s
- Figuring out effective ways to use all of our vehicles efficiently 7 days a week

Marshall

- Mental health and also non-emergency transports
- Distance that EMS needs to transport individuals
- Having the right stakeholders at the table to develop a framework for coordination and council structure
- Coordination from one transportation provider to another across boundaries
- Regulation boundaries
- Access to transit at the times and in the places where it is needed

Rochester

- Consistency between service providers
- Matching public, nonprofit, and private sector operations and schedules
- Funding this new collaborative
- Coordination from one transportation provider to another across boundaries

Bemidji

- Meeting the needs of all, especially older adults, disabled persons, and low-income persons, during all times of the week
- Lack of transportation choice
- Clear communication between all stakeholders and avoid “turf issues”
- People need to know who to contact for transit
- Defining what is coordination is and how to best implement

Q3. “What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT, DHS, and the Met Council pay most attention to?”

Duluth

- Cooperation between providers
- Apply uniform operating standards to all providers
- How to use current funding to support coordination
- Need realistic funding levels: enough support staff to accomplish what a “champion” gets started
- Don’t stop at identifying barriers. We’ve identified and admired them for a long time.
- True coordination
St. Cloud
- How to be cost effective AND provide affordable access in very rural areas
- Offering incentives and easing burdens of providers to collaborate
- “Needs to be enough support staff to accomplish the goal. This is not the time to skimp on staff.”
- More emphasis on local/regional control and coordination

Mankato
- Access, economical transportation across county borders
- Think outside the box
- Coordinate – volunteer driver program – don’t lose sight of this service
- It takes time to get the relationships built to start the coordination process – need to have person/people dedicated to that purpose
- Success of our newly formed system: Faribault and Martin County

Twin Cities
- Remove turf barriers
- Technical assistance
- The tools to provide coordination: insurance, liability waivers, coordination councils?
- Fund coordination and collaboration

Marshall
- Listen to current transportation providers to identify the issues
- Examine legislative changes to access and leverage funds
- Desire for fairer structure throughout the state
- Seamless use of transportation by user
- Rural areas need increased transit options and funding

Rochester
- Collaboration across agencies and clear communication of roles and responsibilities
- Seamless use of transportation by user from door-to-door, especially for older adults
- Identify funding and human resources staffing

Bemidji
- Engage all stakeholders in planning and ensure they are on the same page moving forward
- Fair funding
- Consider the distances that rural providers travel
- Equal access for all
• Program ownership and reimbursement with communication

Coordination Roles

Workshop participants met in small groups, with facilitation and note-taking conducted by staff from the host state agencies. Four areas were explored in these rotating small groups. The areas were roles, processes, tools, and spaces related to transportation coordination.

Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?

Participants at all workshops agreed that the council should be diverse and representative of all parties involved in the transit system. Suggested members include:

• Transportation service users, including low-income persons, older adults, persons with disabilities, veterans, and people of color
• Transportation providers: public, private, STS, volunteer, medical, mental health, older adult, and school (at all levels)
• Emergency medical and trauma services (EMS), hospitals
• Frontline staff
• Funders
• County divisions: health, human services, housing, transportation
• Regional development commissions
• Metropolitan planning organization (MPOs)
• Social-service providers whose clients rely on transit to access work, healthcare, school, and childcare (assisted living care centers/nursing homes, group homes, etc.)
• Advocacy groups
• Elected officials
• Workforce centers
• Disability services
• Veterans services
• Tribes
• Employers, employment programs, and workforce centers
• Governmental representatives from a variety of levels: city government, city council, law enforcement, Department of Transportation, Department of Human Services, state legislature, etc.
• Health care providers
• Economic development representatives: planning commission, Chamber of Commerce
• Faith-based organizations
• Law enforcement
• Area Agencies on Aging
• Planners and policymakers
• Transportation funding providers
• Business community/major employers
• Both rural and urban representation is critical
• Creative people and those who know where the funding sources are
• “Rule-breakers” to challenge and be an advocate

Many attendees suggested that the council be action oriented. In order to “get things done,” the council size should be limited to 8-15 members. Subcommittees could allow for additional participants as well as for in-depth attention to key issues.

**What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?**

Attendees differed on what level of authority a council should have. While they wanted the council to have enough authority to fulfill their mission effectively (for instance, the ability to change policies), some worried that too much authority would lead to poor results for the system’s end users. Concerns about impartiality and fairness were expressed, especially as pertains to distribution of funds.

Opinions also varied as to how much oversight the state government should have over the councils. Some regions favored a more independent and decentralized council, while others wanted a higher level of state support and involvement. Most attendees envisioned a statewide board to which regional councils would report. Some participants envisioned the councils having a joint powers authority.

**What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?**

Attendees felt that a council should have a clear mission and goals, along with the funding and authority to fulfill those goals. Participants suggested that a council could distribute funding, create and communicate policies, and break down barriers to transportation access.

Council staff activities could include:

- Providing operational support, education, and outreach for the council and service providers and users: convene and facilitate stakeholder groups, provide operational support for members, dispatch transportation, gather and share information about transportation services, monitor service delivery, and create a one-stop website and phone line for service users.
- Mapping all available transportation services in the region and promoting cross-agency collaboration
- Connecting riders to services
- Creating tools such as databases and a “one call/one click” dispatch system
- Overcoming current barriers to service, such as waivers, system gaps, and cross-jurisdictional travel
- Distributing funding to transportation providers
- Overseeing transportation providers to ensure compliance with policies, best practices, and financial standards Advocating for policies that improve transportation access for all users
Several groups expressed the importance of funding to support these goals. Participants agreed that it will be crucial to have a paid coordinator, at least in the council’s formation stage. This staff member must be a champion for the initiative and possess strong outreach and collaboration skills.

Coordination Processes

How should governance actors be chosen?

Participants were divided on whether council members should be appointed, elected, or voluntary. However, all attendees requested that councils be diverse and representative of both transportation providers and users. It was suggested there be a nominating committee. Some participants noted there should be written public notice for the public to attend meetings. Important council member selection criteria may include:

- Knowledge of local transit needs and systems
- Authority to influence rules, funding, or programs
- Policy, transit, design, funding, or process expertise
- Representative of transit users (age, location/county, income, etc.)
- Representative of transit providers (size, funding, client base, etc.)
- Representation across geographic areas

It was noted that the councils should have flexibility and their needs might change over time. Several participants felt term limits were important for council members, noting that this might be one way to gradually change the council’s focus and skills as its needs evolve.

Many attendees suggested the creation of subcommittees or advisory boards. These groups would allow for a larger and more diverse participant base, while still keeping the council small enough to be decisive and effective. One group noted that the council structure could be modeled after the regional radio board.
How should the councils be accountable for results?

Participants were in agreement that the councils must have clear, transparent, measurable outcomes and some participants felt that performance standards should be set by the state. Outcomes could include:

- Increased ridership
- Cost savings
- Reduction in service gaps
- Reduction in duplicative services
- Reduction in requested rides that were unmet
- Fewer service denials
- Consistent policies and practices among providers
- Improved outreach to potential users
- Continued success of programs that are already working well
- Stakeholder satisfaction
- Improved collaboration (such as ride-sharing) among members
- Increase in service and access
- Increase in coordination between service areas
- Increase in quality of service

Attendees expressed concern about a lack of accountability leading to wasted funds. Some requested that funding be used to ensure accountability. For instance, participating entities could receive mini-grants for their participation and the council could receive additional funding for demonstrated success. The reverse would also be true; attendees felt that the council should not be allowed to “waste money” by not demonstrating results. While each council should have the authority to be creative and responsive to local needs, statewide oversight is critical.

Coordination Tools

What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have? What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?

Attendees identified two communications systems the council will need: one for providers and one for riders. Both systems will require significant funding and maintenance.

For providers, online databases and communication tools will make it easier to share information between agencies. It would be very helpful to have a common web-based platform/format for information such as transit routes and schedules. These systems could also be used for dispatch services if desired, perhaps in conjunction with GPS technology in vehicles. Data privacy was named as significant barrier to sharing client information. If medical providers are included in the system, HIPAA compliance may be necessary.

For transit users, most participants envisioned a “one call/one click” clearinghouse system for scheduling rides. Riders should have several easy ways (hotline, smartphone
These interfaces should provide multilingual access.

While smartphone use and service vary across the state, several uses of this technology were suggested for both providers and riders.

Attendees noted that technology is only as useful as the people running it. Any technology needs to be championed, maintained and updated, and shared, and training and technical support needs to be provided.

Coordination Spaces

How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?

Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions). The two most popular options were the MnDOT districts (perhaps with an adaptation to follow county lines) and Designated Workforce Center regions. In the Twin Cities, participants requested subregions or multiple regions, perhaps along county or Metropolitan Council district lines. Thought should be given to how the different needs each region might have (urban vs. suburban vs. rural) and how those affect provider costs and profit margins.

In general, participants suggested having 7-12 regions and preferred using pre-existing boundaries for other services that would interact with the transportation councils’ efforts. Participants requested that counties not be split between multiple regions. Within a region some participants noted that there should be no fewer than 9 counties and no more than 18. Others noted that the regions’ boundaries should be based on population density.

It was also frequently noted that regions should be developed around key travel corridors and destinations, not arbitrary lines on a map. Riders from across the state especially need access to the Twin Cities and Rochester (Mayo Clinic). Regardless of council boundaries, riders should be able to travel to employment, medical care, and social opportunities without worrying about whether or not they will be crossing a boundary line.
Figure 2: Map of designated workforce center regions (12)

Figure 3: Map of MnDOT Districts (8-12)
Figure 4: Map of MN Economic Development Regions (13)

Figure 5: Map of Transit Link service area in Twin Cities Metropolitan Area (Source: Metropolitan Council, 2015)
How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?

Participants felt very strongly that cross-boundary cooperation is critical to councils’ success and should be a primary goal. There should be a statewide oversight council to help direct and coordinate all of the regional councils’ efforts.

Attendees statewide agreed that riders should not experience any challenges in accessing services and destinations outside of their home council’s boundaries. The phrase “warm handoff” was used to describe the experience a rider should have when it’s necessary for them to transfer between providers. Participants also noted duplication of services across providers should be avoided.

Fare and eligibility differentials were identified as significant barriers to this level of coordination. Cross-boundary transportation will require two key resources: funds and flexibility. Financial incentives, the ability to change policies (for instance, on payment procedures or data access), and the opportunity to pilot initiatives without risk of penalty would all enhance cross-boundary coordination.
Implications for the roles of MCOTA and state agencies

Participants generally saw the value of the role of state agencies, suggesting the need for a statewide oversight council to help direct and coordinate all of the regional councils’ efforts. They recommended that the regional councils have representatives on the state council. They recognized the need for communications between the regional councils, as well as transparency of communications and decision-making. MCOTA is well positioned to fulfill these duties, if regional transportation coordination councils are created.

Final Impressions

Across the state, workshop participants expressed cautious optimism and enthusiasm for the council concept. Many attendees noted that this level of coordination is long overdue and that they have had many previous discussions about coordination efforts that never came to fruition. They hope for a better outcome this time.

Attendees demonstrated a readiness to move forward quickly, and requested state support and funding to do so. However, they cautioned that they need a structure that creates less “red tape,” not more, in order for them to champion this effort.

Next Steps

The planning committee will use attendees’ input to draft a structure for the coordination councils.

Workshop participants will be contacted when there are updates to share; information also be posted at www.coordinatemntransit.org as it becomes available.
Appendix A: Regional Transportation Coordination Council Concept One-pager
Regional Transportation Coordination Councils of Minnesota

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.

Goal for Regional Transportation Coordination Councils

The state agencies would provide support for creating a statewide framework of 8-10 Regional Transportation Coordination Councils throughout Minnesota in order to break down transportation barriers and offer a seamless system of transportation services. The Regional Transportation Coordination Councils would be responsible for coordinating transportation services through a network of existing public, private and non-profit transportation providers.

Regional Transportation Coordination Councils will be developed in Greater Minnesota after consultation with stakeholders through a webinar and regional stakeholder meetings. Development of a structure for coordination in the seven-county Metropolitan Area will be guided by feedback received through the Twin Cities stakeholder meeting.

Potential Tasks of the Regional Transportation Coordination Councils

• Lead activities to and advance coordination throughout region.
• Exercise the authority to make change based on a formal governing framework.
• Employ dedicated staff to implement change.
• Provide technical assistance to facilitate human service program vehicle sharing.
• Establish transportation provider performance standards for service, vehicles, and personnel.
• Actively participate in and/or lead the FTA required local transportation coordination plan process.
• Utilize a cost accounting system to accurately reflect the full costs of providing transportation services.
• Share quality assurance data and uniform reporting among stakeholders.
• Develop or promote existing van pool or rideshare services.
• Oversee volunteer driver programs or coordination of volunteer programs.
• Establish or promote existing travel training programs.
• Provide feedback to the Minnesota Council on Transportation Access (MCOTA) as to what is working and where state level assistance may be needed.
Regional Transportation Coordination Council Benefits

- Increase efficiencies that may be achieved through more grouping of individuals traveling to the same destination or reduced duplication of services and/or vehicles.
- Enhanced access to social and health services, education and employment.
- Improved use of resources: For example, if the same services can be provided with fewer vehicles, then funds spent on insurance and capital is reduced. Other resources that could be shared include staff training, computer software, or call center staff.
- Coordination and collaboration can result in providing transportation in ways that contribute to livable communities and a vital economy.

Stakeholder engagement

- **Statewide webinar: April 16, 2015**
  
  [www.CoordinateMNTransit.org/events](http://www.CoordinateMNTransit.org/events)
  
  Webinar that outlined the needs and concepts for regional transportation coordination councils.

- **Regional workshops:**
  
  Facilitated workshops to share stakeholder perspectives on what activities potential coordination councils might undertake to implement and/or oversee the provision of coordinated transportation.

  **Spring 2015**
  - Duluth: April 23
  - St. Cloud: April 30
  - Mankato: May 13
  - St. Paul: May 14

  **Fall 2015**
  - **Marshall: October 5, 1:00-4:15 p.m.**
    
    Southwest Minnesota State University

  **Rochester: October 26, 1:00-4:15 p.m.**
  - Location TBD

  **Bemidji: November 2, 1:00-4:15 p.m.**
  - Hampton Inn
  - 1019 Paul Bunyan Drive South

  **Winter/Spring 2016**

  Second round of regional workshops

Appendix B: Individual workshop summaries
The Minnesota Department of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops are being held across the state. Participants (primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies) were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the conversation is provided here.

**Coordination Roles**

**Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?**

Participants agreed that the council should be diverse. Suggested members include:

- Transportation service users, including low-income riders, seniors, riders with disabilities, veterans, and people of color
- Transportation providers: public, private, volunteer/non-profit, and medical
- Elected officials
- Social-service providers whose clients rely on transit to access work, healthcare, school, and childcare
- County staff
- Employers, employment programs, and workforce centers
- School transportation providers
- Both rural and urban representation

**What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?**

Attendees felt that the councils should have a clear mission and goals; several different goals were discussed. Council goals could include:

- Mapping all available transportation services in the region
- Raising awareness of mobility issues and needs
- Connecting riders and services to improve access to employment and healthcare
- Overcoming current barriers to service, such as waivers
- Convoking groups to identify and find solutions for service gaps and other challenges
- Hiring and overseeing an employee to fulfill the above goals, champion transportation services, and provide operational support such as dispatching and billing
What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?

Participants agreed that it will be crucial to have a paid coordinator, at least in the council’s formation stage. This staff member must be a champion for the initiative and possess strong outreach and collaboration skills.

The staff could provide operational support for the council and service providers and users. Duties could include convening stakeholders, providing operational support for members, dispatching transportation, gathering and sharing information about transportation services, and creating a one-stop website and phone line for service users.

Coordination Processes

How should governance actors be chosen?

Many attendees suggested that members follow an application process and be held to term limits. Having a grievance and removal process is important. Some expressed concerns about keeping a balance of power between larger and smaller agencies, as well as between providers and users. Attendees also expressed concerns about sufficient inclusion of disenfranchised populations.

Several discussion groups felt that the council should be limited in size (8-15 people) to make it effective. Subcommittees could be added to allow for greater participation and in-depth attention to key issues.

How should the councils be accountable for results?

Participants felt strongly that councils should have a clear mission, goals, and accountability structure. This structure could come through a funding agreement with the state (perhaps with incentives), measureable outcomes and reporting, and/or a council charter.

Success could be measured in several ways, including:
• Increased ridership numbers
• Cost savings
• Reduction in service gaps
• Reduction in duplicative services

Members noted that each region is unique. Although many would like to have state oversight for the councils, they stressed that each council should have the freedom to adapt to meet local needs.
Coordination Tools

What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?

Attendees noted that technology is only as useful as the people running it. Any technology needs to be championed, maintained and updated, and shared. One way to improve service delivery would be to improve communications amongst providers. This could happen in both the physical (shared offices) and digital realms (phones and online tools).

Privacy is another concern, both for agencies and their clients. Access parameters and policies need to be defined.

What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?

Attendees felt strongly that a coordinating entity needs a computerized database containing up-to-date information about all service providers, routes, and schedules in the region. This software could also be used for dispatch services if desired. A partnering website (as well as social media or phone apps) would give the public access to this information. It was acknowledged that different providers currently use very different systems (computerized or not) and that data access could present a challenge.

Participants also expressed a strong preference for having a “one-stop” phone line for users to call to request transportation. They do not like having to give callers a list of resources to contact on their own; users are less likely to access services if the process is complicated.

It was noted that cell-phone service varies across the region. Coordination tools will also need to address common barriers to service such as differences in programs’ eligibility guidelines and limits on crossing county lines.

Coordination Spaces

How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?

Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions). The two most popular options were the MnDOT districts (perhaps with an adaptation to follow county lines) and Designated Workforce Center regions. In general, participants suggested having 7-12 regions.

It was noted that it’s important to pay attention to key transportation corridors to ensure that regions encompass the destinations users visit most often (school, healthcare, employment opportunities, and amenities).
How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?

Members noted that cross-boundary transportation, whether between counties, regions, or other service areas, can present significant barriers. Cooperation is needed to resolve issues such as:

- Fare or eligibility differentials between the originating service provider and the destination service provider
- Need for a “warm handoff” when riders must transfer services
- Need for passengers from all regions to access the Twin Cities and Rochester (for healthcare)
Regional Coordination Council Workshop
Discussion Report
St. Cloud, MN
April 30, 2015

The Minnesota Department of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops are being held across the state. Participants (primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies) were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the conversation is provided here.

Coordination Roles

Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?

Participants felt strongly that service users (including workers, seniors, and disabled riders) should be represented on the council. Other suggested members included:

- Transportation providers: public, private, and volunteer/non-profit
- Planners and policymakers
- Both urban and rural members
- Social-service providers whose clients rely on transit to access work, healthcare, school, and childcare
- Transportation funding providers (elected officials, etc.)

What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?

Attendees believed that the council needs the authority to make decisions. They expressed mixed opinions about what level of involvement the state government should have in its work.

Several groups expressed the importance of funding to support these councils. They questioned how much control the funders would have or should have over the council.

Regional councils would have representatives on a statewide board.

What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?

Participants suggested that coordinators could convene providers, develop a regional transportation plan, and define levels of service. They also hope a transportation coordinator could provide a “one call” or “one click” referral service to help connect riders to the right transportation provider.
Coordination Processes

How should governance actors be chosen?

Attendees favored a diverse group of actors. They suggested a few selection criteria:

- Knowledge of local transit needs and systems
- Authority to influence rules, funding, or programs
- Policy and process expertise
- Representative of transit users (age, location/county, income, etc.)

Participants felt strongly that local transit providers should be included on the council and/or be able to select its members. Well-defined subcommittees or advisory positions could provide additional opportunities for participation.

Participants were mixed about how a coordinating council should integrate members who cannot “bring resources to the table” or control funding. They favored actors who could make change happen and acknowledged that a lack of control over funding could hinder a council’s progress.

How should the councils be accountable for results?

Attendees suggested some criteria by which the council’s work could be evaluated:

- Reduced service gaps (expanded service to meet needs that are currently unmet)
- Fewer service denials
- Reduced redundancy of services
- Consistent policies and practices among transit providers for a seamless rider experience
- Improved outreach to potential users
- Lower costs
- Continued success of programs that are already working well (“don’t break what works”)

The councils should also set and report on their own goals. Attendees noted that it will be critical to have data to use for evaluation. Transit users’ feedback should be considered during the evaluation process, as well.

Coordination Tools

What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?
What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?

Attendees identified two communications systems the council will need: one for providers and one for riders. Both systems will need adequate training and maintenance support.
The system for providers will need to be consistent and shareable between transportation providers. A software platform (possibly web-based or through Google Docs) could provide support for transit scheduling, billing, mapping, and reporting. This system will need to protect client privacy while making it possible for providers to share information when needed. If medical providers are included in the system, HIPAA compliance may be necessary.

Several discussion groups agreed that consistent training is very important for transit providers, including the drivers.

For transit users, participants envisioned a one-call/one-click system that makes it easy for riders to schedule their own rides. This system should offer a phone-based option for people who prefer to hear a friendly voice, as well as a web-based system for those with computer access. Both aspects should be easy for riders to use.

Participants agreed that cell phones are an important technology for providers and riders alike. Coordination systems should be accessible from a smartphone. Providers should consider options for equipping volunteer (as well as paid) drivers with this technology.

**Coordination Spaces**

**How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?**

Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions). The Designated Workforce Center regions were by far the preferred option. Participants suggested that counties not be split between multiple regions, nor included in more than one region.

It was also noted that regions should be about natural community connections, not arbitrary lines on a map. Regardless of council boundaries, riders should be able to easily access employment, medical care, and social opportunities without worrying about whether or not they will be crossing a boundary line.

**How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?**

Several attendees noted that there will always be a need for cross-boundary cooperation. Councils will need to coordinate with their neighboring regions as well as statewide. There should be a statewide oversight council to help direct and coordinate all of the regional councils’ efforts.
The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments, and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops were held across the state. Participants (primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies) were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the conversation is provided here.

**Coordination Roles**

**Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?**

Participants desired a council comprised of parties involved with all aspects of transportation:

- Transportation providers: public, private, non-profit, medical, senior, school
- Medical providers
- Government representatives from a variety of levels: city council, law enforcement, Department of Human Services, state legislature, etc.
- Transit users and their advocates
- Social-service providers, both government and private
- Economic development representatives: planning commission, Chamber of Commerce
- Religious organizations
- Area Agencies on Aging

**What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?**

Participants felt a council should be engaged, creative, and action-oriented. They want the council to have the authority and the expertise to create policies.

Some participants felt that the council should be an independent entity (not housed in an existing agency or organization) to ensure impartiality. Concerns were expressed about the council’s authority over funding; the council must ensure that funding is fairly distributed to all eligible agencies and that the council is held accountable for producing results with those funds.

**What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?**

Suggested council activities included:

- Develop an understanding of the entire transportation landscape to identify gaps, best practices, and opportunities
- Advocate for policies that improve transportation access for all users
• Coordinate communication among transportation providers and others who interact with the transportation system
• Serve as a liaison between the community, transportation users, and providers: refer to correct services, assist with paperwork, respond to concerns, etc.
• Identify and distribute funding, with fairness and equality as a focus

Coordination Processes

How should governance actors be chosen?

While all attendees agreed that the council must be active and engaged, there was no clear consensus about the council selection process. Suggestions included:

• Elected members
• Invitation only, being strategic about who is invited to participate based on their expertise and authority (perhaps with state guidance to extend these invitations)
• Invite prospective members to participate in the council formation process, and then nominate council members from that group
• Volunteers: anyone who is willing
• Appointed members from local government agencies
• “Draw straws” from each represented cohort
• Only allow members who influence or distribute funding
• Include transportation system users

These contrasts could be reconciled by creating different groups within the council. An advisory board, for instance, could offer a way for system users to participate.

How should the councils be accountable for results?

Attendees suggested that the council or its overseeing entity should develop performance metrics by which to evaluate their success. These metrics could include:

• Reduced duplication of services
• Improved collaboration among members
• Progress towards identified policy goals
• Compliance with deliverable deadlines

Many participants requested that funding be used to ensure accountability. For instance, participating entities could receive mini-grants for their participation and the council could receive additional funding for demonstrated success. The reverse would also be true; attendees felt that the council should not be allowed to “waste money” by not demonstrating results.
**Coordination Tools**

**What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?**

**What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?**

Attendees believed that the council should have the ability to coordinate and dispatch rides. This might require software, GPS tracking for vehicles, and radios/cell phones for drivers. Riders should have several easy ways (hotline, phone app, and website) to plan and request rides from a variety of providers. These interfaces should provide multilingual access.

Communication tools were also identified as critical to the council’s success, with an emphasis on Internet-based systems. Web-based software/databases could provide a shared platform for up-to-date information about transportation services and clients. Several participants also requested use of webconferencing. Attendees recognized that significant IT resources (hardware, software, and staff) will be needed.

**Coordination Spaces**

**How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?**

Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT districts, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions). They preferred using one of these existing regions rather than creating new boundaries, as each existing model provides services that would interact with the transportation councils’ efforts. The Workforce Development Center and Economic Development regions were the two most popular options. Continuum of Care regions were suggested as another model.

Participants had diverse viewpoints about the ideal size of each region. Larger councils might wield more influence, but might be too large to effectively respond to local issues.

Attendees noted that regional boundaries should take into account where riders need to go most often. Transportation corridors, metropolitan areas, and destinations such as medical services will help determine efficient council boundaries.

**How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?**

Participants felt very strongly that cross-boundary cooperation is critical to councils’ success and should be a primary goal. Riders should not experience any challenges in accessing services and destinations outside of their home council’s boundaries.

To achieve this goal, regional councils will have to work together closely. Ideally, they would have funds and/or policymaking authority to help eliminate cross-regional barriers.
Regional Coordination Council Workshop
Discussion Report
St. Paul, MN
May 14, 2015

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments, and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops were held across the state. Participants (primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies) were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the conversation is provided here.

Coordination Roles

Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?

Participants suggested several groups who should be represented on a council. They included:

- Transportation system users
- Transportation funders, both public and private
- Transportation service providers: public, non-profit, private (including taxis), volunteer-based
- Government agencies: MnDOT, DHS, Metropolitan Council, counties, cities
- Medical and social-service providers

What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?

Participants suggested that a council could distribute funding, create and communicate policies, and break down barriers to transportation access.

Attendees differed on what level of authority a council should have. While they wanted the council to have enough authority to fulfill their mission effectively, some worried that too much authority would lead to poor results for the system’s end users.

What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?

The council should be an “agent of change” to improve transportation access. This change could be brought about in several ways:

- Distributing funding
- Coordinating transportation providers to improve service
• Promoting cross-agency collaboration
• Developing tools for trip planning, reimbursement (for users traveling via multiple providers)
• Advocate for, develop, and implement policy
• Overseeing transportation providers to ensure compliance with policies, best practices, and financial standards

Coordination Processes

How should governance actors be chosen?

Attendees favored a diverse council, representative of both transportation providers and users. The council could include multiple “levels” of members with each committee having a different level of responsibility.

Two main methods for choosing these members emerged: by appointment or by election. Those in favor of appointed members suggested that those already involved in the transportation system (MnDOT, Metropolitan Council, local agencies, etc.) should select the council members. Those in favor of elected members envisioned an open application process, perhaps with the current council members casting the ballots.

It was noted that the council’s needs might change over time. For instance, the council might first focus on gaining community buy-in, and later focus on changing policies and procedures. Several participants requested term limits for council members, noting that this might be one way to gradually change the council’s focus and skills as its needs evolve.

How should the councils be accountable for results?

Participants were in agreement that the council must have clear, measurable outcomes. These outcomes could include:

• Ridership counts
• Reduced gaps in transportation service
• Stakeholder satisfaction
• Improved collaboration (such as ride-sharing) among members

Regular reporting was identified as a critical need. The council should be monitored and held accountable for delivering results.
**Coordination Tools**

**What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?**
**What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?**

Participants suggested a very wide array of coordination technologies. Some would be used by transportation providers, while others might be used by riders. While the specific technologies differed, clear requirements emerged. Coordination tools must be:

- Flexible, able to adapt to changing needs and technologies
- Secure (data privacy)
- Accessible to non-English speakers
- Accessible to transportation riders who prefer a variety of platforms: phone, internet, mail, fax, walk-in

Vehicles were identified as an important tool. Equipping drivers with GPS tracking, smartphone apps, and other technologies could make it easier to fill service gaps and monitor the system’s efficiency.

**Coordination Spaces**

**How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?**

Participants focused most of their discussion on how the regions should be formed within the Twin Cities metro area. Several attendees felt that the seven-county area should be divided into multiple regions (or subregions) along county lines, Metropolitan Council districts, or other already-extant boundaries. Thought should be given to how the different needs each region might have (urban vs. suburban vs. rural) and how those affect provider costs and profit margins.

**How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?**

Attendees felt that cross-boundary transportation will require two key resources: funds and flexibility. Financial incentives, the ability to change policies (for instance, on payment procedures or data access), and the opportunity to pilot initiatives without risk of penalty would all enhance cross-boundary coordination.

The goal of this coordination would be to improve the rider experience by limiting transfers and lowering rider costs and hassle when they do have to use multiple providers.
Regional Coordination Council Workshop
Discussion Report
Marshall, MN
October 5, 2015

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments, and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops were held across the state in spring 2015 and three more are being held in the fall 2015. Participants – primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies – were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the Marshall, MN workshop conversation is provided here.

Coordination Roles
Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?
Participants desired a council comprised of parties involved with all aspects of transportation and responses included:

• Is there an entity already in place for coordination?
• People who can make change (including public officials, policy makers, and those who have buy-in and willing to make change)
• Different sectors need to be represented (housing, transit, public health)
• People with knowledge of how “it” works; - Everyone has their own agenda. How is this managed?
• 5310s, ADCs, DT&Hs
• Workforce centers
• Disability services
• Department of Human Services
• Transportation providers (public sector, private sector, STS, volunteer, school)
• County divisions: health, human services, housing, transportation
• Health care/medical
• Mental health
• Veterans
• Veteran Services (have layers, layers, and layers of bureaucracy)
• Area Agencies on Aging and other stakeholders from the older adult/senior community
• City and county government
• Elected officials
• Economic development (planning and zoning)
• School districts, colleges
• Hospitals
• Businesses
• Consumers
• Places of worship
• Non-profits
• Frontline staff
• Law enforcement
• Different interests represented; action-oriented, outcomes

**What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?**
Participants’ suggestions included:
• Members need to have power, something behind it.
• Need the ability to make decisions
• Must be able to implement policy
• Joint powers authority
  o Council should set standards for delivery and monitor service delivery
  o On-call 24/7 service providers
• De-centralize power of funds and representation
• Depends on where funding is coming from and who and where the council will be.
  o State vs. local? – makes a difference
• Look for funding for out-of-state areas
• Provide education and travel training for families and caregivers – access to other languages
• Authority to ensure health and safety for riders
• Advocacy
• Council should set standards for and monitor service delivery
• Outcomes need to be discussed
• Incentives needed
• De-centralizing the power of $$ and representation (the hub gets the attention); need advocates at the legislature
• $$ go to rubber meeting the road, not the administrative layers

**What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?**
Participants’ suggestions included:
• Outreach to all partners. Important because there are gaps in service (Private and ?)
• Monitor service delivery
• Oversee funding
• Providers need to be on board
• Roles and responsibilities depend on where funding is coming from (e.g., state, local, etc.) and who and where the council will be.
• How will the program be successful without operating funding? (coordination insensitive)
• How are participants outside of transit involved in this process?
• Education and outreach to members and partners will be important.
• Southern Prairie Community Care - one breakout group talked about outcomes of organization
• Knowing and understanding existing services
• Being a “thread” to connect
• Revisit Ride-Link – add DHS, medical community
• Create an “Uber” type service
• Staff person of council needs to be an educator and a facilitator
• Different levels of needs; levels of bureaucracy; alignment needed
• Having access to other languages
• Knowing and understanding existing services
• Staff don’t have any clout on the existing council [in SW MN]
• Need a single body to coordinate rides
• Need to coordinate/provide rides home

**Coordination Processes**

**How should governance actors be chosen?**
While all attendees agreed that the council must be active and engaged, there was no clear consensus about the council selection process. Participants’ suggestions included:

• Regions should have flexibility in setting up
• Funding agencies should be at the table.
• People within county, but also people from outside.
• Specific qualifications to be on the board; there should be term limits and new members be elected or appointed.
• Riders for oversight
• Open access membership vs. appointment; who would appoint members?
• Selected by county commission and stakeholder reps
• Lottery system, Joint powers legislation (fiscal agent)
• Regional radio board structure as a model; state $ distributed equally to boards
• Model after SW 18 – mental health providers
• County/city – representatives from each area (elected officials) – include all needs being represented on advisory council
  
  o 2 levels – 2nd level would manage the operations
  o Do these high-level members have the expertise to govern a council?

**How should the councils be accountable for results?**
Participants’ suggestions included:

• Track riders left without a ride back
• Tracking method, especially of rides home/odd times of day/night (measure those rides not provided.)
• Council needs to identify who needs rides
• Pass card for all users/providers
• Guaranteed money to provide this ride
• Funding restrictions need to be removed or reduced
• Council’s job is to identify funding for these rides
• Identify ways be accountable and measure results.
• Set outcome by the members and evaluate the results
• This group would be responsible for the MnDOT/SW coordination plan
• An outcome to measure: “wheels on the ground” [more service and access, not more layers of administration]
• Legislative changes an outcome
• RTCCs: Solve issues, be accountable, measure

Coordination Tools

What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?
• A way to track rides to see what needs to be coordinated
• Smartphone application

What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?
• Software needs to be able to communicate
• Identify what need the technology is meeting?
• Zip card – rider automated user
• Scheduling apps
• Ravations, Routematch – already in place; need to get them to talk to each other
• “Expedia for transit”
• Dead zones
• Cell phones
• Need a good inventory of all partners’ technologies
• IT staff coordination/involvement/expertise
• Reduce government regulations to be able to see user benefits
• Universal fare cards that are common currency among transit providers
• Do a RFP for product that would include:
  • Dispatching/billing/mapping AND protect privacy (HIPAA)
  • Expand on ARMER – radio - broadband for data
• Volunteer drivers could access info on phone to a safe level

Coordination Spaces

How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?
Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT districts, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions).
• Determine the charge of the Coordination Councils before deciding.
• Economic Development and Workforce center maps preferred by some
• Range of counties: no less than 9 counties; no more than 18 counties
• Southwest radio board model: 13 counties
• The T-CAP Project at Western indicates if much larger it would be hard to effectively manage all partners.
• Smaller counties unable to process issues; need regionalization.
• At some point, can’t make everyone happy

How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?
• Needs to be decided by local or county
• What if a transit agency is in two councils? Large regional transit systems should not be split between coordinating regions
• How can we improve communication between regions
The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments, and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops were held across the state in spring 2015 and three more are being held in the fall 2015. Participants – primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies – were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the Rochester, MN workshop conversation is provided here.

**Coordination Roles**

**Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?**

Participants desired a council comprised of parties involved with all aspects of transportation and responses included:

- County human services
- Public health
- Transportation providers
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Health care providers
- Hospitals (e.g. Mayo)
- Clinics
- Nursing homes
- Health plans
- Managed care plans
- MnDOT district project managers
- Disabilities representatives
- Workforce centers
- Major employers
- City and county administrators
- Volunteer driver program
- Colleges/universities
- School districts
- Private transportation – cabs, charters, ecotrans, wecar
- Regional development commissions/metropolitan planning organization
- DT and H facilities
- Low income populations
- Amtrak
- Tourism
- Section 5310 – what incentive would they have to participate?
- Consider incentives to participate.
What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?
Participants’ suggestions included:
- Tell provider the service need and assign trip
- Assure payment method from rider to provider
- Coordinating council works directly with the state to determine ridership guidelines.
- Each transportation agency would schedule and deliver their own rides – route rider to transportation agency.
- Funding, creating consistency or alignment
- Data privacy

What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?
Participants’ suggestions included:
- Overall leadership
- Work with state on guidelines
- Transfer trips to transportation agency in geographic area

Coordination Processes
How should governance actors be chosen?
While all attendees agreed that the council must be active and engaged, there was no clear consensus about the council selection process. Participants’ suggestions included:
- Voluntary
- Appointed by board or councils
- Send applications to MCOTA to review
- Councils should be balanced to have a better representation across the board
- Set qualifications for involvement such as having a transportation background.
- Nominating committees (no self-nomination)
- Vote on candidates
- 1 representative from each county

How should the councils be accountable for results?
Participants’ suggestions included:
- Ridership should increase since there would be more options and less barriers
- Ridership coordination between service and coordination areas
- A decrease in the cost of rides should be a result
- Using reporting tools such as surveys, number of trips, statistics, and feedback from partner agencies
- State, as an overriding group, would set performance standards

Coordination Tools
What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?
- Quality
- Speed
- Create virtual offices
- Getting past data privacy issues
• Clients don’t worry about scheduling
• 1-800 number for clients
• Would be 24/7
• Consistent reporting – data is equitable across the board
• One data entry point
• Dispatch capacity with more staff available
• Internet and cell phone service, esp. in rural areas
• Can incur the costs of gathering data

What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?
• Apps
• Linkage Line
• Websites
• Rider verification tools
• Cell phones for all volunteer drivers
• Trip scheduling software
• Secure communication
• Secure cell and web
• Shared data service
• Data privacy

Coordination Spaces
How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?
Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT districts, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions).
• Metro should be its own (x2)
• St. Cloud/Duluth/Rochester/Mankato (urban centers) should be their own regions
• Suggest using Statewide Emergency Communications Board and Regional Radio Board map
• Regional development map or the workforce map (x2)
• Create region based on population density
• Should take into account geographical and functional boundaries

How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?
• Introduce a travel training program and a peak time allowance to travel in between regions.
• Create a set schedule for trips to urban areas
• Riders can board and ride another system’s transit
• Have a fair exchange of funding
• Need to address the urban/rural access
• Avoiding a duplication of service of one transit following another
• Have a mindset or rules changes
Regional Coordination Council Workshop
Discussion Report
Bemidji, MN
November 2, 2015

The Minnesota Departments of Transportation and Human Services, in collaboration with other state agencies, are proposing to work with the Metropolitan Council, other local governments, and organizations to create regional transportation coordination councils. To gather feedback about this concept, four workshops were held across the state in spring 2015 and three more are being held in the fall 2015. Participants – primarily representing transportation providers, social services, and government agencies – were asked to provide insight about several aspects of this concept. A summary of the Bemidji, MN workshop conversation is provided here.

Coordination Roles
Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council?
Participants desired a council comprised of parties involved with all aspects of transportation and responses included:

- Should be representative all groups in the service area
- Public and private transit providers
- Transit users
- Tribes
- Advocacy groups
- Law enforcement
- Colleges, schools
- Mental health providers
- Elected officials
- Emergency medical
- Hospitals and clinics
- Assisted living centers and group homes
- Veterans and veteran services
- DHS or county staff
- RDCs
- Social services due to client involvement
- Volunteers
- Salvation Army/Red Cross
- Local employers and their employees
- People who are connected with out-of-state needs
- Faith-based groups
- Someone to promote the overall ideas to the group (insurance, marketing)
- Creative people and those who know where the funding sources are
- Managers must be developed – managers should be unbiased and independent
- “Rule-breakers” to challenge and be an advocate
• 1-2 people from each organization should have a seat at the table
• The council should not be comprised of too many people the group would get bogged down.

What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?
Participants’ suggestions included:
• Develop local levels of service
  o What level of access is needed?
• Marketing for services
• Will define the priorities of each region
• Determines what works to move forward
• Should not control funding but should not just be advisory either – possibly be in the role of the mobility manager
• Recommend funding levels to MnDOT
• Able to direct specific resources and have final say in funding
• Emergency/disaster capacity
• Work with conflict of interest – don’t want stakeholders to feel like they are losing control
• Transportation solution specialist
• Be able to take into account the different needs of the different counties (e.g. Kittson, where population density is considerably less than neighboring counties)

What are the roles or responsibilities for coordination staff?
Participants’ suggestions included:
• Organizing an overall view of needed services in geographic area
• Develop a regional coordination plan for the stakeholders
• Full-time facilitator to dispense information.
• Maintain consistent guidelines across the state
• Travel training (funding and implementation)
• Mobility manager responsibility overseen by the coordination council
• Council and staff are a central information base
• Marketing

Coordination Processes
How should governance actors be chosen?
While all attendees agreed that the council must be active and engaged, there was no clear consensus about the council selection process. Participants’ suggestions included:
• Geographic location
• Representative from each county and/or advocacy group
• Private providers are necessary as part of the process
• There should be 5 members – 1 expert each in funding, design, transit, funding, etc.
  o Seek applications for candidates in 1 of these groups
  o Local selection committee made up with an odd number of screeners (i.e. 9 or 11).
- Need to determine focus of group at the local level
- Council should determine appropriate level of access in region through needs assessments and focus groups
- County commissioners
- MnDOT and DHS need to determine who will be on (depends on size of area)
- Term limits are a must
- Anyone who is interested should be able to show up/ sit in on meetings
- Send out a public notice and written communications
- Need some kind of authority to participate
- Expand existing programs to encompass more
- Break down by industries and they request participation

**How should the councils be accountable for results?**
Participants’ suggestions included:
- Transparency is important (x2)
- Quality of service
- Keep independence among groups
- Meets certain guidelines such as rider/hour vs cost/hour
  - Performance in various regions
- Consistent measures across the state
- Financial accountability
- How reactive vs. proactive the councils are
- Identify the mission – actual boots on the ground referring to mobility manager to provide service
- Other extreme and coordination study to determine coordination issues and provide advice
- Throw out traditional performance measures used for transit because of low populations

**Coordination Tools**
**What technology capacity does a coordinating entity need to have?**
- Webinars
- Go To meetings
- An overall information source that pulls information from all sources – a clearinghouse
  - Easy claim after the fact for billing
- Set up an email basket that providers can look at ride needs
- GIS overlay showing booked trips that someone can tag onto
- Interaction between regional coordination councils/mobility manager for individuals
- IT staff
  - User use would not be the issue, but rather finding the tech people to create would be.
- Social media access
- Radio repeater
- Back-up generator
What coordination tools should be used (e.g., telephone, software, mobile apps, radio)?

- Smart card
- Smart phones
- Smart technology
- Call app and online reservations
- 2-way radio
- Monthly reports
- Texting
- Voicemail
- A one-call number
- Consistent wireless service
- Access to a database or central information system
- 100% of riders use the phone, with 60% of those using landlines. Still like to talk to real people.
- Able to accommodate the fact that rural areas are not/may not be ready for new technology

Coordination Spaces

How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?

Attendees were shown maps of several existing regions (MnDOT districts, workforce centers, the Statewide Emergency Communications Board, and economic development regions).

- Population density and available services in area
- Highways that are available between regions
- Emergency communications map is preferred by one group
- Economic development or workforce regions map would be preferred by another group
- Economic development region and the MnDOT regions map was preferred by yet another group
- Ensure funding is divided by population, not geography necessarily
- Ensure small counties are not being excluded.
- Traffic patterns

How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?

- Most people are happy to just have services available
- Notable issues would be mostly medical, otherwise coordinate to as few transfers as possible
- Equal share of service time, not just most efficient
- Communication concerning needed services across boundaries
- Regional hub destinations
- DHS level bill passengers
Appendix C: Introductory responses
Workshop Initial Brainstorming
Individual Responses
Duluth, 4-23-15

1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?

- Transportation access to all areas, rural areas.
- How to improve transit coordination in NW MN. Continue to provide the service in a non-duplicative way at a minimal cost.
- The fact that this meeting is actually about coordination.
- Access to services for clients/consumers. Reliable/regular transportation options.
- Establishing a truly coordinated transportation option for greater MN.
- Coordination is vital to truly increasing access to limited transportation resources.
- Looking for additional options to offer individuals at an affordable price.
- Under- and unserved people in rural areas.
- Limited resources to public transportation and money spent to volunteers—reimbursement to no-load miles.
- Coordination that includes private transportation providers.
- Low-income folks and the struggles of transportation barriers.
- Extreme rural access.
- Funding follows needs.
- Regional coordination.

2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?

- Cost and availability.
- Very rural coordination can be cost-effective.
- Public transit can’t do it all. We need to develop other options.
- We need to learn and catalogue all of the providers—both formal and informal.
- Build a network, work together.
- State department funding source silos makes programs hard to coordinate.
- Communications.
- Right type of transportation service for the needed trip.
- Streaming, not duplicating services, sharing resources.
- More types of transportation available funding.
- Cooperation of existing providers.
- People in poverty having a voice in policy-making.
- Cost and cooperation of different agencies.
- Coordination really happens, not meetings of individual silos.
- Really being able to understand where the programs are and who operates them.
• Cost of coordination. Access to coordination. Meet the needs of the citizens.
• Distance—rural areas cover vast distances which can mean long van/bus rides even if available.
• Coordination does not seem to impact rural areas. Lack of options.

3. **What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?**

• Cooperation between providers.
• Apply uniform operating standards to all providers.
• Making sure capacity and demand are close.
• Awareness of relationship of poverty and transportation.
• True coordination.
• Collaboration of service works. Break down turf issues.
• The ultimate benefactor of a truly coordinated service, the client.
• How to use current funding to support coordination. In other words, using existing money differently. Truly understand and appreciate volunteer transportation programs.
• Schedules—regular/reliable schedules for buses/van so clients/consumers can plan for appointments and jobs.
• Funding: reasonable expectations (there needs to be enough support staff to accomplish what a “champion” gets started.
• Crossover of county lines—limitation of riders to funds and their rural area.
• Don’t stop at identifying barriers. We’ve identified and admired them for a long time.
• Restructure routes to access more rural areas.
1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?

- Access and affordability of transportation to low-income communities in rural areas
- Provide transportation for those passengers that don’t have access and are dependent on public transportation
- Determining what our paratransit service growth will look like in the near future
- To help fill the gaps in transportation and create an efficient, productive system
- Access: Pope, Douglas, Todd, Grant, Stevens, Traverse
- Rural services, inconsistency across counties re: rules, availability
- Lack of rural access and state support to develop
- How will this affect customer choice?
- Availability of service getting people to where they need to get to
- People in rural areas have access to public transit: non-traditional hours, more availability, 2nd Harvest Heartland (affordable)
- Meeting the transportation needs/the underserved
- Possible changes to service delivery/funding
- Improving transit efficiency and ridership and fiscally sustainable
- Transportation in rural areas and available times
- Understanding/learning about current issues in St. Cloud and Stearns/Sherburne counties, RCC makeup
- Role of private and public working together
- Transportation to/from work and community activities for individuals we serve (many require lift-equipped vehicles due to wheelchair or mobility issues)
- Lack of transportation for rural MN
- Access to transportation in rural MN during non-traditional hours
- Continued need for vehicle availability and funding
- Not effectively serving those individuals who need transit, not cost-effective, too many silos
- Curious about effective ownership and control of system in region
- Capacity of DAR and my agency fleet
- Representing rural MN
- To stay informed on the development and discussion of a coordination council and to see where it is going
- Remove boundaries and better coordination
- Rural areas with no public transit system are underserved in several other areas such as resources, jobs, no development
• How will this affect my service and the people using this
• Interest in learning what efforts are being made currently with regard to coordination

2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?

• Local share $ = local decisions, local walls, local taxes, and local politics
• Consumer economic level requiring public transit where none is currently available
• Allow transportation agencies already in place to cross county lines
• After-hours transportation for rural MN, for county-to-county
• Database: coordination of rides (location, times, etc.) to maximize capacity/ridership in the vehicle, insurance (challenge)
• Too many competing priorities
• Politics
• Lobby/cost/access
• Money spent and resources
• Do we have the capacity to accommodate...
• Avoid duplication of services
• Consistent service delivery and aging population by properly licensed providers
• Boundaries
• Effective delivery of transit services to rural/remote areas, especially elderly, disabled, and veterans
• Linking transit to organizations that have high demand for those services
• Crossing county lines and reaching destinations effectively and efficiently
• Policy legislative pork, getting agreement on “how-tos,” money, services, rules
• Getting all the players to the table
• Finding/configuring cost-effective means to serving population
• Legislation re: non-emergency medical transportation (ability for counties to return “broker”) 
• Cost
• Keeping MTM out of rural MN STS
• Desire to operate the best transit services as possible
• Funding, liability, standards
• Finding enough volunteers to meet needs of repetitive appointments, cares, dialysis
• For those not in the transit/transportation area understanding the cost of transportation services
• Cataloging all the transportation options in the region
• Contacting my service, no broker
• Seamless demand/response in rural areas
• Funding and resources. Not many options in many areas
• Out of town rides to Minneapolis and Rochester
Overlap vs. areas of no service
• Need to increase collaboration to cross county lines to provide service
• Getting providers to buy in to collaboration
• How to deal with liability concerns

3. What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?
• Avenues to make true collaboration work
• Aging transportation access
• Connecting networks and aligning availability of transportation with community services and employers
• Maximize effectiveness and efficiency (cost, availability)
• Seamlessness statewide, money, policies/procedures that assure access and fairness
• Lack of transportation has so many downstream effects that result in such great consequences!
• Too many systems that don’t connect across the region, efficient transportation connecting major hubs
• Funding streams, MnDOT controls
• Keep it simple so everyone understands
• There needs to be a champion—a strong leader to get things started
• Assessment of individual abilities as it pertains to transportation
• The need for transit in rural areas outside the local communities
• Outreach to “isolated” and vulnerable populations (awareness of resources), reach and teach
• Offering incentives and easing burdens of providers to collaboration
• Public and private cooperation at the local level
• No to make it too complicated/streamline processes. Seamless system, unravel complexity
• There needs to be enough support staff to accomplish the goal. This is not the time to skimp on staff
• Local coordination is important, more emphasis on local/regional control and coordination
• Affordable transportation for specialized (wheelchair) service
• Cost-effective while increasing access
• Cost-effective and coordinated transportation
• Small rural towns that have to travel a distance to get (county) services
• More comprehensive regional public transportation system (flexibility, affordability, coverage)
• Develop or promote existing vanpool or rideshare services
• Capital replacement, how to meet critical needs in very rural areas
• Rural areas with very limited access, yet making it affordable
• Boundaries changes
• Develop a better working relationship with the providers
• Look at actual costs of providing service
• Regulatory processes could be addressed

Workshop Initial Brainstorming
Individual Responses
Mankato, 5-13-15

1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?

• Local control
• Lack of door to door services
• Holes in transit availability
• How a coordination council would affect local transit
• Lack of public transportation
• Lack of evening weekend transportation
• MnDOT resources are used effectively
• Facilitate/future planning of a newly formed transit
• Possibilities of coordination
• Coordination of timely transportation for persons with disabilities
• Expanding/providing more for community
• Regulations that limit ability to coordinate
• Ability to coordinate
• Fiscal prudent use of resources
• Coordinate with someone else; who pays for service
• How does a municipal system coordination: provide outside funding
• Implementation of service for users
• Getting people across county lines
• Who to best coordinate and how
• Wanted to hear everyone’s ideas of coordination
• The coordination concept interested me

2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?

• Seamless coordination between agencies and across city/county boundaries
• Accountability, cost, and access
• Boundary lines of providers
• Older adults in rural areas often struggle with getting to needed services
• Youth and cost
• Crossing boundary and state lines
• Transporting people with disabilities to and from their work place
• Where will we get the dollars to coordinate
• Lack of transportation (public, volunteers)
• Making active transportation planning a priority to ensure that bike/pedestrian plans are as important as vehicular transportation
• Central call center
• Awareness of available programs
• Who to best coordinate with and how
• Not another layer
• Limited resources that are over regulated so they are too difficult to share
• Transit is here to move people for needs and wants if possible
• Coordinated, timely and available transportation for low income people to get work and appointments
• Payment/funding process
• Limitations for resources
• Geographic boundaries
• Accessibility and coordination of transportation for elderly – within city/county and between county
• Seamless (for the user) implementation
• Getting the right people to the table
• Who pays what
• Working together with all partners to provide service groups

3. **What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?**
• Access to all users, youths and senior citizens
• Access to seniors in rural areas
• Distance to serve cost and cost to provide
• Do more with less funding
• Pay attention to diverse population that needs services. Times of day are critical
• Access, economical transportation across county borders
• Multi-use transportation options
• Don’t lose sight of partners, their value in providing services
• Think outside the box
• Coordinate – volunteer driver program – don’t lose sight of this service
• MN trips – restrictions to provide service.
• Easy access
• How to work together
• It takes time to get the relationships built to start the coordination process – need to have person/people dedicated to that purpose
• Cost
• How can we get the counties, cities etc. to consolidate
• Rural location
• Funding
• The increased regulations and funding mechanisms make using volunteer divers more difficult
• Funding to add coordination activity and promotion
• Making sure everyone has easy, affordable access to transportation whether that is vehicular transportation or active transportation
• MA ATS Policy – no-load miles closest provider etc.
• Easy access
• How volunteer driver programs fit into coordination planning
• Think outside the box
• Remove money silos
• Small towns don’t get the problems enveloped in big-town problems. They are different!
• Listen to the local providers who know the system – they are the experts
• Explain the funding benefit to coordination vs. not coordinating and operating individually
• Money
• Coordinating transportation to wide range and varying places for employment and (medical) appointments. Across county lines
• Not knowing what is available around us
• Similarity across the board
• Do not make this process administratively burdensome
• Work towards the same goal of serving every individual
• Accessible transportation for elderly across city and county
• Success of our newly formed system: Faribault and Martin County
• Protection
1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?

• Better transportation for Washington County area, limited options now.
• How to utilize existing vehicles with availability for existing needs.
• Curiosity, I work on funding side. Bus shelters. How do we as an agency facilitate ridership?
• Numerous providers, numerous potential users, let’s talk.
• How to quantify problem/needs to help develop a workable solution.
• Access to the network in the outer ring suburbs.
• Moving the idea of coordination of vehicles forward—beyond conversation to implementation.
• Lack of effective, efficient servicer in northern Dakota County.
• How does managed care (health insurance) fit in?
• Want to know how the coordination of transportation would be.
• The lack of collaborative and coordinated use of provider “vehicle rolling stock” to fulfill service recipient as well as surrounding community needs... costly duplication.
• Available and affordable assisted transportation for older adults and their caregivers.
• High cost of transportation and lack of coordination among funders and service providers.
• Transportation for individuals facing specific barriers (disability, unemployment, homelessness, etc.).
• Transportation limiting housing options.
• The issue of how well the Twin Cities metro area transportation stakeholders begin to actually coordinate.
• Not enough dial-a-ride services.
• Limited transportation options available in southern metro—Lakeville, Farmington.
• The issue of utilizing present transportation providers to fill gaps in transit.
• Coordinated/ease of access to information regulating and for administration of transportation providers.
• Very limited transportation in NW suburban Ramsey county.
• Coordination/collaboration with other providers in our community.
• Elderly and low-income transit needs in suburban areas.
2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?

- Better coordination of transit for older adults and people with disabilities for medical and non-medical rides.
- Bringing different groups (seniors, disabilities, workforce) together to address needs.
- Someone who knows the various options for older adults and their caregivers.
- Flexibility and bilingual driver or dispatcher.
- I see a lot of private carriers in my neighborhood. Clearinghouse of info on how to contact them? Cost of transportation.
- We have available 5310 grant capacity. How to use it?
- Current Met Council programs are poorly managed and poorly delivered. Why should I expect this to lead to anything different?
- Size of the geographic area and spread of the “hubs” in those areas.
- How to meet the unique needs of individuals in need of transportation.
- Figuring out effective ways to use all of our vehicles efficiently seven days a week.
- How do we coordinate across Ramsey County to include the suburbs in transportation?
- Diversified/expanded access for elderly and disabled residents.
- Communication between service providers.
- Distance/time.
- Denial of service to clients who need to make appointments.
- Liability and insurance—make it affordable for agencies to provide transit.
- Eligibility for special transportation arrangements.
- Funding sources dictating coordination.
- How to cross the barriers of DTH’s transportation, DTH providers stop at the same home.
- Funding—we must coordinate because funders require it but there is a lack of trust to coordinate with others.
- Control management and costs.

3. What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?

- Remove turf barriers.
- I believe the increasing needs of transportation for seniors is going to overwhelm the system.
- Balancing the needs of all Minnesotans with the revenue.
- Many providers have vehicles that sit for the majority of the time. How can we use these vehicles during “down” times?
- Not forgetting the suburbs when making a plan.
• How to get the information to people who don’t know where to start.
• Working with other service providers to streamline related services.
• That we not work in silos.
• Technical assistance.
• Met Council scheduled services are built to move people from city to city but do little to move people around in their own community.
• Developing a solvent or profitable business model.
• How to allow for billing transportation for another DTH.
• Real accessibility.
• Transportation for those unable to drive and cuts to transportation service to Scott County.
• Coordinating various service providers to fill gaps and reduce overlap without stepping on toes.
• Understand each population served.
• Express buses work great for the 9-5ers, but what about people that work swing and overnight shifts?
• The tools to provide coordination: insurance, liability waivers, coordination councils?
• Ensuring gaps are minimized for seniors and disabled.
• Fund coordination and collaboration.
• Incorporate the requirement of coordination in transportation funding applications.
1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?
   - Avoiding duplication of services
   - Unequal and inadequate access for persons in rural MN
   - Cost of services (e.g., daycare)
   - How to get more people with disabilities to work that live outside the city of Marshall
   - Lack of resources to provide all transit needs
   - Making coordination easier
   - Bringing resources together to serve our consumers’ needs
   - Not equal access for all who need it in rural MN. One size does not fit all.
   - How many people (and $$) do we need to spend coordinating rides when resources should be used to provide rides.
   - Rules and regulations inhibit coordination of services/sharing rides/provision of rides.
   - Make sure local stakeholders are at the table when making decisions about coordinating services
   - That we are as rural as we are
   - Lack of transportation in smaller communities
   - Mental Health

2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?
   - Mental health transports (after they have been to hospital)
   - The distances that EMS needs to transport people
   - Need funding for WestCap/Western Comm. Action so more people outside of Marshall can get to work.
   - Is there an entity/group already in place that can take this on instead of creating ANOTHER level?
   - Getting all the players at the table
   - Framework for coordination does not exist
   - One size does not fit all
   - Continuity of transit coordination for one service provider to another
   - How are these councils going to be set up?
   - Mixing of resources ($) to achieve best service
   - Transportation needs outweigh transportation options
   - Regulation boundaries
   - Non-emergency medical transportation
   - Staffing
   - Is this oversight? Or a new agency that provides service?
   - Transit during time needed to the places needed.
3. What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?

- Listen to current providers of transportation services for the current issues
- Reimbursement rules through state agencies
- Examine legislative changes to access funds
- A fairer structure throughout Minnesota
- Ideas for future
- Funding for public transit
- Additional transit $$ allocated from the legislature earmarked for rural transit
- Legislative changes
- Common fare structure
- How to combine multiple pots of $ for the best usage
- Don’t create something for the sake of creating it
- Resolving conflicts and inconsistencies between state agencies and transportation provisions.
- Seamless use of transportation by user
- Don’t forget rural MN! Need more options
- Getting people to utilize existing transit/education
- 24/7
Workshop Initial Brainstorming
Individual Responses
Rochester, 10-26-15

1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?
   • I would like to be part of the ground floor with these types of conversations that are going on.
   • I learned about the councils recently and I am here out of professional interest. I want to learn more about what the RCCs are, how they will be organized, and how they interact with public transit agencies. How will the councils interact with other units of government?
   • Service trips/hot spot/peak times and providing service to all that need at the times needed.
   • Underutilized capacity

2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?
   • Consistency between service providers in the area. But yet letting providers be unique as they would like to.
   • How to match public, nonprofit, and private sector operations and schedules.
   • Funding (e.g. staff resources), especially for new groups like this.
   • Boundaries between service agencies (e.g. hard to coordinate transportation when there are two different types of transportation in one trip).

3. What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?
   • Talking together across agencies and establishing goals that are clear and determining who is responsible for what.
   • Door-to-door needs of passengers, especially older adults.
   • Individual methods of each provider.
   • How to fund and staff any eventual solution.
   • Transportation costs allocation
1. What issue or concern about transportation brought you here today?
   • No public transportation in Kittson County
   • Better reimbursement
   • Administrative pieces bogging down the system
   • Lack of transportation for homeless families
   • Access for everyone who needs transit (x2)
   • “Playing” in the county lines, not being bound by county lines
   • Loss of individual in system
   • Needs of seniors as they are no longer able to drive
   • How will the issue of transportation be coordinated in more rural areas? (x2)
   • The future of transit (funding, Olmstead)
   • Lack of fluidity and creative options now
   • To see how a small bus operation can work on coordination
   • How do we move from concepts and strategy to action and results?
   • Regulatory road blocks to coordination
   • Coordination between rural and urban transit providers.
   • NEMT seem scattered

2. What is the most important issue for transportation coordination in your area?
   • Meeting the needs of all, especially older adults and disabled persons, during all times of the week (x2)
   • Increasing options to the VA medical center in Fargo
   • Defining what is coordination is between the programs
   • Knowing who to contact
   • Programs that receive funding needing to coordinate with other programs
   • Lack of transportation and/or choice of transportation in our area (x2)
   • Varying access requirements and procedures
   • Bringing all parties together and communicating
   • Get different parties to work together and combating “turf” issues
   • Resource directory and their missions.
   • Distance from other providers
   • Dealing with barriers of homeless families
   • Overall nonbiased organization
   • Funding

3. What idea or issue related to coordination should MnDOT and DHS pay most attention to?
   • Transportation organizations can help with coordination
   • Concentrate on the funding and contacting all parties that should be involved
   • Fair funding and support
   • Distance that rural providers are traveling
• Break down the barriers
• Seamless focus between various needs and interests
• Finding a permanent, funded, supported home for mobility managers / regional coordinators
• Access for all
• Program ownership and reimbursement of expenses with communication
• Volunteer driver programs – how they can be blended into existing services?
• Ensure that both MnDOT and DHS are on the same page moving forward.
• Getting the groups together and support because they are extremely busy on day-to-day operations and meeting time may not be readily available
• The balance between personal needs and small town realities
Appendix D: Final impressions
Closing Lightning Round  
Mankato, 5-13-15 

Share a final idea or impression from the event:

- It’s a big project with a lot of potential
- Time is an issue
- Keep communication open
- Willingness
- More meetings needed out west
- Fast results wanted
- How will you communicate with people who aren’t in attendance?
- Good concept
- Send out e-mails to participants as updates are available
- Change is good but difficult
- Communication is critical
- Going to take time, stay involved
- Keep it transparent
- Funding sources
- There is lack of attention on adequate transit in rural regional centers
- Great concept, glad to see it moving forward
- Fiscal responsibility needed so providers’ current resources aren’t drained
- Change existing rules rather than adding to them
- Good start
- Would like to hear strong objectives and a defined end goal
- Clear understandings needed about how it will aid local providers
- Funding needed
- Could sell this idea to his MPO, would like to see users represented, especially from immigrant communities
- Lot of potential, good to see different providers here
- In some rural areas there isn’t any transportation to coordinate
- Moving in the right direction
- Would like to see data about needs from different populations
- Cautious optimism
- Heard a lot of commonalities
- Look forward to seeing implementation
- Create less red tape, not more
Lightning Round Responses
St. Paul, 5-14-15

• People have to get away from worrying about who is getting reimbursed for the ride
• There is a lot of energy to actually coordinate
• The major entities need to keep discussing this
• Encompassing everyone is challenging
• Lot of people who need to be represented and heard, this project is complex
• Will require substantial time, money, and staffing investment
• Identify a need and build a database
• Complexities involved
• Consideration of free-enterprise marketplace models: i.e. food delivery
• Good things can come out of this
• Good start, hope it continues
• Gives me hope for change
• Intriguing to see govt, nonprofit, and private are all interested and attending
• Coordinate, let’s get it done
• Hopeful as we think outside the box
• Better communication and coordination
• More optimistic than when he came
• Start on a small level and then grow
• Hope there’s a champion to carry these good ideas forward and start doing something
• Excited to start implementing
• Good challenging and opportunities for technology, maps are hard
• Some frustration, but solutions are out there
• Great opportunities for innovation if someone will harvest it
• Bring in more players to this discussion
• Transportation is key in alleviating poverty, so make sure those voices get heard
• Think about riders with physical, mental, and language challenges
• Really good start
• Encouraged to see energy
• Lot of great ideas today, looking forward to implementation
Closing Lightning Round
Marshall, 10-5-15

Share a final idea or impression from the event:

- This was a small workshop but a good group and valuable workshop
- First time EMT representatives were involved
- Taxi cabs are not on the DHS-approved list currently; MCOTA could potentially change this
- A radio system that can be used across provides would be very useful (and access for non-emergency users)
- Multiple providers in the area are coordinating well, however sometimes, for example, a county will transport people into the Metro but they bypass counties they are passing through – need better coordination.
- There is still a lot to be done
- Primary concern: that RTCCs have people who want to be there, who are invested, and know why they are there
- Take advantage of structures/technologies already in place
- Glad that we are here and recognize the issue; that it is an issue; keep working together
- RTCCs need basic guidelines: provide direction, with reasons why
- Develop continuity throughout the state
- Overwhelming
- On the right road
- Hopes not to have to deny any rides
- Need right people who will advocate for more funding for the people who need rides
- Pilot one RTCC before taking it to entire state; provide in a rural area
Closing Lightning Round
Rochester, 10-26-15

Share a final idea or impression from the event:

• Three Cs with transit
• I received good information and liked the size of the group, too.
• The second time around for this workshop was great – I felt like I was heard better
• I hope the leaders are open to these suggestions.
• I received information and was also able to provide you info. I can away with a better understanding of how we fit into the whole scheme.
• We need to create incentives for everyone to be at the table
• Outreach, especially to social service groups. Outreach may need to be done at the county level. A webinar could be used for outreach.
• Conversation will be easier once geographic boundaries are determined
• Be mindful that each ‘region’ is different. How will consistency be defined?
• Can the coordinating council be an entity that allows trips beyond point-to-point through the use of fares to the providers for the ease of the rider?
• How will these councils overcome or assist in reducing barriers for riders, such as those who are colorblind or are unfamiliar with the area?
• What would an education system look like (e.g., when and how to use service) and how could it be implemented?
• Be mindful of these systems’ “donut holes”
• There is a fear of loss from existing organizations (i.e., power, ridership, connections with clients, etc.)
Closing Lightning Round
Bemidji, 11-2-15

Share a final idea or impression from the event:

• Geographic areas are unique.
• Another message to the agencies that MN is a huge state and a reminder that there are many unique areas across the state. MN is a big area to cover.
• I will take away the passion from this group for what everyone is doing. This provides hope.
• Seeing what we are lacking in this area and see the potential to make things better.
• I am from ND and it is nice to be connected to this work in MN, too.
• As this comes to fruition, this will create opportunities for many to have access to transportation from their home.
• Needs to be communication between and among regions.
• Keep what we have and move forward. We don’t need to break what is working.
• There have been multiple types of visions of mission – don’t limit to one prototype.
• I am not going it alone.
• I am concerned about the stakeholders who aren’t here and who haven’t shown up. Broaden outreach.
• Everyone is in favor of coordination among groups, but how are we going to combine those groups?
• There will be a challenge working within and among various smaller communities, let alone the urban areas.
Appendix E: Online feedback
**Q1 What are the most important issues for transportation coordination in your area?**

Answered: 3  Skipped: 0

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<tr>
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<th>Responses</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The lack of infrastructure to access public transportation. The shear size of Northern Anoka county makes it a difficult task.</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication. Rules / regulations / policies on requirements for use of funds and going beyond borders</td>
<td>5/26/2015 9:46 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>There is limited transportation for clients that need to get to the county for benefits or to their local foods shelf.</td>
<td>5/13/2015 3:33 PM</td>
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**Q2 Who needs to be involved in a successful coordinating council and how should they be selected?**

Answered: 3  Skipped: 0

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<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Local individuals who are knowledgeable about their local needs and can articulate those needs to the community at large. Possibly elected to a regional transportation board similar to Watershed districts or the Park Board.</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Policy makers (elected officials) need to be on the decision making board; but as working committees - the people on the ground that actually see the impacts or get the frustration of no coordination to actually have the rides provided.</td>
<td>5/26/2015 9:46 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>This appears to be an upper level question and so I will not comment. I do SNAP Outreach with clients that have many transportation issues.</td>
<td>5/13/2015 3:33 PM</td>
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**Q3 What authority and responsibility should the coordinating council have?**

Answered: 2  Skipped: 1

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>They should have sign off authority at the local level so when city/county/MNDot engineers plan a project there has been thought put into the project regarding how it will impact the community as a whole.</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Authority is needed in order to have an impact. If there is authority, then it better be elected officials. Responsibilities</td>
<td>5/26/2015 9:46 AM</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Q4 How should the size of the coordinating council region be determined?**

Answered: 2  Skipped: 1

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<th>Responses</th>
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Minnesota Regional Transportation Coordination Councils: Suggestions and Ideas

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<th>#</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Perhaps they should be aligned within State congressional districts as this would potentially make it possible to even out population density between the regions. This could be redetermined at certain time intervals. For example; after Census counts or the like.</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Geographic representation - by elected officials and folks who have decision making authority (private / and public sector)</td>
<td>5/26/2015 9:46 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q5 How should issues of cross-boundary transportation within and between regions be handled?**

Answered: 2  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There's no way this mandate can work without coordination of State dollars being used so the Regional Coordinating Councils (whatever they are determined to be) would make decisions on how best to serve over time the ongoing and future needs of their regions. Why else would there need to be a Council if they weren't making decisions. Otherwise they would be just a meeting for the sake of meeting.</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I loved the smart card idea. Use that idea and just do it. For volunteer drivers, training for VD's need to be consistent between the systems</td>
<td>5/26/2015 9:46 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q6 Any other suggestions or comments?**

Answered: 2  Skipped: 1

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>This process generally seems to be Bus/Van/Transit centric so please take into account the possibility of Rail, bicycle &amp; other methods of transit as well (snowmobile, Motorbike, etc in outstate areas)</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Once you establish who are the game changers in transportation in the metro and suburbs, then you need to consult local agencies that hear the stories from people so that you know what the true issues are for people living in poverty. Until then, I am unable to comment on the above questions. Seems like this is still very high level and when you are ready with solutions, then get users and agencies that work with the users at the table for a discussion.</td>
<td>5/13/2015 3:33 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q7 In what county are you located?**

Answered: 3  Skipped: 0

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Anoka</td>
<td>5/26/2015 10:55 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Murray, Nobles, Redwood, Cottonwood, Jackson, Rock, Pipestone, Lincoln, Lyon</td>
<td>5/26/2015 9:46 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Dakota and Washington</td>
<td>5/13/2015 3:33 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Q8 Contact Information (optional)**

Answered: 3  Skipped: 0

<table>
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