Northwest Minnesota Region One Public Transit Plan
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Prepared by:

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Northwest Minnesota Transit Plan

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Executive Summary

The new federal transportation bill passed in 2005 requires local transportation officials to compose a public transit document focusing on three populations of transit users: people with disabilities, the elderly and low income individuals. Required elements of the approved transit plan are listed below:

- Current Services/Providers: Assessment of available services that identifies current public, private and non-profit providers.
- Transit Deficiencies: Assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults and low income people.
- Strategies: Strategies and/or activities to address the identified gaps and achieve efficiencies in service delivery.
- Prioritization/Implementation: Relative priorities for implementation based on resources, time and feasibility for implementing specific strategies/activities identified.

The Region One Public Transit Plan covers seven counties: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake and Roseau. Please note that Grand Forks, ND and East Grand Forks, MN are involved in a separate municipal planning process. Please refer to their plan for more details.

This plan is subdivided into four major sections: a profile of NW Minnesota, a comprehensive transit providers section, a transit needs analysis and implementation strategies.

Implementation strategies are based on needs collected by public input, meetings and surveys. Seven broad categories were listed, with action strategies following.

- Regional Coordination - The steering committee noted gaps in coordination between service providers. Efforts will need to continue to strengthen communication.
- Marketing - Regional marketing need to increase or become more effective in order to attract new passengers and to increase route stability.
- Transportation Gaps - Insufficiency in the existing transit structure inhibits citizens from utilizing transportation alternatives.
- Increase Weekend/Evening Transit - Larger municipalities have a need for after hour and weekend transit services. If a cost-effective strategy is established, it could be extended to smaller/rural cities when required.
- Rural Transit - The long distances required for transporting rural residents door-to-door is not currently cost efficient. Transportation alternatives, such as vans or other vehicles, are possible strategic avenues; however this would require increased coordination and participation.
- Transit Funding - Rising annual maintenance and operating expenses require additional funding to operate existing routes. Additional resources will be needed to expand the current services.
- Employee Transit - Transit services to large manufacturing industries could be utilized throughout Northwest Minnesota. Scheduling and coordination between industry and provider will be necessary.
I. Introduction

In August of 2005, The United States Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), reauthorizing the Surface Transportation Act. Certain requirements must be met in order to receive funding in 2007 and beyond in the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access & Commute (JARC) and the Elderly & Disabled Transportation Programs, including the requirement that projects from the aforementioned programs must be part of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human service transportation plan.”

Regional Development Commissions (RDC) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) were chosen to coordinate and conduct the planning process. Planners in these organizations are not stakeholders and can be viewed as independent and objective. Individuals have experience creating local comprehensive plans and it is important that planners in these organizations be aware of and knowledgeable of transit programs and funding streams for local counties.

The planning process is overseen by the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT). Created in 1976, Mn/DOT develops and implements policies, plans and programs dealing with automobiles, trucking, transit, rail, aviation, shipping, biking and pedestrian traffic. The districts are outlined in the map below. For additional information, please visit www.dot.state.mn.us
The purpose of this plan is to aid local community leaders and those involved in human service transportation & public transit in order to create increased cooperation and coordinated programs. Citizens will benefit with improved services lower costs and easier access to transportation. Key elements in this plan include:

- Assessment of transportation needs for the elderly, low income and people with disabilities
- Available services inventory
- Gaps in current service and redundant programs
- Strategies to address service gaps and redundancy
- Prioritization of implementation strategies

When completed, the plan will be in effect for five years, 2007 - 2011, with an update being completed after this time period if MNDOT deems necessary. The project timeline began in May of 2006. A draft plan should be completed by October 1, 2006 and the final plan is due December 1, 2006. Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings will be dispersed throughout this timeline, as well as MNDOT video conferences, planning workshops and other public meetings as deemed necessary.

Public input and involvement were crucial in the creation of this transit plan. SAFETEA-LU requirements state that the transit plan needs to be developed by a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers as well as general public participation. Participation by any interested parties is encouraged and sought after. A Steering Committee was created and involves the following agencies:

- Bonnie Buchanan - Jefferson Bus Lines
- Steve Butler - Far North Public Transit
- Kent Ehrenstrom - MNDOT Transit
- Sally Erickson - DAC
- Mike Frisch - Tri-Valley Opportunity Council
- Peter Lavalier - ODC
- Carrie Michalski - Hillcrest Nursing Home
- Jennifer Olson - NWRDC
- Shannon Olson - Heritage Center
- Danica Robson - NWRDC, Area Agency on Aging
- Troy Schroeder - NWRDC
- Jody Vigness - Prairie Comm. Services
- Mary Wickersham - FOCUS Corp.
- Ken Yutrzenka - Pennington County Social Services
II. Northwest Minnesota Profile

Northwest Minnesota contains seven counties: Kittson, Marshall, Norman, Pennington, Polk, Red Lake, and Roseau County. Characterized by Swedish, Norwegian, German, Asian, Polish and French-Canadians who settled in the area in the late 1800's, Northwest Minnesota has fifty-four incorporated cities, 228 townships and six unorganized territories. Features include a climate with wide seasonal fluctuation, a glacier-created topography and an economy based on agriculture and manufacturing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Area (Sq. Miles)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kittson</td>
<td>1,123</td>
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<td>Marshall</td>
<td>1,675</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>885</td>
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<td>Pennington</td>
<td>622</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>2,013</td>
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<td>Red Lake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>1,676</td>
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<tr>
<td>NW Minnesota</td>
<td>8,426</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Here are the cities in Northwest Minnesota. Each city has services, attractions, and providers that people need on a regular basis. Although transit needs vary from county to county, the basic human needs are similar.
Transportation System Profile

Region 1 consists of 13,904 miles of roadway. This mileage is broken down between U.S. Trunk Highways, MN Trunk Highways, County State Aid Highways (CSAH), County Roads, Township, Municipal Streets, and State Park roads. The breakdown for each county is shown below.
These highways represent the foundation on which the transit systems of the region run on. Which particular road a transit provider takes is dependent upon a number of factors including the type of route, scheduling, time frame and passenger destinations. A well-developed roadway framework allows the transit provider multiple route options and an increased number of potential destinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>ROADWAY</th>
<th>MILES</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>ROADWAY</th>
<th>MILES</th>
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<td>RED LAKE</td>
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<td>RED LAKE</td>
<td>MNTH</td>
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<td>POLK</td>
<td>MUNI. STATE AID</td>
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<td>POLK</td>
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<td>ROSEAU</td>
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<td>PENNINGTON</td>
<td>CITY STREETS</td>
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</tr>
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<td>ROSEAU</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>CSAH</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>COUNTY</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>TOWNSHIP</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NORMAN</td>
<td>CITY STREETS</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>COUNTY TOTAL</td>
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<td>1565</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Region 1 total highway mileage = 13904
Fuel prices have become an increasingly important factor in transportation.
Due to the increasing gasoline and diesel fuel costs, more individuals have been scaling back trips, traveling only when necessary and finding cheaper modes of transportation. Many are looking to public transit as a more cost-effective alternative than running a personal vehicle. As you can see from the price chart below, Minnesota often stays below the USA average in gasoline costs, only rising above a few times throughout the three-year span.

Population

As of July 1, 2005, the estimated population of Northwest Minnesota (according to the U.S. Census Bureau) is 87,313. The graph below shows the population split between the individual counties.
Although the population of Minnesota is increasing, not all the counties in Northwest Minnesota are following this trend. Reasons for population decline include natural disasters, rural migration, employment and housing. Long-term data for the region reveals a general population decline occurring since the 1950’s. Most population growth in the area is centered on cities and the townships surrounding them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tr>
<td>Kittson</td>
<td>9,649</td>
<td>8,343</td>
<td>6,853</td>
<td>6,672</td>
<td>5,767</td>
<td>5,285</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>16,125</td>
<td>14,262</td>
<td>13,060</td>
<td>13,027</td>
<td>10,993</td>
<td>10,155</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>12,909</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penn</td>
<td>12,965</td>
<td>12,468</td>
<td>13,266</td>
<td>15,258</td>
<td>13,306</td>
<td>13,584</td>
<td>619</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>35,900</td>
<td>36,182</td>
<td>34,435</td>
<td>34,844</td>
<td>32,589</td>
<td>31,369</td>
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<tr>
<td>Red Lake</td>
<td>6,806</td>
<td>5,830</td>
<td>5,388</td>
<td>5,471</td>
<td>4,525</td>
<td>4,299</td>
<td>-2,507</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>14,505</td>
<td>12,154</td>
<td>11,569</td>
<td>12,574</td>
<td>15,026</td>
<td>16,338</td>
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<td>Region</td>
<td>108,859</td>
<td>100,492</td>
<td>94,579</td>
<td>97,225</td>
<td>90,181</td>
<td>88,472</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>2,982,483</td>
<td>3,413,864</td>
<td>3,804,971</td>
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<td>Age Group</td>
<td>25 to 34 years</td>
<td>35 to 44 years</td>
<td>45 to 54 years</td>
<td>55 to 59 years</td>
<td>60 to 64 years</td>
<td>65 to 74 years</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census Bureau (Percentages based on 2000 census)

Although currently a middle-aged region, the area is predicted to have significant elderly population growth in the near future. The elderly are one of the main population groups targeted to use transit in Northwest Minnesota. An explosive population growth in older Americans will require changes to be made to current transit systems.
Number of Minnesotans age 65-plus expected to almost triple by 2060

Sources: Minnesota State Demographic Center projections.

Number of Minnesotans age 85-plus expected to more than triple in next 50 years, then level off

Sources: Minnesota State Demographic Center projections.
Below are the population statistics for each individual county. Please take note at the projections detailing the aging of Northwest Minnesota, demonstrated by the high percentage change of the elderly versus the lower/negative percentage changes of the young.

### Kittson County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Age 62+</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
<th>Age 75+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4,114</td>
<td>3,960</td>
<td>1,289</td>
<td>1,141</td>
<td>625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>4,092</td>
<td>3,986</td>
<td>1,512</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>4,159</td>
<td>4,042</td>
<td>1,658</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2020)</td>
<td>-0.53</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>12.18</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2030)</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>28.63</td>
<td>31.46</td>
<td>29.60</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Source: MN State Demography Center, November 2002

### Marshall County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Age 62+</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>2,180</td>
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<td>2020</td>
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<td>2,460</td>
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<td>2030</td>
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<td>7,050</td>
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<td>% Change (2020)</td>
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<td>% Change (2030)</td>
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<td>-6.89</td>
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Source: MN State Demography Center, November 2002
### Norman

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<td>5,636</td>
<td>2,413</td>
<td>2,160</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2020)</td>
<td>-0.55</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>19.97</td>
<td>16.82</td>
<td>7.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2030)</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>36.10</td>
<td>38.64</td>
<td>39.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MN State Demography Center, November 2002

### Pennington

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Age 62+</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
<th>Age 75+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10,712</td>
<td>10,254</td>
<td>2,476</td>
<td>2,145</td>
<td>1,191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>11,543</td>
<td>11,109</td>
<td>3,522</td>
<td>2,920</td>
<td>1,290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>11,863</td>
<td>11,428</td>
<td>4,131</td>
<td>3,640</td>
<td>1,830</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2020)</td>
<td>7.76</td>
<td>8.34</td>
<td>42.25</td>
<td>36.13</td>
<td>8.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2030)</td>
<td>10.74</td>
<td>11.45</td>
<td>66.84</td>
<td>69.70</td>
<td>53.65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MN State Demography Center, November 2002

### Polk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Age 62+</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
<th>Age 75+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>24,350</td>
<td>23,241</td>
<td>6,230</td>
<td>5,463</td>
<td>3,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>25,011</td>
<td>24,175</td>
<td>8,011</td>
<td>6,630</td>
<td>2,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>25,603</td>
<td>24,746</td>
<td>9,505</td>
<td>8,360</td>
<td>4,140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2020)</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>28.59</td>
<td>21.36</td>
<td>-3.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2030)</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>6.48</td>
<td>52.57</td>
<td>53.03</td>
<td>35.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MN State Demography Center, November 2002

### Red Lake

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age 16+</th>
<th>Age 18+</th>
<th>Age 62+</th>
<th>Age 65+</th>
<th>Age 75+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3,367</td>
<td>3,201</td>
<td>935</td>
<td>819</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>3,488</td>
<td>3,365</td>
<td>1,248</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2030</td>
<td>3,588</td>
<td>3,465</td>
<td>1,414</td>
<td>1,280</td>
<td>620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2020)</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>33.48</td>
<td>25.76</td>
<td>9.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Change (2030)</td>
<td>6.56</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>51.23</td>
<td>56.29</td>
<td>43.85</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MN State Demography Center, November 2002
The Minnesota Board On Aging did a statewide survey of older Americans in 1995. In the transportation section, six percent of the respondents stated, “they were unable to go somewhere because they lacked transportation.” Grocery shopping and medical/dental appointments were the most missed activities. The graph below shows sub-populations that lack transportation. There is a definite transportation need among certain sub-populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Populations</th>
<th>% Lacking Transportation In The Last Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 13.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-74 4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over 9.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender 10.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male 2.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female 7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status 15.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 1.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Married 13.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living Arrangement 15.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives Alone 12.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lives With Others 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition, transportation providers that attended our workshop noted an increasing isolation trend among widowed/single females. These people often have a need for transportation. The above information proves this statement.

As people age, their ability to drive becomes limited by reduced reaction times, and deteriorating night vision. Comfort using public transit may be affected by physical limitations such as individual abilities to stand, climb, reach or sit for long periods of time. Although the statements vary according to individuals, public transportation will always be necessary for aging populations in Northwest Minnesota.

**Economics**

Low-income individuals may practice various forms of transportation such as
bicycling or walking, but the seasonal nature of weather in Northwest Minnesota makes it nearly impossible to practice this year-round. Low-income individuals are not different because of their preferences, but because of limited resources. Vehicle ownership is not often a choice for a low-income family, and is based on affordability issues of the vehicle, insurance, gas and maintenance.

The economic status of county residents is listed below. Low-income individuals are targeted as one of the main populations to use public transit. With the exception of Roseau, poverty level percentages are very similar.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Kittson</th>
<th>Marshall</th>
<th>Norman</th>
<th>Pennington</th>
<th>Polk</th>
<th>Red Lake</th>
<th>Roseau</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>$32,515</td>
<td>$34,804</td>
<td>$32,535</td>
<td>$34,216</td>
<td>$35,105</td>
<td>$32,052</td>
<td>$39,852</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Family Income</td>
<td>$40,072</td>
<td>$41,908</td>
<td>$41,280</td>
<td>$43,936</td>
<td>$44,310</td>
<td>$40,275</td>
<td>$46,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population below poverty level</td>
<td>521</td>
<td>979</td>
<td>749</td>
<td>1,467</td>
<td>3,284</td>
<td>448</td>
<td>1,054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent below poverty level</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: State Demographic Center, 2000 Census

The Northwest Minnesota region is characterized by an increasing labor force, as well as an increasing amount of employed individuals. The unemployment rises and falls, however the rate for the region is higher than the unemployment rate for Minnesota and for the United States. The higher unemployment rate seen might be partially due to agriculture. Many individuals are employed in this field on a somewhat seasonal time frame.
Statistics broken down for each county can be seen below. The employment and labor force trends noted above for the region is true for all counties. The variability of the unemployment rate is shown in greater detail. More low-income people in a particular area might require greater transit services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Labor Force</th>
<th>Employed</th>
<th>Unemployed</th>
<th>Unemp. Rate</th>
<th>MN Unempl. Rate</th>
<th>US Unempl. Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kittson</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2,653</td>
<td>2,515</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2,746</td>
<td>2,566</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,581</td>
<td>2,389</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5,364</td>
<td>4,984</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>7.10%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5,509</td>
<td>5,097</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>5,328</td>
<td>4,893</td>
<td>435</td>
<td>8.20%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>3,768</td>
<td>3,597</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Labor Force</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>Unemp. Rate</td>
<td>MN Unempl. Rate</td>
<td>US Unempl. Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennington</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>3,824</td>
<td>3,637</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>3,758</td>
<td>3,559</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8,433</td>
<td>7,974</td>
<td>459</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>8,299</td>
<td>7,772</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>8,136</td>
<td>7,646</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>17,569</td>
<td>16,796</td>
<td>773</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>17,213</td>
<td>16,337</td>
<td>876</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>16,871</td>
<td>16,013</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lake</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>2,297</td>
<td>2,144</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>2,293</td>
<td>2,121</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>2,227</td>
<td>2,053</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>7.80%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>10,397</td>
<td>9,870</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>4.00%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>10,346</td>
<td>9,883</td>
<td>463</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>10,376</td>
<td>9,622</td>
<td>754</td>
<td>7.30%</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: DEED, Annual Averages, Not Seasonally Adjusted

Although not officially one of the populations targeted in this plan, the presence of prominent businesses in the Northwest Minnesota region provides an additional sector of potential transit riders. These individuals could use this service as a stable routine, balancing out some of the other transit passengers who have varied needs for using transit. There is interest among some of the companies in providing this service, however scheduling and cost would have to be discussed in greater detail. The many shift beginning/ending times cause a scheduling dilemma as well as a significant block of time that would be necessary by transit providers.

The list below details the some of the largest employers of the region separated by county. It is important to remember that although agriculture is not listed, it is a predominate employer of many people in Northwest Minnesota. Trucking and construction firms also hire many individuals in the region, but it is more difficult to place in a specific county category due to the fact that the location of employment often changes.

Kittson County:
- City/County Government
- Hanson Manufacturing
- Johnson Oil Company
- Kittson Central School
- Kittson Memorial Hospital
- Lancaster ISD
- Mattracks
- PoDCo LLC
- Tri-County School District
- Wikstrom Telephone

Marshall County:
- City/County Government
- Davidson Construction
- D&D Commodities Ltd.
Grygla School District
H&S Manufacturing, Inc.
Machinewell Inc.
Marshall County Central School District
Nordic Fiberglass Inc.
North Valley Health Ctr.
Stephen/Argyle Central School
Warren Alvarado Oslo School

Norman County:
Ada-Borup School District
Ada Co-op Oil Assoc.
Bridges Medical Center
City/County Government
Norman County East School District
Norman County West Public Schools

Pennington County:
Arctic Cat, Inc.
Best Western Inn
City/County Government
CP Rail
Dakota Clinic
Dean Foods/Land O’Lakes
Digi-Key Corp.
Hugo’s
Kmart
Northern Pride, Inc.
Northern Woodwork
Northland Community & Technical College
Northwest Medical Center
Seven Clans Casino Hotel & Indoor Waterpark
Thief River Falls School District #564
Walmart

Polk County:
Altru Clinic
American Crystal Sugar
Cabela’s
City/County Government
Crookston Public Schools
Dahlgren & Co.
Dee Inc. Foundry & Mfg.
East Grand Forks Public Schools
Erskine Manufacturing
Fair Meadow Nursing Home
Fertile-Beltrami School
First Care Medical Services
Fisher Public School
Fosston School District
Hugo’s
Ideal Aerosmith
MDV, Inc. (Minnesota Dehydrated Vegetables)
New Flyer of America Inc.
Disability

Individuals with a disability represent the third population group that is targeted by this plan as a transit user. Depending on the disability, some individuals may not be able to operate a vehicle, so public transit becomes increasingly important. Personal limitations that may cause one to utilize transit include but are not limited to:
- Cognitive impairments including Alzheimer’s or developmental disabilities
- Dexterity impairments that cause limited use of hands. Some individuals may have a difficult time operating switches/knobs and handling fares. May include forms of Arthritis.
- Endurance issues that cause people not to be able to either wait for long periods of time or travel long distances. Some individuals may be frail, weather sensitive or require personal assistance when entering/Exiting.
- Hearing impairments including deafness and hardness of hearing
- Physical impairments, especially those related to motion
- Vision impairments including blindness and low vision
- Educational impairments including the inability to read, or limited/no English proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Disabled Population</th>
<th>% Employed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kittson</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>59.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall</td>
<td>822</td>
<td>59.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norman</td>
<td>636</td>
<td>55.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennington</td>
<td>1,215</td>
<td>66.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polk</td>
<td>2,582</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lake</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>1,404</td>
<td>78.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: US Census, 2000, Ages 21-64, Noninstitutionalized
III. Transit Providers Profile

Transit in Northwest Minnesota is often divided into two categories: public and private. While public transit can be utilized by anyone, private transit requires a prerequisite of the individual utilizing transit, be it a member of a certain agency/organization, to have a certain impairment or to live in a certain location. Private transportation can sometimes appear to fill a need not met by public transportation and although this statement is not always true, it is important in assessing whether current transit needs are met for specific populations.

**Public Transit Providers**

Public transit is provided by the companies listed below. The only county not covered by public transportation is Kittson County.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Area Served</th>
<th>Elderly</th>
<th>Wheelchair Access</th>
<th>Low Income</th>
<th>Regular Routes</th>
<th>Demand Responsive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cities Area Transit (CAT)</td>
<td>East Grand Forks / Grand Forks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Forks Taxi / Dial-A-Ride</td>
<td>East Grand Forks / Grand Forks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fosston City Bus</td>
<td>Fosston</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodak Radio Cab Company</td>
<td>East Grand Forks / Grand Forks</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northland Taxi</td>
<td>Thief River Falls</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Far North Public Transit</td>
<td>Roseau &amp; Lake of the Woods Counties</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-Valley Heartland Express</td>
<td>Polk, Pennington, Norman, Red Lake &amp; Marshall Counties</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Daily City Service**

The following cities have daily service during the weekdays. Interest in weekend or evening service may be higher in these areas because of the already existing daily service, however interest does not equal anticipated riders.

- Badger: FAR North Public Transit
- Crookston: Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.
- East Grand Forks: Cities Area Transit (Has evening and Saturday hours)
- Fosston: Fosston City Bus
- Roseau: FAR North Public Transit
- Thief River Falls: Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc.
- Warroad: FAR North Public Transit

In addition, Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. provides city-wide services.
to the following areas. These cities do not receive daily weekday service.

- Ada: 3 hours, one day a week
- Fertile: 2.5 hours, one day every other week.
- Twin Valley: 2.5 hours, one day a week

FAR North Public Transit also provides service three days a week to Greenbush.

Multi-County Service

FAR North Public Transit and Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. provides multi-county services to Northwest Minnesota.

Tri-Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (TVOC) schedules routes through every city in the five county region with the exception of Borup. If needs arose, however, the agency would be willing to work the schedule to the best of their ability to accommodate the interested individuals. Some examples of transportation programs available through TVOC includes:

- Senior Companions: a program that provides an opportunity for senior citizens to serve others who are in need of in-home assistance. This generally includes tasks that relate to daily living, such as grocery shopping and transportation to appointments and other social activities. Volunteers who are income eligible can receive a stipend.
- Rural Transportation Collaborative: A collaboration of transit providers that live locally. Volunteer drivers are reimbursed for mileage and receive a free 21 point vehicle inspection.

**Tri-Valley Heartland Express Bus (T.H.E. Bus)**

Types of Vehicles: 75 sedans, 10 medium busses, 2 large busses
- Lift Ramp: Available on all busses
- Total Capacity = 161/medium busses, 25/large busses
  - Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 2 each on medium/large busses

Passenger Trips/Month: 4,500 - 5,000
Vehicle Miles/Month: N/A
Hours/Month Transporting Passengers: 1,200
Hours/Month Arranging Rides: 320

FAR North Public Transit covers Greenbush, Badger, Roseau, Warroad and occasionally Roosevelt in Roseau County. Strathcona is not currently routed through, but the demand is non-existent. Routes can always change though, if transit needs occur.

**FAR North Public Transit**

Types of Vehicles: 5 medium busses
- Lift Ramp: All busses have a lift ramp
- Total Capacity = 72
  - Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 10

Passenger Trips/Month: 2,285
Vehicle Miles/Month: 9,772
Hours/Month Transporting Passengers: 620
Hours/Month Arranging Rides: 100

Private Transit Providers
Private transit is provided by many individuals and agencies throughout the area. Transit providers can either provide transportation two ways, either by owning a bus and providing the service, or scheduling transit through an existing service. The following list consists of agencies that own a vehicle and provide transportation. Specific information is provided below when available from returned surveys.

**Occupational Development Centers, Inc. (ODC)** provides individuals with employment challenges quality, accredited programs in which to gain local, community jobs. Employment/placement programs include job selection, preparation, obtainment and retainment. In addition, in-facility, custom quality product manufacturing and subcontracting are done. Many people with disabilities utilize ODCs to get both short and long-term jobs. Transportation for individuals affiliated with the ODC is taken care of either by private vehicles or scheduling with available public transportation. The service is available on weekdays from 8:00-4:30 (give or take a half hour, depending on the location). The following ODCs are located in Northwest Minnesota:

- ODC, Crookston Division
- ODC, Roseau Division
- ODC, Thief River Falls Division / Custom Products
- ODC, Warren Division

**Occupational Development Center, Inc. (Warren)**

Types of Vehicles: 2 sedans, 2 medium busses
- Lift Ramp: Available on one busses
- Total Capacity = 23/medium busses, 5/sedan
  - Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 5/medium bus

**Occupational Development Center, Inc. (Thief River Falls)**

Types of Vehicles: 3 vans/minivans, 2 small busses
- Lift Ramp: Available on one busses
- Total Capacity = 29/vans
  - Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 6/small bus

Hours/Month Arranging Rides: 2-5

The Day Activity Center Program (DAC) serves people with disabilities in local communities. It is defined by the Minnesota Association For Retarded Children as a community setting for the care, training and stimulation of mentally retarded persons for whom there are no public school classes or other facilities available due to their age, mental ability or behavioral traits. All facilities are open weekdays; times vary depending on location.

- East Polk County DAC
- Falls DAC
- Kittson County DAC
- Norman County DAC
- Polk County DAC

**Falls DAC, Inc.**

Types of Vehicles: 2 vans/minivans, 2 medium busses
- Total Capacity = 31/medium busses, 10/van

Passenger Trips/Month: 1,800
Hours/Month Transporting Passengers: 360
Hours/Month Arranging Rides: Established Routes

**East Polk County DAC**
Types of Vehicles: 1 van/minivan, 2 medium busses
- Lift Ramp: Available on busses
- Total Capacity = 16/medium busses, 15/van
  - Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 8 on medium busses
Passenger Trips/Month: 1,538
Vehicle Miles/Month: 3,000
Hours/Month Transporting Passengers: 80

The Focus Corp. MN, Inc. is a specialized group that serves the severely physically/mentally disabled. The agency serves Roseau County and is open weekdays from 8:00-4:00. Rides are given from residences as well as work sites and one to one assistance is always given. Eligible individuals have to be referenced through social service.

**Focus Corp. MN, Inc.**
Types of Vehicles: 75 sedans, 10 medium busses, 2 large busses
- Lift Ramp: Available on all busses
- Total Capacity = 2/medium busses, 1/small busses, 1 sedan
  - Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 5/medium bus, 4/small bus
Passenger Trips/Month: 819
Vehicle Miles/Month: 4,540
Hours/Month Transporting Passengers: 185

Nursing homes often have individuals that require some form of public transportation. Nursing homes either have private transportation for residents or will coordinate rides through public transportation. The services provided for these residents are imperative; however it is important to mention that the general public is not often able to take advantage of this service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nursing Home</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Bus/Van</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bridges Medical Center</td>
<td>Ada</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgewood Vista</td>
<td>East Grand Forks</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Meadow Nursing Home</td>
<td>Fertile</td>
<td>Yes - Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Care Medical Services</td>
<td>Fosston</td>
<td>Yes - Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenbush Community Nursing Home</td>
<td>Greenbush</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good Samaritan Center</td>
<td>Warren</td>
<td>Yes - In Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halstad Living Center</td>
<td>Halstad</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillcrest Nursing Home</td>
<td>Red Lake Falls</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karlstad Healthcare Center Inc.</td>
<td>Karlstad</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kittson Memorial Hospital</td>
<td>Hallock</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nursing Home/Assisted Living</td>
<td>City</td>
<td>Bus/Van</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McIntosh Manor</td>
<td>McIntosh</td>
<td>Yes - Seasonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midway Care Center</td>
<td>Fosston</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Green Leaf</td>
<td>Thief River Falls</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW Medical Center</td>
<td>Thief River Falls</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland Park Nursing Home</td>
<td>Thief River Falls</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneer Memorial Care Center</td>
<td>Erskine</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverview Nursing Home</td>
<td>Crookston</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roseau Area Hospital &amp; Homes Inc.</td>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>Yes - Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheltering Oaks Manor Nursing Home</td>
<td>Roseau</td>
<td>Yes - Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twin Valley Living Center</td>
<td>Twin Valley</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valley Home</td>
<td>Thief River Falls</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Villa Saint Vincent</td>
<td>Crookston</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warroad Care Center</td>
<td>Warroad</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lutheran Homes (Operating Halstad Living Center, Twin Valley Living Center and 3 senior assisted living apartments)**

Types of Vehicles: 1 sedan, 21 vans, 2 medium busses
- Lift Ramp: Available on all busses and one van
- Total Capacity = 28/medium busses, 10/vans, 4/sedan
- Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 2/van, 2/bus

Vehicle Miles/Month: 1,200
Hours/Month Transporting Passengers: 50
Hours/Month Arranging Rides: 25

Assisted living centers in the area provide housing and personal care services to residents while at the same time promoting independent living, freedom and flexibility. Many services are made available, including transportation. Please contact them for specifics relating to transit opportunities.

**Good Samaritan Heritage Communities**

Types of Vehicles: 1 medium bus
- Total Capacity = 10/medium bus
- Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity = 2/medium bus
- Lift/Ramp Equipped: Yes

Hours/Month Arranging Rides: 35

The Seven Clans Casino has a complimentary shuttle service that runs from the casino to a set location in Thief River Falls from Thursday to Sunday. The van is currently not handicapped accessible. The Seven Clans Casino in Warroad will arrange a ride from motels in the city (with a phone call), but the shuttle currently is not handicapped accessible.

Wings of Mercy provides free medical air transportation to patients with...
limited income. Although centered out of St. Cloud, Minnesota, the radius of
service is 500 miles around central Minnesota. Pilots, nurses and other
volunteers donate their time, planes and experience in order to aid those who
are in need. Two-day advance notice is necessary.
http://www.cloudnet.com/~wings/

Medi-Van is a specialized medical transportation service. Although based in
Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, Medi-Van covers the entire state of Minnesota.
Patients are charged with a base fee and for mileage. At least 24 hour
notice is requested for ride scheduling. For more information, please call
1-800-422-0976.

Jefferson Lines operates in eleven states and one Canadian province providing
scheduled service, charters and tours. Passenger stops in Northwest
Minnesota include: Crookston, Erskine, Fisher, Fosston and McIntosh. For
more information please visit http://www.jeffersonlines.com/.

Some area hospitals and churches either have their own bus, have volunteer
drivers or have a system worked out with existing local transit. Please
contact the facility for more information.

The following agencies are also transportation providers, although they may
not own a vehicle set aside for transportation. Scheduling needs with
existing transit, utilizing volunteers or using a personal vehicle are all
methods that can be used.

The Living At Home/Block Nurse Program (LAH/BNP) connects volunteers and
health professionals with elderly individuals over age 65. This partnership
provides needy individuals with an array of support services, health care and
information, enhances the quality of life and maintains independence for as
long as possible. Transportation is one of many support services performed.
Identified by multiple methods, individuals need to be the right age, live in
a LAH/BNP service area and have an assessment completed by the Program
Director or the Service Coordinator in order to qualify for services. The
following LAH/BNPs provide transportation services:
-Argyle’s H.O.P.E. Program - Services the former Argyle School District
  area.
-Middle River-Thief Lake LAH/BNP - Services Middle River, Thief Lake
  and Gatzke areas.
-Stephen LAH/BNP - Services the former Stephen School District #443
-Tri-Community LAH/BNP - Services School District #441
-Warren LAH/BNP - Services the Warren original School District #446

Social Services Agencies provide many services to low income people, which
can include transportation. An income falling within certain brackets is
necessary to qualify. Each of the seven counties in Northwest Minnesota has
a social service agency.
Schools

Although school districts have multiple busses, transit is not often a service that is provided to those not attending school in Northwest Minnesota. The following Minnesota Statue applies to public transportation. In all cases, situations would have to be approved or denied by the school district.

123B.88 Independent School Districts; Transportation

Subd. 10. Transportation of any person. Districts may use district owned or contractor operated school busses to provide transportation along regular school bus routes on a space available basis for any person. Such use of a bus must not interfere with the transportation of pupils to and from school or other authorized transportation of pupils. In all cases, the total additional cost of providing these services, as determined by sound accounting procedures, must be paid by charges made against those using these services or some third-party payor. In no case shall the additional cost of this transportation be
paid by the district.

Please note that student safety is a priority for schools in Northwest Minnesota. Because not everyone can be screened, some schools may not provide transportation outside of students to make sure a predator does not cause safety concerns.

Transit Fluxuation

It is important to remember that public transit in Northwest Minnesota has factors that cause fluxuation in usage patterns. Certain periods of time may require additional transit due to the factors listed below.

1. Gas/Insurance Prices. As gas and insurance costs increase, many individuals will be looking for ways to cut costs. For some people, owning or operating a car may prove to be cost deficient. Transit usage may increase, as riding a bus may be cheaper than driving.

2. Seasonal Weather. Winters in Northwest Minnesota often prove to be extremely hazardous. Blizzards, winter storms and ice storms cause road conditions to be dangerous to even the most extreme driver. Non-confident drivers may choose to utilize public transportation during storm-prone months, which can occur anytime from October until April.

3. School Sessions. Thief River Falls, Crookston, and East Grand Forks have higher education resulting in students that need rides throughout the community. The public transportation system should be looked at as a means to satisfy this need.
IV. Transit Needs Analysis

Information Retrieval

Information for this plan was collected through numerous phone/email conversations, a steering committee meeting, a workshop and two transportation questionnaires.

The survey attached to Appendix 1 was derived from one created by MnDOT. It was created especially for the transit providers and provides a forum to list transit deficits and concerns. A copy of this was sent to all major transit providers in Northwest Minnesota.

*TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY*

The following four statements were ranked by priority by transportation providers:

1 - Existing transportation services don’t go where services are located
2 - Existing transportation services don’t operate the same hours as when people need transportation
3 - No transportation services available
4 - Existing transportation providers are too costly.

What issues, if any, have you encountered in coordinating or attempting to coordinate transportation? (* indicates most frequent answers)

* Driver qualifications
  - High cost
* Insurance
  - Rural locations
  - Payment
* Scheduling
  - Turf issues
  - Willingness to “serve” more physically disabled

In your opinion, what do you see as the greatest obstacle(s) to transit and human service transportation coordination in your area are? (* indicates most frequent answers)

- Availability of qualified drivers
- Distance between providers
* Funding
- Geographic area
- Lack of agency collaboration
- Lack of coordination with businesses
- Limited in outlying commutes
- Miles between cities
- Policies
- Rural locations
* Scheduling
In your opinion, what enhancements are most needed to improve the coordination of transportation in your service area? (* indicates most frequent answers)

- Agency collaboration
- Business partnerships
- Funding
- Increasing fuel costs
- Inter-agency agreements
- Policies
- Scheduling/Availability

Thinking of the clients or individuals your agency/organization represents/provides transportation services to, what transportation needs are not being met adequately? (* indicates most frequent answers)

- Covering multiple counties adequately
- Increasing fuel costs/costs
- Limited evening/weekend transportation availability
- Service to larger cities for medical appointments
- Utilizing personal vehicles due to scheduling conflicts/unavailability

What are the barriers/obstacles to meeting those needs? Why are these transportation services not being met?

- Affordable transportation
- Employee work schedules
- Increasing costs
- Limited evening/weekend transportation availability

Do you have any other information to share?
- Need to collaborate similar services to save federal/state dollars.

The survey attached to Appendix 2 was created on the advice of the steering committee. It was decided that although useful, the stakeholder questionnaire was mainly effective for transit providers. Many questions were not applicable for transit users and the group felt that a special connection with this population needed to be made. The qualifications for this survey were as follows: one page, simple, easy to read, and no income questions. The survey results provided a unique look into public transit as experienced by the user. This survey was passed out in a group of ten to individual public transportation providers, county social services, living at home block nursing programs, senior/community centers, nursing homes, ODCs, DACs and mental health facilities. The facilities handed them out to transportation users and returned them in a postage-paid envelope. The results are as follows:

*TRANSPORTATION USER QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY*

What Do You Like Best
1. The provided service
   - On time/very helpful/reliable
   - Cost
   - Wheelchair accessibility
   - Easy to use
   - Goes anywhere
-Accommodating hospitality
- Drop offs by the door
- It is a help to others

2. Not driving/owning a car
- Don’t own a car
- Back-up plan if no ride is available
- Availability to those that do not drive
- Provides transportation when I need it
- Getting to destination safely
- I couldn’t drive
- Not having to worry about parking/city driving
- Provides rides for seniors

3. Convenience

4. Good way to get around
- See the landscape/enjoyment
- Independence/no need to bother relatives
- Nice way to get to work
- Visit family
- Get my business done

5. Bus Driver
- Helpful drivers carrying things on the bus
- Visiting with the drivers

6. Socializing/Conversations on the bus

What Do You Like Least
1. Availability
- No Service on weekends, holidays & evenings
- Need extended hours
- Not always available

2. The provided service
- Rough riding on the bus
- Cost
- Passengers and their habits
- Loud/Noise
- Limited time for trips/outings between scheduling other pickups
- Rude on the telephone
- Bad shock absorbers
- Coat got caught in the door

3. Waiting
- Long ride before my stop
- Long ride until my stop
- Long waits

4. Accessibility
- I would like to be picked up at the door
- I can’t get to the bus stop
- Trouble climbing steps
- Need more wheelchair accessibility
- Don’t use the chair lift for walkers

5. No public transportation service in Kittson County
Levels of Service

The following levels of service classifications apply only to public transit that has a non-fixed route. Levels of service are based on three factors.

The first factor is transit availability:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Per Day</th>
<th>6 to 7 Days</th>
<th>5 Days</th>
<th>3 to 4 Days</th>
<th>2 Days</th>
<th>1 Day</th>
<th>Half A Day</th>
<th>Under Half A Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 16</td>
<td>LOS 1</td>
<td>LOS 2</td>
<td>LOS 4</td>
<td>LOS 5</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 7</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 to 15.9</td>
<td>LOS 2</td>
<td>LOS 3</td>
<td>LOS 4</td>
<td>LOS 5</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 7</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 to 11.9</td>
<td>LOS 3</td>
<td>LOS 4</td>
<td>LOS 4</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 7</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 to 8.9</td>
<td>LOS 5</td>
<td>LOS 5</td>
<td>LOS 5</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 7</td>
<td>LOS 7</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 4</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 6</td>
<td>LOS 7</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
<td>LOS 8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Tri-Valley: LOS 4 (Monday–Friday, 10 hours)
- Far-North: LOS 4 (Monday–Friday, 10 hours)
- Fosston City Bus: LOS 3 (Monday–Friday, 10 hours, Sunday, 4 hours)

The second factor is response time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>Response Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Up to a half hour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Half hour to 2 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>More than 2 hours, same day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24 hours in advance, next day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>48 hours in advance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>More than 2 days, up to a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>More than 2 days, up to 2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>More than 2 weeks, or cannot accommodate trip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Tri-Valley: LOS 3 (24-hour notice is requested when possible)
- Far-North: LOS 3 (Advance notice is requested when available, LOC depends on daily schedule)
- Fosston City Bus: LOS 1 (Advance notice is appreciated, response depends on previously scheduled rides)

The third factor is assistance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Door Through Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Door To Door</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Curb To Curb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Transit Stop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Tri-Valley: LOS 3
- Far-North: LOS 3
- Fosston City Bus: LOS 3
Identified Needs

Transportation is a common need among the three population groups surveyed in this plan. Our culture is becoming more dependent upon personal transportation, and stress results when a person loses the ability to provide their own mode of motility. Although all groups are in need of more transportation, the issues vary between the three populations.

- Elderly individuals have high expectations of public transit due to the fact that they may have been previously accustomed to the perks associated with car ownership. The elderly have a need for door-to-door transit, and may require aid in accessing public transit.
- Individuals with a disability require transportation to fulfill their desire to be independent while at the same time accommodating specific disabilities. Transportation is important, as it provides a way for individuals to leave their home or be employed. Aid might be required, as accessing transportation can be difficult for individuals with a disability (dependent upon the disability).
- Low income individuals often work multiple jobs/hours and require extended transit service. Flexibility is key. Transportation to and from a job is a necessity, but the expenses of transportation ownership cannot be incurred and sometimes must be traded off for personal and family needs.

Comparisons of the two surveys and meetings/workshops were done, and the following problems have come up with enough frequency to be labeled as identified needs for public transportation. They are described in detail in the following paragraphs:

- Sporadic use / Scheduling (Main concern of providers)
- Funding - (Main concern of providers)
- Education - (Main concern of providers)
- Mobility - (Main concern of providers and riders)
- Evening/weekend usage (Main concern of providers and riders)
- Coordination / Collaboration (Main concern of providers)
- Rising costs - (Main concern of providers)
- Public transit (Main concern of riders and providers)

Sporadic use was labeled as a problem for transit providers. Transit needs are not absolute. A certain population may require transit for a finite period of time for appointments, etc... Transit providers have set up routes and services to address needs, and after a period of time, the route is not utilized due to the temporary need of the transit user. Rider responsibility needs to be promoted, because one or two dropped individuals matters if a route is running on the bare minimum amount of riders.

Funding is an issue that all transit providers face. Addressing all needs within a fixed budget can often be difficult. Some of the solutions raised in this plan will require additional funding sources in order for completion to occur. Providers want transit opportunities to exist for all of Northwest Minnesota, but funding places limits on what can be provided. Increased funding will be required if increased services are to be provided.

Education is imperative, as some residents may not be aware that transit services exist in their area. As transit funding is also an issue raised in this section, getting the maximum amount of transit users is important if a
provider wants to be successful. Some individuals may not either know the service exists or may think that certain conditions must occur (Ex. = I didn’t know that all ages could ride, I didn’t know that this was a public service). Often times, residents do not recognize the service unless they require it. A connection between transit users and providers needs to take place. How do you market to the individuals that are not using public transit?

Mobility challenges are especially frustrating for both transit providers and users. How can a transit provider stay on schedule and accommodate people who may not be able to make it to a bus stop? Coordination with individuals requiring home pick-ups currently occurs if possible, but is often dependent upon scheduling, location and budgets. Rural transit is a large issue, as many people in Northwest Minnesota do not live in an urban setting. Creativity will be needed in order to find a viable solution.

Evening and weekend usage was listed by both questionnaires as one of the major transit needs. Reasons given were varied in nature, but included social needs, isolation prevention, errands and shopping. Transit riders would like the opportunity to use public transportation outside of the “typical” working week and transit providers often listed evening and weekend transit as a need that is not being met adequately on the stakeholder questionnaire.

Coordination between transit providers will need to occur in order to address some of the solutions listed in this plan. Please note that this is not a large problem, as most transit providers thought that they were more cooperative than competitive. It was discussed at the steering committee meeting that the transit riders in the region will increase proportionally to the amount of cooperation. Additional coordination was suggested between service and transit providers, as both had unique collections of knowledge that would benefit the other.

Rising costs are a recurring concern for transit providers. Increasing fuel costs are listed as a problem because it currently costs more money than in previous years to run the same scheduled route. Gasoline and diesel fuel sales have been selling at record prices, impacting the routines of many individuals, businesses and agencies. Rising insurance costs are also listed as a problem. Because funding is limited or set, maintaining current services becomes increasingly difficult and too many rising expenses will lead to the cessation of routes and/or services.

Public transit is not available in all areas in Northwest Minnesota. Kittson County does not have public transportation. Private transportation often surfaces to fill a need, but these services are not available to the general public, and certain conditions must be met.

Employee Transit

Employees of large regional companies were targeted as a potential fourth population to utilize public transportation in Northwest Minnesota, due to the presence of several large manufacturing companies (listed previously). Regular employee transit would be a solution to problems listed above and several companies, such as Arctic Cat and Digi-Key in Thief River Falls, are
interested in exploring possibilities. Although technically not one of the three transit user populations (low income, elderly and disabled), additional planning needs to be done with these companies because of company, employee and transit provider interest.

Cooperation between transit providers and regional companies would be necessary, as there are noted hurdles to the process:

1. Varying shift starting/ending times would pose a problem. Although a significant population may drive from Warren to Thief River Falls to work, not all of them start at the same time. Scheduling is an important factor.

2. A certain amount of people would need to be interested in order to make transit a viable option. The process would need to be based on which surrounding cities have the most interested potential transit users.

3. Employees might lose interest in utilizing transit. Communication is important on a bus, as many people like talking to each other to pass the time. A group of people may decide to car pool, and the scheduled route may not become economically feasible due to passenger loss. Personal schedules and appointments will also cause rider fluctuation.

College Transit

The cities of Crookston and Thief River Falls may have some additional transit opportunities due to the presence of higher education facilities. The Northland Community and Technical College (Thief River Falls) and the University of Minnesota, Crookston both have students that might take advantage of transit opportunities. The East Grand Forks Technical College currently has a contract that provides transit service to its students.

Again, cooperation and coordination would need to occur due to some noted difficulties:

1. Varying classes and schedules from day to day as well as month-to-month. Rider stability would be a question. Scheduling would be important, but would depend on local college and university needs in order to figure out feasibility.

2. Students would need to use transit, or the whole operation would not be economically achievable. Interest levels would need to be investigated.
V. Implementation Strategies

The strategies are prioritized in order of the largest concern from the stakeholders questionnaire. The strategy prioritizations are intermittently interchangeable depending on political, social, and economic changes in society. Prior to implementation of any strategy a benefit-cost analysis should be done to make sure that the service provided is cost-efficient.

1. Regional Coordination: The current stakeholder group for this plan should be expanded and meet on a regular basis (quarterly?) in order to provide an increased sense of coordination between providers. Forum topics include gaps in service as well as noted deficiencies, scheduling and doubling up of services to a particular area. This group is also necessary due to the rural transit issue, as well as numerous requests to provide door-to-door service.

   - Affected Needs: Sporadic Use, Evening and Weekend Usage, Mobility, Coordination, Public Transit

Strategies:

   A. Transit Providers Group: Put together a group composed of private and public transit providers in Northwest Minnesota. Meet on a semi-annual basis in order to provide increased coordination and information on current transit issues, deficiencies and concerns, including those listed in this transportation plan. Meet in smaller, more local groups if necessary.

   B. Boundary Transit Coordination: Coordinate pick-up and drop off locations between service providers and/or county boundaries. Financial feasibility and scheduling for participating providers would need to be discussed. Specific attention should be paid to Roseau County, whose transit system is not currently able to extend beyond its defined borders to locations such as Thief River Falls, Crookston or East Grand Forks.

   C. Technology: Monitor the increasing technology for transit systems and implement in Northwest Minnesota when it becomes cost-efficient to do so. Upcoming technology could make it easier to coordinate between service providers as well as provide a multitude of other benefits.

2. Marketing: Existing transit services need to be marketed in order to provide education to residents. Certain stereotypes need to be dispelled (I need to be older or have a disability to use that service) and education needs to be provided for those that are unaware of current services.

   - Affected Needs: Sporadic Use, Funding, Education, Coordination, Rising Costs, Public Transit

Strategies:

   A. Service Inventory: Compile an inventory manual of all transit services available and pass out to transit providers. Gaps and doubled services can be avoided, and routes can be coordinated between different agencies, if necessary.
B. Education: Provide more education to residents in order to increase knowledge about public transit and dispel stereotypes. Create increased patronage of existing services. Methods mentioned include: utilizing local television channels, radio ads, flyer/handout in an electric bill or other widely-received mailing, newspaper ad and an addition in employee pay packets (for employee transit).

C. Connection: Create a connection with local service/transit providers in order to inform those who may not be reached with current methods. Coordination with other services may also save costs and provide greater assistance to a greater population of residents.

D. Baby Boomers: Find ways to educate the baby boomer population of Northwest Minnesota about public transit. This large group of people might be more apt to utilize public transportation if they are aware/comfortable before a certain age is reached. Although long-term, this strategy could lead to a large potential group of riders for area transportation providers.

3. Transportation Gaps: Certain regions in Northwest Minnesota lack the opportunity to utilize public transportation.

   - Affected Needs: Public Transit

Strategies:

A. Kittson County: Increasing investigation about public transit needs to be done in Kittson County. Inquiries with the County Board should be done to find out why transportation has been absent, and research needs to be completed to ascertain if there is a stable riding population. Promote and educate about private transportation opportunities if public transportation is not wanted. Only through cooperation and partnership will transit services be provided to Kittson County.

B. Small Cities/Unincorporated Cities: There have been individuals interested in transit for smaller/unincorporated cities such as Angus and Tabor. Although resident usage and cost-efficiency would play large parts in any transit route to these locations, resident interest should be studied to deduce whether a stable/needy riding population exists.

C. Airlines/Busses: Currently there is no service connecting Crookston, Thief River and the surrounding communities to Jefferson Lines and the Grand Forks Airport. The Grand Forks Airport is an important connection for the University of Minnesota at Crookston and the Northland Community College at Thief River Falls.

4. Increase Weekend/Evening Transit: The lack of evening and weekend transit service was a major deficiency pointed out by providers and riders alike in all seven counties. Although partially dependent on funding, regular operating transit hours need to be extended in order to provide this service. Further study on this would be needed in order to obtain specific local interest, usage and feasibility. Sporadic usage of this service would not be
cost-effective and lead to the removal of service. This option would cause a LOS increase if enacted.

-Affected Needs: Evening and Weekend Usage

Strategies:

A. Crookston Extended Service: Work with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council to provide weekend/evening transit service to Crookston, MN. The lack of a taxi service in the city affects the potential expansion of the economic base. Services need to be incorporated into multi-modal transportation services that cater to the visiting public.

-The DAC and some retirement homes do not have available transit on weekends or evenings. Two chemical dependency organizations also hold meetings in the evenings and have clientele that need the use of public transportation because of the lack of any other transportation mode.

-Several businesses and the proposed Super Wal-Mart are located on the fringe of city limits making themselves less accessible to the inner community and more difficult for the public transportation dependant individuals. Public transportation is required by this community to provide access to these facilities.

B. Thief River Falls Service: Work with Tri-Valley Opportunity Council to provide weekend/evening transit service to Thief River Falls, MN. The taxi service does not run on Sundays and is limited in the evenings, so people needing to travel to/from church services and the airport are left needing transit. Certain organizations that provide transit during the week, such as the DAC and some retirement homes do not run transit on the weekends.

C. Regional Extended Service: There is a regional need for extended transit hours for the weekends and evenings. Extended service solutions will vary based on the city and the transit provider. Problems and solutions must be examined according to cost, cost-benefit, existing services and need.

5. Rural Transit: Because Northwest Minnesota has a high number of residents living in a rural setting, a transit system for our area needs rural transportation to be a more prevalent factor than other, more urban regions. The transportation rider’s survey lists getting to the actual bus-stop to be a large concern, specifically among the elderly and portions of the disabled populations.

-Affected Needs: Mobility

Strategies:

A. Volunteer Agencies: Partner with available volunteers and local groups to see if there is an interest in help transportation-dependent citizens. Some churches have rides set up for those who need help coming to services.

6. Transit Funding: Additional funding is necessary in order to incorporate the proposed changes in this document. Every problem noted above from past
surveys and meetings hinges on the acquisition of additional funding. Price increases in maintenance and service combined with regional deficiencies such as rural transit and working hours extensions show the need for a funding increase for public transit in Northwest Minnesota.

-Affected Needs: Funding, Education, Mobility, Evening & Weekend Usage, Coordination, Rising Costs & Public Transit

Strategies:

A. MnDOT: Develop a plan with Mn/DOT planning to address deficiencies and concerns. Seek increased funding for local transit programs to incorporate the plans into effective use for the public.

B. Advertising: Look into advertising on the side of working buses as a way to help defray costs and provide extra funding. This has been implemented by other transportation agencies, however the final decision is up to individual transportation providers.

C. Additional Funding: Search and apply for any additional funding opportunities that can directly apply to local transportation. Federal and state grant dollars can be utilized as match with planning money or grants from the Northwest Foundation.

D. Mobility Manager: Look into available state/federal dollars for the creation of a mobility manager position for Northwest Minnesota.

7. Employee Transit: There is interest by some larger manufacturing companies in Northwest Minnesota to explore the possibility of providing transit opportunities to employees. Not only would this be an additional funding source, it creates a whole new population of eligible bus riders and would aid the sporadic usage patterns currently seen in some areas.

-Affected Needs: Sporadic Use, Funding, Education, Rising Costs

Strategies:

A. Company Employees: Connect interested companies with available transit providers to see if a viable transportation schedule can be created. Employee interest would have to be gauged, and a schedule would need to be created around employee shift changes. The service could cater to groups of workers coming from the same community.

B. Grand Forks Shuttles: Provide more regular shuttles from Crookston and surrounding communities to Grand Forks. More opportunities exist for the low-income and disabled to find jobs, and the route would also help the transit-dependent to find employment. In addition, Crookston is the county seat, and a route would help some transit-dependent citizens in East Grand Forks travel to Crookston.

Implementation of the above strategies relies upon coordination, interest, funding and cost-efficiency. Transit provider meetings (annually or bi-annually) are a vehicle in which to enact the proposed solutions. Future revisions of performance measures manuals for individual service providers will encompass the above strategies, as well as identify potential upcoming concerns. The timeline for completion is extended, as some solutions require multi-agency support and organization on a large scale.
Appendix 1
TRANSPORTATION STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE

The first page of the questionnaire asks general information regarding your agency/organization. The last two pages are specific to transportation and access to services. If additional space is needed, please use additional pages.

**Agency/Organization/Business Information**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Agency/Organization/Business Name:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Street Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Mailing Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>City, State, Zip Code:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Contact Person (Name &amp; Title):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Contact Telephone #:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>FAX Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>E-Mail Address:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Is your agency:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Public  ☐ Private non-profit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ Private for-profit  ☐ Other:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>List each county your agency serves:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>If agency operates multiple sites, please give locations:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>What types of services does your agency/org/bus provide?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Is it possible people cannot access your services due to lack of available transportation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ YES  ☐ NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Does your agency serve people who are transportation disadvantaged? (Persons classified as “transportation disadvantaged” have personal limitations that may limit one’s ability or cause difficulty in getting to places they need or want to go.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>☐ YES  ☐ NO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If yes, please estimate number of people per year

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Please check all that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Limitations</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Person who has a cognitive impairment including, for example, Alzheimer’s, developmental disabilities, or other cognitive impairments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dexterity</td>
<td>Person who has limited use of the hands, making it difficult to handle fares or operate switches, knobs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
<td>Person who is frail or requires personal assistance including persons with weather sensitivities (heat or cold); may not be able to wait for long periods or travel long distances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Person who is not familiar with public transportation and/or the system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>Person who is hearing impaired including deaf and hard of hearing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low income</td>
<td>Person who is low income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>Limited or no English proficiency; may include inability to read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>Person who has physical disabilities especially related to ambulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>Person who is vision impaired including blind and low vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vehicles

16

Does your agency/org/business staff use their own vehicles to transport people? □ NO □ YES

17

Does your agency operate its own or leased vehicles to transport passengers? □ YES □ NO
Please describe the vehicles used to provide transportation. Example 4 vans, three are 4/1 (4 passengers/1 wheelchair) and one is 6/0. See example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vehicle Type</th>
<th>Total Number of Vehicles</th>
<th>Total Ambulatory Capacity</th>
<th>Total Wheelchair/Scooter Capacity</th>
<th>Number of Vehicles Lift/Ramp Equipped</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example (Vans)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedans/Station Wagons</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vans/Minivans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Bus &lt; 10 pass.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Bus 11-20 pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Bus &gt; 20 pass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Coordination.** (A process through which representatives of different agencies and client groups work together to achieve any one or all of the following goals: more cost-effective service delivery; increased capacity to serve unmet needs; improved quality of service; and, services which are more easily understood and accessed by riders.) Coordination can occur on many levels, examples include: informal information sharing; formal (written) coordination arrangements; the management of transportation services by one agency; or the consolidation of transportation services under one provider agency.

19. What issues, if any, have you encountered in coordinating or attempting to coordinate transportation (e.g., billing and payment, insurance, driver qualifications, etc.)?

20. In your opinion, what do you see as the greatest obstacle(s) to transit and human service transportation coordination in your service area?

21. In your opinion, what enhancements are most needed to improve the coordination of transportation in your service area? (e.g. agency collaboration, agency policies, funding, inter-agency agreements)

22. Is transportation a barrier or obstacle in accessing services for your clients/consumers?
   
   *Please check all that apply and rank in priority, with 1 being highest priority.*

   - No transportation services available
   - Existing transportation providers are too costly

   **Priority**
Existing transportation services don’t operate the same hours as when people need transportation.

Existing transportation services don’t go to locations where needed services are located.

Please identify locations: ______________________________________________________

Other: ____________________________________________________________

Describe other: ________________________________________________________

Transportation Services

23 What type(s) of transportation services does your agency offer or purchase? (List)

Provide or Purchase
Transportation Services

Specify Hours

Need Transportation Services?

Monday 

Tuesday 

Wednesday 

Thursday 

Friday 

Saturday 

24 What hours and days of the week does your agency:

25 What are the special needs of your passengers? Check all that apply:

Infants (car seat) 

Physical Disability 

Mental Impairments 

Interpreters 

Escorts/Personal Care Attendants 

Other (please identify)
26. Does your agency have paid or volunteer drivers?
   Paid Drivers ☐ Number of paid drivers ________
   Volunteer Drivers (mileage reimbursement)* ☐ Number of volunteer drivers ________
   Where do you get your Volunteer Drivers? _______________________________________

27. Approximately how many hours per month do your employees spend arranging rides for your clients / consumers / passengers?
   _______________________________________

   If you answered “NO” to question 16 under “Vehicles”, skip to question 36 now.

28. Do you assist passengers to and from your vehicle(s)?
   ☐ YES ☐ NO
   ☐ Sometimes (please specify)
   _______________________________________

29. How far in advance must a passenger schedule their trip?
   _______________________________________

30. What are the eligibility requirements for using your agency’s transportation services and what is the process to be “qualified”?
   _______________________________________

31. How many passenger trips do you provide per month?
   _______________________________________
   **Passenger Trip** – One person making a one-way trip from origin to destination. One round trip equals two passenger trips.

32. How many individual clients do you transport per month?
   _______________________________________

33. Approximately how many hours per month do your employees spend transporting passengers?
   _______________________________________

34. About how many vehicle miles per month do you operate transporting passengers?
   _______________________________________

35. What is your agency’s transportation service strength?
   _______________________________________

**Unmet Needs**
36 Thinking of the clients or individuals your agency/organization represents, what transportation needs are not being met adequately? (Please be specific and include any special needs, requirements, destinations or social activities.)

37 Thinking of the clients or individuals your agency/organization provides transportation services to, what transportation needs are you aware that are not met adequately? Please be specific and include any special needs, requirements, destinations or social activities.

38 What are the barriers / obstacles to meeting those needs? Why are these transportation services not being met?

39 Do you have any other information to share?
Appendix 2
Northwestern Minnesota Public Transportation User Survey

Please fill out this survey to provide needed information on local transportation services.

1. Do you use public transportation? Yes 9 No 9
   If no would you be interested in learning more about public transportation Yes 9 No 9

2. Frequency of use: Daily 9 Weekly 9 Monthly 9 Occasionally 9
   Never Ridden 9

3. Length of trip: 1-3 hours 9 3-6 hours 9 6 or more hours 9

4. Destination: Hospital 9 Store 9 Work 9 Other 9
   Where if other: __________________________________________

5. Would you prefer extending the hours/days of public transit services?
   Yes 9 No 9

6. Do you need a ride to work? Yes 9 No 9

7. What do you like best about public transportation?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

8. What do you like least about public transportation?
   ______________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________

   Red Lake 9 Norman 9 Polk 9

Thank you for completing this survey