Regional Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Coordination Plan

Incorporating SAFETEA-LU requirements for:

- Job Access Reverse Commute (5316)
- New Freedom Initiative (5317)
- Elderly Persons and Persons with Disability (5310)
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I. Executive Summary

The planning process was led by a Area Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) comprised of leadership from services for individuals with disabilities, older adults, and persons with limited incomes in the area. Public input was solicited from a questionnaire, TAC meetings, a workshop, and public meeting. Region 7W and St. Cloud Area Planning Organization staff provided technical assistance and developed the draft sections, with input from the TAC and information gathered from questionnaires and at the public workshop, to compile the plan. The Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Office of Transit provided technical assistance, project oversight and funding.

Region 7W is located northwest of the Twin Cities in Central Minnesota. The Region is comprised of the counties of: Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright. The St. Cloud APO is a local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the St. Cloud metropolitan area, which is entirely within Region 7W. The APO is located within the counties of Benton, Sherburne and Stearns and serves twelve jurisdictions, consisting of more than 104,000 residents of the combined area total population of 321,795. Both planning areas are shown on the next page.

Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO joined forces to conduct the facilitation of the public involvement process and to construct a Public Transportation – Human Services Coordination Plan.

A wide variety of transportation options are available to persons in Region 7W and the St. Cloud metropolitan area. They include agency, for-hire transportation providers, specialized transportation services, taxi service, public transit, para-transit services and volunteer based services. Despite these options, there are still considerable unmet needs, with a willingness of these agencies to achieve better coordination to improve or increase transportation services.

The Region 7W and St. Cloud APO coordinated plan is built upon integrated coordination between rural and urban public transit and human service stakeholders and their priorities. The Public Transit - Human Service Coordinated Transportation Plan will be used as the framework for selecting projects and encouraging coordinated planning. The Public Transit – Human Service Coordinated Transportation Plan will be incorporated into the update of both the Region 7W Long Range Plan and St. Cloud APO 2030 Transportation Plan.

In summer of 2006, Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO began a coordinated process to develop a human service and public transit coordinated transportation plan. The plan builds and expands upon both the regional and APO planning process. It incorporates a discussion of existing public transportation and human services, depicts demographic profiles and shows where and how service gaps will be addressed. An extensive public participation process was undertaken to ensure equitable input by all.

In June 2006, eighteen human service providers and transit operators were solicited to participate with Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO to develop this plan. Of the eighteen organizations initially solicited, eleven expressed interest in the process. Organizations that were solicited either provided transportation services or represented the target groups of people with disabilities, seniors or low income. Once the initial solicitation was completed, those who responded were invited to participate on an Area Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) with Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO to complete the Public Transit-Human Services Coordination Plan.
The focus area of this plan is Region 7W and the St. Cloud Metropolitan area but is meant to be consistent with the other regional plans for the Public Transportation-Human Services Coordination Plan. The goal of this plan is to encourage public participation, inventory the current transportation resources, assess current transportation conditions along with needs, and to help minimize the gaps and duplication of services, that will lead to improved and expanded service.

Region 7W Map

![Region 7W Map](image)
II. Introduction

A. Plan Background
In August of 2005, Congress passed SAFETEA-LU: Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, igniting states and agencies responsible for the delivery of transit services to look at their transit needs and current services. SAFETEA-LU provides funding for many aspects of government, one of which is transportation. Specific programs affected include: Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, Job Access Reverse Commute and the New Freedom Initiative.

The SAFETEA-LU legislation mandates a “locally developed” coordinated transportation plans in order to receive additional Federal Transit Administration grants beginning Federal Fiscal Year 2007. The Regional Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan is the framework for prioritizing projects to receive funding through the 5310 (Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities); 5316 (Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), and 5317 (New Freedom Initiative) funding programs.

Additionally, with SAFETEA-LU the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides $286.4 billion in funding for federal surface transportation programs over six years through FY 2009. This includes over $52.6 billion for federal transit programs which is subject to an annual appropriation by Congress. Several new programs have been created to facilitate enhanced coordination in Minnesota and one existing discretionary program has been restructured as a formula program.

This “Public Transit-Human Services Coordinated Plan” is being completed to fulfill a SAFETEA-LU requirement and be eligible for funding in 2007. It will address transportation concerns within the region, identify service gaps throughout the four county and metropolitan areas, give recommendations for actions to benefit human services and public transportation, and encourage public involvement on transit issues.

B. FTA Funding Programs
Section 5310 Demonstration Program
This limited demonstration program has been authorized for seven states, including Minnesota, that will permit Section 5310 funds to be used for operating costs for public transportation projects. These projects will be planned, designed, and carried out to meet the special needs of elderly individuals and individuals with disabilities. This is unique to Minnesota because in previous years these funds have typically been limited to capital rolling stock.

Under the provisions, Minnesota will be able to use up to 33 percent of the state’s Section 5310 financial assistance for operating costs. Since no additional funding is expected, the cost of the demonstration will be at the expense of funds used for capital replacement.

Section 5310: Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities
This program provides annual funding to states for the purchase of vehicles and equipment to be used by nonprofit organizations or government agencies. The newly purchased vehicles and equipment provide transportation enhancements for elderly and disabled persons. The funds can be used for such items as; buses, radios and communication equipment, vehicle shelters, wheelchair lifts and restraints, and extended warranties. Mn/DOT has opted to use the funds primarily for the purchase of lift-equipped buses. Previously, recipients received up to 80
percent federal funding, which was contingent on a 20 percent local match. Technical assistance is provided by Mn/DOT for vehicle procurement along with an approved list of vendors from which to select.

Section 5316: Job Access and Reverse Commute Formula Program (JARC)
The JARC program provides funding for local programs that offer job access and reverse commute transportation services for low income individuals that may live in the city core and work in suburban locations.

This program has been converted from a discretionary, competitive program to a formula program. Having been in existence for many years, this program has been instrumental in developing transit services to support the welfare-to-work initiatives. The main focus is to allow for new or innovative services that provide work employment matching the locations of low-income workers with location of new job creation.

Formula allocations are based on the number of low-income persons and are distributed to areas in the following manner:

- 60 percent of funds go to designated recipients in areas with populations over 200,000
- 20 percent of funds go to states for areas with populations under 200,000
- 20 percent of funds go to states for non-urbanized areas

Funds may be used for capital expenses with Federal funds providing up to 80 percent of the project cost. For operating expenses, Federal funds are provided for up to 50 percent of the net operating cost of the project. Appropriations for 2006 and 2007 will be combined and granted during the CY2007 application process. The 2007 JARC appropriations for Minnesota total $1.3 million, of which $425,000 will be allocated for urban grants and $863,000 for rural grants.

Section 5317: New Freedom Program
The New Freedom Program encourages service and facility improvements that address transportation needs of persons with disabilities beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). The program will provide additional tools that will allow individuals with disabilities to overcome barriers and be able to fully participate in society. It provides a new formula grant program for associated capital and operating costs.

Formula allocations are based on the number of persons with disabilities to the total population and are distributed to areas in the following manner:

- 60 percent of funds go to designated recipients in areas with populations over 200,000
- 20 percent of funds go to States for areas with population under 200,000
- 20 percent of funds go to States for non-urbanized areas

While designed to be awarded to existing public transit agencies, the administrative requirements of Section 5310 apply to this program. Funds may be used for capital expenses with Federal funds providing up to 80 percent of the project cost. For operating expenses Federal funds are provided for up to 50 percent of the net operating cost of the project. Appropriations for 2006 and 2007 will be combined and granted during the CY2007 application process. The 2007 New Freedom appropriations for Minnesota total $820,000, of which $245,000 will be directed to urban grants and $576,000 for rural grants.
C. Purpose and Role of Coordinated Plan

The Public Transit-Human Service Coordination Plan is to create a comprehensive plan to help state and local community leaders, organization and agencies involved in human service transportation and public transit service to cooperate and coordinate programs and action plans in the delivery of services. In communities that have practiced coordination and cooperation, results will be improved access and service and lower costs that benefit the customer.

The plan must be developed by an independent and objective entity through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers as well as the general public.

The key elements of the plan include:
• An assessment of transportation needs for individuals with disabilities, older adults and persons with limited income;
• An inventory of available services that identifies areas of redundant service and gaps in service;
• Strategies to address the identified gaps in service;
• Identification of coordination actions to eliminate or reduce duplication in services and strategies for more efficient utilization of resources; and
• Prioritization of implementation of strategies

SAFETEA-LU requires formula programs for the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC), and New Freedom, be derived from a coordinated plan. FTA suggests the coordinated plan should maximize the programs’ collective coverage by minimizing duplication of services. Furthermore, the plan should be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private and nonprofit transportation and human services providers, and participation by the public. In addition, FTA proposes the coordinated plan incorporate activities offered under other Federal, State, and locally sponsored programs to greatly strengthen its impact.

FTA suggests States and communities utilize the “United We Ride Framework for Action” when developing a coordinated plan. FTA proposes that choosing a lead agency is a local decision.

Stakeholders that have a local human services transportation coordination planning process already in place were asked by FTA to review and submit comments on the proposed guidance. FTA recognizes the importance of local flexibility in developing plans for human service transportation and strongly supports current planning processes in human service transportation conducted with stakeholders and partners. Additionally, FTA proposes that communities modify their plans or processes as necessary to meet all new Federal requirements. The new requirements encourage communities to consider inclusion of new partners, new outreach strategies, and new activities related to the targeted programs and populations.

This Plan will assist all stakeholders involved in human service transportation and public transit services in facilitating better cooperation and coordination of programs and creating action plans for putting coordinated services in place.

D. Planning Process

Minnesota’s Department of Transportation (MnDOT), Office of Transit teamed up with the Department of Human Services (DHS), Aging Division to set the guidelines and oversee the development of the local plans. Since 2000 transportation plans in Minnesota have been
performance based on productivity and cost effectiveness and have included transit operation planning. Customer expectations have not been part of the equation.

As stated in the guidelines set forth, Regional Development Commissions (RDCs) and Metropolitan Area Planning Organizations (MPOs) were to facilitate and conduct the planning process as independent agencies. Staff should be viewed as an independent and objective entity with no vested interest. The local comprehensive transportation plans prepared by RDCs/MPOs are required to address and incorporate a discussion on transit relating to this planning process.

The Area Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC) included public involvement throughout the process and followed the study timeline reference in Table 1. to accomplish its goals.

### Table 1. Region 7W and St. Cloud Human Services – Public Transit Coordination Study Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Public Involvement</td>
<td>1. Appoint Area Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)</td>
<td>June, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. ATAC Meetings (4)</td>
<td>July 27, 2006</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Planning Workshop</td>
<td>September 13, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Public Meeting</td>
<td>October 19 &amp; 26, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>December, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Inventory Current Transportation Resources</td>
<td>1. Stakeholder listing</td>
<td>July, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Transportation Stakeholder Questionnaire</td>
<td>August, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Compile Questionnaire Results</td>
<td>September, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Framework For Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System</td>
<td>October, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Strategies and Actions</td>
<td>1. Identify and rank preferred alternatives to address the unmet needs.</td>
<td>August - October, 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Identify solutions to meet the unmet needs or reduction in duplication of services.</td>
<td>August - October, 2006</td>
</tr>
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### III. Demographics

**Region 7W**

Approximately 322,000 people live in the four Counties comprising Region 7W area (Benton, Sherburne, Stearns and Wright) of which 42 percent or 133,000 people live in Stearns County.
as shown in Table 4. Roughly 160,000 people – 50 percent of the population has a higher need for transportation services because they are potentially unable to drive due to a disability, their age or income status.

According to the U.S. Census, Benton County has a higher percentage of their population with potential special transportation needs than the other three counties. In Benton County, 52.1 percent of the population has a higher need for transportation services. Stearns, Sherburne and Wright Counties were close behind with 51.2, 46 and 48.8 percent of their population having a higher need for transportation. Benton County has the highest percentage of their population with disabilities (15.7 percent) as compared to Wright (13.8 percent), Stearns (13.6 percent) and Sherburne (13.4 percent). Benton and Stearns have the highest percentage of population 65 and up (seniors) at both 11 percent, compared with Wright (8.8 percent) and Sherburne (7.1 percent).

Table 2. People Typically with Higher Transportation Needs
(U.S. Census; American FactFinder, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population by Special Need Category</th>
<th>Benton</th>
<th>Sherburne</th>
<th>Stearns</th>
<th>Wright</th>
<th>4 County Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (5-17 years)</td>
<td>6,787</td>
<td>14,504</td>
<td>25,758</td>
<td>20,520</td>
<td>67,569</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seniors (65+)</td>
<td>3,765</td>
<td>4,584</td>
<td>14,661</td>
<td>7,915</td>
<td>30,925</td>
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<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
<td>4,894</td>
<td>7,756</td>
<td>16,740</td>
<td>11,276</td>
<td>40,666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families below Poverty</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>1,396</td>
<td>868</td>
<td>3,029</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals below Poverty</td>
<td>2,397</td>
<td>2,776</td>
<td>11,037</td>
<td>4,211</td>
<td>20,421</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>34,226</td>
<td>64,417</td>
<td>133,166</td>
<td>89,986</td>
<td>321,795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage of Total Population</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (5-17 years)</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (65+)</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families below Poverty</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals below Poverty</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Older Adults: About 31,000 older adults, age 65 or over live in the four county Region. This sector of the population is growing faster than any other. In 2000, the 65+ age group made up 9.6 percent of the Region’s population.

Children: About 68,000 children between the ages of 5 and 17 live in the four county Region. In 2000, ages 5-17 made up 21 percent of the Region’s population.

People with Disabilities: About 41,000 people with disabilities live in the four county Region. In 2000, people with disabilities made up 12.6 percent of the Region’s population.

Low Income Individuals: About 20,000 low income individuals live in the four county Region. In 2000, the low income group made up 6.3 percent of the Region’s population.

**St. Cloud APO**

Approximately 86,000 people live in the four City, St. Cloud APO area of Sartell, Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud and Waite Park of which 96 percent or 59,000 people live in the City of St. Cloud as shown in table 5. Roughly 43,000 people – 50 percent of the population – has a higher need
for transportation services because they are potentially unable to drive due to a disability, the age or income status.

According to the U.S. Census, the City of Waite Park has a higher percentage of their population with potential special transportation needs than the other three cities. In Waite Park 53.9 percent of the population has a higher need for transportation services. Sauk Rapids, St. Cloud and Sartell were close behind with 50.8, 40.3 and 44 percent of their population having a higher need for transportation. The City of Waite Park has the highest percentage of their population with disabilities (17.1 percent) as compared to Sauk Rapids (15.7), St. Cloud (13.8 percent) and Sartell (10.5 percent). Waite Park has the highest percentage of population of 65 and up (seniors) with 13.1 percent, compared with Sauk Rapids (11.2 percent), St. Cloud (10.3 percent) and Sartell (8.7 percent).

Table 3. People Typically with Higher Transportation Needs
(U.S. Census; American FactFinder, 2000)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population by Special Need Category</th>
<th>Sartell</th>
<th>Sauk Rapids</th>
<th>St. Cloud</th>
<th>Waite Park</th>
<th>4 City Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Youth (5-17 years)</td>
<td>2,153</td>
<td>2101</td>
<td>9013</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>14,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (65+)</td>
<td>834</td>
<td>1140</td>
<td>6064</td>
<td>858</td>
<td>8,896</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>1452</td>
<td>7471</td>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>10,853</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families below Poverty</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>613</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals below Poverty</td>
<td>368</td>
<td>490</td>
<td>7171</td>
<td>794</td>
<td>8,823</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Population</td>
<td>9,641</td>
<td>10,213</td>
<td>59,107</td>
<td>6,568</td>
<td>85,529</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of Total Population

| Youth (5-17 years)                  | 22.3%   | 20.6%       | 15.2%     | 12.8%      | 17.7%       |
| Seniors (65+)                       | 8.7%    | 11.2%       | 10.3%     | 13.1%      | 10.8%       |
| People with Disabilities            | 105%    | 15.7%       | 13.8%     | 17.1%      | 14.3%       |
| Families below Poverty              | 3.0%    | 2.8%        | 5.0%      | 7.9%       | 4.7%        |
| Individuals below Poverty           | 4.0%    | 4.9%        | 13.1%     | 12.1%      | 8.5%        |

The need for coordinated human service and public transportation is difficult to quantify. However, based on the information provided by the United States Census Bureau, about 50 percent of the population in Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO area has a need for transportation – 160,000 in Region 7W and 43,000 people in the St. Cloud APO area. By estimating that only 25 percent of the population’s transportation needs are being met, means that there are still almost 120,000 individuals in Region 7W and 30,000 in the St. Cloud APO area that are not having their transportation needs met. They are not able to make it to the grocery store, medical appointments, after-school activities, social activities or other events that affect the quality of life.

IV. Public Involvement

Public involvement included three areas of concentration, area technical advisory committee (ATAC), a planning workshop, and a public meeting.

A. Area Technical Advisory Committee
An area technical advisory committee (ATAC) was established during the onset of the planning efforts to initiate the public involvement process and provide direction and resources for the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commissioner</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>E-mail Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dick Mattson</td>
<td>Wright County</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Dick.mattson@co.wright.mn.us">Dick.mattson@co.wright.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy Christenson</td>
<td>Independence Center</td>
<td><a href="mailto:atci@cloudnet.com">atci@cloudnet.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod Pederson</td>
<td>Functional Industries</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rpederson@functionalindustries.com">rpederson@functionalindustries.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Simmons</td>
<td>Options, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peggy Sammons</td>
<td>Stearns County Human Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Peggy.sammons@co.stearns.mn.us">Peggy.sammons@co.stearns.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Mayo</td>
<td>Sherburne County Human Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Julie.mayo@co.sherburne.mn.us">Julie.mayo@co.sherburne.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marian Elkerton</td>
<td>Wright County Human Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Marion.elkerton@co.wright.mn.us">Marion.elkerton@co.wright.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathy DeMars</td>
<td>Wright County Human Services</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Kathy.demars@co.wright.mn.us">Kathy.demars@co.wright.mn.us</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Elfstrand</td>
<td>Tri-CAP Transit Connections</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Linda.elfstrand.tricap@cloudnet.com">Linda.elfstrand.tricap@cloudnet.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Chad Gessell</td>
<td>RiverRider</td>
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<tr>
<td>David Tripp</td>
<td>St. Cloud Metro Bus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Terry Markfort</td>
<td>St. Cloud Metro Bus</td>
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<td>St. Cloud Metro Bus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dean Loidolt</td>
<td>Central Minnesota Council on Aging</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dean@cmcoa.org">dean@cmcoa.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kirby Becker</td>
<td>St. Cloud APO</td>
<td><a href="mailto:becker@stcloudapo.org">becker@stcloudapo.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Siemers</td>
<td>Mn/DOT-St. Cloud</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Susan.siemers@dot.state.mn.us">Susan.siemers@dot.state.mn.us</a></td>
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### Table 4. Region 7W and St. Cloud APO Area Technical Advisory Committee (ATAC)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATAC Meetings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The ATAC met on four occasions at the St. Cloud Mn/DOT Conference Center to discuss issues relating to the Public Transit-Human Services Coordination plan objectives and goals.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| Table 5. Area Technical Advisory Committee Meeting Dates |
|--------|----------------|
| ATAC 1st Meeting | July 27, 2006 |
| Task | Review Project Timeline; |
| ATAC 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting | September 13, 2006 | • Educate ATAC about project, goals, barriers and expected outcome of plan  
• Establish Stakeholder List  
• Reviewed Stakeholder questionnaire  
• Brainstormed who else should be involved and how to solicit involvement;  
• Planned Public Workshop |
| ATAC 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting | October 19, 2006 | • Review information gathered from public workshop  
• Develop strategies and actions for Region 7W and St. Cloud APO |
| ATAC 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting | October 26, 2006 | • Finalize strategies and actions for Region 7W and St. Cloud APO |

**C. Transportation Stakeholder Questionnaire**

Prior to the second meeting a public transit-human service stakeholder questionnaire was sent to all 773 identified public, private for-profit and private non-profit human service providers and transit operators. Stakeholders were given a month to respond and return the questionnaire. The return rate was 14%.

The questionnaire was designed to collect data on current services, physical inventory of transportation systems, coordination currently being practiced and any unmet needs or gaps of services. Data collected from questions on the physical inventory of transportation systems included the type of services available, level of service, service span, response time, service area coverage and areas of gaps or unmet needs. The questionnaire findings were used for discussion at the second ATAC meeting to familiarize the committee with current transit services offered. A summary of the questionnaire results are included in the Appendix.

**D. Planning Workshop**

A public Planning Workshop was held at the MnDOT Conference Center in St. Cloud on September
Public notice of the workshop was published in the St. Cloud Times newspaper, on the St. Cloud APO website and on the local public cable television channel. Second notices were also mailed out to stakeholders that received questionnaires. The purpose of the half-day planning workshop was to discuss ways local transit and human service organizations could coordinate better to meet the needs of their clients.

The workshop was attended by approximately 35 individuals and had an excellent cross section of attendees. Participants included representatives of the private and public transportation systems, county human service agencies, health care facilities, disabled organizations, funding agencies and consumers.

The workshop attendees completed the Framework for Action (FFA): Building the Fully Coordinated Transportation System -- A Self-Assessment Tool for Communities exercise. The FFA exercise identified the strengths and weaknesses in the current local transportation network through a four step planning and action process. The steps, in sequence, included Process Planning, Assessing, Prioritizing, and Action Planning.
Attendees were divided into small groups to discuss the issues (problems or gaps) of coordination. Each group had a series of prepared questions from the FFA to lead the discussion. The groups were instructed to put their thoughts and energies into the development of strategies.

The strategies were listed on flipcharts to share with the entire group for input and inclusion of overlooked ideas or strategies. Each attendee was given five (5) dot-stickers and asked to prioritize what they thought were the top five priorities for their respective planning area (Region 7W & APO). Table 6 on the next page identifies the top five priorities from the workshop.

Following the “Dot” exercise, workshop attendees got back together into their original five small groups. Each group was randomly given one of the priorities listed in Table 6 and asked to put together a list of action strategies that might help with the implementation of that particular priority.
Table 6. Region 7W and St. Cloud APO Top 5 Priorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Top Five Priorities</th>
<th>Action Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Better Agency Coordination &amp; Communication, Especially with Funding (17)</td>
<td>*Identify providers within network counties; *Changing rules &amp; barriers regarding age, funding source, insurance restrictions &amp; liability; *Income eligibility; *Reach out to under served individuals; *Create a Central Area Coordinator to where funded transportation equipment is shared between agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Reimbursement &amp; Need for More Drivers (9)</td>
<td>*Need regional and local standards for programs, possibly statewide; *Recognition given to volunteer drivers that adds value; *Recruitment of volunteers and changing the RSVP method rather than word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private/Public Partnerships (9)</td>
<td>*Identify stakeholders and bring together to educate (need all stakeholders at the table); *Continue to solicit information from all stakeholders throughout process; *Faith based association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobility Management (9)</td>
<td>*Politician buy-in; *Create a centralized tri-county or bi-county call center; *Continue to strengthen state government mandate to work together; *Create something reputable (i.e. 211 or senior linkage – do not reinvent the wheel if certain things are working); *Service throughout the state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance (6)</td>
<td>*Plug into state negotiated pool; *Look into other state examples of insurance coordination; *Discover exact barriers and work on addressing individual barriers one at a time; *Broker or multiple agents to discuss idea(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E. Public Meeting

A public meeting was held on December 18, 2006 at the Mn/DOT Conference Center in St. Cloud. The public meeting was held to provide the public an opportunity to review the final draft of the Public Transit – Human Services Coordination Plan. Public notice of the meeting was put in the local newspapers to encourage public attendance and participation. The public meeting forum was conducted so that the public was provided the opportunity to review the Plan document, ask questions of the ATAC, and provide comments on the Plan.

A transportation questionnaire survey was also available, which allowed attendees to give additional comments.

As indicated in Table 7. Public Meeting Comments, additional comments were provided during the public meeting by attendees. The comment response period was held open until January 19, 2007.
Table 7. Public Meeting Comments

- Good job pulling area information together;
- Missing agency information on WACOSA – they may not have returned questionnaire or participated in process but should be included in overall inventory directory and contacted directly to invite to the table;
- Northstar Commuter Rail not mentioned – should have reference in plan;
- The public meeting was good! Hope for more interest from groups in the future;
- Northstar rail should be included in plan discussions – may need to have Northstar involved;
- Bikes not mentioned – bikes are an alternative mode of transportation and many use bikes in the St. Cloud area – somehow should be incorporated into plan;
- S. Industrial Park area needs bus service – keep hearing no funding to provide service;
- Greyhound to Minneapolis service no longer exists – Executive Express is not handicapped accessible;
- Public needs to be aware at least 4 weeks in advance when meetings are scheduled;
- Users are not listened to – need to have a consumer committee – or consumer representation on current transportation committees – customers should be first.

V. INVENTORY

A. Public Transit Providers

Providers offer transit services ranging from fixed route, route deviation, subscription services and curb-to-curb dial a ride. Table 8 Performance Guideline Categories shows the seven service categories offered in Minnesota. Rural areas in Minnesota have been classified into three different system types: those operating in a non-urban area, those operating within a county and those operating within multi-counties.

Table 8. Performance Guideline Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Application</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA Demand Response</td>
<td>Urban Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>Urban Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Demand Response</td>
<td>Non-Urban Community, Countywide and Multi-County Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Route Deviation</td>
<td>Non-Urban Community, Countywide and Multi-County Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Urban Demand Response</td>
<td>Small Urban and Small Urban within County and Multi-County Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Urban Route Deviation</td>
<td>Small Urban and Small Urban within County and Multi-County Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transit Volunteer</td>
<td>Non-Urban Community, Countywide and Multi-County Systems</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Productivity is measured in terms of how many passengers a transit system carries for each unit of service. The most common measure is passengers per hour. A productivity guideline has been set for each service type based on the number of passengers per hour as outlined in Table 8.1 Passenger Productivity Guideline.

Table 8.1 Passenger Productivity Guideline
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Passengers/Hour</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADA Demand Response</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed Route</td>
<td>15 to 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Demand Response</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Route Deviation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Urban Demand Response</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Urban Route Deviation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Transit Volunteer</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Public transportation programs in Minnesota are funded through a federal-state-local partnership. All public transit systems in Greater Minnesota receive state funding assistance through a fixed-share funding formula established by Minnesota Statutes. The formula sets a maximum local share of the total Mn/DOT approved operating costs. The local share of operating costs consists of a combination of revenue sources, including fare-box receipts, auxiliary revenues, and local tax levies. The remainder of the operating cost is paid from state and federal sources.

B. Section 5307 and Section 5311 Public Transit Providers

**St. Cloud Metro Bus Regular Route** provides fixed route service for the City of St. Cloud, Waite Park, Sauk Rapids and Sartell. Operates Monday through Friday, 5:25a.m –9:45pm; Saturday 7:45a.m-6:45p.m.; Sunday 5:15pm-12:15a.m. Metro Bus Fixed Route fleet consists of 33 Class 700 accessible buses.

**St. Cloud Metro Bus Dial-a-Ride** operates a dial-a-ride service within the City of St. Cloud, Waite Park, Sauk Rapids and Sartell. Operates Monday through Friday, 5:25a.m.-Midnight; Saturday 8:05a.m.-6:30p.m.; Sunday 9:00a.m.-6:00p.m. Metro Bus Dial-A-Ride fleet consists of 22 Class 600 accessible buses.

**RiverRider** operates in Sherburne and Wright Counties, providing route deviation and dial-a-ride services. City services in Annandale, Elk River, Monticello and Buffalo with surrounding small communities and townships being served. Operates Monday through Friday 7:00a.m.-5:00p.m. RiverRider’s fleet consists of 1 Class 600, 4 Class 500 and 7 Class 400 accessible busses.

**Tri-CAP Transit Connection** operates in Benton, Morrison and Stearns counties, providing route deviation and dial-a-ride services. City services in Little Falls, Melrose and Sauk Centre with surrounding small communities and townships being served. Operates Monday through Friday 7:00a.m.-5:00p.m. Tri-CAP Transit Connection’s fleet consists of 2 Class 600, 1 Class 500 and 9 Class 400 accessible busses.

In 2005 these four systems provided over 1,952,392 annual passenger trips, traveling over 1,907,141 miles and provided over 131,844 service hours annually. The average cost per passenger is $10.23.

C. Section 5310 Elderly and Disabled Transportation Providers
Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO have six private non-profit transportation providers. These providers utilize Class 400 lift-equipped buses that provide over 95,000 annual elderly and disabled person passenger trips, traveling over 212,000 annual miles. These six private non-profit agencies log over 16,000 hours of service each year.

**Functional Industries** is a private nonprofit community rehabilitation service provider that provides a continuum of high-quality, individualized vocational rehabilitation and habilitation services. For over 30 years, Functional Industries has assisted the individuals we serve in achieving their personal and employment goals. Functional Industries fleet consists of sixteen vehicles that are used on a daily basis to transport the people it serves six of which are 5310 vehicles.

**Good Shephard Lutheran Home** is a long-term care provider for younger and older adults. The campus consists of 162 bed Nursing Home/Sub-acute, 36 Unit Memory Cottages, 200 independent Senior Apartments with services (40 of these receive Assisted Living Services). Also have home delivered meal program, in which we deliver meals to Sauk Rapids and Sartell seniors. We serve adults from the Sauk Rapids and surrounding areas. Transportation fleet consists of one Class 400 - 15 passenger bus and two mini-vans.

**Guardian Angels of Elk River/Angels on Main** is a private non-profit organization providing Adult Day Services for elderly and disabled persons living at home, as well as respite for their caregivers. Guardian Angels on Main currently own and operate one Section 5310 vehicle and a seven passenger mini-van.

**Independence Center, Inc. (ICI)** is a day training and habilitation provider that offers skill development training for adults with developmental disabilities. ICI provides transport for participants to and from the Center, to and from employment sites, and in and around the community for recreation and leisure activities. Independence Center, Inc. currently owns and operates two Section 5310 vehicles and has a total fleet of seven vehicles. The service area consists of an approximate 15-20 mile radius around the St. Cloud area.

**Options, Inc.** is a private, non-profit agency providing Day Training, Habilitation and Supported Employment Services to over 150 adults with disabilities throughout Sherburne and Northern Wright Counties. For the majority of the persons served, Options provides vocational services ranging from individual job placement and support, to placement on work crews, to sub-contract work within its facility. Options works with over 45 area businesses in meeting the employment needs of its consumers. Options also provides Adult Day Services for the elderly.

Options currently operates six lift equipped buses, five full size vans and three mini-vans. We also contract with RiverRider Public Transit and with a private provider to transport consumers to and from Options and to various job sites.

**St. Benedict’s Center** is a non-profit agency providing assisted living, independent living and memory care for seniors. St. Benedict’s Center currently operates two Class 400 lift equipped buses. St. Benedict’s also leases one of the Class 400 buses part-time to Talahti Care Center to provide transportation to its adult day services program.

**D. County Services Department**
County Human Service Departments, Public Health Departments and Veteran Services all have clientele that need assistance with transportation related to the services they are receiving. While at each county these departments are using the public transit system to a degree, there is still the need for them to become involved with making sure their clients get to where they need to be. This level of need varies depending on the department and county. Benton County contracts with Tri-CAP Transit Connections, Tri-CAP spend approximately 50 hours per month arranging rides, and another 290 hours transporting Benton County clients. They put on approximately 9,000 miles per month, using 20 cars for this transportation. Sherburne County has indicated they spend approximately 699 hours per month arranging rides, and another 443 hours transporting their clients. They put on approximately 18,630 miles per month, using 53 cars for this transportation. Stearns County also contracts with Tri-CAP Transit Connections. Tri-CAP spends approximately 145 hours per month arranging rides, and another 870 hours transporting Stearns County clients. They put on approximately 27,000 miles per month, using 35 cars for this transportation. Wright County has indicated they spend approximately 180 hours per month arranging rides, and another 403 hours transporting their clients. They put on approximately 8,617 miles per month, using 42 cars for this transportation.

All four counties have Veterans Services that provide transportation to their clientele to the VA medical centers in St. Cloud and the Twin Cities. It varies by county on how they provide transportation. Some use volunteers, other have their own staff. In each Benton, Sherburne and Stearns counties the Veteran Services office had its own vehicles to use, while Wright County coordinates its transportation needs through Wright County Human Services Volunteer Program.

E. Other Agencies, Organizations and Businesses Providing Transportation

There are a variety of other agencies, organizations and business within Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO area that either provide transportation to their clientele or provide transportation for other organizations or to customers with a particular need. The transportation survey that was undertaken for this study has identified a number of these organizations. Some other organizations are known through other sources. The list below should not be thought of as the definitive list of what transportation is provided within the Region, this list only reflects the responding providers.

Private For-Profit Businesses in Transportation

- Above All Coach Travel
- AC Transportation, Inc. – Clinic Cab
- Broadway Limousine, Inc.
- CARE Transportation, Inc.
- Country Care A Van
- Heritage Tours of Richmond
- Jefferson Bus Line (Big Lake and St. Cloud)
- CARE Transportation, Inc.
- Kozy Transport Services, Inc.
- Pearl Limousine, Inc.
- Rockville Bus Service, LLC
- SPECO Charter, LLC
- Spanier Bus Service, Inc.
- St. Cloud Charter Service, Inc.
Senior Centers, Elderly Housing, Assisted Living Units and Nursing Homes

Again, we want to emphasize that the list below are only those facilities that answered the survey and who indicated a need of unmet needs for the clientele they provide services.

- Big Lake Senior Club
- Buffalo Community Center
- Senior Community Services – Delano Area Transportation
- Elk River Senior Center
- Kimball Senior Dining
- Monticello Senior Center
- Paynesville Area Center
- Roccari Senior Center
- At the Lake Adult Care
- Bethany Home of Catholic Charities
- Mother Teresa Home of Catholic Charities
- Buffalo Adult Day Center
- Centennial Villa Assisted Living
- Fairchild’s Fostercare
- Frank Adult Foster Care
- Heritage of Foley
- John Paul Apartments, Cold Spring
- Lange Board & Room with Special Services
- Loesch Supported Living Services, Inc.
- Lutheran Social Service, Senior Companion Program
- Mother of Mercy Campus of Care
- Melrose Area Hospital & Pine Villa Care Center
- Park View Care Center
- Optioncare
- Heartland Home Health Care & Hospice
- SPOT Rehabilitation & Home Health Care
- Cummings Care Center
- Generations Senior Homes
- Health North, Inc.

Churches

Some of the Region’s churches provide transportation services to bring their members to church on Sunday’s and some for other church related activities. It should be noted that the majority of churches do not provide transportation through vehicles they own. Many do have organized member volunteers to provide rides to other members in need.

School Districts

There are a number of school districts within Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO. In some cases the school district themselves handle the transportation and in other cases, the district’s contract out this service.

F. NorthStar Commuter Rail
The Northstar Commuter Coach is operated by the Northstar Corridor Development Authority (NCDA), the primary advocate for Northstar commuter rail. The NCDA’s mission is to provide convenient, safe and reliable transportation in the 80-mile Northstar Corridor that runs along the Mississippi River and Minnesota Trunk Highway 10 between downtown Minneapolis and the Greater St. Cloud area. Thirty local governments, including cities, townships and counties make up the membership on the NCDA board.

To assist in the (pre-Northstar commuter rail) transport of commuter rail transit riders, the NCDA has implemented a Northstar commuter (coach) bus between Elk River and downtown Minneapolis. The bus operations resemble a mix of standard bus and commuter rail service. It operates on existing roadways and utilizes shoulders during congestion, stopping at park-and-ride lots in Elk River at 191st Avenue and Coon Rapids - Riverdale Shopping Center traveling to/from the 5th Street Transit Station in downtown Minneapolis during peak hours. Service times and stops are Monday through Friday (major holidays excluded) with eight (8) trips leaving for Minneapolis between 5:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. and eight (8) trips from Minneapolis between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Service times and stops are also shown in Table 9 below.

The Northstar commuter buses are coach-style vehicles that include comfortable seating with head and foot rests, power outlets for laptops or cell phones, overhead reading lights and storage compartments. Each bus is lift equipped for American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance.

Table 9. Northstar Commuter Coach Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INBOUND TRAVEL TIMES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave Elk River</td>
<td>Leave Coon Rapids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:25 AM</td>
<td>5:45 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:55 AM</td>
<td>6:15 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10 AM</td>
<td>6:30 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:25 AM</td>
<td>NO STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:45 AM</td>
<td>7:05 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:05 AM</td>
<td>7:25 AM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:20 AM</td>
<td>NO STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:55 AM</td>
<td>8:15 AM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTBOUND TRAVEL TIMES</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leave Minneapolis</td>
<td>Leave Coon Rapids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 PM</td>
<td>4:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:55 PM</td>
<td>NO STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:10 PM</td>
<td>4:45 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30 PM</td>
<td>NO STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:50 PM</td>
<td>5:25 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15 PM</td>
<td>NO STOP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:30 PM</td>
<td>6:05 PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:00 PM</td>
<td>6:35 PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The commuter bus is anticipated to cease upon completion of construction for the Northstar Commuter rail in 2009. The Northstar commuter rail Phase 1 will provide service along a 40-mile corridor between Big Lake and downtown Minneapolis utilizing the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad. It is currently assumed that there will be 5 stations at Big Lake, Elk River, Anoka, Coon Rapids, and downtown Minneapolis with a possible future 6th station in Fridley, Minnesota. Phase I of the commuter line is expected to carry about 5,900 passengers per day by 2030, saving commuters nearly 900,000 hours in travel time every year, compared to the next best transit alternative of bus transit.

It is anticipated that Northstar Phase 1 there will be six trips in the morning and evening during peak travel times. One of the six trips in both the morning and evening will be a reverse trip.

The St. Cloud Economic Development Partnership in cooperation with the NCDA, Mn/DOT, Sherburne County and various other local partners have initiated a coordination process for Phase II to see whether there is interest and support for extending Northstar commuter rail from Big Lake to Rice, Minnesota. A Phase II committee has also been established to assess what the next steps should be to maintain momentum with the project.

VI. Assessment of Current Conditions and Needs
This assessment will mainly focus on the needs of seniors, individuals with disabilities and low-income individuals. Through this analysis of the available services highlighted in Section V of this plan to the needs that were identified and discussed in this Section, there will be a discussion of gaps in service, as well as identification of any duplication of services.

Within this Section, there will be discussion and documentation of customer expectations, including human service issues and needs. These needs were gathered by several means, including a survey of providers, a workshop and past studies. This Section will include service analysis based on “Level of Service” measures that were developed by the Minnesota Department of Transportation, Office of Transit.

A. Level of Service
Service span measures the number of hours during the day and days per week the Demand Response service is available in a particular area. Unlike the similar measure for Fixed Route Service that measures hours per day of service, the service span measure for Demand Response incorporates days of service in addition to hours per day. This is done because in some rural areas Demand Response service may only be provided on selected days per week, or even selected days per month. Incorporation of both hours per day and days per week provides a more complete perspective on the amount of Demand Response service that is available within a community or larger area. Table 10 shows the matrix of hours per day and days per week.
Table 10. Demand Response Service Span

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours Per Day</th>
<th>Days Per Week</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;0.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Market research shows that respondents asked that services be designed to serve multiple counties, operate 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., five to seven days per week. LOS 2 will meet the combined hours of operation and frequency of operation expectations.

Response time is the minimum amount of time a user needs for scheduling and accessing a trip or the minimum advance reservation time. This measure is most appropriate where most of the trips are scheduled each time that the user wants to travel. This measurement is less appropriate where most of the trips are provided on a standing-order, subscription basis, where riders are picked up on pre-scheduled days at pre-scheduled times and do not need to call in advance for each trip. Response time can be calculated for the situation when a trip request is first made. Table 10.1 provides the response time guidelines.

Table 10.1. Demand Response Availability – Response Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LOS</th>
<th>Response Time</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Up to ½ hour</td>
<td>Very prompt response, similar to exclusive-ride taxi service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>More than ½ hour, and up to 2 hours</td>
<td>Prompt response; considered immediate response for DRT service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>More than 2 hours, but still same day service</td>
<td>Requires planning; but one can still travel the day the trip is requested</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>24 hours in advance; next day service</td>
<td>Requires some advance planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>48 hours in advance</td>
<td>Requires more advance planning than next-day service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>More than 48 hours in advance, and up to 1 week</td>
<td>Requires advance planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>More than 1 week in advance, and up to 2 weeks</td>
<td>Requires considerable advance planning, but may still work for important trips needed soon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>More than 2 weeks, or not able to accommodate trip</td>
<td>Requires significant advance planning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Market research indicates that persons want a prompt response. The Level of Service (LOS) 2 would meet this customer expectation.

The presence of absence of transit service near one’s origin and destination is a key factor in one’s choice to use transit. In Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO areas the Primary (Level 1) Regional Trade Center is St. Cloud. Secondary (Level 2) Trade Centers are small urban cities; Buffalo, Elk River, and Monticello. These small urban trade centers typically host medical facilities. The assumption of this performance measure is that all counties, at a minimum, have access to a Level 3 Regional Trade Center, 5 days per week.
Interregional Corridors and Regional Trade Centers

[Map showing interregional corridors and regional trade centers]
B. Transit Service Gap Analysis

For evaluating the quality of service and capacity of transit services, the concept of Level of Service (LOS) measures were used as shown below in Table 11. To determine LOS the public transit criteria in Table 10 was used as a baseline.

Demand response services and complementary paratransit services were evaluated on:
- Current LOS from Mn/DOT’s annual application;
- A comparison of current LOS and customer expectations; and
- Feasibility of meeting customer expectations

The Availability-Service Span, and Availability-Response Time measures were looked at to determine appropriate LOS for providers. Provider LOS is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 Public Transit System Demand Response Measurements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Service Span</th>
<th>Response Time Service</th>
<th>Response Time Availability</th>
<th>Regional Trade Center</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RiverRider</td>
<td>M-F 10.5 hrs/day</td>
<td>LOS 4</td>
<td>LOS 3-4</td>
<td>Buffalo – Elk River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tri-CAP Transit Connections</td>
<td>M-F 10.5 hrs/day</td>
<td>LOS 4</td>
<td>LOS 3-4</td>
<td>St. Cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Cloud Metro Bus DAR</td>
<td>M-F 16 hrs/day, Sat. 11 hrs/day, Sun. 9 hrs/day</td>
<td>LOS 1</td>
<td>LOS 2-3</td>
<td>St. Cloud - Sartel - Sauk Rapids – Waite Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Cloud Metro Bus FR</td>
<td>M-F 16 hrs/day, Sat. 11 hrs/day</td>
<td>LOS 1</td>
<td>N/A Fixed Route</td>
<td>St. Cloud - Sartel - Sauk Rapids – Waite Park</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To meet the combined hours of operation and frequency of operation expectations, systems would need to reach service levels at LOS 2. To meet customer expectations for prompt response, systems would need to reach LOS 2.

C. Needs Demonstrated Through Mn/DOT Greater Minnesota Transit Plan

The Minnesota Department of Transportation, (Mn/DOT), Office of Transit has conducted a couple of recent reports that show transportation needs of persons throughout Greater Minnesota. From these materials it is apparent that the needs seen in Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO area are similar to the needs found around the state.

The Transit Needs Assessment within Mn/DOT’s 2001 Greater Minnesota Public Transportation Plan gave three methods that need to work together in order to eliminate the gaps of service found in the state’s Greater Minnesota transit systems by 2010. The first step is to make efficiency improvements to current services. “However, since current systems are relatively efficient, this action will satisfy only a small portion (1.9 percent of the need) of the need” for additional trips. The second means to meet or eliminate the gap in needed service levels is to “continue to coordinate and cooperate with special transportation services, such as those funded with Section 5310 funds.” The plan indicates through these efforts, 16.8 percent of the transportation gap can be fulfilled. It is important to note that Region 7W and St. Cloud APO currently has only six 5310 providers. Service expansion is looked to meet an additional 23.9 percent of the need by 2010. The hope of the plan is to meet 80 percent of the need in all 80 counties of Greater Minnesota by 2010. This plan also calls for the maintaining of the current productivity level (passengers per capita) for Greater Minnesota transit systems to meet the
identified service gaps. While the Greater Minnesota transit operators have demonstrated strong performance, they have not been able to meet all the mobility needs. “Expanded services to meet these needs cannot even be considered with the current level of federal, state and local funding.”

The Plan discussed a questionnaire that was distributed in 2000 to the 67 Greater Minnesota public transit systems. There were 47 surveys returned. One of the questions asked systems to list improvements that could be made to satisfy the unmet need. Of the thirty responses from non-urban transit systems, ten indicated more weekend service, six more evening service and five said expanded service hours. A question about the best coordination opportunities with other providers had nine answers from 5310 buses/social services and nine responses from inter-community carriers (such as Greyhound). School districts and volunteer driver programs tied for third with four answers each. One half of the non-urban transit systems that answered the survey indicated that they thought there are opportunities for inter-jurisdictional services to areas outside their service area through better coordination/cooperation with neighboring county systems.

D. Greater Minnesota Transit Market Research Study.

In May 2000, Mn/DOT released a study entitled Greater Minnesota Transit Market Research Study. The report conducted by SRF Consulting Group, Inc. and N.K. Friedrichs Consulting, Inc. consisted of random and on-board surveys of residents and transit passengers.

From random sample surveys, the study indicated that six percent of respondents used some form of local bus service in the past twelve months. Awareness and use of local bus service for the general public is greatest among lower income households. The survey return showed, overall, “the largest share of respondents prefer the bus service area to cover several counties (53%). This share is significantly greater among respondents who live in smaller cities or rural areas (60%). Respondents who live in larger cities with a population over 5,000 have a greater need for buses to operate seven days a week.”

“When asked to judge the trade-offs of service characteristics, respondents indicated that days of bus service was rated higher than size of area or service hours. Travel time was valued more than size of service area or service hours. The hours that service operates was more important than wait time or size of service area, and less important than days that service operates and travel time. The size of the service area was valued less than service hours, travel time, or days that service operates.” The majority of respondents want the bus service to run longer hours and to run five to seven days per week. Respondents prefer that buses run from 6:00a.m. until 10:00p.m.

The random survey also asked about marketing techniques and system information. “Respondents indicated that bus route maps and telephone numbers to call for local transit related information are the most desired types of information. Frequent users who say they ride the bus once a week or more often are also interested in printed bus schedules and a list of bus fares. Respondents are most interested in obtaining information about local bus service in their community from their local newspapers, senior citizens centers and at bus stops and bus waiting areas.”

The on-board survey that was conducted for the study separated results from small urban transit service areas and county transit service areas that included multi-county areas. There are some basic differences in the typical rider of these two service area types. Small urban
transit service areas were defined as small urban areas with less than 5,000 populations, small transit urban areas with 5,000 to 10,000 population, and small urban areas with more than 10,000 population, but less than 50,000 population. “Transit users in small urban areas are predominantly female (ranging from 75% to 85%), and low income (ranging from 80% to 94% with incomes less than $35,000), with some physical limitations (ranging from 50% to 60% had difficulty walking). The main purpose for use by small urban transit riders is work (ranging from 17% to 36%) and shopping (ranging from 32% to 44%), convenience (ranging from 16% to 30%), and car not available (ranging from 15% to 20%). Most small urban users (ranging from 77% to 83%) use transit regularly, at least two to three times per week.”

“Transit users in county service areas are predominantly elderly (ranging from 52% to 61% older than 65 years old), female (ranging from 72% to 78%), and low income (ranging from 80% to 87% with incomes less than $35,000) with some physical limitations (ranging from 37% to 45% had difficulty walking). The main purpose for use by county transit riders is shopping (ranging from 22% to 33%) and medical (ranging from 23% to 30%). The primary reasons for using transit are don’t or can’t drive (ranging from 38% to 46%), convenience (ranging from 22% to 24%) and car not available (ranging from 15% to 18%). Most county users (ranging from 56% to 64%) use transit regularly, at least two to three times per week.”

E. Greater Minnesota Public Transit Systems – Five Key Findings
The Minnesota Department of Transportation, (Mn/DOT), Office of Transit 2001 Greater Minnesota Transportation Plan gave a synopsis of some key facts about all Greater Minnesota Public Transit Programs. These finding show that the transportation provided by public transit program’s operated in Region 7W and the St. Cloud APO area are in most ways typical of most other programs found around the state. The report made five key findings:

1. “There are only seven counties and seven small urban areas without public transportation.”;
2. Most public transit programs do not operate during evening hours. Only 11 of 67 systems operate after 6:00 p.m.;
3. Most public transit programs have service Monday through Friday. “Only one-quarter of the systems operate on Saturday while only 11 operate on Sunday.”;
4. “Because of limited resources, trips are often confined to political boundaries, such as city or county lines.”; and
5. Also, because of limited resources, “many systems are in need of a new transit facility, a radio communication system and an upgraded computer system.”

The study also concluded “overall Greater Minnesota systems cost less to operate, provide more passengers per hour than comparable systems in other parts of the United States. This performance occurs while most systems are providing less service per capita than their peers.”

VI. Region 7W and St. Cloud APO Priorities and Action Steps
After the planning workshop the ATAC met several times to discuss strategies and action planning for the top five (5) priorities. It was decided by the ATAC at the first post-workshop meeting to combine the “Mobility Management” priority with the “Better Agency Coordination and Communication”. The ATAC also decided unanimously to eliminate the “Insurance” priority because they felt it was a state issue, rather than a Region 7W or St. Cloud APO priority.

Below are the top three priorities for inclusion into the Plan. After solidifying the priorities the ATAC then worked through a strategies and action planning exercise to identify the goals and
objectives for each priority, how each goal and objective could be accomplished and a timeframe implementation and review.

Priority 1 – Better Agency Coordination, Communication and Mobility Management

Priorities
| Identify Providers within network Counties |
| Changing Rules and Barriers Regarding Age, Funding Source, Insurance Restrictions and Liability |
| Income Eligibility |
| Reach Out to Under Served Individuals |
| Create a Central Area Coordinator |
| Politician Buy-In |
| Continue to Strengthen State Government Mandate to Work Together |
| Create Something Reputable (i.e. 211 or Senior Linkage) |

Strategies and Actions
| Create and Maintain a Provider Directory, both electronically and hard copy. \* First draft by January 2007, 2nd Draft by March 2007, Final by June 2007 with ongoing updates |
| Peer Coordination and Sharing of Information via e-mail updates, database and quarterly ATAC meetings (open to other stakeholders) and public education directed towards underserved individuals (i.e. billboards, brochures/fliers, county DHS newsletter inserts, posters, etc.) |
| Creation of an Area Coordination Program with an ultimate vision of an interactive website with coordinated web hosting, automatic e-mail updates, directory with map, single point coordination for ride requests. \* Website draft by June 2007 and information line by December 2007 |
| Creation of linkage line (1-800#) for Region 7W and St. Cloud APO area (possibly linked with an entire state linkage line) which will be streamlined for use (i.e. enter ZIP code via telephone and will route directly to specific provider.) \* Fully operational by December 2009 |

Priority 2 – Support and Enhancement of Volunteer Programs

Priorities
| Regional and Local Standards for Programs, possible statewide |
| Recognition Given to Volunteer Drivers that Adds Value |
| Recruitment of Volunteers and Changing the RSVP Method Rather than Word of Mouth |

Strategies and Actions
| Provide reimbursement or incentives for volunteers and/or stipends |
| Create a booklet of standards to streamline knowledge and use/referral of volunteer drivers. \* Draft standard booklet by March 2007 and final by June 2007 |
| Facilitate increased communication between volunteer driver programs. Implement a regional coordinated effort to attract volunteers. Volunteer agencies that use, refer or make use of volunteers will be incorporated into the Area Directory by December 2007 |
| Cross utilize volunteers across agencies and county boundaries using mutual aid agreements. \* Mutual Aid Agreement by January 2008 |
Training focus on safety, driver training, assistance of disabled and elderly, and first aid.  Coordinated by December 2007

Priority 3 – Private/Public Partnerships

Priorities

- Identify stakeholders and bring together to educate
- Continue to solicit information from all stakeholders throughout process
- Faith based association

Strategies and Actions

- Better coordination of transportation services within Region 7W and St. Cloud APO area
- Provision of reimbursement and/or incentives to volunteer drivers for the mention of their name (advertising)
- Work with employers to provide rate reductions for employees
- Review legislation to reduce insurance restrictions on cross utilization of vehicles between agencies
- Provide funding to support “tried and true” programs. (The tried and true programs are those that already work but lack the need for funding because of either lack of service (hours and routes) or vehicles. Need for expansion of existing fixed routes in the St. Cloud APO area, additional dial-a-ride service, and making use of all vehicles that are available but under utilized. Complete JARC and New Freedom Applications for 2007)
- Identify agencies who have components/portions of services that could be shared (i.e. maintenance, training or administration)
- Get multiple agencies together to provide a gap service and contract out services rather than start new service (i.e. request funding match from all agencies to provide service)
APPENDIX

Appendix A: Region 7W – St. Cloud APO Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Stakeholder Questionnaire

Appendix B: Stakeholder Questionnaire Summary
  *Region 7W
  *St. Cloud APO

Appendix C: Workshop Press Release

Appendix D: Workshop Agenda

Appendix E: Small Group Discussion Format (Framework for Action)

Appendix F: Strategies and Action Planning Matrix
  Priority 1: Better Agency Coordination, Communication & Mobility Management
  Priority 2: Support & Enhancement of Volunteer Programs
  Priority 3: Private/Public Partnerships
August 14, 2006

In August of 2005, Congress passed the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation, Equity Act: A legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), reauthorizing the surface transportation act. As part of this reauthorization, grantees under the New Freedom Initiative, Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) and Elderly and Disabled Transportation Program (5310) must meet certain requirements in order to receive funding for fiscal 2007 (beginning 10/1/06) and beyond.

One of the SAFETEA-LU requirements is that projects from the programs listed above must be part of a “locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.” This plan is required to be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation services, human services providers and the general public.

You have received this Passenger Transportation Provider Interview Questionnaire because you represent a local/county/state government agency or advocacy group who provides service to, or advocates for, individuals who have public or specialized (elderly and or persons with disabilities) transportation service needs. As a stakeholder affecting transportation services, and potentially benefiting from additional funding, please invest time to complete the questionnaire. Your responses are very important in helping assess and determining gaps in service, which correlates to unmet needs.

The responses received will be used to assist in completing a regional coordination plan to make application for federal funding resources available through SAFETEA-LU. Please complete and return the questionnaire by September 15, 2006 to Sue Siemers, Mn/DOT District 3 Transit Project Manager, Mn/DOT, 3725 12th Street North, St. Cloud, Minnesota 56303.

In addition to this questionnaire, you are invited to attend a Public Transit – Human Services Coordination Workshop on Friday, September 29, 2006 from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the St. Cloud Mn/DOT Conference Center, 3725 12th Street North, St. Cloud. Please RSVP to this coordination workshop by calling Sue Siemers at 320.223.6556 or e-mailing susan.siemers@dot.state.mn.us.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in this important planning process. If you have any questions regarding this questionnaire or the coordination workshop, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Sue Siemers, Mn/DOT District 3
Coordination Facilitator to Region 7W
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**

1. Name: 

2. Street Address: 

3. Mailing Address: 

4. City, State, Zip Code: 

5. Contact Person (Name & Title): 

6. Contact Telephone #: 

7. FAX Number: 

8. E-Mail Address: 

9. Is your agency: 
   - Public 
   - Private non-profit 
   - Private for-profit 
   - Other: 

10. List each county your agency serves: 

11. If agency operates multiple sites, please give locations: 

12. What types of services does your agency/organization/bus provide? 

13. Is it possible people cannot access your service due to lack of available transportation? 
   - YES 
   - NO 

   **If yes, please estimate number of people per year** 

14. Does your agency serve people who are transportation disadvantaged? (Persons classified as “transportation disadvantage” have personal limitations that may limit one’s ability or cause difficulty in getting to places they need or want to go.) 
   - YES 
   - NO 

15. 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 (hear or cold); may not be able to wait for long periods or travel long distance</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>
</tbody>
</table>
Vehicles

16. Does your agency/organization/business staff use their own vehicles to transport people?  
   YES  NO

17. Does your agency operate its own leased vehicles to transport passengers?  
   YES  NO  
   if answer is NO skip to question 19

18. 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>
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<tr>
<td>Small Bus &lt; 10 pass.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medium Bus 11-20 pass</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Large Bus &gt; 20 pass</td>
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</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

Existing transportation services do not operate the
Same hours as when people need transportation

Existing transportation services do not go to locations
Where needed services are located

Please identify locations: __________________________________________

Other

Describe other: ___________________________________________________

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provide or Purchase</th>
<th>Specify Hours</th>
<th>Need Transportation Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
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<td>Wednesday</td>
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<td>Thursday</td>
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<td>Friday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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

- Infants (car seats)
- Physical Disability
- Mental Impairments
- Interpreters
- Escorts/Personal Care Attendants
- Other (please identify)

26. Does your agency have paid or volunteer drivers?

- Number of paid drivers

- 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 service to, what transportation needs are you aware 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 B

STAKEHOLDER QUESTIONNAIRE SUMMARY
*REGION 7W
*ST. CLOUD APO
Public Transit – Human Service Coordination
Stakeholder Workshop
Mn/DOT St. Cloud Conference Center – Lewis North/Central
Friday, September 29, 2006
10:00 am – 2:00 pm

AGENDA

10:00 a.m. Introduction
* Kirby Becker, APO and Sue Siemers, Mn/DOT-Region 7W
  - Welcome/Introductions
  - Purpose

10:15 a.m. Coordination in Minnesota
* Noel Shughart, Mn/DOT
  - History
  - Coordination success stories: Terry Markfordt, St. Cloud Metro Bus,
    Linda Elfstrand, Tri-CAP and Christina McCallah, Functional Industries
    - Public transit/Section 5311
    - Section 5310/non-profit
    - Public transit/Human Services
    - Public transit/DT&H/Health Care

11:00 a.m. Work Team Discussions (participants will be divided into groups for a facilitated activity):
  - Assessment Tool for Communities
  - Summaries
  - DOT Exercise

12:15 p.m. Lunch (provided)

12:45 p.m. Develop an action plan for improving and sustaining coordination in the future by identifying
  - Top priorities;
  - Strategies for success;
  - Action plan to coordinate transportation services.

2:00 p.m. Closing Remarks
  - Evaluation Forms
  - Next Steps

2:30 p.m. Adjourn
APPENDIX E

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION FORMAT
(FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION)
APPENDIX F

STRATEGIES AND ACTION PLANNING MATRIX

PRIORITY 1
BETTER AGENCY COORDINATION, COMMUNICATION & MOBILITY MANAGEMENT

PRIORITY 2
SUPPORT & ENHANCEMENT OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

PRIORITY 3
PRIVATE/PUBLIC PARTNERSHIPS