

Turtle Mountain and Rolette County Transit Development Plan

Prepared for:

North Dakota Department of Transportation
and the
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa

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Disclaimer

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Executive Summary

Turtle Mountain Reservation is located in Rolette County in extreme north central North Dakota. The reservation and surrounding tribal lands are densely populated and have more residents per square mile than Cass County, North Dakota's most populated county. Unemployment in the area is extremely high and income levels are expectedly low; 27% of North Dakota's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) caseload is in Rolette County. Many area residents are transportation-disadvantaged.

The county is served by three publicly-supported transit operators. Other than these three systems, there are no forms of commercial or public transportation in the county. The county's regional hub for shopping, medical services, and interstate transportation is Minot, which is approximately 120 miles away.

The county's three transit providers work well together and their efforts to coordinate services increased significantly as a part of this research effort. The operators' hours of service have been limited because of a lack of operating funds, but improvements are being made as a result of additional funding made available by the new federal SAFETEA-LU highway bill and new state transit assistance monies appropriated by North Dakota's 2005 Legislature. Despite these improvements, more funding and coordination are needed to more efficiently and effectively respond to the mobility needs of the area's transportation-disadvantaged residents.

An advisory committee was formed to provide input and direction to this study. The committee included tribal and local government officials, human service and employment agency personnel, hospital representatives, administrators of local transit operations, representatives of local schools and the community college, and the North Dakota Department of Transportation. The advisory committee met three times and was provided with draft copies of various sections of the report as they became available. They were encouraged to provide related comments and suggestions.

The advisory committee was asked to identify and prioritize areas of need regarding local transportation services. The committee identified medical, compliance, and education-related transportation as priorities. These areas of need were confirmed via personal interviews and an employer survey. Interviews were conducted with approximately 25 local entities, including transit operators, county and tribal officials, human service and employment agency representatives, and school personnel. A transportation needs questionnaire was sent out to the county's 25 largest employers. The survey achieved an 80% response rate.

The study's advisory committee recognized the research effort would take several months and the implementation of related recommendations could take considerably longer. Given the immediate mobility needs of many area residents, the committee asked the Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC) personnel to help create a separate committee to on more immediate mobility-enhancing actions. SURTC honored this request, and related results will be discussed later.

Based on documented mobility needs and an inventory of available transit services, researchers were able to identify areas of unmet need. These areas of need served as the basis for developing recommendations for new and enhanced transit services and supporting operational, administrative, and marketing efforts. These recommendations include the following:

- Maintain existing levels of service.
- Expand operating hours of existing services.
- Provide new services using existing service providers.

- Fixed route linking Dunseith, Belcourt, and Rolla
- Fixed routes serving Belcourt-area low-income housing, the local community college, and major employers
- Fixed route providing weekday service from Rolette County to Minot
- Coordinate operations of local service providers.
- Establish an ongoing marketing effort to create awareness of available services.
- Create a transit advisory board to provide ongoing direction to local service providers.
- Adopt and utilize uniform and expanded record keeping practices to facilitate accurate operational assessments.
- Monitor operations to assess operations, public awareness, utilization, and remaining unmet needs and make modifications, as appropriate and affordable, to better meet the personal mobility needs of area residents.
- Initiate personalized initiatives to help satisfy low-volume needs.

As indicated above, a short-term planning committee was formed to address the most immediate mobility needs of area residents. At the committee's first meeting, SURTC researchers recommended the area's three transit services submit supplemental funding requests for transit monies administered by the North Dakota Department of Transportation. Those requests were submitted and the department ultimately provided local transit operators with an additional \$111,000 in state and federal funding for budget year 2006-07.

The receipt of this funding coincided with the presentation of this study's draft recommendations. The county's transit providers embraced these recommendations and SURTC researchers further recommended the new assistance money be used to pursue the implementation of at least some of the study's draft recommendations. The operators concurred.

Based on the prioritization of needs discussed earlier and the immediate availability of new financial support, this study's recommendations concerning implementation were segmented into Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III. As indicated above, the county's three transit operators have exhibited a high degree of enthusiasm and cooperation throughout this study effort. They are in the process of implementing many of the Phase I recommendations with existing and expanded funding received for the 2006-07 fiscal year:

Phase I Recommendations

Maintain existing levels of service and expand hours of operation

Component 1 – Rolla dial-a-ride

Component 2 – Belcourt dial-a-ride

Component 4 – Rural dial-a-ride

Component 6 – Taxi

Expand and standardize operating hours

Standardized fares

Coordinate operations of existing operators

Marketing – one name and one phone number

Initiate centralized dispatch efforts

Create a transit advisory board

Adopt uniform record keeping practices

Phase II recommendations involve an aggressive implementation of new services, primarily along the lines of the new fixed routes identified earlier. This expansion necessitates a greater degree of coordination among area operators and cannot be achieved without additional funding, personnel, and

program marketing. It is estimated that Phase II implementation would require approximately \$278,000, about \$46,000 of which might be covered via fares and reimbursement for medical-related services. The remaining \$232,000 would have to come from other federal, state, and/or local sources. Phase II recommendations are listed below.

Phase II Recommendations

- Hire a mobility manager
- Expand marketing effort
- Expand centralized dispatch operations
- Initiate new services:
 - Component 1 – Dunseith-Rolla route
 - Component 2 – Belcourt cluster route
 - Component 5 – Fixed route to Minot

This study also identifies potential funding services for these and the Phase III recommendations that will be presented later. The most desirable funding source is the new Section 5311(c) tribal transit program created by SAFETEA-LU. These monies are 100% federal and require no local match. The deadline for year one applications was Oct. 18, 2006. The preparation of this report was accelerated and draft versions of its recommendations and implementation strategies were provided to tribal officials starting August 2006 so they could use them in any related application they might submit to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

As indicated earlier, the study's advisory committee prioritized the mobility needs of the area's transportation-disadvantaged residents and identified medical, compliance, and education-related transportation as top priorities. These areas of need were followed by employment-related transportation. This decision was reinforced by feedback received from the area's major employers via the survey discussed earlier.

Based on this prioritization, the study identified two items for Phase III implementation. One of these relates to commuter-related transportation that would link the proposed transit system to the area's major employers. The cost of this service is estimated at \$31,000 per year, approximately \$28,000 of which would have to come from non-fare sources. Another Phase III item involves the purchase of computer software that would be used to schedule passengers and dispatch system vehicles. This system would also facilitate related record keeping and the compilation of performance-enhancing data. The cost of this purchase is estimated at \$20,000. Subsequent enhancements could cost well in excess of \$100,000 and might include on-board computers and automatic vehicle location equipment. These enhancements should be considered only if they are justified by ridership growth and system expansion.

Phase III Recommendations

- Component 3 – Fixed route to major employers
- Computerized scheduling and dispatch
- Long-term vehicle replacement

As the preceding listing indicates, Phase III recommendations also include the long-term acquisition of system transit vehicles. It appears there are enough accessible transit vehicles in Rolette County to meet the needs of the proposed transit system. Additional and replacement vehicles will be required, however, as ridership grows and as existing vehicles reach the end of their useful lives.

It must be emphasized that there is a need for ongoing coordination. Related efforts must focus not only on the area's transit providers, but also on other entities that control program funding or have clients who are currently receiving program-specific transportation services from area human service and employment agencies. The cooperation of all these entities, along with the ongoing efforts of the area's transit providers and the proposed advisory board, will facilitate the development and operation of a fully coordinated transit system that responds to the mobility needs of area residents in an efficient and cost-effective manner.

The FTA's draft strategic plan calls attention to Task 51 of TCRP Project J-6 regarding transit system ridership increases. The FTA notes that,

“As with other studies, it (TCRP J-6) found that the most significant ridership increases took place when the transit agencies undertook a combination of the following types of initiatives:¹

- Service adjustments – including service reconfigurations and expansion and new service models;
- Fare and price adaptations – including introduction of new fare media and technologies;
- Marketing and information initiatives;
- Shifts in planning orientations – including increased emphasis on strategic planning and customer-oriented planning; and,
- New efforts in service coordination, collaboration, and partnership – especially those with universities.”

The recommendations presented in this report are consistent with the findings of that report and, it is hoped, will contribute to significant increases in ridership in Rolette County's transit operations, all to the benefit of the area's transportation-deprived citizens.

¹ Stanley, Robert G. and Robert Hyman. “Evaluation of Recent Ridership Increases.” TCRP Research Results Digest (April 2005) p. 2.

1. Introduction

This study is being undertaken to develop a transit management plan that will result in the provision of transit services to better satisfy the personal mobility needs of residents of Turtle Mountain Reservation and Rolette County, North Dakota. The following paragraphs describe the impetus for this study and related tasks and timelines.

In October 2005, a representative of the Turtle Mountain Community College contacted the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center (SURTC) regarding assistance available to help address personal mobility problems being faced by some of its students. The college is located near Belcourt, N.D., on the Turtle Mountain Reservation, home to the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

As a result of that contact and subsequent conversations, a meeting was held at the college on Dec. 5, 2005, to discuss the area residents' unmet personal mobility needs. Attendees included Tribal Chairman Ken Davis, SURTC staff, representatives of the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT), local transit providers, college officials, and members of the local medical, social service, and public school communities.

The group agreed to meet again on Jan. 19, 2006. In preparation for that meeting, NDDOT asked SURTC to outline how it might be involved to help document the area's transit needs and to prepare recommendations for coordinated, county-wide services. Local entities agreed to collect demographic information and data concerning residents' unmet transportation needs.

The group met again Jan. 19. SURTC outlined possible study tasks and related timelines, and possible funding sources were also discussed. It was projected that SURTC might be able to provide partial funding for the project from FTA funds at its disposal. NDDOT explained that it might be able to finance remaining costs. The department suggested the tribal chairman send a formal request regarding the study to the director of the department. It was also suggested the group compose an advisory committee to oversee the study once funding became available.

On Jan. 23, 2006, Tribal Chairman Ken Davis sent a letter of request regarding the proposed study to NDDOT Director David Sprynczynatyk. NDDOT subsequently executed a contract for related services with SURTC.

The contract identified six work-related tasks regarding the proposed study. These tasks outline a work plan for the research effort—a work plan which adheres to the precepts of the FTA's 2004 *Framework for Action: Building the Fully Coordinated Human Services Transportation System*. Project tasks include:

- Task 1 – prepare a demographic overview of the study area to identify segments of the population traditionally in need of transportation services (elderly, disabled, low income, etc.).
- Task 2 – complete an inventory of existing transportation services in the area (commercial, school, other publicly supported services, etc.).
- Task 3 – complete a transportation needs assessment survey by contacting entities, such as major employers, local schools, community college, medical community, social service agencies, Job Services, existing transportation service providers, local Head Start programs, tribal and county officials, and the NDDOT.
- Task 4 – develop population and economic trend projections for the study area.

- Task 5 – develop recommendations concerning transportation service enhancements, the coordination of local and regional transportation services, the identification of related capital and operating needs, and public awareness efforts designed to inform area residents concerning the availability of local transportation services.
- Task 6 – prepare a management plan (including funding sources) related to the implementation of study recommendations.

As this listing illustrates, coordination is to be a major component of the desired plan. This coordination involves the area's existing transit providers and entities, such as local human service agencies and employment offices.

This emphasis on coordination is also consistent with the mandates of Executive Order No. 13330. Via this February 2004 mandate, President Bush established a coordinating council on access and mobility. The intent of this action was to promote interagency coordination and cooperation that would lead to improved mobility for the nation's transportation-disadvantaged population.

The tasks outlined above are consistent with the precepts of that order, as well as the calls for coordination set forth in the recommendations of SURTC's 2004 *Enhancing Passenger Mobility Services in North Dakota through Increased Coordination* report and its 2005 study, *Personal Mobility in North Dakota: Trends, Gaps and Recommended Enhancements*. Both reports are available on SURTC's website at <http://www.surtc.org/research/reports.php>.

The NDDOT contract called for completing the initial draft of the related report by October 2005. Final publication was to be completed within three months thereafter.

The advisory committee that was formed to oversee the study and to provide related input and direction met for the first time on May 2, 2006. At that meeting, SURTC staff members outlined the tasks and timelines discussed above. Committee members also provided input regarding area residents' transportation needs, existing means of transportation, and unmet personal mobility needs. A list of committee members is presented in Appendix A.

The advisory committee met again Aug. 15, 2006, to review work completed to date. Copies of meeting minutes are presented in Appendix B.

On Aug. 16, 2006, SURTC researchers met with the area's three public transportation service providers to review the study's draft recommendations. These service providers were asked to comment on these recommendations by Sept. 10, 2006. Their input is reflected in the final recommendations presented in section 6 of this report.

This report is divided into seven sections and addresses each of the tasks outlined earlier, along with related input received from the advisory committee. These sections include:

- 1. Introduction
- 2. Demographics and Transportation Disadvantaged Populations
- 3. Transportation Service Providers and Trip Generators
- 4. Population and Economic Projections
- 5. Unmet Personal Mobility Needs
- 6. Recommendations
- 7. Implementation

Following an introductory paragraph, sections 2-7 include a section which, in a bullet format, summarizes that section's highlights. This presentation is intended to give readers a preview of the contents of the section and to make it easier to refer back to the proper section to locate desired information.

This study was originally intended to focus on the preparation of a transit development plan for the Turtle Mountain Reservation and nearby tribal trust lands. However, at the urging of the advisory committee, the scope of the project was expanded to include all of Rolette County, North Dakota.

The advisory committee also expressed concern that the study would take several months to complete, even though there were many immediate mobility needs being faced by area residents. Based on the immediacy of these needs, SURTC staff members agreed to work with a select group of advisory committee members and local transit service providers in an attempt to take immediate steps to implement service changes that would address some of these needs.

This short-term assessment and implementation effort was also outside the scope of this project. As will be discussed in section 7, however, it did result in an immediate increase in funding and the implementation of new and expanded services which addressed some of the most urgent personal mobility needs of area residents. It is hoped more of these needs will be satisfied by the implementation of other recommendations contained in this report.

2. Demographics & Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations

2.1 Introduction

The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa is one of 561 federally-recognized Indian tribes in the United States. Tribal offices are located near the unincorporated city of Belcourt on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in Rolette County, North Dakota. Rolette County is located in extreme north central North Dakota. The northern border of the reservation is within ten miles of the U.S.–Canadian border.

The tribe has approximately 31,000 enrolled members – individuals who have registered with the tribe, who are at least 25% Indian, and who are at least part Chippewa. The tribe estimates about 13,500 of its enrolled members live in Rolette County and about half of these members live on the reservation (Davis 2006). As will be discussed later, there is a significant discrepancy between Census and tribal population estimates.

This section is devoted to a review of geographic and demographic data related to the reservation and its residents. Topics discussed in this section include:

- Geography
- Demographic characteristics
- Transportation disadvantaged populations

This section will be followed by an inventory of transportation services available to area residents and the identification of local and regional trip generators.

2.2 Section Highlights

- Population – Rolette County has 13,674 residents; 8,307 (61%) live on reservation or nearby tribal lands.
- There are significant differences between Census and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) population estimates. Census data from 2005 shows 10,010 Native Americans living in Rolette County. The BIA estimates there were 12,055 Native Americans living in the county in 2006.
- Tribal land – The reservation has 72 square miles. There are another 56 square miles of tribal land elsewhere in Rolette County.
- Cities – The county's five largest cities are home to 40% of county residents.
- Population density – The reservation has a population density higher than any county in North Dakota.
- Minorities – Non-Whites make up 97.1% of the reservation's population.
- Median age – The median age of reservation residents is nearly 13 years below the state average.
- Senior citizens – Rolette County has about 1,800 senior citizens.
- Education – The county and reservation lag behind the state and nation in educational achievement.
- Disabled – The county's disabled population totals 2,300, comparable to state percentages.
- Employment – The county is a labor surplus area with severe unemployment.
- Poverty – There is significant poverty in the area; 27% of state's TANF caseload is in Rolette County and one-third of the county's residents receive federal food assistance.
- Households without vehicles – More than 10% of the county's residents live in households that do not have a motor vehicle.

- Transportation disadvantages – Significant portions of the county’s population are considered transportation disadvantaged.

2.3 Geography

The Turtle Mountain Reservation has a total area of approximately 72 square miles. As Figure 2.1 illustrates, the reservation is located in Rolette County in extreme north central North Dakota, within a few miles of the Canadian border. Rolette County has a total area of 902 square miles. The reservation covers approximately 8% of the land in the county.

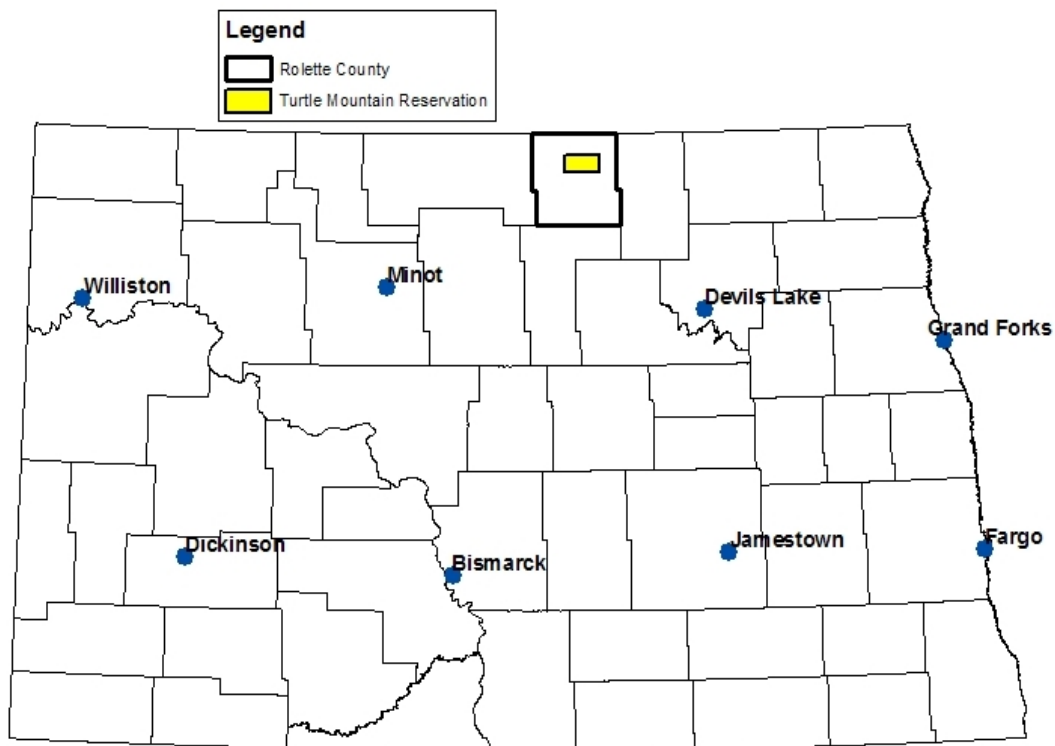


Figure 2.1 Location of Turtle Mountain Reservation
Source: North Dakota Department of Transportation

Note that unlike most Indian tribes, Turtle Mountain Chippewa have a significant amount of tribal land located off the reservation. Tribal trust land is property owned and managed by a tribe for the benefit of tribal members. Tribal land is typically on reservations, but the Turtle Mountain Reservation is unusual to the extent that a significant amount of its tribal land, about 36,000 acres, is located off the reservation. The vast majority of this off-reservation land is located in Rolette County, but some is located as far away as Montana (Davis 2006). As indicated by the map in Figure 2.2, a great deal of this land is located within a few miles of the reservation’s boundaries.

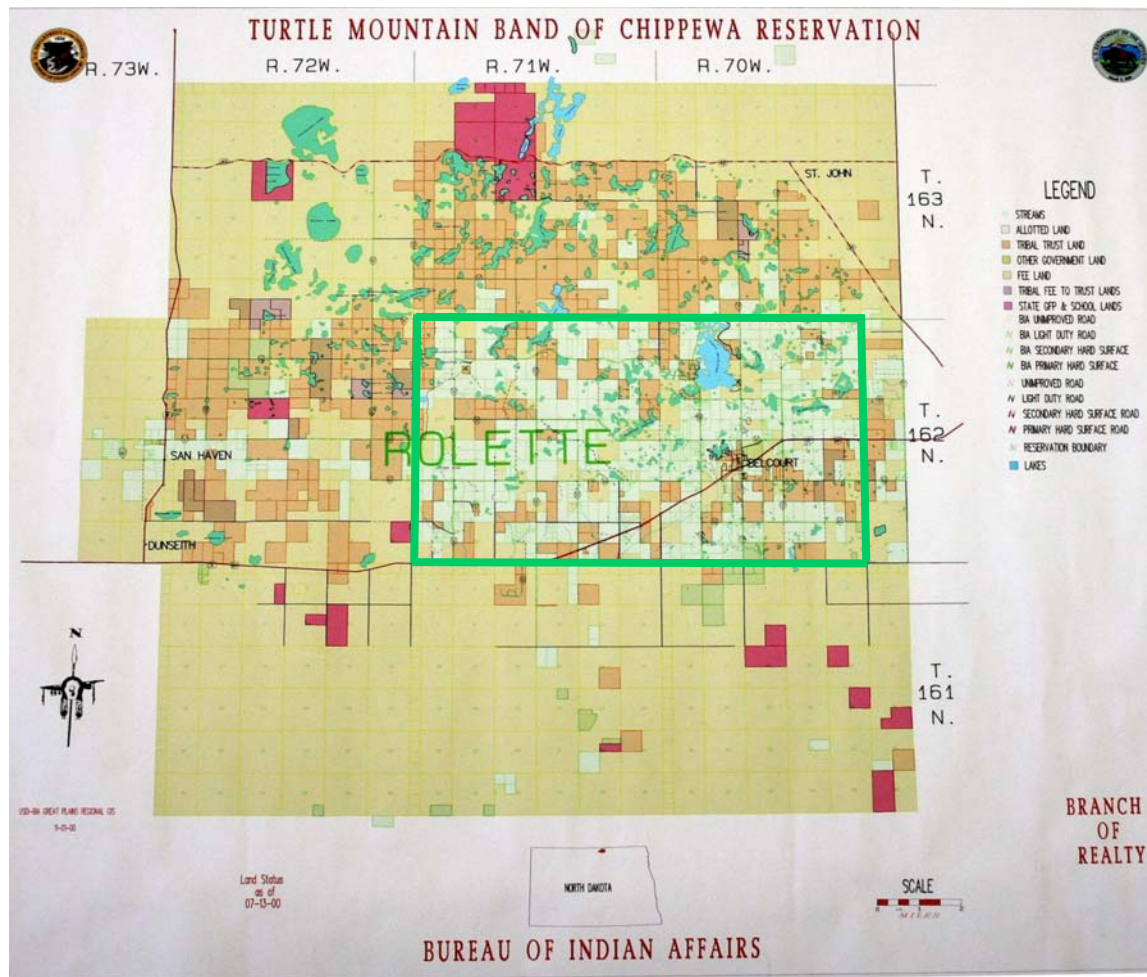


Figure 2.2 Reservation & Tribal Land in Rolette County

Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs

The 36,000 acres of off-reservation tribal trust land in Rolette County equals over 56 square miles of property. The 72-square-mile size of the reservation is, therefore, somewhat misleading because of the large amount of other tribal land located near the reservation.

Figure 2.2 also identifies what is known as allotted land. Allotted land is property which was originally given to individual tribal members by the federal government, much like a homestead. As is the case with tribal trust land, allotments are typically located on reservations, but many Turtle Mountain Chippewa received allotments located off the Turtle Mountain Reservation.

This situation arose because the reservation is relatively small and the amount of land available was not sufficient to accommodate the large number of tribal members who were eligible to receive acreage allotments. Eligible recipients were, therefore, given available public domain land elsewhere in North Dakota and Montana (Bureau of Indian Affairs 1966). As Figure 2.2 illustrates, there is a significant amount of allotted land off the reservation in Rolette County. This land, plus the tribal trust land discussed above, effectively increases the size of the reservation well beyond its statutory 72 square miles.

Land on and around the reservation is mainly low, rolling hills covered with deciduous forests of poplar, birch, oak, willow, and aspen. As illustrated by Figure 2.2, a portion of the reservation is covered with lakes, sloughs, and marshland; the area is quite picturesque. Winters are cold and summers are warm and pleasant. Annual precipitation totals between 25 and 30 inches.

The area's land is primarily glacial deposits and contains considerable amounts of rock, sand, and gravel. Only about 10% of the land on the reservation is used for farming.

2.4 Demographic Characteristics

The remainder of this section is devoted to discussions concerning various segments of the population in and around the Turtle Mountain Reservation. The majority of the data is derived from the 2000 Census.

Note, however, there is a significant difference between Census data and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) population estimates. Regarding Native American populations, the Census Bureau estimates 10,010 Native Americans resided in Rolette County in 2005. Conversely, the BIA estimates the county's Native American population totaled 12,055 in 2006.

Tribal chairman Ken Davis believes BIA population estimates are more accurate. He suggests many individuals do not respond to Census surveys. Reasons cited include a mistrust of government and the fact that responding might have a negative impact on housing assistance being received by respondent households (Davis 2006).

Despite this apparent underreporting in Census data, this report will depend on its use. This utilization is based on the widely accepted nature of Census data and the fact that the Census generates data on a wide variety of demographic factors. In fact, the tribe used Census data in its 2005 grant application to the Northwest Area Foundation (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa 2005).

Throughout this report, SURTC will attempt to point out major impacts this underreporting may have on related statistics. The data presented will be segmented to reflect the following geographic areas:

- Turtle Mountain Reservation & off-reservation trust land in Rolette County
- Other portions of Rolette County
- North Dakota statewide
- United States

Many of the population groups discussed in the following subsections are typically considered transportation disadvantaged. These segments include senior citizens, low income, minorities, disabled, and households without motor vehicles. Special attempts will be made to quantify these populations within the study area.

2.4.1 County, Reservation, and City Populations

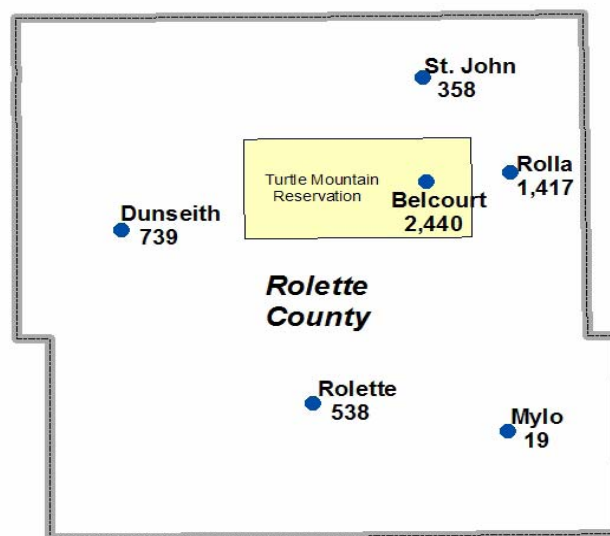
According to 2000 Census data, Rolette County had a total population of 13,674. This same Census data reports 5,815 of these people live on Turtle Mountain Reservation and another 2,492 live on other tribal trust land in Rolette County. Approximately 73% of the county's population is identified as American Indian; 25% is classified as White. Over 96% of the reservation's population is classified as American

Indian. As indicated earlier, it is estimated that Census data may underreport the county's Native American population by over 2,000 residents.

The majority of the tribe's population is metis/michif, a name specific to people of mixed Cree, Pembina Chippewa, and French ancestry. This French heritage stems from French traders who entered the region starting in the early 1600s. Many intermarried with Indian women. The result is a heritage that embraces both French and Chippewa traditions.

There are six cities in Rolette County. These cities range in size from Belcourt, with a population of 2,440, to Mylo, with a population of 19. The county's six cities have a combined population of 5,511 and serve as the home for approximately 40% of the county's residents. Figure 2.3 depicts the location of these cities within the county and identifies each city's 2000 population.

Figure 2.3 Rolette County Cities and Populations



Source: North Dakota Department of Transportation and U.S. Census – 2000

Belcourt, the county's largest city, is located on the reservation and is the site of most tribal offices and a number of the county's major employers. Rolla, the county's second largest city, is located only six miles away and serves as the county seat and the county's largest retail center. The county's five largest cities, their 2000 populations, and their proximity to Belcourt are listed in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Rolette County Cities, Populations, and Proximities

City	Population	Miles from Belcourt
Belcourt	2,440	0
Rolla	1,417	6
Dunseith	739	16
Rolette	538	16
St. John	358	8

Source: North Dakota Department of Transportation and U.S. Census – 2000

Even though the reservation occupies only 8% of Rolette County, more than 42% of the county's residents live on the reservation. A significant portion of the county's remaining residents live within a few miles of the reservation's borders, many in housing clusters owned and operated by the tribal housing authority. These housing clusters will be discussed in greater detail in Section 3.

With a population of 5,815 and a land area of 72 square miles, the reservation has nearly 81 residents per square mile. As Table 2.2 illustrates, the Turtle Mountain Reservation has more residents per square mile than all of North Dakota's most populated counties. According to the tribe, the Turtle Mountain Reservation is the most densely populated reservation in the eight northwestern states (Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa 2005).

Table 2.2 Residents Per Square Mile – Comparisons

Location	Square Miles	2000 Population	Residents per Square Mile
Turtle Mountain Reservation	72	5,815	81
Cass County (Fargo)	1,765	123,138	70
Grand Forks County (Grand Forks)	1,438	66,109	46
Burleigh County (Bismarck)	1,633	69,416	43
Ward County (Minot)	2,103	58,795	28
Rolette County	902	13,674	15
Spirit Lake Reservation	405	4,435	11
Rolette County (Off Reservation)	830	7,859	9
North Dakota (Statewide)	70,704	642,200	9
Fort Berthold Reservation	1,544	5,915	4
Standing Rock Reservation (ND Portion)	1,094	4,044	4

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

Table 2.2 also identifies population densities for the state of North Dakota, Rolette County, and the off-reservation portion of Rolette County. As this table illustrates, Rolette County has a higher-than-average population per square mile, but areas off the reservation have a population density similar to the state average. Given the higher-than-average population density of areas immediately adjacent to the reservation, more distant areas of the county have a population density below state averages, an occurrence that is very typical of rural areas throughout the state.

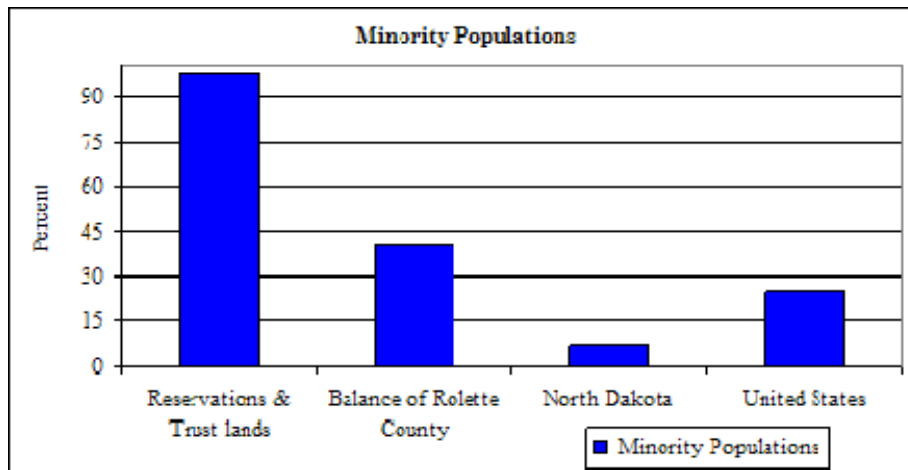
In several respects, the demographic characteristics of Rolette County and the Turtle Mountain Reservation are significantly different from those of the rest of North Dakota and of the United States. These differences manifest themselves primarily in terms of age, minority status, educational attainment, disability status, employment status, and income. Each of these demographic characteristics will be discussed in the following subsections.

2.4.2 Minorities

Rolette County has a higher than average percentage of minorities than the rest of North Dakota. This occurrence relates to the fact that the majority of the county's population lives on or immediately adjacent to the Turtle Mountain Reservation and because the vast majority of these residents are American Indians.

According to 2000 Census data, 97.1% of the residents of the reservation and nearby tribal lands are non-White; 96.4% are American Indian. For other portions of Rolette County, 40.5% of the area's 5,367 residents are non-White. Overall, 75% of Rolette County's residents are non-White. On a statewide and national basis, non-White residents account for 7.6% and 24.9% of the population, respectively. These statistics are presented in graphic form in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4 Minority Populations
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County, North
Dakota, and U.S.



Actual Minority Populations:

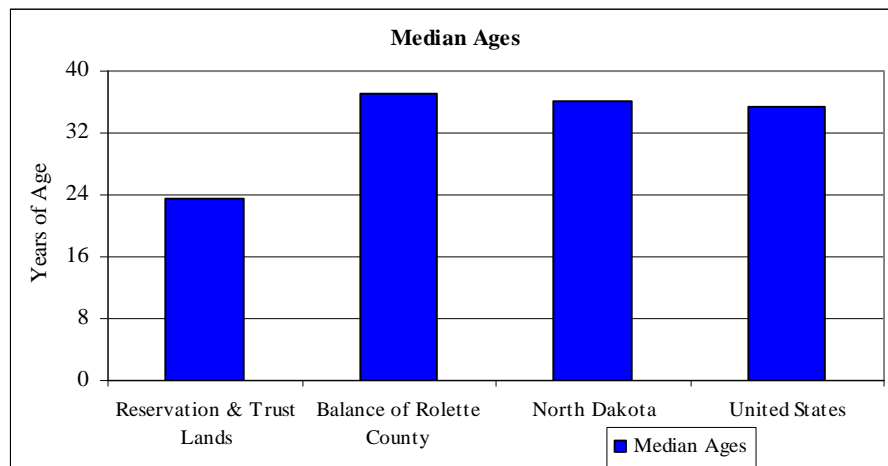
- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 8,065 (97%)*
- *Other Rolette County – 2,174 (40%)*
- *Entire County – 10,239 (75%)*

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

2.4.3 School Age and Senior Citizens

According to the 2000 Census, the median age of all North Dakota residents was 36.2, slightly above the national average of 35.3. Conversely, the median age of residents on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and other area tribal lands was 23.6. It is estimated the median age for other portions of Rolette County is 37.1. These median age comparisons are summarized in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 Median Ages
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County, North Dakota, and U.S.

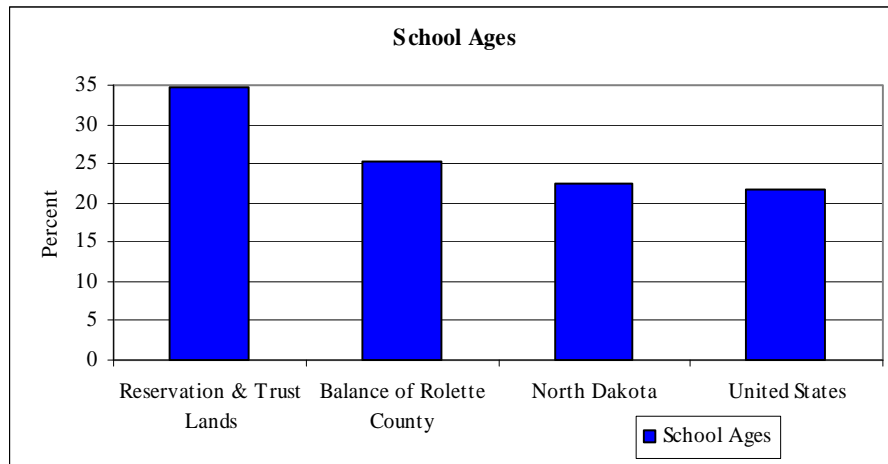


Source: U.S. Census – 2000

In 2000, 2,883 reservation and tribal land residents (34.7%) were school age (5-19). In other portions of Rolette County, school-age residents numbered 1,362, approximately 25.4% of the population.

Statewide, 22.4% of North Dakota's residents fell within this age range. Nationally, 21.8% of all residents were age 5-19. These school-age statistics are presented in graph form in Figure 2.6.

Figure 2.6 School-Age Populations
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County,
North Dakota, and U.S.



Actual Populations:

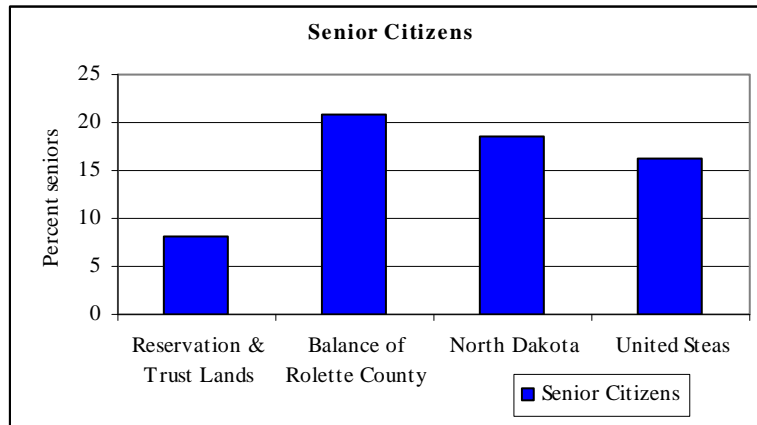
- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 2,883*
- *Other Rolette County – 1,362*

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

On the other end of the age spectrum, only 8.1% of reservation and trust land residents are 60 years of age or older. As depicted in Figure 2.7, comparable figures for other portions of Rolette County, North Dakota, and the country are 20.8%, 18.5%, and 16.2%, respectively. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2000 there were only 671 reservation and trust land residents age 60 or older. In other portions of Rolette County there were 1,114 residents age 60 and over.

As Figure 2.7 illustrates, Rolette County's off-reservation senior population is well above state and national averages while the reservation's senior population is well below the same averages.

Figure 2.7 Senior Populations
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County,
North Dakota, and U.S.



Populations:

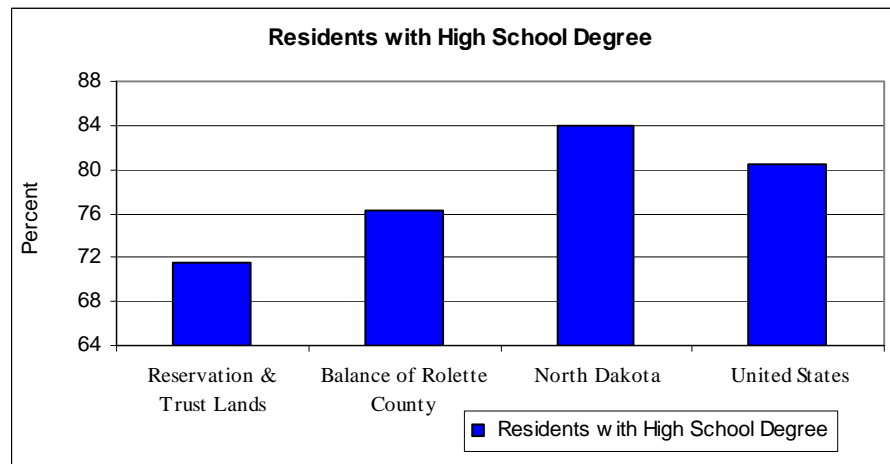
- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 671*
- *Other Rolette County – 1,114*

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

2.4.4 Education

In terms of educational attainment, Figure 2.8 illustrates that 71.5% of reservation and tribal land residents age 25 or older have achieved at least a high school degree. For other portions of Rolette County, this figure stood at 76.3% in the year 2000. Conversely, 83.9% of all comparable-age North Dakotans have attained a similar level of education. Nationally, 80.4% of all residents age 25 and over have at least a high school degree. These achievement statistics are summarized in Figure 2.8.

**Figure 2.8 Educational Attainment
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County, North
Dakota, and U.S.
Residents Age 25 and Over**



Actual Populations:

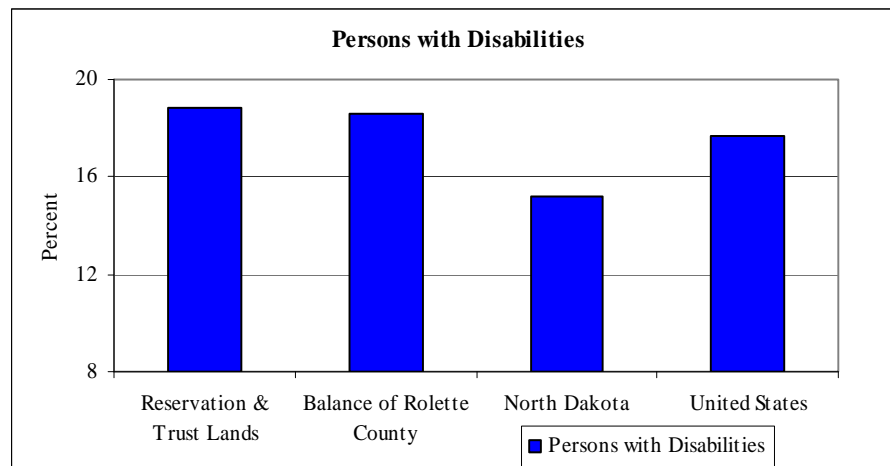
- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 2,871*
- *Other Rolette County – 2,586*

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

2.4.5 Disabilities

The U.S. Census Bureau indicated Rolette County and the Turtle Mountain Reservation are very typical in terms of residents with reported disabilities. In the year 2000, 1,389 reservation and trust land residents (16.7%) reported having some type of disability. As Figure 2.9 indicates, 15.2% of all North Dakota residents and 17.7% of all U.S. residents reported similar disabilities. For other portions of Rolette County, 18.6% of the area's 5,000 preschool-age residents reported having a disability.

Figure 2.9 Disabled Population
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County, North Dakota, and U.S.



Actual Populations:

- Reservation & Trust Lands – 1,389
- Other Rolette County – 928

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

2.4.6 Employment

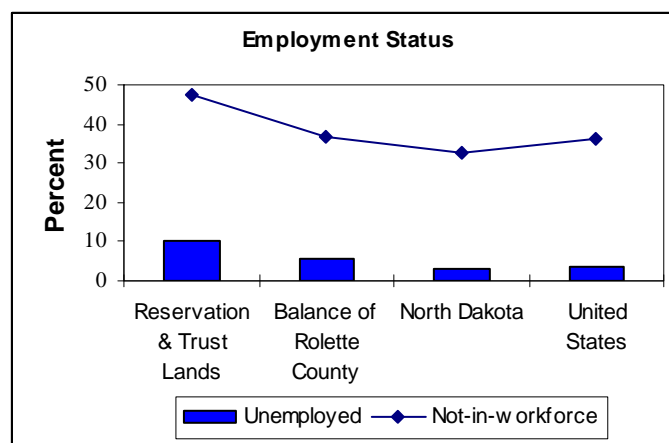
The U.S. Department of Labor defines Rolette County as a labor surplus area. This designation is given to areas with an average unemployment rate at least 20% above the national average (U.S. Department of Labor 2006).

As Figure 2.10 illustrates, U.S. Census data indicates 10.3% of all reservation and tribal land residents age 16 and over were unemployed in the year 2000 and another 47.4% were not in the work force, meaning they were unemployed and not currently seeking employment. Comparable North Dakota figures stood at 3.0% and 32.5%, respectively. Comparable national statistics were 3.7% and 36.1%. Other areas within Rolette County reported an unemployment rate of 5.4% while 36.5% of that area's residents age 16 and over were not in the labor force.

Note that the tribe's unemployment estimates vary significantly from those reflected in Census data. As indicated earlier, BIA estimates suggest the county may have over 2,000 more Native American residents than are reported in Census data and many of these unreported residents may be unemployed and living in poverty. To the extent this is factual, the unemployment numbers discussed in this subsection and the poverty numbers discussed in the following subsections may be significantly understated.

This possible understatement is somewhat verified by the tribe's T.E.R.O. (Tribal Employment Right Ordinance) office. Office personnel report the agency receives approximately 200 new applications for employment every month and it has over 6,000 applications on file (Davis 2006).

**Figure 2.10 Unemployed or Not Currently Seeking Employment Populations
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County,
North Dakota, and U.S.**



Actual Unemployed Populations:

- Reservation & Trust Lands – 539
- Other Rolette County – 218

Actual Unemployed & Not Seeking Employment Populations:

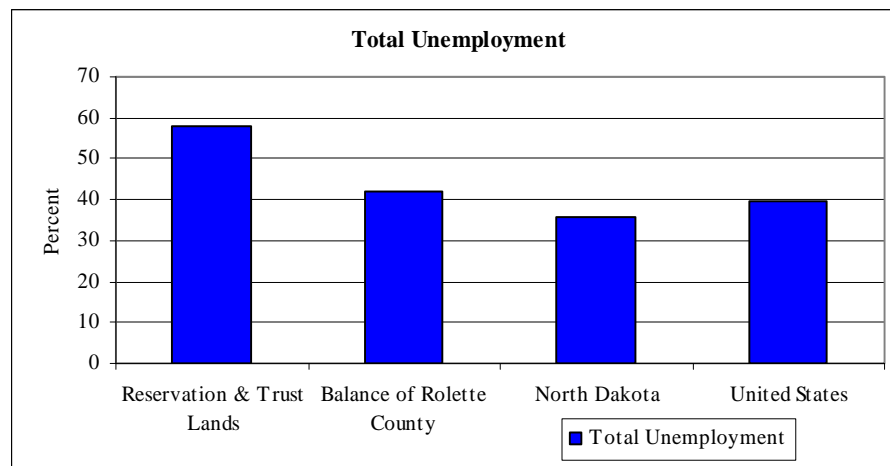
- Reservation & Trust Lands – 2,474
- Other Rolette County – 1,471

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

On a county-wide basis, 2000 Census data reports 8.2% of the workforce-age residents of Rolette County were unemployed. The U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports an even higher unemployment rate of 9.4%. BLS reports show a 9.5% unemployment rate for Rolette County in 2005, considerably higher than North Dakota's 3.4% and the nation's 5.1%.

In terms of the total number of unemployed residents, both unemployed and those not currently seeking employment, Census data reflects there were 3,013 reservation and tribal land residents age 16 and over that were not employed in the year 2000. For other portions of Rolette County, the total for these employment categories was 1,691. As Figure 2.11 indicates, these totals represented 57.7% of the reservation and tribal land's employment-age population and 42.0% of the population in other portions of the county.

**Figure 2.11 Total Unemployed Populations
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County,
North Dakota, and U.S.**



Actual Populations:

- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 3,013*
- *Other Rolette County – 1,691*

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

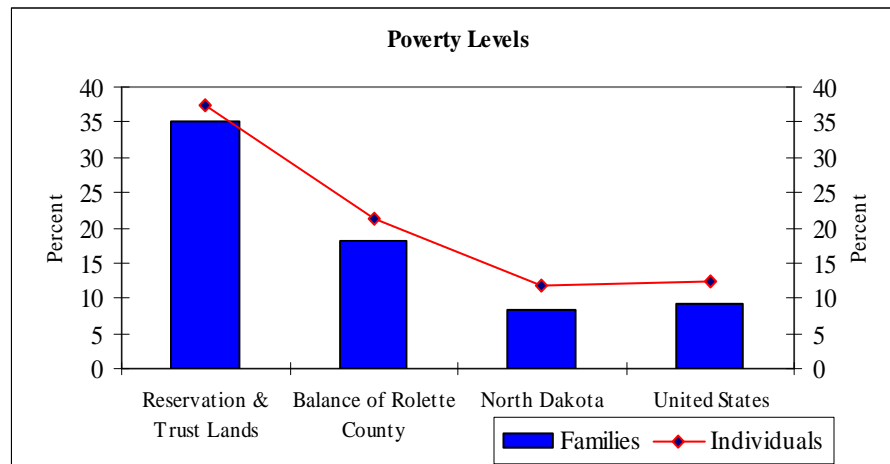
Turtle Mountain Reservation has a Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance (T.E.R.O.), which functions like Job Services. Local residents can register with the T.E.R.O. office if they are looking for employment. Entities that wish to conduct business on the reservation must also register with the office. As of June 2006, the tribe's T.E.R.O. office had 6,000 names of available workers on file (Davis 2006).

2.4.7 Poverty & Income Levels

According to the director of Rolette County Social Services, 27% of North Dakota's Temporary Aid for Need Families (TANF) caseload is in Rolette County. These Rolette County cases involve 714 families and 1,943 individuals. There are 1,951 households, or an estimated 4,629 individuals in Rolette County, who receive federal food assistance. This total equals approximately one-third of the county's entire population (Mathiason 2006).

U.S. Census data indicate 35.1% of the families and 37.4% of the individuals age 18 and over that live on the reservation and nearby tribal land were living in poverty in 1999. North Dakota's comparable poverty categories, as depicted in Figure 2.7, were reported at 8.3% and 11.9%, respectively. National numbers stood at 9.2% and 12.4%, very similar to those reported in the state. For other areas in Rolette County, these statistics were reported at 18.2% and 21.2%, respectively. These statistics are presented in graphic form in Figure 2.12.

Figure 2.12 Poverty Levels – Families & Individuals
Reservation & Trust Lands, Other Rolette County, North
Dakota, and U.S.



Actual TANF Family Populations:

- Reservation & Trust Lands – 686
- Other Rolette County – 257

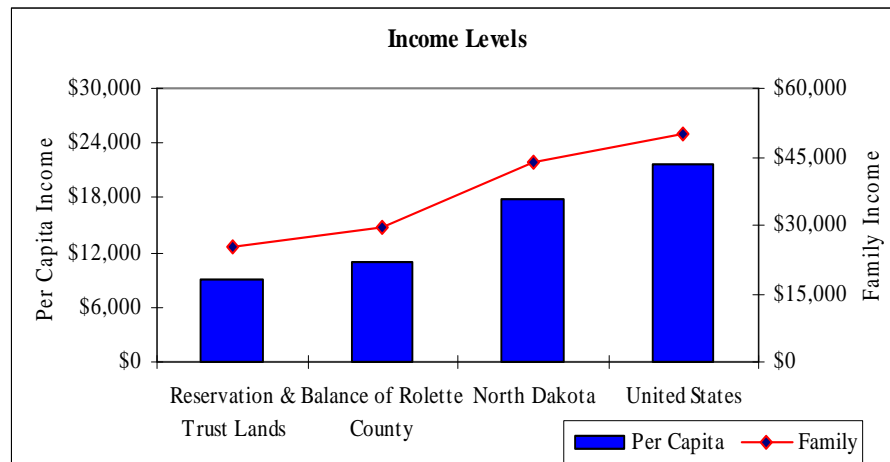
Actual TANF Individual Populations:

- Reservation & Trust Lands – 3,054
- Other Rolette County – 1,134

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

According to the 2000 Census, in 1999 per capita income of reservation and tribal trust land residents was \$9,001 and the median family income was \$25,417. Comparable statistics for Rolette County, North Dakota, and the United States are presented in Figure 2.13. As Figure 2.12 illustrates, per capita income levels on and around the reservation are at about 50% of state levels and 42% of national levels. Family income levels for reservation and trust land residents are about 58% of state levels and 50% of national levels.

Figure 2.13 Per Capita and Family Incomes
Reservation & Trust Lands, Rolette County, North Dakota, and U.S.



Actual Per Capita Income Levels:

- Reservation & Trust Lands - \$9,001
- Rolette County - \$10,873
- N.D. - \$17,769
- U.S. - \$21,580

Actual Family Income Levels:

- Reservation & Trust Lands - \$25,417
- Rolette County - \$29,744
- N.D. - \$43,654
- U.S. - \$50,046

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

2.4.8 Households without Motor Vehicles

The final demographic factor to be discussed in this section involves households without motor vehicles. Information specific to the Turtle Mountain Reservation is not available, so this discussion will focus on data related to Rolette County and the state as a whole.

In the year 2000, 10.6% or 482 of the households in Rolette County did not own a motor vehicle. During the same year, 6.6% of all households in the state did not own a motor vehicle. Rolette County had the highest percentage of vehicle-less households of all of North Dakota's 53 counties (Population Bulletin 2003).

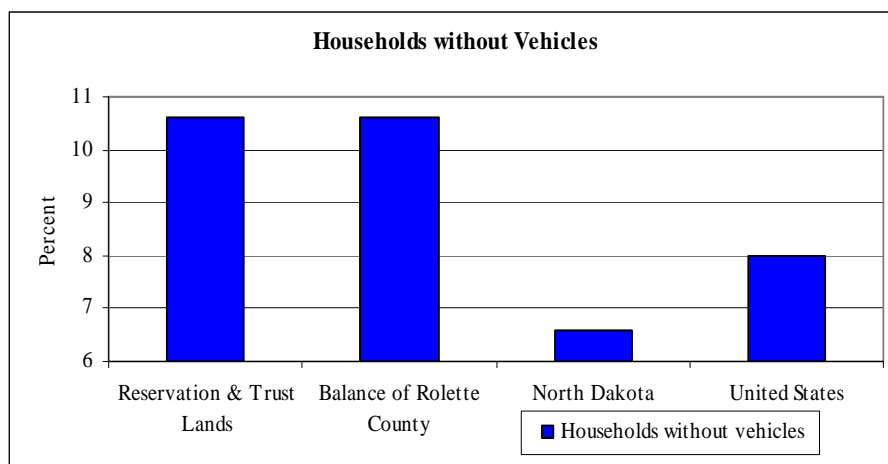
Rolette County also has a higher-than-average number of persons per household. In 2000, Rolette County had 2.97 persons per household, considerably higher than the state average of 2.41. It is therefore estimated there are approximately 1,449 individuals in Rolette County who reside in households that do not have a motor vehicle.

The Turtle Mountain Reservation and its surrounding tribal lands have an even higher number of persons per household. According to 2000 Census data, households on the reservation and nearby tribal lands had an average of 3.07 residents per household. Adjusting for this household size, remaining areas of the county have an average of 2.81 residents per household.

Assuming a constant 10.6% vehicle-less population across the county, there are approximately 870 individuals on the reservation and nearby tribal lands who live in households without a vehicle. Given the poverty levels and Census undercounting considerations discussed earlier, it is believed this number may, in fact, be considerably higher. It is estimated there are another 560 individuals elsewhere in Rolette County who live in households that do not have a motor vehicle.

Actual Rolette County and estimated reservation numbers are presented in Figure 2.14. In both instances, it is estimated 10.6% of the population resides in a household that does not possess an automobile for personal transportation. The U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics estimates 8% of all U.S. households do not have a vehicle.

Figure 2.14 Households without Motor Vehicles
Reservation & Trust Lands, Rolette County, and North Dakota



Families Without Vehicles:

- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 283*
- *Remainder of Rolette County – 199*
- *Entire County - 482*

Individuals Without Vehicles:

- *Reservation & Trust Lands – 870*
- *Remainder of Rolette County – 560*
- *Entire County - 1,430*

Source: North Dakota State Data Center

2.4.9 Demographic Summary

From the foregoing discussion, it may be summarized that the Turtle Mountain Reservation and the surrounding tribal land is densely populated, by North Dakota standards, and its residents are minorities, relatively young, slightly under-educated, highly unemployed, and low income. Disability levels for reservation residents are comparable to state and national levels. The county has a higher-than-average number of households that do not own a motor vehicle.

2.5 Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations

In September 2005, SURTC published a report commissioned by the North Dakota Department of Transportation which focused on the personal mobility needs of North Dakotans (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center 2005). That report and many other transportation needs studies identify six subgroups within the population which tend to have transportation needs that the individuals within those groups are unable to provide for themselves. These subgroups include:

- Seniors
- Elementary and high school age students
- Low income
- Disabled
- Minorities
- Individuals in households without motor vehicles

The preceding subsections of this section touched on each of these populations as they relate to reservation and county demographics. Table 2.3 summarizes corresponding data for both the Turtle Mountain Reservation and nearby tribal trust lands and other portions of Rolette County.

**Table 2.3 Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations in Rolette County
Reservation & Tribal Trust Lands and Other Portions of Rolette County**

Population Subgroups	Reservation & Trust Land		Other Rolette County	
	2000	Percent	2000	Percent
Seniors (age 60 & over)	671	8.1	1,114	20.8
School age students	2,883	34.7	1,362	25.4
Low income families	686	35.1	257	18.2
Low income individuals	3,054	37.4	1,134	21.2
Disabled	1,389	18.8	928	18.6
Minorities (non-White)	8,065	97.1	2,174	40.5
Individuals without vehicles	870	10.6	1,430	10.6

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

It is important to note that the populations of the various population subgroups identified in Table 2.3 cannot be totaled to determine an area's total transportation disadvantaged population. This inability is based on the fact that many of the individuals reflected in these statistics may be in multiple subgroups. For example, an individual may be a member of a minority, elderly, low income, disabled, and without a vehicle. Adding subgroup totals could, therefore, result in double, triple, or even quadruple counting.

Table 2.4 restates the transportation-disadvantaged population data presented in Table 2.2 and compares it with state and national percentages reported earlier in this section.

**Table 2.4 Transportation-Disadvantaged Populations - Comparisons
Turtle Mountain Reservation, Rolette County, & North Dakota**

Population Subgroup	Reservation & Trust Lands	Other Rolette County	North Dakota	United States
Seniors (age 60 & over)	8.1%	20.8%	15.0%	16.2%
School age students	34.7%	25.4%	20.0%	21.8%
Low income families	35.1%	18.2%	8.3%	9.2%
Low income individuals	37.4%	21.2%	11.9%	12.4%
Disabled	18.8%	18.6%	15.2%	17.7%
Minorities (non-White)	97.1%	40.5%	7.6%	24.9%
Individuals without vehicles	10.6%	10.6%	6.6%	8.0%

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

As Table 2.4 indicates, the Turtle Mountain Reservation and its nearby trust lands have a relatively small senior population, but the remainder of Rolette County has a higher-than-average concentration of seniors. Both areas have higher-than-average concentrations of school-age students, low income families and individuals, minorities, and individuals without direct access to a motor vehicle. In each of these categories, the concentrations are higher on the reservation and its trust lands than in the remainder of the county. Both areas have slightly higher-than-average concentrations of disabled residents, but the variations are relatively insignificant.

In summary, this data suggests that both the Turtle Mountain Reservation and its tribal trust land and the remainder of Rolette County have average or above concentrations of population groups that are typically mobility disadvantaged and, therefore, in need of public transportation services to satisfy their personal mobility needs.

Existing means of personal mobility, including public transportation services, are the topic of the next section.

2.6 References

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3. Means of Personal Mobility and Trip Generators

3.1 Introduction

As the preceding section indicated, the Turtle Mountain Reservation and the surrounding area have fairly sizable populations of individuals who are traditionally considered transportation disadvantaged. This section will inventory means of personal mobility available to meet the transportation needs of these and other area residents. Following this inventory, this section will identify concentrations of residential housing within the county and major trip generators – an identification of places where area residents live and where they want and need to go. Section 4 will focus on which of these travel needs are going unmet and related obstacles being faced by individual travelers.

3.2 Section Highlights

- Transportation service providers – Three service providers are available to provide public transportation services to area residents.
- Automobiles – Private automobiles are the primary means of transportation for area residents.
- School transportation – The county’s seven schools operate 53 rural bus routes and transport about 62% of the county’s students to and from school each day.
- Pre-school – The tribe’s five Head Start centers operate 11 vehicles to transport pre-school riders.
- Ambulances – There are three ambulance services in Rolette County. These services and private automobiles provide more Medicaid-related services than anywhere else in North Dakota.
- Nursing homes – There are two licensed nursing homes in the county; both have handicapped accessible vehicles to transport their residents.
- Housing concentrations – The majority of the county’s residents live immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 281 between Dunseith and Rolla; many reside in one of the tribe’s housing clusters. Rural areas have approximately one household per square mile.
- Transportation destinations - Most of the travel destinations in the county are located immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 281 between Dunseith and Rolla. Primary trip purposes include employment, medical and compliance appointments, education, and shopping.
- Employment – there are approximately 6,500 jobs in Rolette County; nearly half are private sector jobs and 40% are government-related. The majority of the county’s largest employers are located near Belcourt but the largest number of employers is located in Rolla.
- Medical transportation – The county’s medical clinics are located in Belcourt, Dunseith, Rolette, and Rolla. The county’s two hospitals are located in Belcourt and Rolla. Minot is the region’s largest medical destination.
- Education transportation – Other than the area’s K-12 schools, Turtle Mountain Community College is the area’s primary education-related destination.
- Shopping – Rolla is the county’s primary retail center, both in terms of businesses and retail sales.
- Compliance trips – Most of the county’s employment and social service agencies are located in Belcourt and Rolla. Both communities serve as destinations for related trips.
- Other vehicles – In addition to agency-owned and private automobiles, there are approximately 130 vehicles in Rolette County used to provide transportation services to students, senior citizens, medical patients, agency clients, and the general public.

3.3 Means of Personal Mobility

The advisory committee provided researchers with valuable insights concerning means of personal mobility available to satisfy the transportation needs of area residents. The following list summarizes travel methods identified by committee members:

- Commercial transportation services
- Public transportation services
- Automobiles
- School buses and other school vehicles
- Ambulance and other hospital vehicles
- Head Start and day care vehicles
- Nursing home vehicles
- Recreational vehicles
- Pedestrian and bicycle transportation

Each of these means of transportation will be discussed in the following subsections.

3.3.1 Commercial Transportation Services

The only commercial transportation service available on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and elsewhere in Rolette County is the taxi service operated by Royal Coach Transportation of Belcourt. The company provides services county-wide from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. Primary in-county destinations include Belcourt and Rolla; company vehicles also travel to Minot an average of two times per week to take area residents to medical appointments. Occasional trips are made to other destinations such as Devils Lake and Grand Forks.

Royal Coach is incorporated and receives financial assistance through NDDOT. This assistance comes primarily in the form of FTA Section 5311 operating funds. As a for-profit business, Royal Coach is not eligible to receive state aid funds as will be discussed later.

Royal Coach operates a wide variety of vehicles for associated business enterprises, but its taxi operations depend primarily on three handicapped-accessible vans. It expects to take delivery of a fourth vehicle, a 17-passenger handicapped-accessible bus, in late 2006. This bus and its three vans were purchased with 80-20 FTA grants administered by NDDOT.

Royal Coach provides daily service from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. It charges a \$5 pick-up fee plus \$1 per mile; more than 90% of the company's clients are routinely unable to pay the full fare and a portion of the amount payable is waived. From July 2005 through June 2006, Royal Coach provided 4,491 one-way passenger trips (Hamley 2006).

Despite the lack of other commercial transportation services in Rolette County, area residents do depend on other service providers to meet their transportation needs. These service providers operate elsewhere within the region and connect to other regions of the state and nation. These service providers include commercial airlines, intercity buses, and passenger rail service.

Area residents who need to travel outside the region via commercial transportation can access related services at larger nearby cities. Table 3.1 identifies five North Dakota cities which serve as commercial

transportation centers and which might typically be used by residents of Rolette County. This table also lists the approximate highway miles from Belcourt to each of these regional centers.

Table 3.1 Regional Transportation and Service Centers

City	Population	Miles from Belcourt
Devils Lake	7,222	83
Minot	36,567	112
Grand Forks	49,321	173
Bismarck	55,532	198
Fargo	90,599	254

*Source: North Dakota Department of Transportation and
U.S. Census – 2000*

In addition to serving as points where area residents might gain access to intrastate and interstate commercial transportation services, the cities identified in Table 3.1 also serve as regional centers in terms of expanded medical services, shopping, recreational activities, etc. The need to access related facilities and services will be discussed elsewhere in this report.

It should also be noted that Belcourt and the Turtle Mountain Reservation are located in relatively close proximity to two major Canadian cities, namely Brandon and Winnipeg, Manitoba. Brandon, a city of nearly 40,000 people, is located 90 miles northwest of Belcourt. Winnipeg, with a population of 620,000, is located 175 northeast of Belcourt.

Because of their size and location, Brandon and Winnipeg would seem to be natural service centers for Rolette County and the Turtle Mountain Reservation. In most instances, however, there is a natural tendency for area residents to gravitate toward regional centers in their own country. In some instances, these tendencies relate to currency exchange rates and customs duties. In other instances, especially related to medical services, differing medical and insurance systems discourage cross-border trips to access related services.

Figure 3.1 illustrates the location of the Turtle Mountain Reservation and Rolette County relative to each of the regional centers listed in Table 3.1. The map in Figure 3.1 also identifies the route travelers might take to travel from Belcourt to each respective regional center. Even though it is not a regional center, Figure 3.1 also includes the city of Rugby, North Dakota. As will be discussed later, Rugby serves as the nearest access point for intercity bus and rail services.

Figure 3.1 Study Area Location Relative to Regional Centers



Source: North Dakota Department of Transportation

Because of their location relative to Rolette County, Devils Lake and Minot serve as the primary regional service centers for area residents. In terms of commercial airline service, both cities are served exclusively by Northwest Airlines with connections to Minneapolis. Devils Lake has two daily flights to Minneapolis via Jamestown, N.D. Minot has three daily flights directly to Minneapolis.

Three of North Dakota's 90 general aviation airports are located in Rolette County – one at Rolla, one at Rolette, and one at the International Peace Gardens north of Dunseith. These airports are available for use primarily by air taxi operators, private aircraft, and air ambulance services.

Individuals wishing to travel to or from the area via intercity bus can access bus service at Minot or Devils Lake or elsewhere along U.S. Highway 2, which runs between the two cities. As indicated in Figure 3.1, the access point nearest Rolette County is Rugby, which is located approximately 40 miles southwest of Belcourt.

Intercity bus service is provided by New Town Bus Line (NTB). This service operates one eastbound and one westbound bus five days per week. Interstate connections are possible once travelers reach Bismarck or Grand Forks. NTB also receives Section 5311 assistance from NDDOT.

The final means of commercial transportation services available to area residents is via rail. Like the intercity bus service described above, rail passenger service runs through the region parallel to U.S.

Highway 2. Service is provided by Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corporation) on its Empire Builder route.

The Empire Builder route runs eastbound to Minneapolis and Chicago and westbound to Seattle and Portland. Service is provided daily; the nearest stations are located at Minot, Rugby, and Devils Lake. The location of these communities relative to the reservation and Rolette County is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

3.3.2 Public Transportation Services

As described in the preceding discussion of Royal Coach Transportation, traditional non-profit public transportation services in Rolette County and on the Turtle Mountain Reservation are funded through programs administered by NDDOT. The primary sources of funding are the FTA and state motor vehicle license assessment fees.

Public transportation services in the six-county region are coordinated by the North Central Planning Council based in Devils Lake. The council is a non-profit corporation formed in 1972 by participating counties and soil conservation districts. The council exists to help plan and coordinate a wide variety of publicly-supported programs and activities in the region. Transportation is one of the council's primary activities.

Concerning transportation, NDDOT uses the council as the focal point to provide funding to the 11 publicly-supported service providers in the region. In addition to Royal Coach Transportation, there are two other providers that operate in Rolette County. These two providers, Nutrition United and Nutrition & Support Services, will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Primary funding sources for these two providers include federal and state grant monies and rider fares. Federal funds come mainly from the FTA in the form of Section 5309 (capital improvements) and Section 5311 (operating) monies. Related programs are administered by NDDOT.

State operating assistance funds are provided via a public transportation fund established by the North Dakota Legislature in 1989. State law (North Dakota Century Code Section 39-04.2) assesses a \$3 fee on every motor vehicle license issued by the state. These monies are distributed back to each county and related public transportation service provider. Each county receives \$18,300 per year plus approximately \$1.50 per capita, depending upon actual state-wide program receipts. If there is more than one service provider in the county, these funds are divided among the carriers based on elderly and disabled passenger ridership.

State law initially levied a fee of \$1 per license. That assessment was increased to \$2 in 1997 and to \$3 in 2005. As a result of this increase, program funding is expected to increase from \$1.6 million to approximately \$2.2 million annually. It is expected that Rolette County and its two non-profit service providers will receive a total of \$44,554 for fiscal year 2006-07. This money is used by the service providers to fund related operations and as a match for federal grants.

Prior to discussing the county's non-private transit service providers, note that the 2005 federal highway bill, The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), established a new grant program that relates specifically to transit programs involving Indian tribes (49 U.S.C. 5311 (c)(1)). Funding for this program starts out at \$8 million for fiscal year 2006 and increases over the life of the bill to \$15 million for fiscal year 2009; a total of \$45 million was appropriated for the program over the life of the bill. Related program guidelines were published in the

August 15, 2006, Federal Register. Grant applications must be submitted by October 16, 2006. SURTC's tribal liaison and the North Central Planning Council were notified of these guidelines and deadlines on August 16, 2006.

Concerning the county's service providers, Nutrition United is a private, non-profit entity based in Rolla, the county seat. Rolla is located approximately six miles east of Belcourt and immediately adjacent to the eastern edge of the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Nutrition United is attempting to influence the public's perception of its transit services and now provides related services under the business name of Rolette County Transit, thereby disassociating itself with services that are nutrition-related or available strictly for senior citizens.

Nutrition United/Rolette County Transit (RCT) provides dial-a-ride service to the general public as well as elderly and disabled individuals in non-reservation portions of Rolette County. RCT has four vans. One is a spare and the other three are based in Rolla, Dunseith, and Rolette. The Rolla and Rolette vans are handicapped accessible.

Rolla's services are primarily local and provide area residents with access to medical and social service appointments, shopping, etc. Services are provided from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The van based in Dunseith is used to provide service from western portions of the county to appointments in Dunseith, Bottineau, Rugby, Belcourt, and Rolla. Services are typically available between 9:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Related trips are significantly more time consuming and mileage intensive than the local trips provided by RCT's dial-a-ride service in Rolla.

RCT's third active van is based in Rolette. It is used quite sparingly with local service being offered only about two hours per week.

RCT charges \$1 for one-way trips and \$1.50 for round-trips in Rolla and Rolette. The Dunseith service charges \$2 for round-trips of 17 miles or less and \$7 for longer trips. For the 12-month period ending June 30, 2005, RCT provided a total of 5,922 one-way passenger trips. It has an annual operating budget of approximately \$48,000 (Leonard 2006).

Nutrition & Support Services is a transportation service operated by the tribe on the reservation. The service is based in Belcourt and provides local dial-a-ride service from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. In addition to local transportation, the service also provides area residents with transportation to Minot (210 miles round trip) for medical appointments, etc. This service is provided two to three times per week. The service has two 17-passenger buses and one van; one of the service's buses was largely unused between July 2005 and June 2006.

Nutrition & Support Services transit services are available to the general public and are operated in conjunction with the service's senior meals program; the budgets of the two programs are apparently difficult to segregate. Best estimates indicate annual costs associated with transit-related services total approximately \$49,000. Based on May 2006 operating statistics, it is anticipated the service will provide nearly 8,000 one-way passenger trips during the upcoming year (Morin 2006).

Table 3.2 summarizes some of the key operating statistics reported by the area's three publicly-supported transportation service providers. This data will be compared with national averages in later sections and will serve as a basis for determining what might be achievable in terms of service levels and operating efficiencies in the study area.

**Table 3.2 Operating Statistics
Publicly Supported Service Providers**

	Royal Coach	Rolette County Transit	Nutrition & Support Services
Type of Service	Taxi	Dial-a-ride	Dial-a-ride
Service Area	Rolette County	Rolette County	Reservation
Operating Budget	\$72,312	\$43,615	\$49,284
Annual Miles	58,500	25,612	25,140
Vehicle Hours	11,232	2,750	3,540
Passenger Trips	4,491	5,922	7,956
Vehicles	3 vans (all accessible)	4 vans (2 accessible)	1 van & 2 buses (all accessible)
Full Time vehicles	3	2	2

Source: Royal Coach Transportation, Rolette County Transit, and Nutrition & Support Services

The services provided by the area's three publicly-supported operators are loosely coordinated, partially via their affiliation with North Central Planning Council. Each operator is familiar with the others' operations and seeks to minimize duplication. It does not appear, however, that there are strategic plans in place to coordinate related services throughout the county.

3.3.3 Automobiles

This study's advisory committee indicated private automobiles provide three forms of personal mobility for area residents. The first of these is transportation for individuals and members of their immediate household. The second role of private automobiles is to provide transportation for extended family members and for friends. The third group transported by private automobile is coworkers via carpool arrangements.

Given the relative lack of public and commercial transportation services, the dispersed nature of tribal housing clusters, distances between places in rural settings like Rolette County, and harsh winter weather, it is expected that dependence on private automobiles would be greater in the study area than in other parts of North Dakota and the nation. This dependence on automobiles is exacerbated by the fact that vehicle ownership is lower in Rolette County than anywhere else in North Dakota. As discussed in Section 2, 10.6% of the households in Rolette County do not own a motor vehicle. This compares to a statewide average of 6.6%.

The lack of transportation alternatives and low vehicle ownership rates explain the advisory committee's listing of family and friends as a primary means of personal transportation. Many area residents depend on family and friends to provide transportation via their personal automobiles. Reportedly, much of this transportation is provided free of charge or with passengers making a per-trip contribution to help cover associated expenses.

Regarding commuting, 2000 Census data reports 87.7% of all North Dakota workers depend on personal vehicles to commute to and from work. In Rolette County, this percentage climbs to 89.9% on the reservation; and on nearby trust lands, it jumps to 95.8%.

As indicated in Table 3.3, this same data indicates more than 20% of the workers who reside on the reservation and nearby tribal lands commute to work via carpool, more than double the state average. As is the case with family and friends transportation, this occurrence is reflective of low vehicle ownership rates and the relative lack of other transportation alternatives.

**Table 3.3 Commuting to Work
Reservation & Trust Land, Rolette County, and North Dakota**

	Reservation & Trust Lands	Rolette County	North Dakota
Workers 16 & Over	2,183	4,482	319,481
Drive Alone	75.1%	71.4%	77.7%
Carpool	20.7%	18.5%	10.0%

Source: U.S. Census – 2000

Although not identified as a use of private automobiles by the study’s advisory committee, interviews with human services and medical personnel revealed private vehicles are also used by some organizations to provide client-specific transportation. Tribal Child Welfare, for example, reimburses employees who use their own vehicles to provide transportation services to clients. Related costs total about \$15,000 per year (Poitre 2006). The tribe’s Community Health Representative Program also uses private automobiles to provide medical-related transportation services to some of its clients. Salaried drivers are used to provide these services (Poitra 2006).

Job Service North Dakota facilitates the use of private automobiles by some of its clients by providing funding to make their personal vehicles operable. These vehicles are then used to access supportive services and to facilitate job searches. These TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) clients are eligible to receive up to \$500 or more for private automobile expenses such as licensing, insurance, and repairs. Up to an additional \$100 may be available to defray monthly operating expenses. Job Service personnel estimate the Rolla office spends between \$75,000 and \$100,000 annually to facilitate private automobile use by its clients (Albert 2006).

3.3.4 School Buses and Other School Vehicles

There are five public school districts in Rolette County. These districts are based in the county’s five largest communities, namely Belcourt, Dunseith, Rolette, Rolla, and St. John. All five districts offer classes from kindergarten through grade 12.

The Rolette, Rolla, and St. John public school districts each operate out of a single facility. Dunseith has two public school buildings - one for kindergarten through grade 6 and one for grades 7-12. The Belcourt district has three schools – one for kindergarten through grade 5, one for grades 6-8, and one for grades 9-12. The Belcourt district is currently building a new high school. Its current high school facility will be converted to a middle school.

In addition to the schools operated by the county’s five public school districts, there are also two schools in the county operated by the tribe. These schools are located in Dunseith and Belcourt and both offer classes for students from kindergarten through grade 8. The tribe is currently building a new Belcourt school facility about one mile southwest of Belcourt. When it becomes operational, this school will offer classes from kindergarten through grade 12.

Table 3.4 summarizes the student enrollment in each of the county's public and BIA school districts, and identifies what percentage of each entity's students is transported to and from school via school-operated buses.

Table 3.4 School Enrollment and Bus Populations
Rolette County School Districts & BIA Schools
School Year 2004-2005

School	Enrollment	Number Transported	Percent Transported
Belcourt	1,686	1,025	60.8%
Dunseith	448	282	62.9%
Dunseith Day	173	173	100.0%
Ojibwa (Belcourt)	282	179	63.5%
Rolette	182	113	62.1%
Rolla	315	110	34.9%
St. John	303	231	76.2%
Total	3,389	2,113	62.4%

*Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
Bureau of Indian Affairs Turtle Mountain Agency (Davis)*

The enrollment figures presented in Table 3.4 are lower than the school-aged Census populations reported in Section 2. It is anticipated these differences exist for several reasons, including declining statewide school populations, the fact that some county residents attend school in districts outside the county, and many students complete high school at age 18, while Census data includes 19-year-old students in the school-age population.

As indicated in Table 3.4, 62.4% of the students who go to school in one of the county's five public school districts travel to school by bus. It is anticipated the majority of the approximately 38% of students who are not being transported by bus live in the town where the school is located or voluntarily provide their own transportation. Based on the relatively small size of each community, students who live in these towns have short trips to school, often only a few blocks.

Table 3.5 lists the number of rural bus routes operated by each district, along with the average number of students that ride on each district's buses. As this table indicates, the number of bus routes operated by the county's school districts varies significantly, with the vast majority of routes being operated by the Belcourt district.

Table 3.5 School District Bus Routes and Route Ridership
Rolette County School Districts
School Year 2004-2005

School	Vehicles	Rural Routes	Annual Rides	Annual Miles	Average Riders/Route*
Belcourt	37	22	272,302	198,604	35.0
Dunseith	14	7	84,078	124,906	33.9
Dunseith Day	6	4	59,858	53,681	42.3
Ojibwa (Belcourt)	10	8	59,720	77,880	21.1
Rolette	12	5	36,599	83,386	20.7
Rolla	8	3	33,380	52,592	31.4
St. John	9	4	83,793	100,686	59.2
Total	96	53	629,730	691,735	33.6

* Based on state average of 177 operating days per year and two trips per day.

*Source: North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
Bureau of Indian Affairs Turtle Mountain Agency (Davis)*

As Table 3.5 indicates, the county's 53 rural school routes have an average ridership of 33.6 students per run. According to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the average school bus in the state has a capacity of 42 passengers, with some being designed to carry over 70 passengers. Assuming that the buses in Rolette County are of average size, these buses have the physical ability to transport not only students but also an average of eight other individuals.

In addition to the rural routes listed in Table 3.5, the Belcourt district also operates four in-town routes and four special education routes. The only other route operated by any of the county's five school districts is another special education route operated by the Dunseith district.

In addition to providing transportation to and from school, school districts also operate buses and other vehicles to provide students with transportation to and from off-campus classes, field trips, extra-curricular activities, etc. Athletic events are a major area of activity for schools. Related transportation is typically provided for team members but not for other students, family members, or other fans. These individuals typically travel to out-of-town competitions in personal vehicles.

3.3.5 Ambulance and Other Hospital/Medical Vehicles

The advisory committee identified ambulances and other hospital vehicles as one of the means of transportation available to area residents. There are three ambulance services in Rolette County. These services are based in Belcourt, Rolla, and Rolette; each is associated with local medical facilities. All three are licensed as basic life support services by the North Dakota Department of Health.

Table 3.6 summarizes vehicle and patient trip data for these three ambulance services. As indicated, the service in Belcourt is considerably busier than those in Rolla and Rolette.

Table 3.6 Ambulance Service Operating Statistics – Rolette County, 2005

Community	Ambulance Vehicles	Emergency Trips	Non-Emergency Trips	Total Trips
Belcourt	4	1,403	864	2,267
Rolette	2	50	1	51
Rolla	2	409	0	409
Total	8	1,862	865	2,727

Source: North Dakota Department of Health (Meyer)

There are two hospitals in Rolette County – one in Belcourt and one in Rolla. The primary destination for the Rolla and Rolette ambulance services is the hospital in Rolla. The hospital in Belcourt is the primary destination for the Belcourt service.

In 2003, Rolette County ranked first in North Dakota in terms of providing Medicaid-related transportation services. Medicaid is a federal program which provides various medical services to eligible low-income individuals. Emergency and non-emergency transportation to access these services are allowable program costs. This transportation may be strictly local or it may involve transporting eligible recipients to services only available at more distant medical centers, either in North Dakota or out of state.

Transportation-related services are categorized as transit/taxi, private providers, and ambulance. According to the North Dakota Department of Health, Rolette County ranks number one in the state in all three categories in terms of miles driven to provide related services and number three in terms of total transportation-related expenditures. These statistics are summarized in Table 3.7. These high-mileage and expense numbers are presumably directly related to high program eligibility rates in the county and the fact that many participants do not have personal transportation they can use to access related services.

Table 3.7 Medicaid Transportation Service – Rolette County, 2003

Service Provider	Miles Driven	Expense
Transit/Taxi	412,380	\$32,417
Private Providers	2,013,912	\$83,902
Ambulance	109,320	\$68,912
Totals	2,535,612	\$185,231

Source: North Dakota Department of Human Services (Fleckenstein)

All three of Rolette County's ambulance services are authorized to provide Medicaid-related emergency medical transportation services. The only authorized non-emergency service provider is Belcourt's Royal Coach Transportation.

In addition to using transit and taxi services, program participants can also use transportation provided by individuals who have enrolled with the Department of Health to provide such services. As indicated in Table 3.7, these private services provided over two million miles of Medicaid transportation services in Rolette County in 2003.

It is important to note the expenditures reflected in Table 3.7 do not include those made by the Quentin N. Burdick Memorial Healthcare Facility in Belcourt or the Community Health Representative Program discussed earlier. Burdick Healthcare estimates it spends in excess of \$325,000 annually to provide referral-related transportation to its patients who need to travel to other facilities in cities such as Minot. High risk patients are typically transported by ambulance while others are transported in vans and sport utility vehicles. Facility administrators estimate two to three patients are transported to Minot Monday through Friday of each week (Bercier 2006).

3.3.6 Head Start and Day Care Vehicles

The federal Head Start program is designed to promote social competence in children of low-income families and children with disabilities. Children age five and under are eligible to participate. According to the North Dakota Head Start Association, there were more than 3,300 pre-school children enrolled in programs at one of North Dakota's 71 Head Start centers in 2003. Some Head Start centers provide transportation services to program participants while others do not.

There are five Head Start centers being operated by Turtle Mountain Chippewa Head Start in Rolette County. These centers have a total enrollment of approximately 330, and operate 11 vehicles, which are used to transport children to and from related programs (Ramey 2006). Local centers and the number of vehicles operated by each are listed below:

- Belcourt Head Start Center (Belcourt) – 6 buses
- Shell Valley Head Start Center (Belcourt) – 1 bus
- Downtown Dunseith Head Start Center (Dunseith) – 1 bus
- North Dunseith Head Start Center (Rural Dunseith) – 2 buses
- St. John Head Start Center (St. John) – 1 bus

Only one of these buses is handicapped accessible. It is positioned on whatever route may require related accessibility.

Head Start is a program operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Agency rules require efforts be made to coordinate related transportation services with other human service programs. It appears Head Start equipment may be shared with non-Head Start programs in collaborative arrangements (Withers 2006).

There are nine licensed day care programs in Rolette County. These licensees are located in Belcourt (2), Dunseith (2), Rolette (2), and Rolla (3). Licensees are categorized as being family, group, or center programs. Family programs are licensed for less than seven children and group programs are licensed for between eight and 18 children. Center programs can accommodate up to 200 children, depending on the size of the facility. There are two center-licensed programs in Rolette County, one in Belcourt, and one in Rolla. One of Rolla's other licensees is a family program. All of the other licensees in the county are group programs.

The center program in Rolla has a mini-bus that it occasionally uses for daytime activities. For liability-related reasons, most day care facilities do not provide transportation services, either on a to-and-from basis or for daytime activities.

As is typically the case, experience suggests there are numerous unlicensed child care operations in Rolette County. These situations typically involve family members and neighbors caring for children while parents are at work or school, etc. (Nett 2006).

3.3.7 Nursing Home Vehicles

There are two licensed nursing homes in Rolette County, one in Dunseith and one in Rolette. Both facilities have handicapped-accessible vehicles that were purchased with state-provided FTA funds. These vehicles are used primarily to transport residents on local outings and to medical appointments (Senger 2006).

The Dunseith Community Nursing Home is a 42-bed facility. Medical trips are typically made to Belcourt, Rugby, and Minot. Rolette's Presentation Care Center is a 46-bed facility. Most of its medical-related trips are to Rolla and Minot. The Rolette home also has a mini-van that it uses for its more ambulatory residents.

In addition to these two nursing homes, there is a licensed assisted-living care facility in Rolla. This facility has 29 living units and uses a minivan to provide transportation services to its residents. These services consist primarily of social and medical trips in Rolla and nearby Belcourt.

The tribe's housing authority has two centers designated for senior citizens, one in Belcourt and one in St. John. These centers are comprised of 80 and 10 rental units, respectively. Neither center provides transportation services to its residents, but the Belcourt facility is co-located with Nutrition & Support Services. Plans are currently underway to construct a new 60-bed nursing home in Belcourt. Groundbreaking is expected in late 2006.

3.3.8 Recreational Vehicles

This study's advisory committee listed recreational vehicles as one of the means of transportation available to local residents. These vehicles presumably include things such as all terrain vehicles (ATV), snowmobiles, motorcycles, and watercraft.

As the name implies, these vehicles are used primarily for recreational purposes. Their utilization may, however, include non-recreational uses, such as ATVs used for farm work and motorcycles used for commuting during non-winter months.

While no specific data is available on the overall usage of this type vehicle, it is anticipated that usage to satisfy the personal mobility needs of the general public is minimal. According to 2002 Census data, only .5% of Rolette County's 4,482 working residents reported using motorcycles or other non-traditional means to commute to work. The same query on the reservation and nearby tribal lands generated an affirmative response of only .2%.

3.3.9 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation

Walking was the final means of local transportation to be identified by this study's advisory committee. Because related Census data includes bicycle transportation, this discussion will include both of these forms of non-motorized transportation.

Walking and bicycling can be very viable and efficient forms of transportation. Usage is, however, dependent on a number of factors, including the distances involved, available facilities such as sidewalks and bike paths, an individual's physical condition, and weather.

Rolette County's rural environment and harsh winter weather conditions make walking and bicycling less viable options than they might be in urban settings or in more moderate climates. The 2000 Census data indicate only 45 reservation-area residents reported they either walk or bicycle to work. Similarly, only 158 of the county's remaining workers listed walking or bicycling as their primary means of commuting.

Despite the minimal rating given walking and bicycling as a Census commuting option, the use of these mobility options should not be underestimated in terms of local travel by residents of the Turtle Mountain Reservation and surrounding tribal lands. While statistics are not available for non-commuting travel by foot or bicycle, the close proximity of many housing clusters to the city of Belcourt, lower vehicle ownership rates, high poverty levels, and the lack of other transportation alternatives may leave many individuals with no other means of travel.

3.3.10 Miscellaneous Transportation Services

In addition to the means of personal mobility identified by this study's steering committee, SURTC research identified additional transportation services available to certain segments of the local population. These services are client-specific and involve vocational rehabilitation and alcohol treatment, and both programs are tribe-related.

The tribal 1-21 vocational rehabilitation program provides transportation services for clients with physical or cognitive disabilities who are receiving training or who are searching for transportation. The program has two vehicles and reportedly spends about \$30,000 annually to provide related services (Davis 2006).

The tribe also runs what is known as 5th Generation Alcohol Services for Adults. This program is based in Belcourt and provides inpatient, outpatient, and aftercare programs related to alcohol abuse. The program uses personal vehicles to provide about 20 rides per month to patients who need to travel to regional centers for treatment (Longie 2006).

3.3.11 Transport Vehicle Inventory Summary

As indicated in the preceding subsections of this section, there is a wide variety of transportation services available in Rolette County. Some of these services are available to the general public, but many are strictly for the clients of the providing agency. Table 3.8 summarizes the number of transit vehicles identified earlier in this section.

Table 3.8 Transit Vehicle Inventory

Service Provider	Available Transit Vehicles
Nutrition & Support Services – Belcourt	3
Rolette County Transit – County-wide	4
Royal Coach Transportation – County-wide	3
School Districts – County-wide	96
Ambulances – County-wide	8
Head Start and Daycare – County-wide	12
Nursing Homes - Dunseith and Rolette	2
Vocational Rehabilitation – County-wide	2
Total	130

Source: Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

In addition to the vehicles identified above, the Burdick Healthcare Facility in Belcourt has access to a large fleet of vehicles that it uses to transport patients to and from Minot for medical appointments. As indicated elsewhere in this section, numerous agencies also use automobiles to transport clients. Some of these vehicles are agency-owned, but in many instances the agencies reimburse employees for providing related services with their own cars. In other cases the agencies reimburse private individuals for related services provided with private automobiles.

3.4 Concentrations of Residential Housing

Identifying where people live and where they need to travel are integral parts of a transit plan. This subsection focuses on the identification of major population clusters on and around the Turtle Mountain Reservation and other areas in Rolette County.

As indicated in Section 2, Rolette County is 902 square miles in size and has a population of 13,674. Within the county, the Turtle Mountain Reservation and its surrounding tribal lands cover approximately 128 square miles and have a Census population of 8,307. Most of these tribal residents live in the city of Belcourt (2,440) or in one of the tribe's housing clusters. Other major population centers include the cities of Dunseith (739), Rolette (538), Rolla (1,417), and St. John (358).

Table 3.9 summarizes these population statistics and calculates the population density of Rolette County exclusive of these population centers. As this table illustrates, rural areas of the county have an average population of only three residents per square mile. Assuming an average household size of approximately 2.7, rural areas of the county have only slightly more than one residence per square mile.

Table 3.9 Residents Per Square Mile – Rural Rolette County

County Population	13,674
Less: Reservation & Tribal Land	8,307
Dunseith	739
Rolette	538
Rolla	1,417
St. John	358
Rural Population	2,315
County Land Size	902 sq. miles
Less Reservation & Tribal Lands	128 sq. miles
Remaining Rural Land in County	774 sq. miles
Rural Residents Per Square Mile	3.0
Rural Households Per Square Mile	1.1

Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Besides the county's five main cities, many of the county's residents live in the 16 housing clusters operated by the tribe's Turtle Mountain Housing Authority. These clusters, as identified in Table 3.10, are generally considered low-income housing. As this table indicates, the majority of these clusters are located in or near Belcourt. Several of the remaining clusters are located near either Dunseith or St. John, and one is located about halfway between Dunseith and Belcourt.

The tribe's 16 housing clusters have a total of 747 housing units, all but 32 of which are owned by the Turtle Mountain Housing Authority. The housing authority does not maintain estimates concerning the population of its various housing clusters. The population projections in Table 3.10 are based on Census-based household sizes for the reservation and nearby tribal lands, and these estimates are considered to be extremely conservative. The population of these sites may, in fact, be the source of much of the previously discussed discrepancy that exists between Census and Bureau of Indian Affairs population estimates.

Table 3.10 Turtle Mountain Housing Clusters

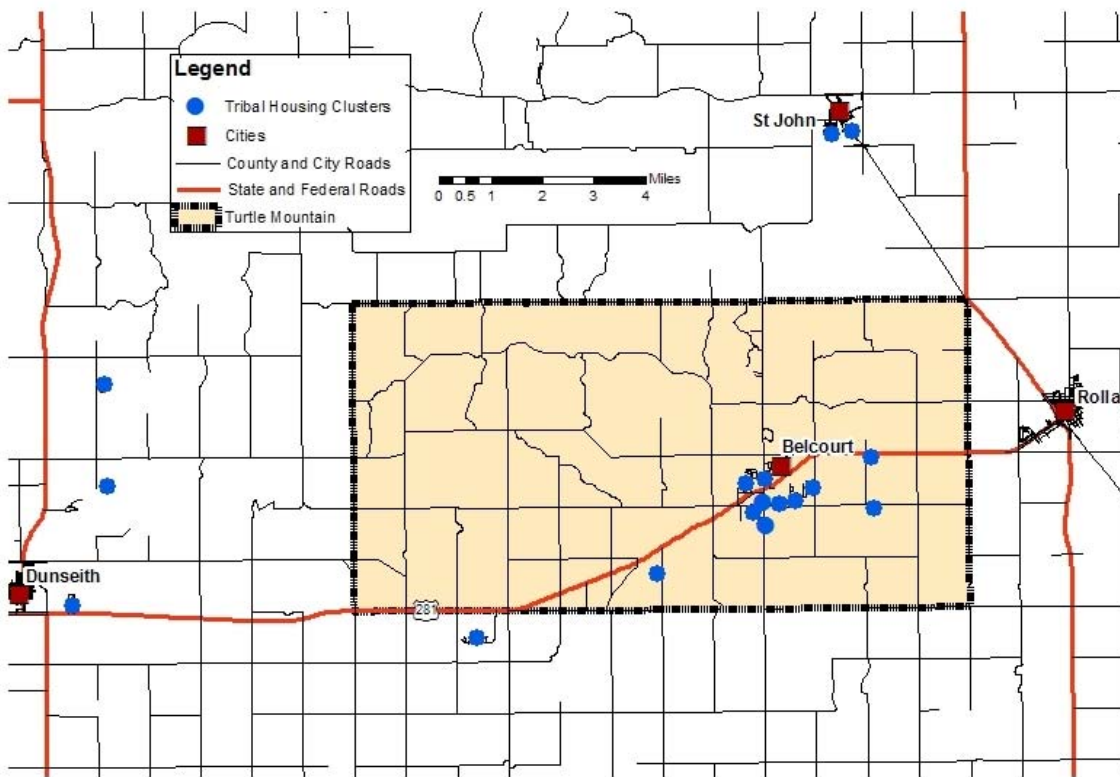
	Site	Rentals	Home Owner	Location	Approximate Population
1.	LaBelcour	80	0	Belcourt	246
2.	Crick Site	12	0	Belcourt	37
3.	South Cluster	4	15	Belcourt	59
4.	Turtle Ville	8	0	Belcourt	25
5.	Turtle Mtn. Retirement	80	0	Belcourt	246
6.	East Site	21	1	.5 Mi. E. of Belcourt	64
7.	Eagle's View	90	1	1 Mi. E. of Belcourt	275
8.	Green Acres	32	1	2 Mi. E. of Belcourt	98
9.	Kent Addition	129	0	2 Mi. E. of Belcourt	396
10.	Center Site	18	8	3 Mi. W. of Belcourt	55
11.	Shell Valley	93	1	8 Mi. W. of Belcourt	286
12.	Dunseith	82	0	.5 Mi. E. of Dunseith	252
13.	St. Mary's Site	6	4	2 Mi. NE. of Dunseith	18
14.	North Site	44	1	4 Mi. NE. of Dunseith	135
15.	St. John Site	6	0	St. John	18
16.	Birchwood Manor	10	0	St. John	31
	Totals:	715	32		2,241

Source: Turtle Mountain Housing Authority (Schroeder)

The eight housing units in Turtle Ville will be relocated to the Kent Addition in the near future and that site will cease to exist.

Figure 3.2 presents a map of Rolette County and identifies the location of each of the county's cities, the Turtle Mountain Reservation, and the tribe's 16 housing clusters; the location of the housing clusters utilizes the numeric-identifiers listed in Table 3.9. These locations are the primary concentrations of residential living in Rolette County and would be major pick-up and drop-off points for any transit system that operates in the county.

Figure 3.2 Concentrations of Tribal Housing Clusters, Rolette County



3.5 Destinations

At its initial meeting on May 2, 2006, this study's advisory committee was asked to identify the primary transportation needs of area residents. In response to this query, the committee identified the following:

- Employment
- Medical appointments
- Education
- Shopping
- Compliance appointments
- Social/church
- Recreation

While the residential housing areas discussed in the preceding section are primary trip starting points/origins, the items listed above are considered the main destination trip generators. These generators will be the focus of the remaining pages of this section.

3.5.1 Employment-Related Destinations

There are three primary employment sectors in Rolette County – private, public, and agriculture. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), full- and part-time employment in Rolette County totaled 6,528 in 2004, down from 6,819 in 2001 but up from 6,279 in the year 2000.

Prior to further discussions concerning employment in Rolette County, note that estimates of actual employment vary widely by information sources. For example, Job Service North Dakota reports the total number of employed persons in the county in 2004 was 4,818 (Job Service North Dakota 2004). This number is considerably lower than the BEA estimate presented in the preceding paragraph.

The BEA number is somewhat supported by an annual labor market survey conducted by the tribe. The result of the tribe's 2004 survey of 246 county employers showed a total of nearly 7,000 jobs in the county, a number somewhat similar to the BEA's total (Laducer 2006).

Given the amount of detailed information available from the BEA and related verification obtained from the tribe, this subsection's analysis of the county's employment situation is based on BEA data. The types of employment in the county, based on this BEA data, are summarized in Table 3.11.

**Table 3.11 Types of Full and Part-Time Employment
Rolette County 2000 and 2004**

Sector	2000	2004
Private	3,139	3,103
Government	2,546	2,847
Agriculture	594	578
Total	6,279	6,528

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis – U.S. Dept. of Commerce

Of the 594 jobs in agriculture, 542 are farm proprietors. There are, therefore, only 52 farm jobs in the county that are not filled by farm owners. While this number seems surprisingly low, it does indicate very few area residents are potentially in need of transportation to access farm jobs, especially since these jobs are spread out among the farms across the county.

As Table 3.11 indicates, private sector jobs are the largest employment sector in Rolette County. Underlying data for 2004 is incomplete, but 2000 data indicated that 1,345 of the 3,139 jobs are in the service industry (health, professional, repairs, lodging, food services, etc.). The second-highest number of jobs in that category was in retail with 693 jobs. The next highest categories were manufacturing (358) and construction (298).

According to the BEA, 715 of the 3,139 private sector jobs were filled by proprietors. Therefore, 2,424 of these jobs involved individuals who were hired employees. The BEA also reported that prior to 2002, tribal employment was included in the private sector category. Since that time, these job numbers have been included in the local government category. The private sector jobs reported in Table 3.11 should, therefore, be reduced somewhat to reflect tribal employment numbers, and a corresponding increase should be made in the government jobs category.

The second largest employment sector in Rolette County is government. According to the BEA, local government accounted for 1,766 of those 2,546 jobs; federal positions account for another 625. The other major employment group within this category was military (625). This category included active personnel, reservists, and National Guard members.

Job Service North Dakota's website provides private vendor information concerning the number of various size employers in North Dakota counties and cities; the information is reportedly compiled from secondary sources. Table 3.12 summarizes this employer size data for each of the county's largest cities. Some adjustments were made where it appeared that employers were reported repeatedly in the same or multiple categories.

Table 3.12 Rolette County Employers by Size and Location

Community	Employees							
	250-499	100-249	50-99	20-49	10-19	5-9	0-4	Total
Belcourt	5	4	4	9	12	11	40	85
Dunseith	1	0	2	4	5	8	45	65
Rolette	0	0	1	1	5	8	32	47
Rolla	0	1	3	12	14	33	108	171
St. John	0	0	0	1	0	4	21	26
Totals	6	5	10	27	36	64	246	394

Source: North Dakota Job Services (infoUSA)

As Table 3.12 indicates, Rolla has by far the largest number of employers, while Belcourt has the largest number of employers with 50 or more employees. A review of the underlying data indicates most of the employers with 50 or fewer employees are in the retail or service industries. This being the case and given the large number of small employers in Rolla, it appears Rolla is, in fact, the retail and service center of Rolette County. Belcourt, on the other hand, has an economy driven, to a large extent, by major employers, some of which are government and tribe-related and some that provide medical and social services to the community. Education-related employers are among the largest employers in all of the cities listed in Table 3.12.

As mentioned in Section 2, in 2005 the tribe submitted a grant application to the Northwest Area Foundation. In that application, the tribe identified several of the largest employers in Rolette County. These employers, their location, and employee numbers are summarized in Table 3.13.

Table 3.13 also includes a listing of other major Rolette County employers. This secondary list was compiled based on information obtained from a variety of sources, such as Job Service North Dakota and local chamber of commerce websites. Employee numbers for these employers are not available, but the entities listed are identified as being major employers in the area.

Table 3.13 Major Rolette County Employers

Employer	Location	Employee Count
Tribal Gov't. & Housing Authority	Belcourt	776
Uniband (call center)	Belcourt	342
Sky Dance Casino & Hotel	Belcourt	325
Indian Health Services	Belcourt	261
Belcourt School District	Belcourt	229
Ojibwa Indian School	Belcourt	118
Turtle Mtn. Community College	Belcourt	111
Presentation Medical Center	Rolla	100+
Turtle Mtn. Manufacturing	Belcourt	90
Bureau of Indian Affairs	Belcourt	56
Dunseith Day School	Dunseith	39
Partial List of Other Major Employers		
Bureau of Indian Affairs Education	Belcourt and Dunseith	
County Government	Rolla	
Dunseith Public Schools	Dunseith	
Dynaband (call center)	Belcourt	
International Peace Gardens	Dunseith (10 mi. N.)	
Laducer and Associates	Belcourt	
N.D. Dept. of Human Services	Not specified	
Rolette County	Rolla	
Rolette Public Schools	Rolette	
Rolla Retailers	Rolla	
St. John Public Schools	St. John	
Turtle Mtn. Corp/Pemstar	Dunseith	

Source: Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and North Dakota Job Service

The 11 employers for which employee counts are listed in Table 3.13 employ a total of 2,447 people, or nearly half of the county's non-proprietor and non-farm jobs. Many of the county's remaining jobs are with the other major employers listed in Table 3.13.

As Tables 3.12 and 3.13 illustrate, employer locations in Rolette County generally tend to mirror city populations, with the largest number of major employers and employees being located in Belcourt, the county's largest city. It appears that Rolla, the county's second largest city, may have the second highest employee count in the county, followed by Dunseith, Rolette, and St. John.

As will be discussed elsewhere in this report, a part of the research effort included a survey of the county's major employers. In addition to assessing employees' transportation needs as they relate to employment, questionnaires also asked each respondent to report on the number of workers they employ in Rolette County.

Specific responses will not be reported in order to protect employer confidentiality. It is worth noting, however, that some respondents reported employee counts consistent with those reported in Table 3.12. Some reported minor increases while a few reported significant declines. The inconsistency of these employee counts may be reflective of the highly competitive environment that some of the county's major employers operate in. This occurrence is certainly not unique to Turtle Mountain Reservation or Rolette County.

3.5.2 Medical Destinations

There are two hospital medical centers and four medical clinics in Rolette County. The hospitals are located in Belcourt (Quentin N. Burdick Memorial Healthcare Facility - Indian Health Service) and Rolla (Presentation Medical Center). Both facilities have slightly fewer than 50 patient beds and specialize in family practice medicine. There are medical clinics in Belcourt, Dunseith, Rolette, and Rolla.

In addition to these medical centers, there are optometric offices in both Belcourt and Rolla, and there is a dental office in Rolla. The county's only chiropractic office is also located in Rolla. Retail pharmacies are located in Dunseith, Rolette, and Rolla.

In addition to these clinics and medical support entities, there are numerous social service agency offices in Rolette County. Some of these offices are county- or state-related and are based primarily in Rolla, the county seat. Several other offices are federal or tribe-related and are based in Belcourt.

The county's hospitals and clinics are family practice-type services and typically refer patients to regional medical centers for specialized medical attention. In most instances, these referrals are to physicians in Minot, which is located approximately 115 miles southwest of Belcourt and Rolla.

3.5.3 Education-Related Destinations

There are three age-related components to the educational system in Rolette County – preschool, school age, and college. The area's preschool/Head Start and K-12 school systems and their related transportation services were discussed earlier in Section 2. Given the high population of age 19 and under youth in the county, especially on the reservation and associated tribal lands, there are obviously significant needs related to transporting these individuals to and from school and associated activities. Fortunately, as discussed in Section 2, the local school districts and Head Start centers have comprehensive busing programs in place to meet the vast majority of these needs.

The one component of the area's educational system that was not discussed in Section 2 was the Turtle Mountain Community College (TMCC). TMCC is one of 32 tribal colleges in the United States. It was founded in 1972 and is accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools.

TMCC has a 66,000-square-foot campus in Belcourt and a new, 105,000-square-foot campus, which is located three miles north of Belcourt. The new facility opened in 1999 and is located on a 123-acre site. It features state-of-the-art technology and facilities. A 1,000-seat auditorium was added to the facility in 2003.

TMCC has approximately 650 full-time equivalent students and serves an additional 250 pre-college adults. The average age of its students is 30.7. About two-thirds of its students are female and approximately 70% of its students are single parents. School officials estimate about 80% of the school's students are from Belcourt, another 10% are from Dunseith, and about 5% are from Rolla. It typically takes students three years to complete a degree program.

TMCC offers classes Monday through Thursday. Class periods begin at 9 and 11 a.m. and at 1 and 3 p.m. Classes run for 90 minutes. There are also evening classes. There are no scheduled transportation services between Belcourt and TMCC's main campus. It is estimated that about two-thirds of all students drive to school alone and the remaining third rideshare. The lack of transportation services and related commuting costs are cited by some students as a reason for missing classes or for withdrawing from school. This problem is reportedly limited to daytime students since evening students are typically

working during the day and have vehicles of their own they can use to travel to and from school (Fredrick 2006).

3.5.4 Shopping

The advisory committee identified shopping as one of the major areas of need regarding personal mobility. This need entails primarily accessing food and a wide variety of items necessary for personal use and for maintaining a household.

One way of identifying centers of retail activity is to review state sales tax receipt data. This data is not totally reflective of retail sales, however, since some sales are not subject to tax collections. Major categories that are not subject to such taxation include food purchased for off-site consumption and sales by reservation-based establishments.

Despite this shortcoming, it is revealing to note where taxable sales are taking place in Rolette County. Table 3.14 summarizes where taxable sales occurred in Rolette County in calendar year 2004.

Table 3.14 Taxable Sales by City – Rolette County, 2004

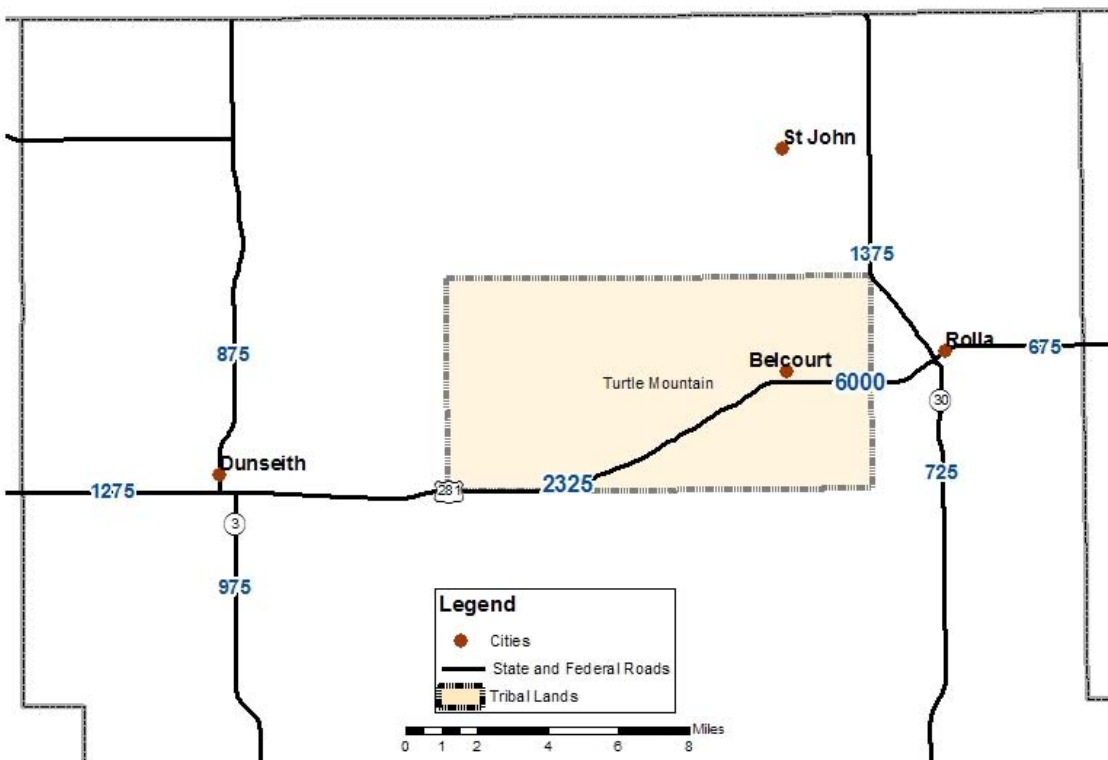
City	Taxable Sales	Percent of County Total
Dunseith	\$2,741,563	12.3%
Rolette	\$3,157,839	14.1%
Rolla	\$15,320,513	68.5%
St John	\$750,121	3.3%
Other	\$401,434	1.8%
	22,371,470	100.0%

Source: North Dakota Tax Department

Belcourt's absence from this list, due largely to the nontaxable nature of most local sales, obviously makes it difficult to identify exactly where retail sales are taking place in the county. Table 3.14 does, however, highlight the fact that the vast majority of other sales in the county take place in Rolla (68.5%). Rolette and Dunseith are a distant second and third in terms of taxable sales activity.

Despite the lack of information concerning retail sales in Belcourt, the advisory committee did note that many Belcourt-area residents make the six-mile trip to Rolla to shop. Statistics compiled by NDDOT verify there is, in fact, a significant amount of traffic between Belcourt and Rolla. This local traffic count information is presented on the map in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Daily Highway Vehicle Counts - 2005
Rolette County – U.S. Highway 281 & N.D. Highway 5



Source: North Dakota Department of Transportation (Nelson)

As the map in Figure 3.3 indicates, there is relatively little traffic on the highways running north, south, and east of Rolla and north, south, and west of Dunseith. Daily traffic counts increase significantly between Dunseith and Belcourt and then more than double again on the segment between Belcourt and Rolla.

Given the fact that the Belcourt – Rolla segment has significantly more traffic than the segments that lead into these cities, it may be assumed much of the traffic between these two points is local versus motorists and trucks passing through the area. The specific purpose of these trips is not known, but it is assumed that it is a combination of all of the trip purposes identified by the advisory committee and a significant portion of the trips are shopping related.

As indicated earlier in Table 3.12, it is estimated there are more than 171 businesses in Rolla, 108 of which have fewer than five employees. Over 80% of Rolla's employers (141) have less than 10

employees. It is assumed that many of these are retail and service industry merchants. Conversely, Belcourt has only 51 employers with fewer than 10 employees.

Based on employer numbers presented in Table 3.12 and taxable sales data presented in Table 3.14, it is projected that Rolla is the county's primary retail center. Based on its population and employer count, it is anticipated that Belcourt is the county's second largest retail destination. Dunseith and Rolette appear to be relatively small retail centers in the county while St. John plays a relatively small part in the county's overall retail sales.

As is the case across the country, it is assumed many area residents make relatively frequent shopping trips throughout the year to more distant regional centers, such as Minot. These trips may have multiple purposes, such as shopping, medical appointments, and sporting events.

3.5.5 Compliance-Related Trips

The advisory committee indicated that one of the major purposes of local transportation was to make trips related to compliance appointments. These trips involve activities and programs such as the following:

- Employment counseling
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Al-Anon (counseling for family members of alcoholics)
- Law enforcement probation meetings
- Work experience training

Destinations for related compliance meetings are typically in either Belcourt or Rolla. Employment counseling meetings, for example, would be associated with Job Service North Dakota's office in Rolla. Law enforcement meetings would be in Rolla if the meeting involved the county's law enforcement system. Conversely, such meetings would be in Belcourt if the situation involved tribal or Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement.

As is the case with law enforcement, social service-type meetings involving things such as Alcoholics Anonymous or Al-Anon could be in either Rolla or Belcourt, depending on whether the services offered were being provided by the county or the BIA.

It is difficult to quantify such trips, but to the extent that they occur, they typically take place in either Belcourt or Rolla. Most non-tribal members would access related services in Rolla while tribal members could attend meetings in both communities, depending on the focus of the meetings. Meetings involving Job Services would take place in Rolla while most other meetings would be in Belcourt.

3.5.6 Social & Church-Related Destinations

The advisory committee suggested that area residents' personal mobility needs included social and religious outings. Included in the list of related activities are the following:

- Weekly church services
- Visit family and friends
- Bingo and other fun-related outings
- Casino trips
- School functions

- Weddings and funerals
- Pow Wows

As was the case with the compliance-related trips discussed in the preceding subsection, it is difficult to quantify the need for these types of trips. It should be noted, however, that many of them are church or school related and there are churches and schools in each of the county's communities. It is, therefore, assumed the need for related transportation is relatively universal across the county and virtually all of these trips are local in nature.

It should also be noted that Section 4 will attempt to quantify the need for many of the types of trips discussed in this section. This will be accomplished via input received from area service providers (social services, medical, etc.) and through the use of national averages regarding the number of personal trips that average individuals make each day.

3.5.7 Recreation-Related Destinations

Recreation-related transportation involves activities such as athletic and sporting events, where the travelers may be either a participant or an observer. This type of travel may also involve outdoor activities such as fishing, camping, skiing, etc.

School sporting events are often the focal point of community activities in North Dakota, especially in relatively small communities such as those in Rolette County. These events typically involve a local school competing against another community's school in football or basketball. Some of these events take place in the community, while some competitions are held in other towns; some are nearby, while others may be in distant communities. When local teams advance to district, regional, or state tournaments, greater distances may be involved. As indicated earlier, participants and other members of the student body may be transported to such events in school vehicles. Other observers, however, typically travel to such events in personal vehicles.

Many older non-students also participate in athletic competitions such as softball or basketball leagues and occasional tournaments. These events may be local, but they may also involve travel to nearby communities or to more distant locations. Related travel is almost always via personal vehicles with team members traveling together or separately.

Other non-athletic recreational outings are also common occurrences. As indicated earlier, typical activities involve things such as fishing, camping, and skiing. As discussed in Section 2, Rolette County includes parts of North Dakota's Turtle Mountains. This area is a major destination for many state residents; local residents, therefore, have ready access to related activities.

As was the case with compliance and social/church-related transportation, it is difficult to quantify related needs. It is, however, worthwhile to note that this type of transportation does represent a significant personal mobility need of area residents.

The following section will attempt to quantify these and the other personal mobility needs discussed in the preceding subsections of this section.

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4. Population and Economic Projections

4.1 Introduction

The demographic data presented in Section 2 and the employment numbers discussed in Section 3 represent only a snapshot in time. It would be inappropriate to design a transit system based solely on these numbers, especially if significant changes are anticipated. Quantifying expected changes is the purpose of this section.

This section is divided into two parts. The first part deals with projected changes in the area's overall population and, more specifically, in those segments within the population likely to need transportation assistance. The final section of this section will address economic changes that may be anticipated on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and nearby tribal lands and in the remainder of Rolette County.

4.2 Section Highlights

- As discussed in Section 2, Census Bureau and Bureau of Indian Affairs population estimates vary significantly. The BIA estimates Rolette County's Native American population at more than 12,000; the Census places it at about 10,000.
- This section's population projections are based on Census data. To the extent that this data underreports reality, this section's projections are also understated.
- Projected populations – Rolette County's overall population is expected to remain relatively stable over the next 20 years. Reservation and tribal land populations are expected to increase by about 2,000 while the rest of the county will experience an offsetting decline.
- Senior populations – reservation-area senior populations are expected to more than double over the next 20 years (674 to 1,500). Senior populations elsewhere in the county are expected to increase from 1,100 to 1,800.
- Disabled populations – the county's mobility-impaired population is expected to rise from 571 to 703 over the next 20 years.
- Students – the school-age population on the reservation and tribal lands is expected to remain fairly stable over the next 20 years. Elsewhere in the county, this age group is expected to decline by 55% (from 1,356 to 611).
- Vehicle-less households – over the next 20 years, the number of households without motor vehicles is expected to rise from 314 to 388 on the reservation and nearby tribal lands. There will be an offsetting decline in the remainder of the county.
- Job growth – the number of jobs in the county is expected to increase by about 500 between now and 2012, an 8.4% increase. It is anticipated that most of these new jobs will be in locations near existing places of employment.

4.3 Population Projections

In January 2006, SURTC published a report entitled *Projecting Changes in Mobility-Challenged Populations in North Dakota: 2005-2025* (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center 2006). That report used the cohort-component method of population projection to project the size of various subgroups of North Dakota's population in five-year intervals from 2005 to 2025. Analyzed subgroups included each of North Dakota's 53 counties as well as senior citizen, disabled, school age, and households without vehicles within each county.

SURTC researchers used the same methodology to develop comparable projections for the Turtle Mountain Reservation, including nearby tribal lands and other portions of Rolette County. Related presentations are the topic of the following subsections.

As was pointed out in Section 2, it is not appropriate to aggregate individual subgroup numbers in an attempt to determine the overall number of transportation-disadvantaged individuals in an area. Over counting would be the result given the fact that many individuals may be members of several subgroups. Despite this shortcoming, the projections presented in the following pages do give some indication of what demographic changes might be expected in the area over the next 20 years.

Note that some of the 2000 population counts in this section vary slightly from those presented in Section 2. These changes occur as a result of the utilization of different data sets. These variances are, however, minor and insignificant since the purpose of this section is to identify major trends within the population. The trends identified herein would not change if minor adjustments were made to make the underlying data exactly match the numbers presented in Section 2. Here, then, are the population projections for Rolette County through the year 2025.

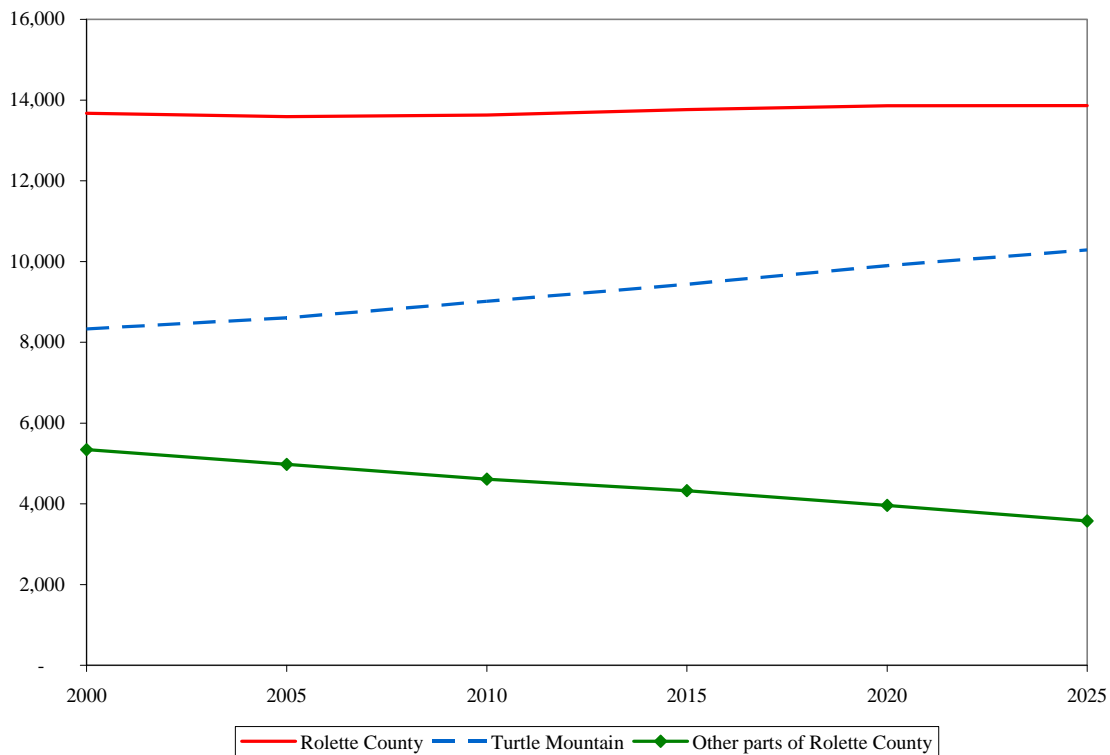
4.3.1 Overall Population Projections

According to the 2000 Census, Rolette County had a total population of 13,674. Of this total, 8,307 people resided on the reservation or nearby tribal lands, and 5,367 lived elsewhere in the county. As indicated in Section 2, Bureau of Indian Affairs estimates place the county's population at approximately 2,000 higher than the Census Bureau.

While this BIA estimate may, in fact, be valid, this study consistently uses Census data because of its universal applicability and comparability and because of the magnitude of related information available. However, it is important to note that the projections presented in this section are understated to the extent that Census data understates the population of Rolette County and its various subdivisions. Despite this possible undercounting, the trends presented throughout this section are considered accurate.

Figure 4.1 illustrates trends in each of the county's population groups through the year 2025. As this figure shows, Rolette County's population is expected to remain virtually unchanged, increasing by only 189, a 1.4% increase.

Figure 4.1 Actual and Projected Populations, 2000-2025



Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Note that the population of the reservation and tribal lands is expected to grow by nearly 2,000 over the next 20 years, thereby leaving the remainder of Rolette County with a projected population loss of approximately 1,800, a 33% decline.

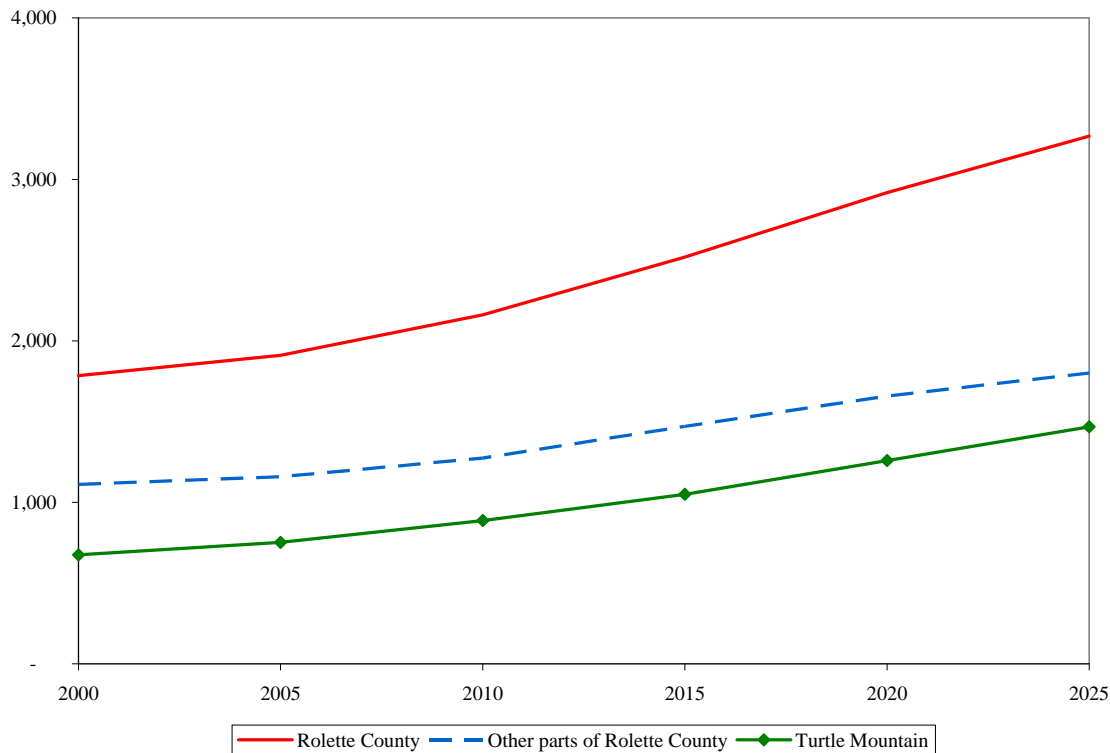
Also note that, as discussed in Section 2, there are significant differences between the population numbers developed by the Census Bureau and the BIA. The Census Bureau projected Rolette County's Native American population at approximately 10,000 in 2005, while the BIA placed it at just over 12,000 in 2006. To the extent that the county's Native American population is understated, so is its overall population. Such an understatement would have a corresponding impact on all of the projections made in this section. The underlying trends should, however, remain accurate.

4.3.2 Senior Citizen Population Projections

Despite the relatively stable nature of Rolette County's overall population, numerous changes are anticipated in its various subgroups. In addition to the changes in reservation area versus off-reservation population totals, the county can expect significant changes in its senior population between now and 2025.

In 2000, Rolette County had 1,785 residents age 60 and older. As Figure 4.2 indicates, this number is expected to rise to 3,268 by 2025, an increase of 83%. It is anticipated that this increase will occur county-wide. The reservation's senior population is expected to increase from 674 to nearly 1,500 while the senior population in the remainder of the county may rise from about 1,100 to 1,800.

Figure 4.2 Senior Citizen Population Trends, 2000-2025

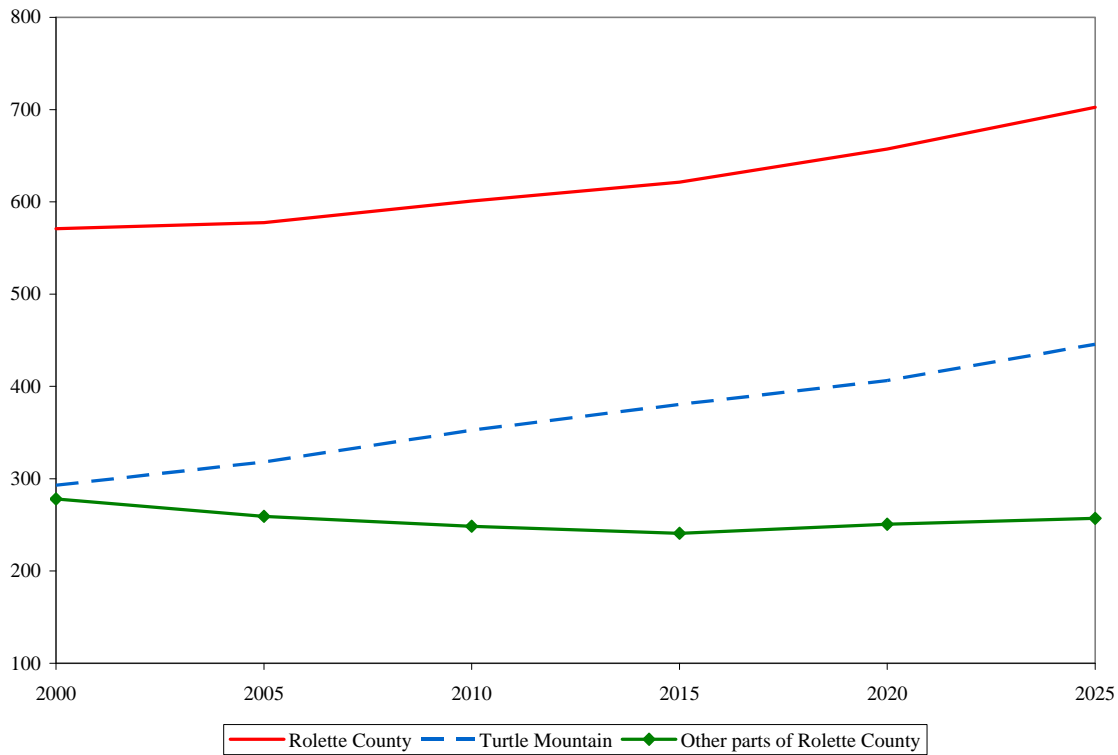


Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

4.3.3 Disabled Population Projections

According to the Census Bureau, there were 571 mobility-impaired individuals in Rolette County in 2000; 293 of these individuals lived on the reservation and other tribal lands while 278 lived in other parts of the county. As Figure 4.3 illustrates, the county's mobility-impaired population is expected to increase to 703 by 2025. Of this total, it is anticipated 446 of these individuals will live on the reservation or nearby trust lands and 257 will live elsewhere in the county; the reservation area mobility-impaired population will increase by about 150 while the size of the same subgroup will decline by about 19 in other areas of the county.

Figure 4.3 Mobility-Impaired Population Projections, 2000-2025



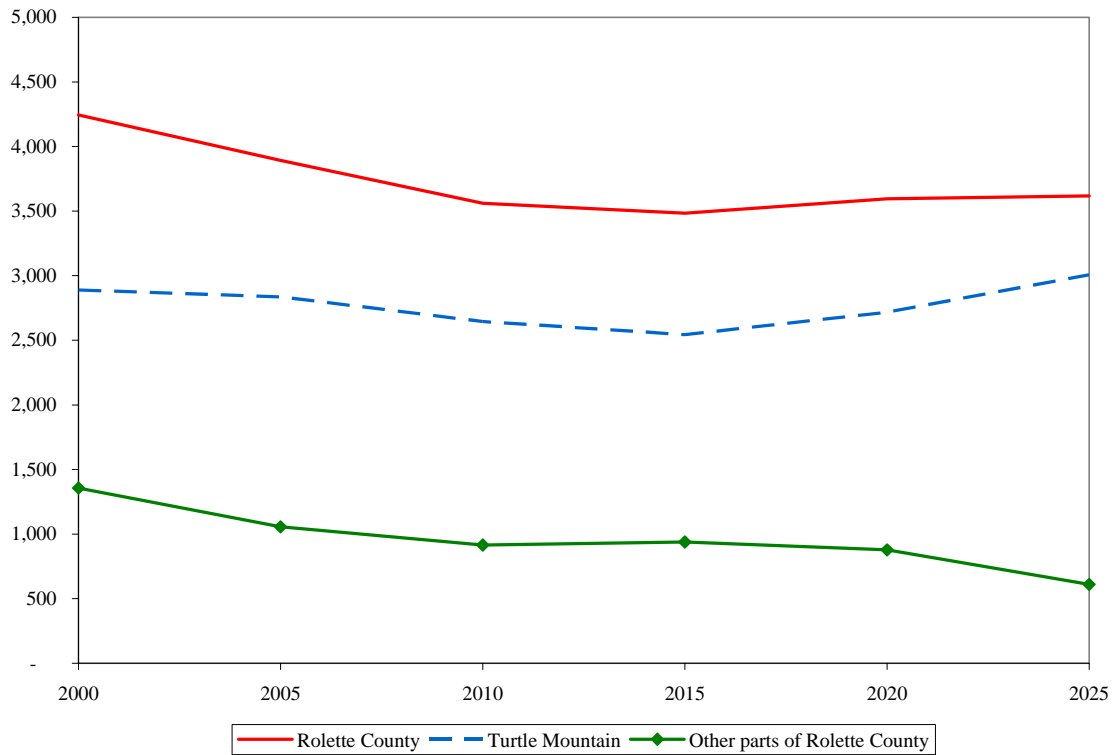
Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

4.3.4 Student Population Projections

As indicated in Section 2, the reservation and trust land portion of Rolette County has a school-age (5-19) population significantly higher than other areas of North Dakota. Like other areas of North Dakota, however, the area's school-age population is expected to decline between now and 2025.

As Figure 4.4 shows, the reservation and trust land areas of the county had a student-age population of 2,889 in 2000. This number is expected to increase slightly to 3,006 by 2025. The county's overall student-age population is expected to drop from 4,245 to 3,617. The student-age population in non-reservation areas of the county is expected to decline from 1,356 to 611, a drop of nearly 55%.

Figure 4.4 Student-Age Population Projections, 2000-2025



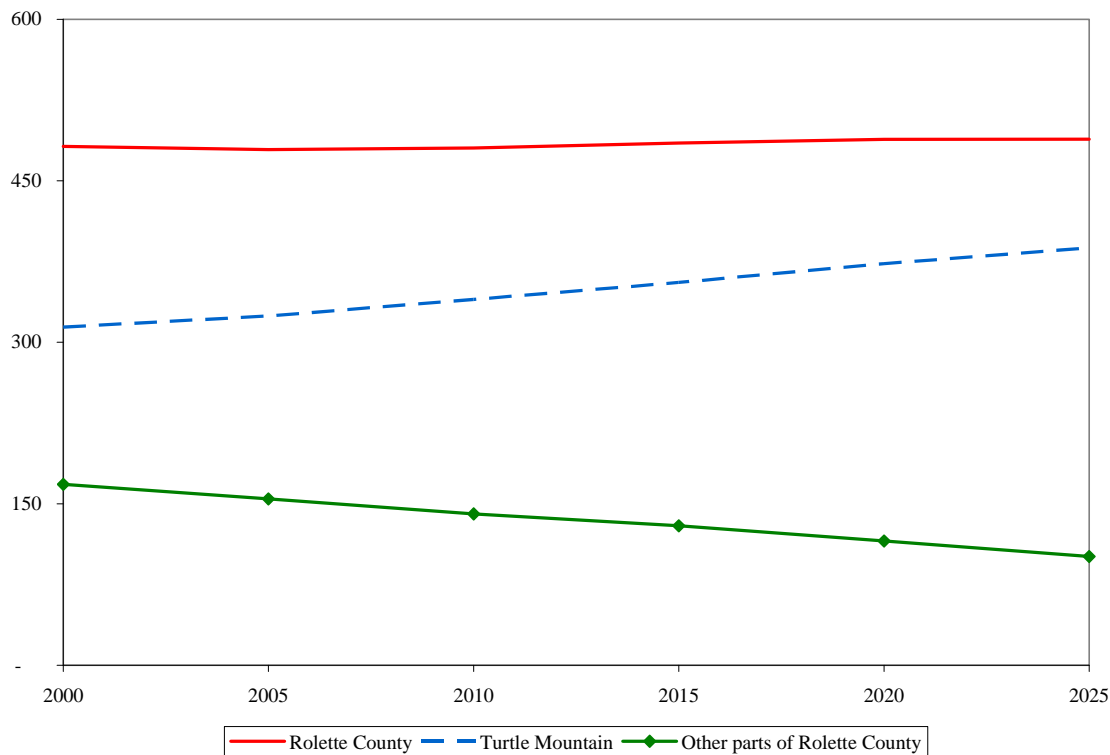
Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

4.3.5 Households without Vehicles Projections

As is the case with Rolette County's total population, the number of households in the county without vehicles is expected to remain virtually unchanged through 2025. As Figure 4.5 indicates, there were approximately 482 households without vehicles in 2000. This number is expected to increase slightly to 489 by 2025.

There are, however, shifts within the county's subpopulations. The number of vehicle-less households on the reservation and its trust lands is expected to rise from 314 to 388. Conversely, the number of households without vehicles in other portions of the county is expected to drop from 168 to 101.

Figure 4.5 Households without Vehicles Projections, 2000-2025



Source: North Dakota State Data Center and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

4.3.6 Summary of Population Projections

As the preceding subsections of this section indicate, the population of the reservation and its trust lands is expected to increase by nearly 2,000 or about 23% over the next 20 years, but virtually all of this increase will be offset by a corresponding decline in population in the remainder of the county.

The preceding subsections presented projections on three population subgroups typically considered transportation disadvantaged and which do not have their mobility needs addressed, in large part, by local school systems. These groups include senior citizens, disabled residents, and households without vehicles.

As is the case with the total population, the number of disabled individuals and households without vehicles are expected to increase on the reservation and its trust lands. As was also the case with the county's total population, a corresponding decline is anticipated in these populations in non-reservation portions of the county.

The only segment of the population that should expect similar changes in all areas of the county is the senior citizen population. The number of seniors age 60 and over living on the reservation and its trust lands is expected to rise from 674 to 1,468 between 2000 and 2025. The off-reservation senior population is also expected to increase, rising from 1,111 to 1,800.

Table 4.1 summarizes the population projections presented in the preceding portions of this section. The number of individuals without vehicles is based on anticipated household sizes of 3.21 for reservation-area households and 2.97 for other areas of the county.

Table 4.1 Population Projections by Subgroups, 2000 – 2025

Geographic Areas	Reservation & Trust Lands			Balance of Rolette County			All of Rolette County		
Categories	2000	2025		2000	2025		2000	2025	
Seniors	674	1,468	+118%	1,111	1,800	+62%	1,785	3,268	+83%
People with Disabilities	293	446	+ 52%	278	257	- 8%	571	703	+23%
Students	2,889	3,006	+ 4%	1,356	611	- 55%	4,245	3,617	- 15%
No Vehicle Families	314	388	+ 24%	168	101	- 40%	482	489	+ 1%
Individuals w/o Vehicles	1,008	1,245	+ 24%	499	300	- 40%	1,507	1,545	+ 3%
Total Population	8,331	10,287	+ 23%	5,343	3,576	- 33%	13,674	13,863	+ 1%
Total Seniors, People with Disabilities & Individuals w/o Vehicles	1,975	3,159	+ 60%	1,888	2,357	+28%	3,873	5,516	+43%

Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Table 4.1 also combines the total estimated sizes of the senior, disabled, and individuals without vehicles populations. As discussed earlier, these totals are an over-estimation because many individuals may be members of two or even all three of these subgroups. It is, however, enlightening to observe trends in these compilations. This data will be valuable when designing a transit system that is capable of addressing the long-term mobility needs of area residents.

Underlying data for all the charts presented in the preceding subsections of this section are presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Rolette County Demographic Projections, 2000 – 2025

Rolette County	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Actual and Projected Number of Seniors (60+), 2000 to 2025	1,785	1,911	2,162	2,520	2,918	3,268
Actual and Projected Number of Mobility Impaired Residents, 2000 to 2025	571	577	601	621	657	703
Actual and Projected Number School Aged Residents (5-19), 2000 to 2025	4,245	3,892	3,560	3,483	3,596	3,617
Actual and Projected Number of Households without Vehicles, 2000 to 2025	482	479	480	485	488	489
Actual and Projected Population, 2000 to 2025	13,674	13,586	13,628	13,762	13,858	13,863
Turtle Mountain – Reservation & Trust Lands	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Actual and Projected Number of Seniors (60+), 2000 to 2025	674	752	887	1,050	1,260	1,468
Actual and Projected Number of Mobility Impaired Residents, 2000 to 2025	293	318	352	380	406	446
Actual and Projected Number School Aged Residents (5-19), 2000 to 2025	2,889	2,837	2,645	2,544	2,718	3,006
Actual and Projected Number of Households without Vehicles, 2000 to 2025	314	324	340	356	373	388
Actual and Projected Population, 2000 to 2025	8,331	8,608	9,015	9,436	9,897	10,287
Other Portions of Rolette County	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025
Actual and Projected Number of Seniors (60+), 2000 to 2025	1,111	1,159	1,275	1,470	1,658	1,800
Actual and Projected Number of Mobility Impaired Residents, 2000 to 2025	278	259	249	241	251	257
Actual and Projected Number School Aged Residents (5-19), 2000 to 2025	1,356	1,055	915	939	878	611
Actual and Projected Number of Households without Vehicles, 2000 to 2025	168	154	141	129	115	101
Actual and Projected Population, 2000 to 2025	5,343	4,979	4,613	4,326	3,962	3,576

Source: U.S. Census – 2000 and Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

4.4 Economic Projections

As is the case with population, major changes in the region's economy could have an impact on the demands that are placed on its transit system. For that reason, this study will also attempt to identify future trends regarding economic development and employer and employee numbers.

Related data is, unfortunately, quite subjective. There are, for example, economic forecast models that apply to the entire country and to various multi-state regions within the country. These models do, however, become less and less precise as they focus in on specific states or individual counties within those states.

Regarding statewide projections, Job Service North Dakota published a report, *North Dakota Employment Projections 2012*, which projected changes in employment in each of 25 major categories between 2002 and 2012. Overall, the report projected a statewide growth in employment of 8.4%.

As indicated in Section 3, full- and part-time employment totaled about 6,500 workers in Rolette County during the first few years of the decade. If the county achieves job growth consistent with statewide Job Service projections, job numbers should reach approximately 7,000 by the year 2012, an increase of about 500 jobs.

Given the inexact nature of projecting economic development and job creation, SURTC researchers chose to visit with leaders in the local business community in an attempt to identify significant local long-term economic development trends. These leaders include contacts with the county's major employers and economic development and job development contacts with the county, tribe, and major cities in Rolette County. The following discussions are based on input received from these sources.

4.4.1 Economic Development and Job Creation – Local Facilitators

According to Job Service North Dakota personnel, local resources to promote economic development and job creation come primarily from local units of government and the tribe (Albert 2006). Related contacts were subsequently made with each of the local contacts identified by Job Services. Information gleaned from these contacts is presented in the following paragraphs of this subsection.

Belcourt (Pop. 2,440) – As indicated in previous sections, Belcourt is an unincorporated city on Turtle Mountain Reservation. The city, along with the remainder of the reservation, is governed by the tribe's tribal council. The tribe's Tribal Planning and Economic Development Department is responsible for promoting economic development efforts in Belcourt and on the remainder of the reservation.

As discussed in Section 3, most of the county's major employers are located on Turtle Mountain Reservation. There are numerous enticements in place which promote business startups and economic development on the reservation. Some of these enticements and related designations include the following:

- HUBZone – the Small Business Administration Historically Underutilized Business program, which provides federal contracting preferences to small businesses in eligible communities.
- Renewal Community – upon receipt of this federal Department of Housing and Urban Development designation, employers are eligible to receive certain wage-benefits for employees who both live and work in the renewal community.
- Champion Community – the U.S. Department of Agriculture conferred champion status on communities that took part in multi-year strategic plans to address local poverty-related issues.

The designation also made certain employers in these communities eligible for a package of related tax benefits.

- Free Trade Zone – the U.S. Department of Commerce has designated the reservation as a foreign trade zone. This designation creates advantages for manufacturers that are engaged in international trade by eliminating, reducing, or deferring tariffs on materials that are imported into the zone.
- REAP – the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Rural Economic Area Partnership program is designed to provide participating rural areas with technical assistance and limited planning monies to address problems associated with out-migration, constraints in economic development and growth, and market disconnection and to develop related revitalization plans. The reservation is a part of a multi-county REAP.
- Small Business Status – this Small Business Administration designation creates competitive advantages for businesses when bidding for government contracts.

The tribe was also recently awarded a \$10 million grant by the Northwest Area Foundation. Grant receipts will equal \$1 million per year for 10 years. The money is to be used to address poverty issues related to housing, infrastructure, economic development, and education on the reservation. Plans are also underway to build a new 60-bed nursing home in Belcourt. Groundbreaking is expected in late 2006.

The tribe is actively involved in seeking new business startups, and works closely with existing businesses to secure contracts which promote employment and viability. However, as discussed in earlier sections, the area’s major employers operate in extremely competitive environments, and workforce numbers, therefore, fluctuate with related contract work. The local economy is currently characterized as being soft. There is reportedly a need for more stability and predictability in tribal government, conditions that would reduce risk and encourage investments and long-term economic development (Cornelius 2006).

Rolla (Pop. 1,417) - Rolla’s economic development efforts are headed by the Rolla Job Development Authority, a subdivision of the city of Rolla. The authority has an annual operating budget of approximately \$75,000, money that is derived from local sales tax reviews.

The authority’s focus is on retaining and possibly expanding existing businesses and attracting new businesses. Job retention efforts involve helping existing businesses, as needed, both in terms of their current operations and also the sale of businesses when current owners are so inclined. Some optimism exists concerning modest expansions by a few local businesses.

One major economic development project is being viewed with guarded optimism. This project would involve the construction of a major electrical wind farm near Rolla. If constructed, this projection might involve more than 200 construction-related jobs. Long-term employment might involve 10-15 employees. If it’s built, construction might take place as early as 2007 or 2008 (Youngerman 2006).

As indicated in Section 3, Rolla is the county’s largest retail center and serves as a shopping destination to many residents of the county, including Belcourt and the remainder of Turtle Mountain Reservation. Wal-Mart is reportedly planning to open a store in Bottineau, about 39 miles west of Rolla and 32 miles west of Belcourt. If this occurs, it may have a significantly negative impact on retail sales in Rolla (Leonard 2006).

Dunseith (Pop. 739) – Promoting economic development in Dunseith is the responsibility of the Dunseith Development Corporation. With between 300 and 400 employees, PemStar is the community’s largest employer. The company’s local operation specializes in engineering and manufacturing services, and is reportedly doing well. It is hoped that related employment levels will remain at least stable.

The local business community is considered soft given the propensity of people to drive to larger regional centers for shopping. The development corporation has been involved with moving surplus military housing to the community, but those efforts are complete. The corporation is largely inactive at the present time (Gottbreht 2006).

Rolette (Pop. 538) - Economic development and job creation in Rolette is handled by two entities: the city-supported job authority and the Rolette Area Development Association, which is run on a volunteer basis by the local business community. These entities work together to support local businesses and to promote the community to new businesses and individuals who might wish to relocate to Rolette.

The city of Rolette is in the process of acquiring the local nursing home. Plans call for the renovation of the facility or possibly replacing it with a new facility. The city has contracted with a private entity to manage the home. Discussions have also taken place concerning a possible expansion to include a new assisted living facility. This addition would give the area's aging population the option of staying in the community rather than relocating elsewhere to obtain required living arrangements.

The city has also seen some growth via quality of life-related relocations – people who have chosen to return to the area after having lived elsewhere. Some area residents work in the community, but in other cases people live elsewhere and commute to jobs in Rolette or live in Rolette and commute to jobs in places like Rolla or Dunseith.

Similar to Rolla, discussions have also taken place in Rolette concerning the construction of an electrical wind farm in the area. If this occurs, the project would involve several hundred construction jobs and a relatively small number of subsequent full-time operations and maintenance positions. Overall, long-term projections are for modest increases in local job numbers (Myhre 2006).

St. John (Pop. 358) – Promoting economic development in St. John is the responsibility of a volunteer director of the city's Community Development Corporation. St. John is a bedroom community located seven miles from both Rolla and Belcourt. The local school is the largest employer in the city. In addition to the school, there are eight to ten local businesses, some of which are seasonal.

The Community Development Corporation has a strategic plan, and has been fairly successful in procuring grants to encourage economic development. The corporation has 21 sites available for housing and a building that it is willing to make available for a business that is willing to locate in the community. It is expected that any development that does take place will be relatively small, involving 10 to 20 workers (Leonard 2006).

4.4.2 Economic Development and Job Creation – Survey Responses

This research effort included a questionnaire that was sent to each of the major employers in Rolette County. As will be discussed in Section 5, this survey queried employers concerning the commuting patterns and needs of existing and potential employees. The survey also questioned respondents regarding their expectations regarding future economic development, both within their firm and elsewhere in the county.

Questionnaires were sent to 25 employers in Rolette County. This survey represented an attempt to contact each of the employers in the county that employs 25 or more workers. A copy of the survey instrument is presented in Appendix C. Questions 16 and 17 pertain specifically to economic development and job development expectations.

Responses were received from 20 of the 25 employers surveyed, a response rate of 80%. Concerning expectations for internal growth, 11 employers projected no change in employee numbers over the next five years. Five respondents expect growth rates of up to 25%, one expects growth of up to 50%, and one expects a decline of up to 25%. Two respondents did not venture a guess concerning future employee counts.

Concerning expectations for area-wide economic development, 14 of the 20 respondents did not provide a projection. Four employers expect growth of an unspecified amount, and two project area-wide growth of up to 15%.

4.4.3 Economic Projections – Summary

Based on input received from the area's major employers and economic development facilitators, it appears that the state's overall projection of an 8.4% increase in employment is achievable in Rolette County. Many of the individuals contacted and survey respondents projected stable job numbers, but some expect modest increases.

This 8.4% increase is projected between 2006 and 2012. As indicated earlier, an 8.4% increase in job numbers in Rolette County equals approximately 500 jobs.

Note that Rolette County is a labor-surplus area with a ready supply of young and relatively well-educated potential workers. Overall population projections suggest that this supply of available employees will not diminish in the near future. Area residents also have post-high school educational opportunities available to them locally via the Turtle Mountain Community College. Economic development mechanisms are in place, and related efforts are ongoing in most of the county's largest cities and on Turtle Mountain Reservation.

For the purposes of developing a long-term personal mobility transportation plan for the county and Turtle Mountain Reservation, these factors suggest that related plans should be based on relatively stable to modestly increasing employment numbers. Related jobs will be in locations relatively congruent to existing job sites as discussed in Section 3.

4.5 References

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5. Estimating Unmet Transportation Needs

5.1 Introduction

Personal mobility is essential for individuals to participate in the economic and social activities of their community, and to obtain necessary educational, medical, and social services. In Rolette County and especially the Turtle Mountain Reservation and surrounding areas, residents rely on a combination of private and public transportation options to satisfy these mobility needs. Although human service agencies and three publicly-funded transit programs offer important local transportation services, many local leaders perceive a range of unmet transportation needs of county residents, especially for those on and near the Turtle Mountain Reservation. The purpose of this section is to summarize quantitative and qualitative measures of need and demand and to provide a range of demand estimates for future public transit services in Rolette County.

5.2 Section Highlights

- National standards - there are no national standards which prescribe the correct amount of public transit services that should be offered in an area.
- Estimating demand for service - a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches must be used to estimate needs and demands for service.
- Needs versus ridership - expressed needs for transit services typically fall short of ultimate system ridership.
- State and local service goals - local service goals should be tied to related state goals.
- Service available to the public - existing public transit services have gradually evolved from being senior citizen services. Their operations are often hindered by public perception and operating budgets.
- Little coordination and need for service - local human service agency representatives see a significant need for expanded public transit services. Several agencies provide services on their own with little or no coordination among agencies.
- Lack of awareness - most local human service agency representatives are unaware that existing transit service providers are willing and able to transport their clients and members of the general public.
- Little need for commuter services - large employers in the county do not see a lack of transportation services as a major detriment to recruiting or retaining employees.
- Significant growth in ridership - expanding public transit services in the county could cause annual ridership numbers to increase from the current 18,000 one-way passenger trips to 41,000 annual trips or more.

5.3 Transit Need Versus Transit Demand

The concept of transportation need is necessarily a subjective one. No national standards or guidelines exist that prescribe the correct amount of public transportation service. Similarly, no guidelines exist concerning a means to accurately measure unmet need. There are methodologies which track the average number of daily trips made by various demographic sectors of the population based on availability of private vehicles and other factors.

Unfortunately, no measure of acceptable or desirable trip rates exists. If one did exist, it could not possibly apply to all situations. Therefore, the most appropriate way to address the concept of need, and

then to estimate possible ridership levels, is to use a variety of quantitative and qualitative approaches to describe needs and possible demand based on trip purposes, origins, destinations, and schedules.

Before discussing ways of identifying unmet needs and estimating demand, the concepts of need and demand need to be carefully defined. While these terms are often used interchangeably, they represent very different measures. Need is a measure of potential demand; actual demand may, in fact, be something far less.

Surveys often identify the need for more expanded transportation services, but experience has shown that when public transit services are offered, actual ridership demand is usually only a small fraction of identified needs. Individuals may say they need more transportation services to get to medical appointments, but whether they will use public transportation depends upon their other options, the cost and convenience of the transit service, and whether the service offers rides when they need them and to the correct destinations.

For example, a person may say he or she needs medical transportation to access therapy three times a week. However, if service is only provided one day a week, or if the ride takes two to three times as long as a private vehicle trip, the person will not use transit. In these instances, reported need will not translate into actual ridership demand.

While actual ridership forecasts are needed to determine service levels and to estimate revenue budgets, more descriptive measures of need are required to design service alternatives that address unmet needs. Therefore, both need estimates and demand estimates are required. Both will be presented in this section.

5.4 Approaches to Identifying Unmet Transit Needs in Rolette County

Because no single approach provides an adequate or accurate representation of unmet transportation needs, this study will use three approaches to identify unmet needs. It will also provide the detail necessary to propose and evaluate service enhancement options presented in Section 6. These three approaches include the following:

- Application of the recommended service levels identified in the recently completed North Dakota Personal Mobility Plan as applied to Rolette County.
- Descriptive measures of need based on interviews with existing service providers, human service agency representatives, and major employers.
- Application of state and national transit trip rate data to the Rolette County and Turtle Mountain Reservation areas.

Four aspects of transit need and/or demand must be considered to be of use when developing and evaluating transit service proposals. These include trip purpose (work, medical, nutrition, other social service access, school, recreation/social), trip origin and destination, time-of-day and day-of-week requirements, and the absolute level of demand (total one-way trips per time period). Both the statewide mobility plan and the interviews address the first three factors, and the state and national trip rate forecasting methods provide estimates of absolute demand levels. Each of these approaches is described in the remainder of this section.

5.5 North Dakota Statewide Mobility and Service Goals

In 2005, NDDOT sponsored a planning effort that resulted in a statewide personal mobility plan for North Dakota. The report entitled, *Personal Mobility in North Dakota: Trends, Gaps and Recommended*

Enhancements, outlined several mobility goals for all areas of the state and proposed basic levels of public transportation that recognize differences between urban, small urban, and rural areas.

This plan delineated service level goals for six user groups and three geographic/demographic classifications. The user groups included pre-school, grades K-12, adults in general, seniors age 60-plus, low-income persons, and persons with disabilities. A corresponding mobility goal matrix was developed, and a copy of that matrix is presented in Table 6.1 in Section 6. Specific recommendations for areas, such as the Turtle Mountain Reservation and nearby areas in Rolette County, are described in the following paragraphs.

For an area with the population similar to that of the reservation and surrounding area, Head Start and school bus transportation are recommended to meet the needs of pre-school and K-12 pupils, along with taxi and emergency transportation. For the other four categories of adult transportation, daily demand-responsive dial-a-ride service combined with taxi and emergency transportation are recommended.

The statewide mobility plan also recommended that all areas of the state have public transportation services that connect the local area to regional hubs. In Rolette County's case, the regional hub would be Minot. The statewide plan's concept is that if residents can get to one of the state's eight hubs, they can then connect to intercity air, bus, and rail transport for trips to other parts of the state, region, or nation.

Comparing these recommended service levels with the service now available in Rolette County provides the first measure of unmet needs for the study area. Pre-school and K-12 transportation needs appear to be adequately served by existing providers. In addition, the three publicly-funded transit service providers theoretically offer daily demand-responsive service to all parts of the county, including the Turtle Mountain Reservation and surrounding areas.

However, after interviewing area service providers, and based on the results of input from local meetings and interviews, it appears the present services are limited in their capacity to provide true county-wide daily service. They also need to expand the marketing of their services to inform residents of the type and level of service that is currently available. Further, there is no regularly scheduled public service to the nearest regional hub, Minot.

In theory, Rolette County's existing services appear to meet the statewide service goals. However, because of past funding limitations and real and perceived limitations concerning rider eligibility, the present services do not provide sufficient public transportation services to the most populated areas of the county.

For example, while the three services own and can operate up to ten vehicles, these vehicles are not used intensively by any of the providers; some operate only several hours a week. The reported total annual mileage for all three carriers is less than 60,000 miles or about 6,000 miles/vehicle, about one-quarter the typical annual mileage for high-productivity demand-response services.

According to data compiled in the statewide mobility plan, Rolette County's public transportation providers offered only about half as many vehicle miles per capita as the statewide average (3.46 compared with the 6.44 average for the rural counties of the state). Because of this low level of service (measured on a per-capita basis), actual ridership levels are also low compared with other rural areas. The statewide average for rural areas is 1.18 annual trips per capita. Rolette County transit systems provided about .92 annual trips/capita in 2005.

Based on a comparison of statewide service goals to current services in Rolette County, it appears there is a need for more intensive service levels where services currently exist, and more service needs to be

provided to regional hubs outside the county. Proposals for moving toward these goals are outlined in Section 6.

5.6 Needs Identified by Transit Services, Human Service Agencies, and Major Employers

5.6.1 Needs Identified by Existing Public Transit Providers

Rolette County has three publicly-supported transit providers. The services they offer were described in Section 3. Representatives of these providers were interviewed as part of this needs assessment. Each provider was asked to identify unmet needs as represented by service requests that they must deny because of a lack of capacity and to identify service enhancements that they would like to implement. As indicated in the previous section, it appears that each of these providers has the physical capacity to provide more services.

None of the providers report that they turn down rides on a regular basis. Two of the local operators evolved from systems designed to provide services to senior citizens. In recent years, funding sources have changed and services are now available to the general public. Unfortunately, little marketing or public information has been provided to inform area residents that the services are now available to everyone. Consequently, many area residents are not aware that they can utilize these services.

The transit ridership data for the three providers shows a slow steady increase that parallels the increased funding provided by state and federal grant programs. However, the three providers receive very little local financial support. Furthermore, the county, which is stressed by high welfare enrollments and an unemployment rate that is among the highest in the state, has very little ability to increase its direct financial support to public transit.

5.6.2 Needs Identified by Human Service Agency Representatives

It is assumed that human service agency representatives have direct contact with the many of individuals that have unmet personal mobility needs. In many instances, these human service agencies often provide or arrange for transportation in order to deliver services to their clients. Therefore, information from these agencies greatly enhances understanding of unmet mobility needs in Rolette County.

To glean information from area human service agencies concerning their clients' transportation needs, personal interviews were conducted with nine agencies that serve residents of Rolette County. Each agency interviewed serves a particular client group and/or specific trip purpose. As a general observation, the agency representatives indicate that 30%-50% of their clients need some help in arranging transportation assistance. In many cases the agencies' case workers directly provide transportation in their personal cars, or in some cases, use agency vehicles to provide rides. Because this transportation is only a peripheral service to the agencies' main mission, little operating or cost data is available to measure the extent and cost of the transportation. The following paragraphs summarize the interviews with the agencies' staffs.

Tribal Child Welfare is located about three miles west of Belcourt. This agency works primarily with children and their parents, including children in foster care. The agency reported that 50% of its clientele have transportation needs and the agency cannot meet all these needs.

Currently, four of the agency's employees provide some transportation services. The agency reimburses them at the rate of \$.445 per mile plus their salary. One employee spends about 50% of her time providing related services and three others spend about 10% to 15% of their time transporting clients. They serve 20 to 25 families at any given time.

The agency is currently spending about \$15,000 per year on employee-provided transportation, plus the cost of related salaries. There is no limit on trip distances, some of which are especially long for trips to treatment centers. Representatives of the Tribal Child Welfare program did not know that Nutrition & Support Service could provide rides to the general public, including Child Welfare's clients (Olson 2006).

5th Generation Treatment Center is funded under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 (PL 93-638, 88 St. 2203). It is a tribal agency currently housed in a small facility in Belcourt, but it plans on expanding by the end of the year to a 20-bed facility for inpatient treatment. The facility has inpatient, outpatient, and aftercare programs. It has capacity for 8 inpatients, 5 slots for day treatment, 12 slots for outpatients, and 18 for aftercare. The Center treats patients 18 years of age and older. Their current facility is not accessible to individuals with disabilities, so they must refer these clients to other facilities. Most clients rely on family members for transportation, but the agency does provide about 20 rides per month, some of which are local and some of which are to regional centers (Longie 2006).

The **Community Health Representative** program's only function is to provide medical transportation services. Like the 5th Generation Treatment Center, this service is a 638 grant-funded program. The program gives assistance for medical transportation, including getting people to their medical appointments and picking up pharmaceutical supplies.

CHR drivers are salaried and use their own vehicles. The program reimburses drivers at the current Internal Revenue Service rate of \$.445 cents per mile. Drivers also provide dialysis rides Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for four patients; they drive to Rolla, Rolette, Dunseith, and Belcourt for dialysis patients and do not leave the local area for other medical rides.

Rides are free. Budget constraints make it impossible for the agency to satisfy all client needs. Their clients must be enrolled in the tribe, and the length of the rides is very restricted because of insufficient funding. The agency has about 15 drivers, who are paid \$9 per hour. Agency personnel indicate that inadequate funding forces the agency to take only the most desperate cases as determined by the illness and financial ability to acquire other transportation (Poitra 2006).

Rolette County Social Services provides assistance to low-income individuals and families. They assist clients (mostly young single parents) with employment issues and substance, such as food stamps, TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) payments, fuel assistance, and child care. They have 721 families enrolled in related assistance programs. This number represents more than one-fourth of all such clients in the state of North Dakota

Agency personnel indicated that they experience a 30% no-show rate for services provided to their 2,000 Rolette County clients, which equates to about 600 missed appointments per month. The primary reasons for missed appointments are transportation-related issues and a lack of child care. Rolette County Social Services has some volunteers that provide transportation services, but the number of volunteers is declining as gas prices continue to increase (Mathiason 2006).

Job Service North Dakota helps unemployed residents with their job search efforts. The agency also provides transportation assistance by providing financial assistance to help repair and maintain client vehicles. TANF clients are eligible to receive up to \$500 or more for private automobile expenses, such

as licensing, insurance, and repairs. Up to an additional \$100 may be available to defray monthly operating expenses.

Job Service personnel estimate that its Rolla office spends between \$75,000 and \$100,000 annually to facilitate private automobile use by its clients. The office has approximately 265 active cases, about 90% of which have transportation-related needs. Most of these clients reside in either Belcourt or Dunseith. Clients fail to appear for appointments at the Job Service office in Rolla about 60% of the time. Some, but not all, of these failed appointments are related to transportation problems (Albert 2006).

The **Vocational Rehabilitation 121** project provides vocational rehabilitation services to tribal members. It serves clients of all ages with physical and cognitive disabilities. According to agency personnel, 90% of the agency's 110-120 clients have transportation-related problems.

The agency spends about \$30,000 per year on transportation. It owns one accessible bus and one van and is planning to acquire an additional bus with a lift. The agency provides transportation for training and job search activities. Among its clients, 85% attend school, but 40% to 50% drop out due to transportation issues. Many do not ride the bus because of the stigma associated with riding the "Voc Rehab" bus. The agency's lone driver uses the van most of the time, and the bus is also used for larger group trips (Davis 2006).

The **Tribal Employment Right Ordinance (T.E.R.O.)** has an office located in the tribal buildings about three miles west of Belcourt. The office gets approximately 200 new applications for employment per month and has more than 6,000 applications on file. The agency has no funds for transportation. Most clients reportedly buy a car shortly after they become employed. There are very few retail and service sector jobs available in the community (Davis 2006).

BIA Social Services is an economic assistance program similar to the one operated by Rolette County. Its client load ranges from 750 to 900 per month, and the clients must come to the office to certify their eligibility. The agency does not have any money or resources available for transportation. It is estimated that about 75% of the client load has transportation-related problems (Breland 2006).

Indian Health Services indicated they have a strong demand for transportation. It is estimated that the hospital spends about \$360,000 per year to transport patients to regional health centers; Minot is the primary destination.

IHS has four ambulances available for the emergency needs. Non-emergency trips are made primarily with standard General Service Administration vehicles. Maintenance workers are often used as drivers for the non-emergency trips. IHS has reportedly called Nutrition & Support Services on several occasions but, for various reasons, it has been unable to arrange transportation through that public transportation program. The administration of the hospital is reportedly interested in working with area transit operators to procure non-emergency medical transportation services. Indian Health Services provides trips to Minot several times per week. These trips involve between 15 and 20 riders (Bercier 2006).

In summary, the human service agency representatives interviewed as part of this study indicate that transportation, primarily to locations within the county, is a major problem for their agency and impacts their ability to deliver needed services. Few agencies use existing transit providers to obtain needed transportation for clients. Those that have tried to use existing services have met with limited success.

In response to lack of transportation alternatives, several agencies own and operate their own vehicles; some pay non-driver employees or volunteers to operate automobiles to provide transportation services to their clients. While many transportation needs may only be served with this one-on-one transportation service, expansion of existing shared-ride public transportation services would relieve agencies of some of their transportation problems and would improve their ability to serve clients.

It appears from the information gathered during the interview process that a strong coordination effort involving publicly-supported transit services and social service agencies would benefit the community. There is a lack of synergy concerning the provision of local transportation services. Many organizations are working on their own to satisfy client needs.

Experience across the country in both urban and rural areas suggests that coordination efforts will result in more and better transportation services than can be provided by individual agencies working on their own. A strong marketing plan to inform the community of available publicly-supported transit services, coupled with cooperation from the social service agencies and private business, could produce a serviceable plan that would accommodate a much higher percentage of the transportation needs in the community than is currently being met.

5.6.3 Needs Identified by Major Employers

As part of this study, a questionnaire was distributed to the county's 25 largest employers to determine current transportation needs for work trips and to ascertain interest in improved ridesharing and transit services. Responses were received from 20 employers (80%). A copy of the survey instrument is presented in Appendix C.

Employer responses are summarized in Table 5.1. As this table indicates, only four of the respondents indicated that transportation was definitely a factor when recruiting new employees (Question 10); four said that transportation was a factor regarding retention (Question 11).

Only three employers felt that an expanded transit system would definitely benefit their operations (Question 12) or their employees (Question 13); most were uncertain regarding related benefits. Only one employer expressed a willingness to subsidize transit services; most were uncertain (Question 14). Only six respondents indicated that they would not be willing to consider a flexible work schedule to accommodate the use of commuter transportation services (Question 15).

The operations of responding employers lend themselves to transit services. Most of the respondents operate out of single locations, and almost all are located immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 281 and N.D. Highway 5, which runs across the county. Most of the employers have single shifts with start times between 7 and 8 a.m. and end times between 4:30 and 5 p.m.

According to the responding employers, most employees commute alone, but several employers reported that between 10% and 30% of their employees rideshare. One-way commute distances are typically five miles or less, but some employees, as might be expected in rural areas, commute more than 20 miles to work.

In general, it does not appear that the lack of public transportation services is a problem in Rolette County, at least from the perspective of the county's major employers. This response seems to run counter to federal efforts, such as the Federal Transit Administration's Jobs Access program, which seeks to enhance transit services for low-income workers. Given the area's high unemployment rate, it may be possible employers have a ready supply of potential workers, and that these individuals make private transportation a top priority once they become employed. As indicated in Section 3, the county also has a relatively high percentage of its workforce that participates in ridesharing.

Table 5.1 Commuting Needs, Benefits, and Employer Participation

Survey Questions		Response		
<i>Question #</i>	<i>Questions</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
10	Is transportation a recruiting factor?	4	10	6
11	Is transportation a retention factor?	4	13	3
12	Would expanded transit benefit employers?	3	8	9
13	Would expanded transit benefit employees?	3	7	10
14	Would firms be willing to subsidize transit?	1	4	15
15	Are schedules flexible to facilitate the use of transit?	6	6	8

Source: Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

5.7 Demand Estimates Based On Trip Rate Factors

Previous sections described unmet needs primarily in terms of trip purposes and origins/destinations. These sections did not, however, provide much specific information on possible demand for additional public transportation rides. The purpose of this section is to provide general ridership estimates that would likely result if public transportation services were expanded.

These estimates are based on ridership trip rates experienced in other rural areas in the state and around the country. They provide estimated demand levels that might be possible given anticipated service improvements. Obviously, the actual level of demand will depend on the specific services offered, the quality of the service in terms of frequency and on-time performance, and the marketing of the services. Section 6 and 7 will present more detail on estimates for individual service proposals.

Table 5.2 summarizes ridership and operating data for the three existing public transportation operators in Rolette County. Annual ridership estimates are based more on capacity and comparable usage rates from other counties than on specific service factors.

Currently, the county's three operators provide about 18,000 one-way trips per year, or about 1.35 trips/capita; they provide slightly over four miles of service per resident in the county. If the public transportation providers offered the average number of miles per capita as found throughout the rest of North Dakota, they would operate about 88,000 miles, or 57% more miles than they do presently. Since the present fleet is under utilized in terms of hours and miles of service per year, increasing the use of the existing vehicles could allow for the 57% increase. Although operating expenses for fuel, drivers, and maintenance would also increase, it would probably not be in the same proportion as the increase in miles.

If the three public providers could increase ridership to the high end of rural trip productivity found in North Dakota, annual ridership would be about 41,000 or 2.2 times the current level. If the current fleet of 10 vehicles was operated 10 hours/day five days a week, and achieved three one-way trips per vehicle hour (a reasonable expectation for rural demand responsive service), it would have a capacity of about 60,000 trips per year, more than three times the existing ridership level.

Finally, the Transit Cooperative Research Program (TCRP) has devised several models to estimate rural transit demand. One such model was applied to the data for Rolette County and resulted in a demand forecast of more than 106,000 annual one-way trips for general public, work, and senior citizen transportation. This model relies on trip rates for the various population groups (elderly, disabled, low-income) or trip purpose (work). The ridership estimate seems high for Rolette County (more than 6 trips/capita), but does indicate the possible market for public transit services in terms of some national statistics and averages.

Once again, these figures are not specific forecasts based on service proposals; they are simply indicators of capacity of a more fully developed public transportation service. As indicated in the previous section, a major step in addressing unmet needs of county residents, particularly those living on or near the Turtle Mountain Reservation, would be to increase the utilization of existing capacity through coordination and marketing of services. Beyond that, some of the existing vehicles and hours of operation could be directed toward more predictable fixed-route or flexible-route service that would increase demand and productivity for existing service providers. Possible service expansions are described in the following section.

Table 5.2 Current and Projected Ridership Levels – Rolette County

Current Annual Ridership for 3 providers - One-way passenger trips (2005)	18,406
Current Annual Vehicle Miles for 3 providers (2005)	56,000
Current Trips/Capita	1.35
Current Vehicle Miles/Capita	4.10
Current North Dakota Rural Counties High Performance Trips/Capita	3.00
Current North Dakota Rural Average Miles per Capita	6.44
Demand Estimates for Rolette County	
Trips/Capita Equal to Other ND Providers	41,000
Vehicle Miles Operated Based on Average Miles/Capita North Dakota	88,000
Estimated Annual Ridership Using Social Economic Factors Model - TCRP	106,725
Current Capacity based on 10 vehicles, 10 hours/day, 5 days/week, 3 trips/hour	60,000

5.8 References

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6. Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

Rolette County and Turtle Mountain Reservation have several options concerning the provision of personal mobility services to area residents. These options range from maintaining the status quo and providing the same level of service that are currently available to implementing significant changes to existing operations.

As the preceding section illustrated, there are significant unmet personal mobility needs in the county, especially on the reservation and nearby tribal trust lands. Fortunately, there is also a significant influx of new transit monies available from state and federal sources. These factors suggest that changes in the existing service environment are warranted and possible.

6.2 Section Highlights

- Mobility goals – the area’s mobility goals should at least meet those proposed in NDDOT’s personal mobility plan.
- Existing services – efforts should be made to, at a minimum, maintain existing levels of service.
- Expand hours of services – existing services should be expanded to provide coverage more hours per day.
- New services - new hub and spoke services should be initiated, using existing service providers, to provide fixed-route service between Dunseith, Belcourt, and Rolla and from the area to Minot and to enhance existing dial-a-ride and taxi services in Belcourt, Rolla, and rural areas of the county.
- Coordinate services – efforts should be made to coordinate the operations of local service providers (both public and client-specific).
- Marketing - an ongoing marketing effort should be initiated to create awareness of available services.
- Transit board - a transit advisory board should be created to provide ongoing direction to local service providers.
- Record keeping - uniform and expanded record keeping practices should be adopted to facilitate accurate operational assessments.
- Monitor operations – system operations should be monitored to assess operations, public awareness, utilization, and remaining unmet needs.
- Service modifications – system services should be modified, over time and as appropriate and affordable, to better meet the personal mobility needs of area residents.
- Personalized initiatives – specialized services, such as ridesharing and friends/family transportation, should be initiated to help satisfy low volume needs.

6.3 Mobility Goals

SURTC's 2005 *Personal Mobility in North Dakota* (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center 2005) report to NDDOT may serve as a good starting point for discussions concerning service goals for the area's personal mobility network. As is the case with this study, that report focused on the transportation needs of transportation-disadvantaged segments of the population and prescribed levels of service that should be pursued to satisfy residents' most basic transportation needs. Once those needs are satisfied, the report suggested that supplemental levels of service be implemented to meet higher level needs and to address needs that are more specific to certain communities.

Table 6.1 presents a mobility goals matrix that was set forth in the personal mobility study. This matrix outlines various levels of service that were proposed for various size communities in North Dakota.

For the purposes of this study, it may be appropriate to treat Rolla and Belcourt and the surrounding reservation and its trust lands as a single community. This approach seems fitting given the density of population in the area and the close proximity of the two cities to one another. These two cities and the reservation and its nearby trust lands have a combined population of approximately 10,000.

Utilizing this approach, targeted levels of service for the cities of Dunseith, Rolette, and St. John and rural areas of the county would be as prescribed in the first row of Table 6.1. Pre-school and K-12 students would have their publicly-supported transportation needs met via Head Start, school, and emergency vehicles. All other residents would have their publicly-supported needs met primarily with weekly dial-a-ride and emergency vehicles.

As also specified by Table 6.1, the area, including Belcourt, Rolla, and the reservation, would have similar levels of service, except to the extent that dial-a-ride services would be available on a daily basis and taxi services would also be available, primarily to provide services beyond the normal hours of operation of traditional dial-a-ride services.

Table 6.1 Mobility Goals: Base Level Government-Supported Services for Various Demographic Groups and Geographical Areas

Demographic Group / Geographic Area	Pre-School	Grades K-12	Adult	Seniors Age 60+	Low Income	Disabled
Rural Areas & Cities Under 4,500	Head Start & Emerg.	School & Emerg.	Weekly Dial-A-Ride & Emerg.	Weekly Dial-A-Ride & Emerg.	Weekly Dial-A-Ride, Medicaid, TANF, & Emerg.	Weekly Dial-A-Ride, Voc. Rehab. & Emerg.
Cities 4,500 – 20,000	Head Start, Taxi, & Emerg.	School, Taxi, & Emerg.	Daily Dial-A-Ride, Taxi, & Emerg.	Daily Dial-A-Ride, Taxi, & Emerg.	Daily Dial-A-Ride, Taxi, Medicaid, TANF, & Emerg.	Daily Dial-A-Ride, Taxi, Voc. Rehab. & Emerg.
Cities Over 20,000	Head Start, Fixed Route, Taxi, & Emerg.	School, Fixed Route, Taxi, & Emerg.	Daily Fixed Route, Taxi, & Emerg.	Daily Fixed Route, Taxi, & Emerg.	Daily Fixed Route, Taxi, Medicaid, TANF, & Emerg.	Daily Dial-A-Ride, Fixed Route, Taxi, Voc. Rehab. & Emerg.

In addition to the levels of service prescribed in the mobility matrix, the *Personal Mobility* study also recommended that state residents have the ability to travel from their home communities to one of the states' nearest regional hubs to access medical services, shopping, intrastate and interstate transportation services, etc. These regional hubs were identified as the state's eight largest cities. Preceding sections indicated that Minot serves as the primary regional hub for Rolette County. Related mobility recommendations should, therefore, provide a means for the area's transportation disadvantaged to travel to and from Minot.

The *Personal Mobility* study indicated that a hub and spoke system is often the most effective and efficient means of moving people between communities within a region. This section's recommendations will utilize this concept.

With these targeted levels of service and related concepts in mind, and based on the information presented in preceding sections, the following pages set forth a series of recommendations concerning the provision of personal mobility services on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and throughout Rolette County. A related management plan and implementation strategies are presented in the final section of this report.

6.4 Specific Recommendations

As indicated above and in earlier sections, there are significant unmet personal mobility needs on Turtle Mountain Reservation and in other portions of Rolette County. Fortunately, the area already has three publicly-supported service providers in place, and there are new and expanded funding sources available to help fund service expansions and enhancements. The following recommendations will be presented in the remaining pages of this section:

- 6.2.1 Maintain existing levels of service.
- 6.2.2 Expand operating hours of existing services.
- 6.2.3 Provide new services using existing service providers.
- 6.2.4 Coordinate operations of local service providers.
- 6.2.5 Establish an ongoing marketing effort to create awareness of available services.
- 6.2.6 Create a transit advisory board to provide ongoing direction to local service providers.
- 6.2.7 Adopt and utilize uniform and expanded record keeping practices to facilitate accurate operational assessments.
- 6.2.8 Monitor operations to assess operations, public awareness, utilization, and remaining unmet needs and make modifications, as appropriate and affordable, to better meet the personal mobility needs of area residents.
- 6.2.9 Initiate personalized initiatives to help satisfy low volume needs.

Each of these recommendations will be elaborated upon in the following subsections of this section. More specific operational issues will be discussed in the management plan that is set forth in Section 7.

6.4.1 Maintain Existing Levels of Services

Some areas of North Dakota have limited personal mobility options, given the fact that they have only one service provider that provides limited, part-time services. Rolette County and Turtle Mountain Reservation are fortunate in this regard, given the fact that the area has three local services providers that give an estimated 19,000 one-way passengers trips annually.

As described in Section 3, these three operators have a total of 10 vehicles that are used to provide related services. Seven of these vehicles are used on a regular basis, and eight are equipped with features that make them accessible to passengers with disabilities. Service hours vary from five to eight hours per weekday to 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days per week.

Discussions with the study's advisory committee and interviews with numerous members of the area's medical and social services community did not produce any statements of discontent regarding the provision of unnecessary services. It is, therefore, recommended that no wholesale modifications be made in terms of discontinuing existing services.

Note, however, that this recommendation does not necessarily mean that existing services should not undergo some changes. As the following recommendations will discuss, proposals will be made which will result in service expansions. Existing services will have to be coordinated with these expansions to promote overall system efficiencies and effectiveness. The changes may result in some modifications to existing services.

This maintenance of service approach should also involve the pre-school, K-12, and emergency-related transportation services that were identified in Section 3 and outlined in Table 6.1. It appears that these services are currently meeting the basic transportation needs of related segments of the population. It is

recommended that these services, as provided by local schools, Head Start centers, and hospitals, be maintained.

6.4.2 Expand Operating Hours

As indicated above and in Section 3, the area's public transportation service providers operate on varying schedules. Royal Coach provides county-wide dial-a-ride taxi services from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days per week. Belcourt's Nutrition & Support Services provides local dial-a-ride services from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. Rolla's Nutrition United/Rolette Transit Service (RCT) provides dial-a-ride services in Rolla from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. in western regions of the county. Service is provided in Rolette one day per week.

Nutrition & Support Services and RCT indicate that they would like to provide additional services, but that funding limitations made doing so impossible. As indicated in Section 3, however, additional federal and state funding has become available, and all three local service providers have received significant funding increases via related programs administered by NDDOT. These funds should be used to expand operator service hours, especially in the communities of Rolla and Belcourt, to include a Monday through Friday start time of no later than 7:30 a.m. and an end time of no earlier than 5:30 p.m.

A specific service plan will be discussed in following subsections. Even if the comprehensive service plan that is presented in the following subsection is not implemented, local service providers should expand their operating hours to better meet the personal mobility needs of a great portion of the area's transportation disadvantaged population.

6.4.3 Provide New Services Using Existing Providers

As indicated in Section 5, there are significant unmet personal mobility needs in Rolette County and on Turtle Mountain Reservation. As indicated in Section 3, the vast majority of the county's population, major employers, medical facilities, and social service providers are located along and immediately adjacent to U.S. Highway 281 and N.D. Highway 5 that connect the cities of Dunseith, Belcourt, and Rolla. The following service network is presented with that fact in mind.

It is recommended that a transportation network be implemented using six service components. Some of these components represent totally new services, while others entail the modification of existing services. Given the number and capabilities of the area's existing service providers, it is recommended that all of these components, if implemented, be operated by the area's existing providers. Doing so would, however, require a significant amount of operational and administrative coordination. This topic will be the focus of Subsection 6.2.4.

Service Component One – Establish a modified fixed-route bus system that will make two round trips per day, Monday through Friday, from Dunseith to Belcourt and Rolla. The stop in Belcourt should be a part of a local hub-and-spoke system that will facilitate passenger transfers with the other service components that will be discussed later.

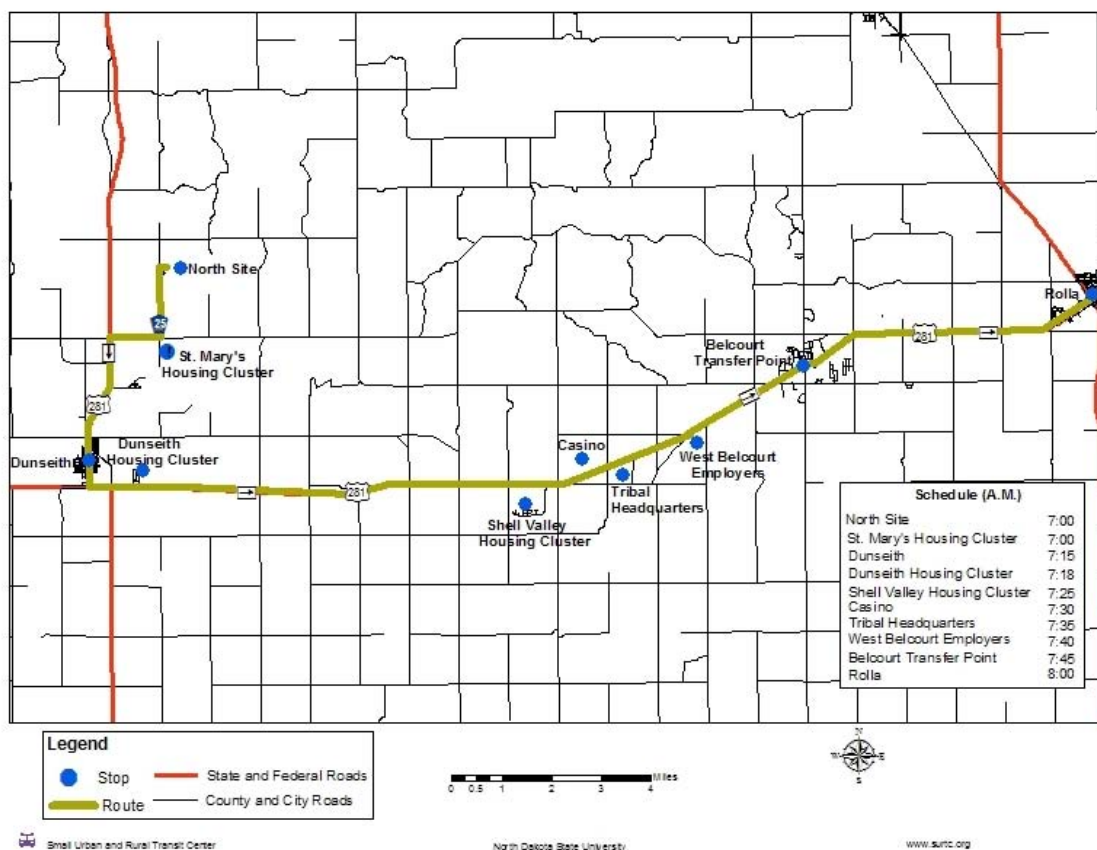
This route would originate at the tribal housing clusters northeast of Dunseith at approximately 7 a.m. The bus would travel to Dunseith and then eastbound toward Belcourt. Along the way, it would pass the Shell Valley housing cluster. Cluster residents would receive service only if they called transit dispatch to request a ride.

The route would stop at the casino, tribal headquarters, and the major employment sites located approximately three miles west of Belcourt. Service to the Center housing cluster would be provided on an as-needed basis with residents having to call in advance if service is desired.

In Belcourt, the bus would stop at a transfer point (possibly the Belcourt Mall) at approximately 7:45 a.m. and then proceed to Rolla. The total travel time for this 25-mile route is approximately one hour. From 8 a.m. until 11 a.m., this bus would be available to provide local dial-a-ride services in Rolla. From 11 a.m. until noon, it would run a reverse route from Rolla to Belcourt and Dunseith. From there, the bus would immediately run back to Belcourt and Rolla and then be used for local dial-a-ride services from about 1 p.m. until 5 p.m. At that time, it would run back from Rolla to Belcourt, Dunseith, and the housing clusters northeast of Dunseith.

A map and corresponding timetable for this component are presented in Figure 6.1 and Table 6.2, respectively.

**Figure 6.1 Component One Fixed Route & Dial-A-Ride
Dunseith – Belcourt – Rolla**



**Table 6.2 Timetable – Component One Fixed Route & Dial-A-Ride
Dunseith – Belcourt – Rolla**

<u>Departure Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
7:00 a.m.	North Site & St. Mary's Housing Cluster
7:15 a.m.	Dunseith
7:18 a.m.	Dunseith Housing Cluster
7:25 a.m.	Shell Valley Housing Cluster
7:30 a.m.	Casino
7:35 a.m.	Tribal Headquarters
7:40 a.m.	West Belcourt Employers
7:45 a.m.	Belcourt Transfer Point
8:00 a.m.	Rolla
8:00 – 11:00 a.m.	Rolla Dial-A-Ride
11:00 – Noon	Reverse Route
Noon – 1:00 p.m.	N.E. Dunseith to Rolla
1:00 – 5:00 p.m.	Rolla Dial-A-Ride
5:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Reverse Route (at transfer point at 5:15 p.m.)

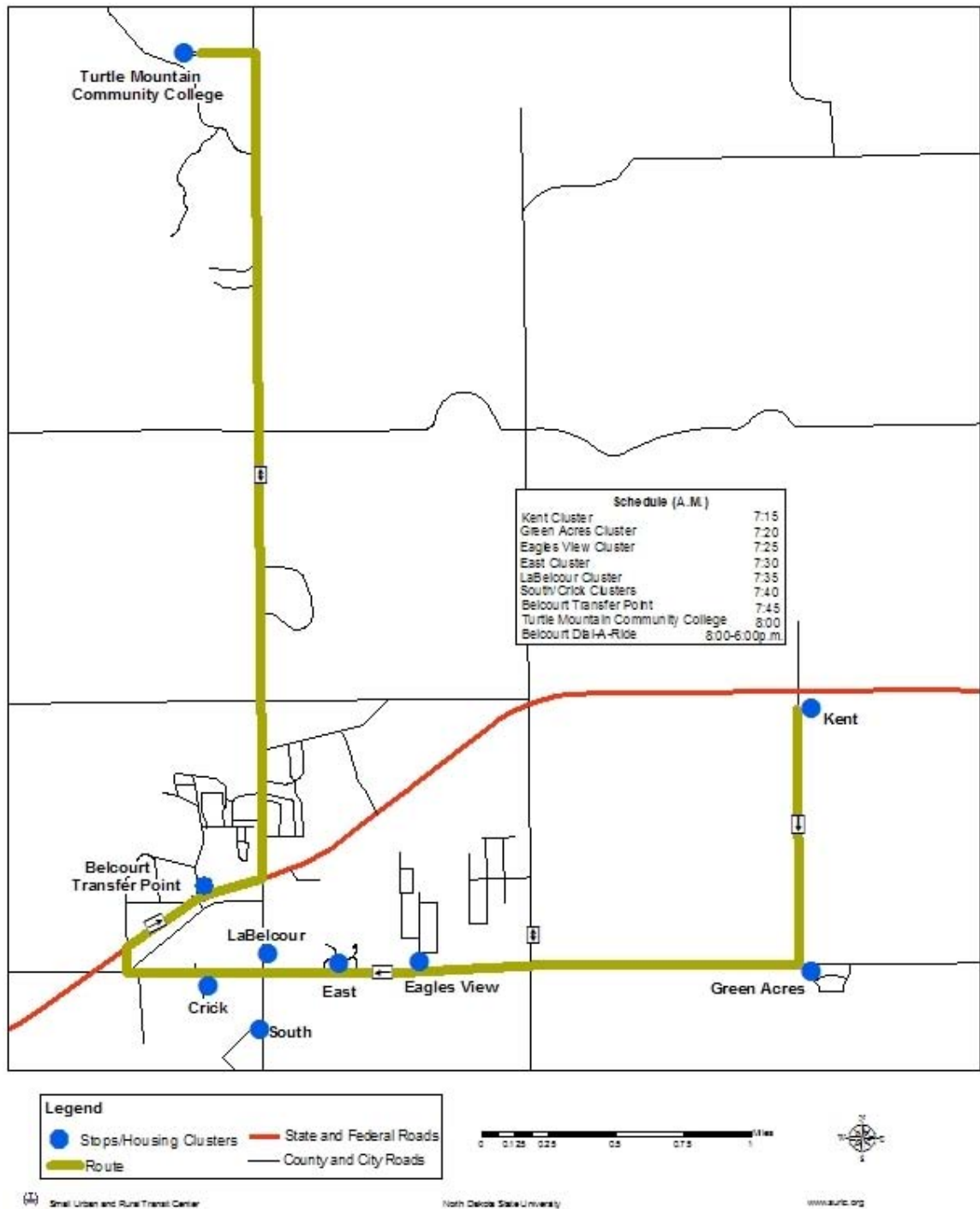
Service Component Two – Establish a modified fixed-route bus system that will run, Monday through Friday, through tribal housing clusters located within two miles of Belcourt to the Belcourt transfer point and then to the Turtle Mountain Community College. As is the case with the route proposed in Component One, the stop in Belcourt would be a part of a local hub-and-spoke system that will facilitate passenger transfers with the other proposed service components.

This route would be run from approximately 7:15 to 7:45 a.m. and would be coordinated to facilitate transfers at the Belcourt transfer point at 7:45 a.m. Housing clusters covered by this route include LaBelcour, Creek, East, Eagle's View, Green Acres, and Kent. After arriving at the transfer point, the bus would, if necessary, travel on to the Turtle Mountain Community College to deliver students. Route travel times are estimated at approximately one hour.

When the vehicle is not being used to provide fixed-route service, it will be used to provide dial-a-ride services in and around Belcourt. Service runs would be scheduled to facilitate transfers to and from the Component One fixed-route service at the Belcourt transfer point.

A map and corresponding timetable for this component are presented in Figure 6.2 and Table 6.3, respectively.

**Figure 6.2 Component Two Fixed Route & Dial-A-Ride
Belcourt Housing Clusters & Community College**



**Table 6.3 Timetable – Component Two Fixed Route & Dial-A-Ride
Belcourt Housing Clusters & Community College**

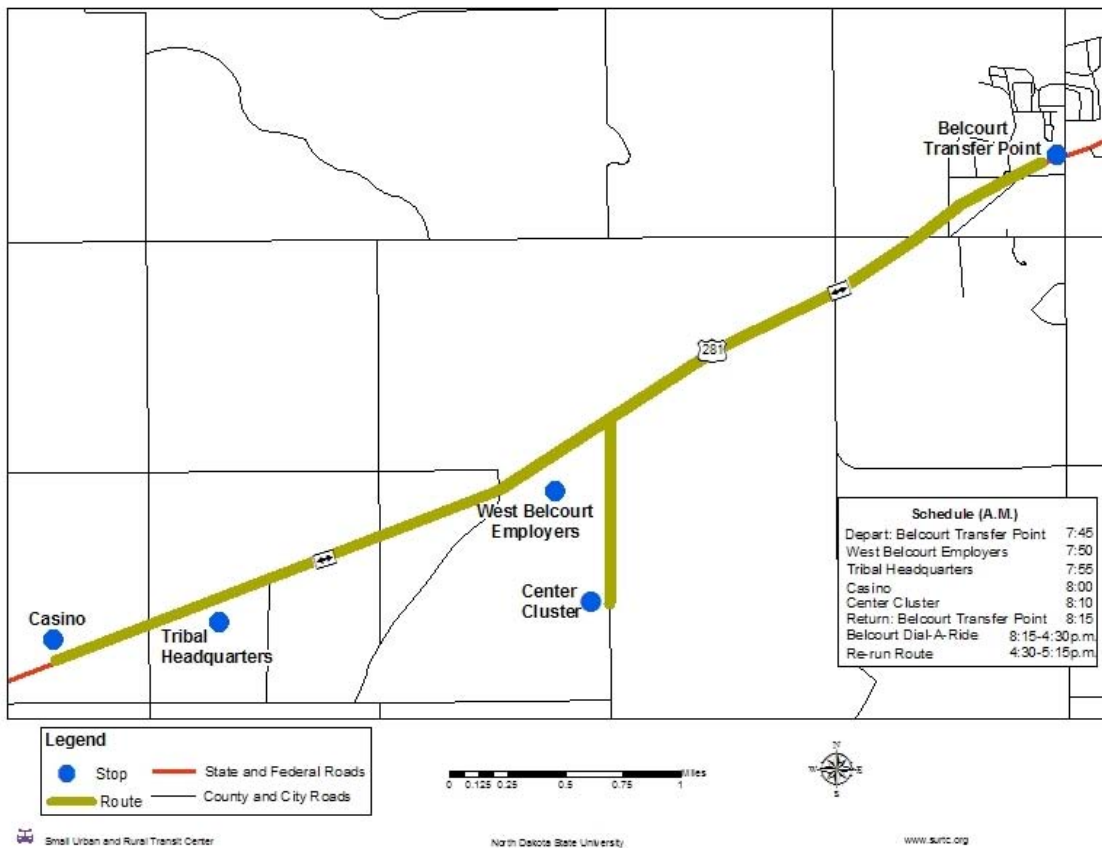
<u>Departure Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
7:15 a.m.	Kent Cluster
7:20 a.m.	Green Acres Cluster
7:25 a.m.	Eagle’s View Cluster
7:30 a.m.	East Cluster
7:35 a.m.	LaBelcour Cluster
7:40 a.m.	Creek Cluster
7:45 a.m.	Belcourt Transfer Point
8:00 a.m.	Turtle Mountain Community College
8:00 – 6:00 p.m.	Belcourt Dial-A-Ride

Service Component Three – Establish a modified fixed-route bus system that will leave the Belcourt transfer point at 7:45 a.m., Monday through Friday, and travel west to destinations located within five miles of Belcourt along U.S. Highway 281. These destinations would include major employers, tribal headquarters, and the casino. This route could also provide service to the Center housing cluster located three miles southwest of Belcourt.

This route would be run four times per day at times that facilitate transfers with the route proposed in Component One. When not in use for this route, this vehicle would also be available to provide dial-a-ride services in and around Belcourt.

A map and corresponding timetable for this component are presented in Figure 6.3 and Table 6.4, respectively.

**Figure 6.3 Component Three Fixed Route & Dial-A-Ride
West Belcourt Employers & Housing Cluster**



**Table 6.4 Timetable – Component Three Fixed Route & Dial-A-Ride
West Belcourt Employers & Housing Cluster**

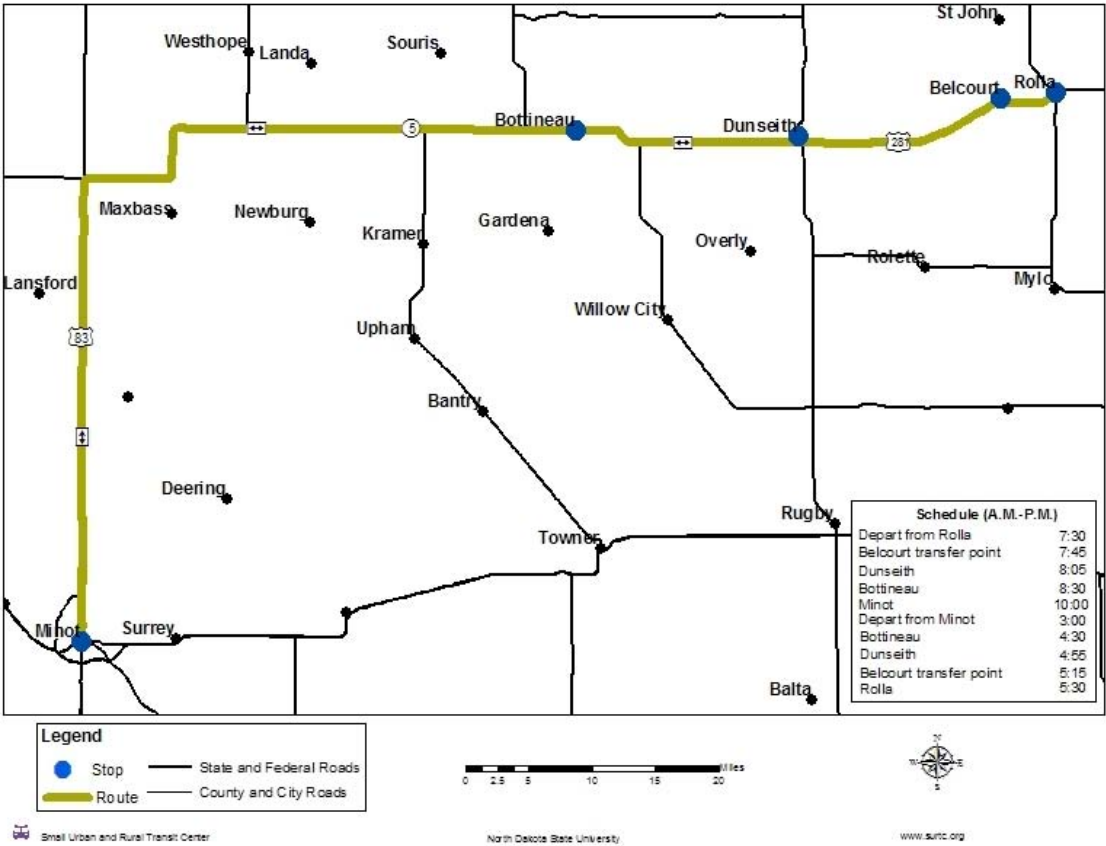
<u>Departure Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
7:45 a.m.	Depart from Belcourt Transfer Point
7:50 a.m.	West Belcourt Employers
7:55 a.m.	Tribal Headquarters
8:00 a.m.	Casino
8:10 a.m.	Center Cluster
8:15 a.m.	Return to Belcourt Transfer Point
8:15 – 4:30 p.m.	Belcourt Dial-A-Ride
4:30 – 5:15 p.m.	Run Route

Service Component Four – Operate dial-a-ride services in western Rolette County and in the cities of Rolette and St. John. Dial-a-ride services are currently provided in western portions of the county five days per week by RCT. St. John and Rolette receive similar services on a weekly basis. It is recommended that these services be maintained at existing levels. It may be worth noting, however, that services in western portions of the county may be excessive, and that corresponding reductions could be made, possibly reducing service to three days per week. This reduction would make this service’s vehicle and driver available to provide the services being recommended for the communities of Rolette and St. John.

Service Component Five – Operate a fixed route from Rolla to Minot via Belcourt, Dunseith, and Bottineau. The proposed route would be run five times per week, Monday through Friday. The vehicle would depart from Rolla at approximately 7:30 a.m. and stop in Belcourt at the transfer point. From there, the vehicle would travel to Minot with stops in Dunseith and Bottineau.

It is anticipated that this route would arrive in Minot at approximately 10 a.m. and that it would transport primarily medical patients; it would, however, also be available for other travelers. It is expected that the bus would leave Minot at approximately 3 p.m. and arrive back at the Belcourt transfer point by 5:15 p.m. and Rolla by 5:30 p.m. A corresponding map and timetable are presented in Figure 6.4 and Table 6.5, respectively. In addition to providing local residents with access to medical and other services in Minot, this route would also provide a link between Rolette County and intrastate and interstate transportation services that are available in Minot.

**Figure 6.4 Component Five Fixed Route
Rolette & Bottineau Counties to Minot**



**Table 6.5 Timetable – Component Five Fixed Route
Rolette & Bottineau Counties to Minot**

<u>Departure Time</u>	<u>Location</u>
7:30 a.m.	Depart from Rolla
7:45 a.m.	Depart from Belcourt Transfer Point
8:05 a.m.	Dunseith
8:30 a.m.	Bottineau
10:00 a.m.	Minot
3:00 p.m.	Depart from Minot
4:30 p.m.	Bottineau
4:55 p.m.	Dunseith
5:15 p.m.	Belcourt Transfer Point
5:30 p.m.	Arrive in Rolla

Service Component Six – Operate county-wide taxi service based in Belcourt from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends. Implementing service components one through five would provide Belcourt and Rolla with weekday dial-a-ride services from approximately 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. As indicated in Section 3, the area’s taxi service, Royal Coach Transportation, currently provides county-wide taxi service from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days per week. It is recommended that this service be coordinated with others being proposed to provide area residents with related services during evening hours and on weekends.

6.4.4 Coordinate Operations

As indicated earlier, it is recommended that the service expansions proposed in the preceding subsections of this section utilize all three of the area’s existing service providers. Implementing the service components outlined in the preceding subsection would create a county-wide hub-and-spoke transportation network.

Operating an effective and efficient hub-and-spoke system using multiple service providers requires a significant amount of dedication, cooperation, and coordination. It is, therefore, recommended that the area’s service providers take steps to significantly increase the amount of coordination that exists among their operations. At the present time, this coordination is largely limited to operating within defined service areas within the county and submitting annual FTA and NDDOT operating grant requests through a regional planning organization.

This increased coordination should involve not only route operating schedules, but also tasks such as budgeting, promotional efforts, record keeping, dispatching, etc. It may also include a single-point operational oversight. Many of these items will be discussed in the following subsections and in the management plan that is the topic of Section 7.

6.4.5 Establish Marketing Effort

It is recommended that the area’s three service providers undertake a significant public awareness campaign to make area residents aware of public transportation services available within the county. Following an initial campaign, ongoing efforts should be maintained to continually remind the public, employers, and medical and social service personnel of service options, hours of operation, fares, service modifications, etc.

The area's three transportation services provide a significant amount of coverage to county residents. Researcher contacts with professional personnel indicate, however, that many people who should be knowledgeable about local transportation services are highly unaware of what options are available. Housing authority and college personnel, for example, were not aware that local dial-a-ride services were available to the general public. Some of this unawareness may, for example, stem from the fact that the vehicle used to provide services bears information regarding senior meals transportation.

Rolla's Nutrition United has taken steps to promote the image of public transportation by renaming its transportation services Rolette County Transportation. Royal Coach Transportation runs weekly advertisements in a local paper concerning the availability of its services.

All three of the area's service providers should initiate campaigns to expand public awareness of their operations. These campaigns should be coordinated and, if possible, unified to create a single image and point of contact. Components might include informational posters, news releases, advertisements in local newspapers, and informational meetings with local officials, medical and social service personnel, college administrators, etc.

6.4.6 Create Transit Advisory Board

In November 2004, SURTC completed a report for NDDOT entitled, *Enhancing Passenger Mobility Services in North Dakota through Increased Coordination* (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center 2004). One of that study's recommendations involved the creation of regional councils to facilitate the awareness of available personal mobility services within each region's community of professionals who deal with transportation-disadvantaged individuals. The creation of these councils was also intended to facilitate the coordination of related transportation services within the region.

It is recommended that this same approach be taken in Rolette County. Representation on the county's transit advisory board might include the following:

- North Central Planning and the area's three service providers
- Rolette County and tribal social services
- Tribal Council representative
- County representative
- Job Service North Dakota
- Quentin N. Burdick Memorial Healthcare Facility
- Presentation Medical Center
- Turtle Mountain Community College

This board should initially meet on a monthly or quarterly basis to educate its members of the availability of services and planned enhancements. The board should also provide input concerning proposed enhancements, coordinating and marketing efforts, etc.

Following this initial educational and program design phase, the board should meet on an as-needed basis, but at least semi-annually. Discussions should include not only ongoing operations, but also desirable service enhancements and coordinating public transportation services with those being provided by others to specific clientele groups.

6.4.7 Adopt Uniform Record Keeping

SURTC's 2005 *Personal Mobility in North Dakota* report to NDDOT (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center 2005) recommended that NDDOT establish uniform record keeping and reporting methods and corresponding performance measurement tools be used to help assess the operations of the state's publicly-supported transportation services. Steps are reportedly underway to implement this recommendation (Fuchs 2006).

If pursued to completion by NDDOT, implementing these record keeping and reporting methods will be mandatory for the area's three publicly-supported transportation service providers. Regardless of whether or not this recommendation is implemented by NDDOT, such an effort should be undertaken in Rolette County.

A review of operating records conducted as a part of this study indicated that each operator compiles information differently, and the lack of information, in some instances, makes it impossible to determine the relative performance of each operator. This inability makes it difficult or impossible to make projections concerning effectiveness and efficiency when compared with national averages or specific operations in other parts of the state or nation. Implementing this recommendation will make future assessments possible.

Regarding specific record keeping requirements, research sponsored by the Federal Transit Administration resulted in the preparation of a guidebook for developing transit performance-measurement systems (Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 88). The guidebook presents suggestions for the development and use of measurement systems for both fixed-route and demand-response dial-a-ride programs and emphasizes that such measurement systems should be specifically designed for each program.

The report also suggests, however, there are certain core measurement tools that should be used by virtually all programs. It is recommended the following data should be collected to facilitate performance assessments, both internally over time and in comparison with other peer operations in North Dakota and elsewhere:

- One-way passenger trips
- Vehicle miles
- Vehicle hours
- Operating expenses
- Revenues (by source – fares, grants, tax revenues, etc.)

Collecting and maintaining this data in a consistent manner will permit meaningful performance assessments. These assessments are necessary to help determine operator efficiencies and effectiveness. The utilization of this data is discussed in more detail in the following subsection.

Many publicly-supported transit operators do more than strictly provide transit services. In Rolette County, for example, both Nutrition United and Nutrition & Support Services operate nutrition programs for senior citizens. In addition to providing traditional transit services, Royal Coach also operates a limousine service.

It is vital that these operators accurately allocate revenues and expenses to various segments of their overall operations. Failing to do so will make subsequent assessments meaningless.

For systems that operate multiple routes, the data outlined above should also be collected on a route-by-route basis. Doing so will permit the analysis of not only the system's overall operations, but also those of individual routes.

6.4.8 Monitor Operations and Make Modifications as Warranted

It is recommended that system operations be closely monitored, especially during the implementation phase and the first year thereafter, to assess effectiveness, efficiencies, public awareness, and utilization. Unmet needs should also be identified and system modifications should be implemented, as appropriate and affordable, to better meet the personal mobility needs of area residents.

Regarding specific performance assessments, the data identified in the preceding subsection should be used to calculate the following:

- Financial deficits
- Cost recovery
- One-way trips/hour
- One-way trips/mile
- Expense/mile
- Revenue/trip
- Expense/hour
- Average speed

These assessment factors are standardized performance measurement tools that can be used to both monitor a system's operation over time and to compare that service's operations with those of peer systems in other parts of the state and country. As indicated in the preceding subsection, collecting data on a route-specific basis will also permit route-by-route assessments.

Note that related assessments are not based strictly on a system's statistical achievements relative to other systems. There may, for example, be very valid reasons for various statistical results being outside the norm. Such results would, however, warrant further review to determine if there are, in fact, good reasons for such occurrences. If there are not, system modifications may be warranted.

In addition to monitoring the performance measurements outlined above, special efforts must be made to monitor customer satisfaction, both of individual riders and of agencies that are using system services to transport their clients. Service dependability, reliability, and on-time performance are critical to building ridership and satisfying related mobility needs. Compiling data concerning on-time performance and conducting satisfaction surveys may be an appropriate means of generating information regarding related route-specific and overall system performance.

6.4.9 Initiate Personalized Initiatives to Help Satisfy Low Volume Needs

SURTC's 2005 *Personal Mobility in North Dakota* report to the NDDOT (Small Urban & Rural Transit Center 2005) contained a series of recommendations related to supplemental services. These recommendations were designed to help facilitate the provision of services beyond those basic needs that might reasonably be satisfied by public transportation systems.

Many of that study's supplemental recommendations involved programs and services that could be implemented at relatively low cost. This approach was deemed vital given the fact that not all unmet

personal mobility needs can be satisfied with public transit programs, especially in rural areas with low population densities.

Two of that study's supplemental recommendations may warrant consideration in Rolette County. These supplemental service recommendations involve 1) promoting friends-and-neighbors and faith-based approaches to satisfying as many mobility needs as possible, especially in rural areas and 2) encouraging and facilitating ridesharing to help meet commuting-related transportation needs.

Regarding the friends and neighbors and faith-based initiatives, the study recognized that personal automobiles already satisfy the vast majority of the state's personal mobility needs. Rather than attempting to develop extremely costly programs to satisfy certain unmet needs, it was recommended that programs be developed to facilitate the use of private automobiles to satisfy as many of these needs as possible. These programs might involve local entities willing to serve as clearinghouses to bring together volunteer drivers and those who need transportation. Potential candidates might include existing service providers, local churches, community-minded businesses, chambers of commerce, or community action agencies.

Similarly, local entities might also serve as clearinghouses to promote and facilitate commuter ridesharing. These efforts could also be handled internally by major employers. Turtle Mountain Community College has reportedly made some efforts to promote ridesharing among students. The college may wish to continue and expand this effort in an attempt to help satisfy the transportation needs of some of its students.

6.5 References

Fuchs, Bruce. 2006. *Personal Interview*. North Dakota Department of Transportation, Bismarck, North Dakota, July 10.

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center. 2004. *Enhancing Passenger Mobility Services in North Dakota through Increased Coordination*, Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Fargo, North Dakota.

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center. 2005. *Personal Mobility in North Dakota: Trends, Gaps and Recommended Enhancements*, Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Fargo, North Dakota.

Transit Cooperative Research Program. 2003. *TCRP Report 88 – A Guidebook for Developing a Transit Performance-Measurement System*, Transportation Research Board, Washington, D.C.

7. Implementation

7.1 Introduction

Section 6 presented a variety of recommendations concerning existing and expanded transit services in Rolette County. Some of these recommendations involve specific services and routes, while others addressed issues involving things such as program administration and marketing.

This section is devoted to implementation strategies and timetables related to Section 6 recommendations. As the following paragraphs will illustrate, some of these implementation strategies are already in process. Funding opportunities also exist for the short-term implementation of most of this study's recommendations.

As the following pages indicate, the implementation of Section 6 recommendations are presented as Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III action items. SURTC researchers want to emphasize that the implementation strategies presented in this section are conceptual in nature. Depending on operational realities, funding availability, local priorities, etc., local operators and the proposed advisory board may find it necessary to modify certain proposals and to reposition specific items on the priority list. These types of changes are considered normal and acceptable, as long as sound judgment is used during the process. Local entities have exhibited this type of judgment throughout this study.

7.2 Section Highlights

- Planning and cooperation - this study's efforts have produced a high degree of planning and cooperation among Rolette County's three publicly-supported transit operators.
- Prioritize - study recommendations should be prioritized into Phase I, II, and III action items.
- Phase I funding - funding is already in place to implement Phase I recommendations.
- Phase I implementation - several Phase I implementation actions are already underway. Phase I actions include expanded and standardized service hours, standardized fares, name uniformity, centralized dispatch, the creation of a standing advisory board, and standardized record keeping.
- Phase II recommendations - Phase II recommendations include the hiring of a mobility manager to fully coordinate area services and the initiation of fixed-route services as outlined in Section 6.
- Phase II subsidy - approximately \$232,180 in non-fare and non-Medicaid funding will be required to implement all Phase II recommendations.
- Phase III subsidy - an additional \$28,080 will be required to finance the initiation of services proposed in Phase III.
- Funding applications - immediate action should be taken to secure funding for Phase II and III recommendations.
- ADA compliance – local service providers must remain vigilant concerning compliance with mandates of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- ITS actions - no actions are required to take advantage of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) at the present time.
- Coordination – coordination efforts must be ongoing on the part of local transit operators and entities such as human service agencies and employment offices.
- Advisory board - the recommended advisory board must take an active role concerning system planning and coordination.

- Cooperation - special efforts must be undertaken to avoid pitfalls associated with protectionism and responding to special interest groups – actions that could have a detrimental impact on system operations that benefit the common good.

7.3 Implementation Actions

As indicated in previous sections, local service providers and other members of this study's advisory committee were anxious to have service changes and expansions take place well in advance of the completion of this report. As a result, a short-term planning committee was formed and numerous steps were taken to initiate immediate service enhancements.

Draft copies of this study's recommendations were shared with committee members and service providers in mid-August, 2006, shortly after the area's service providers were informed of funding increases that would become available as a result of new SAFETEA-LU and state transit monies. The service enhancements being implemented by the area's transit operators are consistent with some of the recommendations presented earlier in Section 6. These enhancements might be considered Phase I enhancements that were made possible by expanded funding in existing programs. Other service changes and enhancements may require additional funding sources. These changes might be considered Phase II or even Phase III options.

Note, however, that the implementation of various recommendations should be sequenced based upon more than strictly funding. Even more importantly, recommendations should be implemented based upon local priorities.

At its meeting on August 15, 2006, this study's advisory committee was asked to prioritize the focus of various service options. The committee indicated that service enhancements related to medical services, compliance appointments, and education should take top priority. Service enhancements related to employment were deemed less important. Employer responses to the survey discussed in Section 5 confirm the wisdom of this prioritization.

Table 7.1 presents a listing of all the recommendations discussed in Section 6. The table also identifies each of these recommendations and related subparts as being Phase I, Phase II, or Phase III recommendations. Related implementation timing is a function of funding availability and/or the immediacy of related mobility needs.

Table 7.1 Implementation Prioritization

Recommendation	Phase I	Phase II	Phase III
Maintain existing levels of service and expand hours of operation:			
Component 1 – Rolla dial-a-ride	X		
Component 2 – Belcourt dial-a-ride	X		
Component 4 – Rural dial-a-ride	X		
Component 6 – Taxi	X		
Expand and standardize operating hours	X		
Standardized fares	X		
Coordinate operations of existing operators	X		
Marketing – one name and one phone number	X		
Initiate centralized dispatch efforts	X		
Create a transit advisory board	X		
Adopt uniform record keeping practices	X		
Hire a mobility manager		X	
Expand marketing effort		X	
Expand centralized dispatch operations		X	
Initiate new services:			
Component 1 – Dunseith-Rolla route		X	
Component 2 – Belcourt cluster route		X	
Component 5 – Fixed route to Minot		X	
Component 3 – Fixed route to employers			X
Initiate computerized scheduling and dispatch			X
Long-term vehicle replacement			X

7.3.1 Phase I Implementation

As discussed in Section 3, Rolette County's three publicly-supported transit providers had an aggregate 2005-06 operating budget of approximately \$165,000; primary funding sources included FTA 5311 operating monies and state transit funds. As a result of increased 5311 funding made possible by the federal SAFETEA-LU highway bill and increased state transit funding appropriated enacted by North Dakota's 2005 Legislature, overall funding support to the county's three transit operators increased by approximately \$111,000 for the 2006-07 budget year (Senger 2006).

This study's draft recommendations were presented to the county's three transit operators on August 15, 2006. The operators' initial reaction to the recommendations was positive. They were asked to review the recommendations in more detail and to provide SURTC researchers with input and budgets related to each proposed service component by September 10, 2006. Their input is reflected in this report.

The short-term planning committee that was created as an adjunct to this study met on August 16, 2006. All three transit operators were members of this committee. At that meeting, the operators reiterated their initial support for the study's draft recommendations. As a result of this support, SURTC researchers suggested service changes and enhancements be implemented consistent with the draft recommendations to an extent permissible with the expanded funding outlined above. The operators and other committee members concurred and agreed to proceed along the lines outlined as Phase I implementations in Table 7.1.

The Phase I recommendations regarding the creation of a standing advisory board and the adoption of uniform record keeping practices were not formally discussed at that meeting. These actions can, however, be pursued without significant monetary expenditures. It is recommended that they be initiated immediately.

Rolette County's three publicly-supported transit operators met with North Central Planning Council personnel on September 5, 2006. The operators reportedly exhibited a high degree of cooperation and are moving aggressively to implement many of the Phase I recommendations outlined earlier.

7.3.2 Phase II Implementation

Implementing the Phase II recommendations listed in Table 7.1 would require funding over and above that which is currently available to the county's three transit operators. These Phase II recommendations included the following:

- Hire a mobility manager
- Expand marketing effort
- Initiate centralized dispatch
- Initiate new services:
 - Component 1 – Dunseith-Rolla route
 - Component 2 – Belcourt cluster route
 - Component 5 – Fixed route to Minot

Before discussing each of the Phase II recommendations listed above, note that three of these items involve specific routes, while three involve other operational, staffing, and marketing proposals. These non-route items are included in Phase II because they are not absolutely necessary to accomplish Phase I initiatives. Conversely, they are vitally important if the new routes outlined above are to be operated in an effective and cost-efficient manner.

Each of the items listed above will be discussed in the remaining paragraphs of this subsection. These discussions will include the rationale for each item, along with a related budget estimate and the identification of possible funding sources. The final portion of this subsection will include a composite summary of these budget estimates and funding sources.

Note that it may be necessary to prioritize and phase in operations of the items listed above if sufficient monies are not available for full implementation. Related determinations are best made by local operators and the proposed advisory board.

Mobility Manager – Each of the county's three transit operations have their own administrators. In all cases, these administrators perform traditional administrative duties, such as budget preparation and management, record keeping, grant writing, human resource management, etc. As is typically the case in small rural transit programs, however, these administrators also perform operational functions, such as dispatching, driving, etc. As is also the case in many rural transit programs, the administrators at Belcourt's Nutrition & Support Services and Rolla's Nutrition United are also heavily involved with the operations of the local senior center and the local senior meals-on-wheels nutrition program.

Some of these transit duties may change as a result of the implementation of Phase I recommendations outlined earlier. In at least the short-run, however, these duties will not change significantly. In many respects it is expected that position duties will increase as a result of expanded operations and the need to coordinate services with the area's other providers.

Given the existing and anticipated workloads of system administrators and the demands associated with coordinating and marketing the proposed unified system, it is recommended that a mobility manager position be created. The person in this position would be responsible for working with each system's manager to create and operate a county-wide transit system that, if fully coordinated, appears seamless to riders.

The mobility manager would also be responsible for working with system operators and the advisory board to manage an ongoing short- and long-term planning process. This process would continually monitor system operations and the mobility needs of area residents. The end result of this effort would be a responsive and efficient transit system.

An important part of this planning process would be the collection and maintenance of uniform financial and performance-related records. These records would be used by system managers and the advisory board to assess operations, and would serve as a basis for making modifications to the system. This function is also consistent with the previously discussed recommendations of North Dakota's personal mobility plan and related requirements that are being formulated by NDDOT. This function would be the responsibility of the mobility manager.

It is anticipated that the mobility manager would also work with each of the system's three operators to develop an overall system budget and prepare and submit related grant applications. As is typically the case with rural transit systems, program funding will come from a wide variety of sources, each of which has its own operational and reporting requirements. Overseeing these requirements is vitally important to the success of the proposed system.

Marketing and managing supervisory duties associated with the dispatch function would be assigned to the mobility manager. These programs are discussed in subsequent paragraphs of this subsection.

It is anticipated that the mobility manager position will be full time. Related salary and benefit costs are projected at \$60,000 annually.

Marketing - As discussed in previous sections, there is room for improvement concerning the public's awareness of available public transportation services in Rolette County. The creation of a fully coordinated, county-wide transit system will be of little value if area residents are unaware of its existence. An aggressive and ongoing marketing effort must be implemented to promote utilization and the ultimate satisfaction of many of the area's personal mobility needs.

As discussed earlier, area operators have already taken steps to develop an image that will make it easier to promote the county's unified and enhanced transit system to area residents. Key components to initial Phase I and/or Phase II efforts include the use of a common name and telephone number for the three entities, and the related use of a centralized dispatch system to field calls and to relay corresponding information to the appropriate transit vehicle.

This one name, one number change will lay the foundation for an expanded marketing program. It will signal the community that major changes are taking place concerning the provision of public transit services. Immediate steps should then be taken to further inform the public concerning these changes and enhancements.

This marketing effort should be comprised of several elements. It is proposed that this effort include not only a traditional advertising campaign, but also items such as informational posters and brochures, news releases, public information meetings, and one-on-one visits with key personnel at social service and employment agencies, etc.

Most of these marketing efforts are labor intensive and cost little other than the staff time that is devoted to them. This staff time is a part of the budget projection associated with the mobility manager position discussed earlier. Non-labor costs associated with a marketing campaign would include the printing of informational posters and brochures and the placement of promotional advertisements in the area's weekly newspapers. It is anticipated that an effective marketing campaign can be run for \$10,000. Subsequent yearly costs could be substantially lower, in the \$2,000 to \$3,000 range.

Central Dispatch – As indicated earlier, transit system operators have agreed that using a common name and telephone number is the most efficient way to market their services to the public. They also agree that using a single telephone number necessitates the use of a centralized dispatch center to receive calls for dial-a-ride services.

In theory, this central dispatch center could simply forward related calls to each operator's dispatch personnel. Doing so would, however, be highly inefficient. It would be far more efficient if the central dispatch center would forward related service requests directly to the appropriate transit vehicle. This approach would save time and eliminate dispatch functions at each of the three participating operations.

It is anticipated that Phase I central dispatch might be handled with personnel who work for one or more of the participating operators. The expanded services proposed in Phase II would, however, lengthen system operating hours considerably and would, it is hoped, generate more requests for service. These demands will create a corresponding need for more dispatch personnel.

It is projected that this Phase II dispatch function will require two staff positions. One of these positions would work early morning hours and the other would work a later shift. These employees would also be available to help the mobility manager with other office duties. Associated salary and benefit costs are projected at \$50,000 per year. It is projected that an additional \$10,000 will be required for the one-time acquisition of mobile radios and office equipment.

Expanded Transit Services – As indicated earlier, Phase II implementation includes three service expansions. These expansions include a fixed route running from Dunseith to Belcourt and Rolla, another fixed route that would service Belcourt-area low income housing clusters and the local community college, and a third fixed route that would provide five-day-per-week service between Rolette County and Minot, the area's regional hub located 120 miles away.

Discussions in the following paragraphs are based on providing the proposed services five days per week. The proposed services, especially the Rolette County to Minot route, could be operated on an abbreviated schedule. Such an occurrence could push full implementation back to Phase III. Related decisions would be dictated by available funding and local priorities.

As described in Section 6, the proposed Dunseith-Belcourt-Rolla fixed-route service (Component 1) would run each direction twice a day. When not running the fixed route, the driver and vehicle would be used to provide morning and afternoon dial-a-ride services in Rolla.

The fixed route portion of this service component is the only incremental part of this service. The cost of this incremental service is, therefore, the only new expense that needs to be financed with new money.

As outlined in Section 6, it is estimated that this fixed route service would require approximately five hours of time per day, or about 25 hours per week. Based on operator input and existing state-wide averages, it is estimated that the proposed service can be provided for about \$30 per hour. This amount would cover both driver costs and vehicle operating expenses. Total annual costs are estimated at \$39,000.

North Dakota's rural paratransit systems generate fare income equal to approximately 18% of each system's operating costs. Given the poverty status of Rolette County, it is estimated that fare income for each proposed service enhancement will cover only 10% of related operating costs. It is estimated, therefore, that the Dunseith-Belcourt-Rolla route will require an annual operating subsidy of approximately \$35,100. This 10% fare recovery may even be considered a long-term goal. Local officials may determine that a recovery of only 5% is achievable.

The second Phase II service initiative identified in Table 7.1 involves fixed-route service that would cover all the low-income housing clusters located in or in close proximity to Belcourt. This route would also extend to Turtle Mountain Community College, which is located three miles north of Belcourt. When this vehicle and driver are not providing fixed-route service, they would be used to provide local dial-a-ride service in Belcourt.

As outlined in Section 6, the fixed-route portion of this service (Component 2) is the only incremental portion of this function; other component services are already being provided. This fixed-route service would be a part of a hub-and-spoke system that would permit transfers with other components of the overall system.

This fixed-route service would require approximately four hours per day or about 20 hours per week. Based on an assumed cost of \$30 per hour, this service would have an annual incremental cost of \$31,200. Assuming offsetting fare income of \$3,120, this service will require an annual operating subsidy of \$28,080.

The final Phase II service component listed in Table 7.1 involves the initiation of intercity fixed-route services between Rolette County and Minot, the region's medical, shopping, and transportation hub. The service would originate in Rolla and travel through Belcourt, Dunseith, and Bottineau en route to Minot. It is hoped that the service would replace many of the disjointed medical trips that various entities are currently making. It would also be available to non-medical travelers.

This service would be provided Monday through Friday of each week and would entail a roundtrip distance of approximately 250 miles. Royal Coach estimates that the service can be provided for about \$300 per day, or about \$1,500 per week, or about \$78,000 per year. Depending on funding availability, this route could be operated less frequently. Operating the route one day per week would cost \$15,600 annually. Providing service three times per week would cost \$46,800 per year. Ultimately, funding availability and true demand will dictate trip frequency.

Phase II Summary – The preceding paragraphs outline service initiatives and enhancements that would be promulgated as a part of Phase II implementation. As indicated, corresponding budget estimates are based strictly on the costs associated with items that are incremental to what is currently being provided by the existing operators.

These service components and related budget estimates are summarized in Table 7.2. Potential funding sources are discussed later in Section 7.4.

Table 7.2 Phase II Budget

Service Component	Budget	Income	Subsidy
Mobility manager	\$ 60,000	\$ 0	\$ 60,000
Program marketing	\$ 10,000	\$ 0	\$ 10,000
Expanded dispatch	\$ 50,000	\$ 0	\$ 50,000
Mobile radios and office equipment	\$ 10,000	\$ 0	\$ 10,000
Dunseith-Belcourt-Rolla route	\$ 39,000	\$ 3,900	\$ 35,100
Belcourt cluster/college route	\$ 31,200	\$ 3,120	\$ 28,080
Fixed route to Minot	\$ 78,000	\$39,000	\$ 39,000
Total	\$278,200	\$46,020	\$232,180

Except for the \$10,000 cost projection for mobile radios and office equipment, all of the costs identified in Table 7.2 are operational. Depending on funding sources, these costs could bear related local match requirements of up to 50%. Potential funding sources are discussed in Section 7.4.

7.3.3 Phase III Implementation

As indicated in Table 7.1, there are three items in the Phase III portion of this program's overall implementation strategy. These components involve the provision of fixed-route service between Belcourt and major employers that are located between three and five miles west of Belcourt, the implementation of a computerized scheduling and dispatching system, and long-term vehicle replacement.

As outlined in Section 6, the commuter route from Belcourt to outlying employers would operate four times per day in conjunction with the proposed hub-and-spoke system. During other times, the driver and vehicle would provide local dial-a-ride service. The proposed fixed route is the only incremental portion of this service.

It is projected that this fixed-route service would require approximately four hours per day or about 20 hours per week. Based on an overall operating cost of \$30 per hour, this service would have an annual operating cost of \$31,200. Assuming 10% coverage via fare box revenue, approximately \$28,080 will be required to finance this route's operations.

The implementation of a computerized scheduling and dispatch system is an extension of the centralized dispatch components outlined for Phase I and Phase II. This system will better accommodate ridership growth that is projected for the system and will facilitate more efficient and effective operations and system responsiveness. It will also promote more accurate record keeping and the preparation and maintenance of performance-enhancing data.

The estimated cost of related computerized software, a host computer, and related training and maintenance is \$20,000. This purchase will provide a very basic scheduling and dispatch system that is capable of handling reservations, vehicle scheduling and dispatch, billings, and monthly reports. Program enhancements may be added as warranted by growth in ridership. High-end enhancements would include features such as on-board computers and automatic vehicle locators. Such systems can cost as much as \$150,000, depending on the complexity of the transit system's operations and the number of vehicles involved. Local match requirements may be an issue if project funding comes from a source that is not

100% federal. This type acquisition is typically eligible for federal funding at an 80% level. Annual training and software maintenances fees equal about 20% of initial software costs (Shah 2006).

As discussed in earlier sections, there is no shortage of accessible transit vehicles in Rolette County. Therefore, no related vehicle costs are built into these cost projections. In the long term, however, system administrators must pay attention to the system's vehicle needs and develop related budgets and grant proposals accordingly. Depending on vehicle utilization during Phase II and the timing of Phase III implementation, some vehicles may actually need to be replaced well in advance of the other items identified as Phase III projects. Such acquisitions should, however, be made with an eye to the future and in anticipation of what type and size vehicles will be needed.

Projected Phase III costs are summarized in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3 Phase III Budget

Service Component	Budget	Income	Subsidy
Fixed route to major employers	\$ 31,200	\$ 3,120	\$ 28,080
Computerized scheduling and dispatch	\$ 20,000	\$ 0	\$ 20,000
Total	\$ 51,200	\$ 3,120	\$ 48,080

7.4 Potential Funding Sources

As discussed earlier in this report, the area's three transit services finance their operations from three primary sources. Operating funds are typically derived from Federal Transit Administration 5311 funds administered by NDDOT. These funds require a 50% local match. The area's two non-profit services receive state transit monies that are used for local match. All of the county's transit operators obtain their transit vehicles via FTA programs administered by NDDOT. These programs carry a 20% local match requirement.

In addition to the 5311 program, the FTA has several other programs that might be available to finance costs associated with various segments of the proposed transit system. These programs include:

5309	Capital acquisitions (vehicles and equipment, etc.) Requires 20% local match
5310	Elderly and disabled transit Requires 50% local match for operations and 20% local match for capital acquisitions
5311	Small urban and rural transit system operations Requires 50% local match for operations and 20% local match for capital acquisitions
5311(c)	Tribal transit – operating and capital Requires no local match
5311(f)	Interstate Bus Requires 50% local match
5316	Job Access & Reverse Commute (JARC) Requires 50% local match
5317	New Freedom (beyond ADA) Requires 50% local match

The following paragraphs discuss funding options that might be available to finance the new service initiatives and related administrative and marketing functions outlined in Section 6.

As discussed earlier, work is already underway to implement most of the proposed Phase I initiatives. These enhancements will be funded with expanded 5311 and state transit monies that became available to the area's transit operators starting July 1, 2006.

The most desirable funding source for the proposed service, administrative, and marketing initiatives is the new 5311(c) tribal transit program. Program guidelines were announced on August 15, 2006, and related proposals are due by October 18, 2006. Program funding is at a 100% level with no local match requirement.

The existing 5311 program may also serve as a source of additional funding. North Dakota's allocation of 5311 money is scheduled to increase each year under the federal SAFETEA-LU highway bill. Related grant applications are submitted to NDDOT annually. It is anticipated that future annual increases may be smaller than those realized by Rolette County's operators for fiscal year 2006-07.

The FTA's 5311(f) intercity bus program is a potential source of funding for the fixed-route portions of service components one, two, and five. Program funds may only be used to cover up to 50% of sustained losses, and NDDOT indicates that North Dakota's funding allocation is fully committed for fiscal year 2006-07. Based on cost estimates presented earlier, it is projected that utilizing this program would require up to \$116,090 annually in local match.

The Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) Section 5316 program may also serve as a source of funding for many of the components identified. JARC funds are set aside for clients who are part of the TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) program. Program funds must be used solely to provide job access for low-income individuals who commute from a city to an outlying area. Funding for this program requires coordination, and is based on the number of low-income individuals in a community. This program may be best suited for Service Component 3, which proposes a fixed route from Belcourt to major employers located west of the city. As is the case with the 5311(f) program, North Dakota's allocation of JARC funds is very limited.

The 5317 New Freedom program could also serve as a source of funding for service components that might service disabled individuals at a level beyond what is required by the ADA. It is estimated, however, that North Dakota's allocation under this program may be as little as \$147,000 per year, so the amount that might be available to any one program may be limited.

In addition to established FTA funding programs, there may be a number of potential funding sources available from local sources and agencies that are operating in Rolette County. For example, it was suggested that the community college might assess a student fee to support the provision of transit services between Belcourt and the college.

The Indian Health Services hospital in Belcourt also appears to be a likely source of funding, especially for the proposed fixed route between Rolette County and Minot. As discussed in Section 3, the hospital is already using its own vehicles and personnel to provide non-emergency transportation services to Minot several times per week. Contracting for related services within the proposed service system might save the hospital a significant amount of money. Additional program money might be available as a result of Medicaid-related trips that would be provided to area residents.

Agencies such as Job Services and Vocational Rehabilitation might also be sources of supporting funds. These and other agencies, such as those identified in Section 3, are currently spending significant amounts of money to provide or subsidize transportation services for their clients. As discussed earlier, all of these entities should be contacted and encouraged to contract for services with the proposed county-wide system.

Major employers should also be approached regarding proposed transit enhancements. To the extent that these enhancements might benefit them and their employees, they should be encouraged to provide financial support to facilitate related operations.

Major employers should also be approached concerning advertising on system vehicles. Advertising income may serve as a beneficial source of income to support local transit operations. The gaming casino located west of Belcourt may be especially receptive to a related proposal, especially since Service Component 3 would link the casino to the city of Belcourt, to the benefit of both its patrons and its employees.

Table 7.4 summarizes the funding sources discussion in the preceding paragraphs of this section. This presentation is limited primarily to state and federal funding sources that are available via FTA and NDDOT programs. As discussed earlier, however, special attention should be paid to other funding that might be available from sources such as local hospitals, the college, employment and human service agencies, and area employers.

Table 7.4 Potential Funding Sources

Service and Administrative Components	Potential Funding Sources
Phase I	
Component 1 – Expand Rolla dial-a-ride	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc. Future 5316 and 5317 funds
Component 2 – Expand Belcourt dial-a-ride	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc. Future 5316 and 5317 funds
Component 4 – Expand rural dial-a-ride	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc. Future 5316 and 5317 funds
Component 6 – Maintain taxi service	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds
Coordinate operations of existing operators	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc.
Marketing – cooperative ads, etc.	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds
Initiate centralized dispatch	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds
Create a transit advisory board	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds
Adopt uniform record keeping practices	Existing state, local, & 5311 funds
Phase II	
Hire a mobility manager	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds
Expand marketing effort	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds
Centralized dispatch operations	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds
Two-way radios and office equipment	Future 5309, 5310, and 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds
Component 1 – Initiate Dunseith-Rolla route	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds Future intercity bus 5311(f) funds Future 5316 and 5317 funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc. Future 5316 and 5317 funds
Component 2 – Initiate Belcourt cluster route	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc. Future 5316 and 5317 funds
Component 5 – Initiate fixed route to Minot	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds Future intercity bus 5311(f) funds Future 5316 and 5317 funds

Phase III

Component 3 – Initiate employer fixed route	Future state, local, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds Cooperative funding from agencies, employers, etc. Future 5316 and 5317 funds
Computerized scheduling and dispatch	Future 5309, 5310, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds
Long-term vehicle replacement	Future 5309, 5310, & 5311 funds Tribal transit 5311(c) funds

7.5 ADA Considerations

Complying with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements is necessary for all community transportation providers. While the service options outlined here comply with the spirit of the ADA, small, seemingly subtle modifications may change this status. Modifications may be needed before implementing the service components described in this study, and will almost certainly be needed over the long run as the area's mobility needs change. Any modifications or expansion of service should be reviewed and adjusted, if necessary, to ensure compliance with the ADA. In many cases, a formal review is required by law (ADA 49 CFR, Subpart F, 37.137).

Those involved in transportation system operation, management, and governance must be familiar with the parts of the ADA that are relevant to their system. Current operations should be confirmed to be ADA compliant, and any changes or service expansions should be reviewed and adjusted to ensure compliance with the ADA.

SURTC researchers have reviewed the service recommendations outlined in Section 6 to determine their compatibility with the ADA. Special attention was paid to requirements related to vehicle accessibility and complementary paratransit service requirements associated with fixed-route services.

Regarding vehicles that are used to provide services, rules vary depending on whether the operator is a public entity or a private company. For public operators, newly acquired fixed-route vehicles must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals who use wheelchairs, unless a waiver is received from the Federal Transit Administration. Newly acquired demand-response vehicles must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, including those with wheelchairs, unless the system, viewed in its entirety, provides a level of service to individuals with disabilities, including those who use wheelchairs, equivalent to the level of service it provides to individuals without disabilities.

For services provided by private operators, newly acquired fixed-route vehicles seating eight or more passengers, excluding over-the-road buses (motor coaches), must be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals using wheel chairs. Newly acquired demand-response vehicles seating eight or more passengers, excluding over-the-road buses (motor coaches), must be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals using wheel chairs, unless the system, viewed in its entirety, meets the standard for equivalent service. Vans seating less than eight persons must be accessible and usable by individuals with disabilities, including individuals using wheel chairs, unless the system, viewed in its entirety, meets the standard for equivalent service.

Concerning complementary paratransit service, in many instances, the ADA requires that providers of fixed-route services provide complementary paratransit service for individuals who are unable to use fixed-route service due to a disability. Regarding the fixed-route portions of service components one, two, and three, it is important to note that the complementary paratransit service requirements do not apply to commuter service, which is defined as fixed-route service predominantly in one direction during peak periods (ADA 49 CFR, Subpart F, 37.121(c), ADA 49 CFR, Subpart F, 37.3). Service components, one, two, and three appear to meet this definition, and complementary paratransit is, therefore, not required.

Regarding component five, fixed-route service from Rolette County to Minot, complementary paratransit service requirements do not apply to private entities (ADA 49 CFR, Subpart F, 37.121(a)). If this proposed service is provided by Royal Coach, as projected, complementary paratransit is not required.

7.6 ITS Applications

Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) are technology-based applications that create efficiencies in transportation. These technologies are ideally integrated to create synergies that create even further efficiencies. In transit, ITS applications typically include things such as specialized accounting software, automated fare box systems, automatic vehicle locators, automatic passenger counters, computerized vehicle maintenance programs, etc.

Rolette County's existing transit operations are relatively small, and current management processes and technology-related applications are suitable for delivering the service components presented in this study. However, increased ridership or coordination among transportation system operators may eventually alter this condition.

As the proposed system evolves and as new ITS technologies are developed, local managers should reassess their needs and technological developments to determine if new applications would create worthwhile efficiencies. To assist in this monitoring process, managers are directed to *TCRP Report 76: Guidebook for Selecting Appropriate Technology Systems for Small Urban & Rural Transportation Operators*. This report is an excellent resource that identifies potential technologies that may solve problems facing transit operators. The report guides readers through the decision-making process and is available online at

http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_76.pdf#search=%22tcrp%20report%2076%22 (TCRP 2002).

7.7 Ongoing Coordination

Several of the recommendations presented in Section 6 relate directly or indirectly to the need for expanded and ongoing coordination among the county's three publicly-supported transit operators. The need for coordination is, however, much more far reaching and includes entities such as the area's social service agencies, employment agencies, etc.

Fortunately, the framework for this coordination is already in place. The existing transit operators and personnel with the North Central Planning Council have worked together in the past, and are expanding on this relationship to implement many of the recommendations presented to them via draft copies of this study. This cooperation and coordination must be ongoing.

Related coordination also requires the involvement of other entities from throughout the county. Virtually all of these entities were represented on the advisory committee that was created to provide input and direction to this study effort. As recommended in Section 6, this committee should be maintained in the form of a standing advisory board to work with local transit managers to monitor system operations, to provide ongoing direction to local service providers, and to oversee long-term planning processes.

Local operators and the advisory board will face certain challenges regarding system operations and ongoing coordination. For example, each of the area's service providers have their own service mandates and boards that they are accountable to. Specifically, one operator responds to the county, while another is accountable primarily to the tribe; the third is a for-profit, owner-operator. System managers and the advisory board must work diligently to educate everyone involved concerning the benefits of a coordinated and fully integrated transit system where each participating entity does what they do best to the benefit of the overall system. Protectionism will work to the detriment of the county-wide system and residents of both the reservation and the remainder of the county.

Note that the benefits that result from implementation of this study's recommendations will probably not accrue equally to each participating transit operator or other beneficiary (human service agency, employment office, county government, tribe, etc.). Some providers may see relatively larger increases in ridership, revenue, and costs than others, and some non-operator beneficiaries may experience greater or lesser client benefits than others. Transit systems cannot be the ultimate solution for everyone, but everyone must be willing to work together for the common good.

Two solutions to these challenges are presented in *TCRP Report 91: Economic Benefits of Coordinating Human Service Transportation and Transit Services*. This report suggests that differences in organizations and potentially inequitable outcomes should be recognized even before implementation begins (TCRP 2003). This occurrence will help minimize unrealistic expectations. Having realistic expectations will minimize subsequent feelings of disappointment.

It is also recommended that area service providers consider entering into written agreements concerning the provision of services, sharing resources, etc. Written agreements clarify intentions and help minimize potentially damaging misunderstandings that may undermine system success. These agreements also create a structure that will facilitate ongoing efforts despite inevitable personnel changes within each participant's organization.

Additional written agreements should be entered into with local entities that are currently providing transportation services for their clients or subsidizing similar services that are provided with private vehicles. These agreements should promote the use of the proposed public transit system whenever possible, thereby reducing overall costs and promoting efficiency in government. These agreements should also include a contract for services which would generate revenue that would be usable as a local match for various operating grants. Such is not the case if the passengers in question simply pay fares for the services provided.

Pursuing coordination among the area's existing transit service providers and other entities, such as human services and employment agencies, is consistent with the presidential mandate in Executive Order No. 13330. This intent of this 2004 order was to promote interagency coordination and cooperation that would lead to improved mobility for the nation's transportation-disadvantaged population. Coordination is also consistent with the mandates of SAFTETEA-LU.

Complying with this order and SAFTETEA-LU mandates will promote efficiency and enhance the area's ability to attract federal funding support to the operations of local transit services. It is also consistent

with the coordination efforts discussed earlier, as outlined in SURTC's 2004 report, *Enhancing Passenger Mobility Services in North Dakota through Increased Coordination* (SURTC 2004).

7.8 Special Initiatives for Low Volume Needs

Section 6's final recommendation involved special initiatives for low volume needs. This recommendation relates specifically to supplemental service recommendations that were set forth in the 2005 personal mobility study the SURTC prepared for NDDOT. Those recommendations have applicability to Rolette County.

As indicated in that study, not all personal mobility needs can be feasibly satisfied via public transit. This is especially true in rural areas of the state where population densities cannot justify high levels of public transit service. In these cases, specially designed, personalized initiatives may be warranted to help meet the mobility needs of transportation-disadvantaged individuals.

Two of the special initiatives identified in the state's personal mobility study include "family and neighbors" or "faith-based" approaches to transportation and options such as commuting-related ridesharing. This report and a full discussion of these initiatives are available on SURTC's Web site at <http://www.surtc.org/research/reports.php> (SURTC 2005).

Pursuing the local implementation of these and/or other special mobility initiatives might be included in the job description that is developed for the mobility manager position discussed earlier. Related actions should be taken as a part of Phase III implementations.

7.9 Summary

Previous sections of this report document that there are significant unmet personal mobility needs on the Turtle Mountain Reservation and other areas in Rolette County. The county's three publicly-supported transit operators are providing some basic services, but coordinating and expanding these services is necessary to help meet the needs of the area's transportation-disadvantaged residents, a high percentage of which are low income and unemployed.

Throughout this study effort, the area's transit operators have exhibited an extreme willingness to work together to help better meet the mobility needs of area residents. Proposals presented to these operators by SURTC researchers have been embraced, and initial implementing steps have been taken, thanks in part to expanded funding that has become available as a result of SAFETEA-LU and North Dakota's transit assistance program.

This study's recommendations for service enhancements involve expanded service hours of existing operations, new service routes, expanded marketing efforts, and the addition of new administrative personnel and practices which will facilitate coordination and management of the expanded transit system. This section outlined a Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III implementation strategy related to the recommendations presented in Section 6.

Many of the components of Phase I are already being implemented. This achievement is made possible by the willingness of the operators to use this report's draft recommendations and to work together, and it is further enhanced by the expanded funding discussed earlier.

Phase II and Phase III enhancements are dependent on expanded funding. There are immediate implementation opportunities thanks to new tribal transit monies that are available via SAFETEA-LU.

Local officials are encouraged to take advantage of these and other funding sources to expand the area's transit services to further satisfy the mobility needs of area residents.

The Federal Transit Administration's draft strategic plan calls attention to Task 51 of TCRP Project J-6 regarding transit system ridership increases. The FTA notes that,

“As with other studies, it (TCRP J-6) found that the most significant ridership increases took place when the transit agencies undertook a combination of the following types of initiatives:²

- Service adjustments – including service reconfigurations and expansion and new service models;
- Fare and price adaptations – including introduction of new fare media and technologies;
- Marketing and information initiatives;
- Shifts in planning orientations – including increased emphasis on strategic planning and customer-oriented planning; and,
- New efforts in service coordination, collaboration, and partnership – especially those with universities.”

The recommendations presented in this report are consistent with the findings of this report and, it is hoped, will contribute to significant increases in ridership in Rolette County's transit operations, all to the benefit of the area's transportation-deprived citizens.

7.10 References

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² Stanley, Robert G. and Robert Hyman. “Evaluation of Recent Ridership Increases.” TCRP Research Results Digest (April 2005) p. 2.

Appendix A

Advisory Committee Members

<u>L Name</u>	<u>F Name</u>	<u>Title/program</u>	<u>Phone Number</u>	<u>Email address</u>
Albert	Alex	Job Service ND/Econ. Dev.	(701) 477-5631 - 209	aalbert@state.nd.us
Belgrade	Scott	Tribal Chairman Assistant	(701) 477-2574	scottbelgardework@hotmail.com
Bercier	Dennis	State Senator & TMCC	(701) 477-7810	dbercier@tm.edu
Boucher	Merle	State Senator	(701) 246-3652	mboucher@state.nd.us
Davis	Willie	Turtle Mtn. Community College	(701) 477-7862	None Available
Hamley	Jim & Joann	Royal Coach owners	(701) 477-8120	royalcoachtrans2001@yahoo.com
Jollie	Phyllis	Mall Owner	(701) 477-3572	phyllisjollie@yahoo.com
Laducer	Jeremy	T M Tribal Trans. Planning	(701) 477-2650	jeremy@tribalresource.com
LaFountain	Marie	T Mtn Head Start, Fam. Ser. Mgr	(701) 477-0260 - 11	mariecl@utma.com
LaFountain	Les	Turtle Mtn. Community College	(701) 477-7862 - 2061	les.lafountain@tm.educ
LaFontaine	Viola	T. Mtn Community High School	(701) 477-6471 - 205	viola.lafontaine@sendit.nodak.edu
LaRocque	Emil	Tribal Scholarship Director	(701) 477-8102	emil_58316@yahoo.com
Leftwich	David	Local Government Engineer	(701) 328-4334	dleftwic@state.nd.us
Leonard	Larry	Rolette County Senior Meals	(701) 477-6421	nutusms@utma.com
Mathiason	Beverly	Rolette County Social Services	(701) 477-3141 - 234	40marb@state.nd.us
McCloud	Val	Rolette County Auditor	(701) 477-5665	vmccloud@state.nd.us
Morin	Alfreda	Senior Meals Program	(701) 477-6609	alfredomorin@yahoo.com
Olson	Ina	Child Welfare	(701) 477-5680	imao@tmewss.net
Poitra	Ron	T. Mtn. Head Start, Trans. Mgr.	(701) 477-0260 - 48	None Available
Senger	Jacque	North Central Planning Council	(701)662-8131	jacquencpc@gondtc.com

Appendix B

Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Turtle Mountain Community College
Belcourt, North Dakota
May 2, 2006 10:00 a.m.

Attendees:

Albert, Alex	Job Service North Dakota
Belgarde, Scott	Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa
Bennett, Wannetta	Turtle Mountain Community College
Bercier, Dennis	Turtle Mountain CC - Infrastructure Director
Bercier, Todd	Indian Health Services
Birkland, Jan	Turtle Mountain Child Welfare & Family Services
Boucher, Merle	North Dakota Legislature
Boucher, Susan	Turtle Mountain Times
Davis, Willy	Turtle Mountain CC - Transition Spec. Voc. Rehab.
Frederick, Anita	Turtle Mountain CC - Dean of Students
Fuchs, Bruce	North Dakota Department of Transportation
Hamley, Jim	Royal Coach Transportation
Hamley, JoAnn	Royal Coach Transportation
Hegland, Gary	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
Laducer, Jeremy	Turtle Mountain Transportation Director
LaFontaine, Viola	Turtle Mountain Community School
LaFountain, Les	Turtle Mountain CC - Health Career Prog. Dir.
LaRocque, Emil	Tribal Scholarship Director
Leonard Jr., Larry	Nutrition United
Mielke, Jon	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
Parisien, Albert	Bureau of Indian Affairs- Roads
Senger, Jacque	North Central Planning Council

Gary Hegland, and Jon Mielke from Small Urban and Rural Transit Center (SURTC) Fargo, ND, welcomed everyone to the meeting. They also facilitated the meeting which lasted from 10 am to 3 pm.

Gary indicated that we have a very good cross section of community stakeholders to serve on the Advisory Committee.

The first item on the agenda was the introduction of all members on the advisory committee. Each was asked to give some input on the impact of the transportation system on their respective agencies and missions.

Jacque Senger stated that she is the Transportation Coordinator for North Central Planning Council in Devils Lake. North Central Planning Council serves the six county region – Rolette being one of the counties. She would like to see expansion in Rolette County to serve anyone who is in need of transportation services.

Scott Belgarde stated that at this time the only way people get rides is a family member.

Merle Boucher, ND Legislator, stated that transportation is needed for growth and development in Rolette County. Transportation is needed for people to continue their education, medical rides and work.

Susan Boucher stated that she sees the need for a transportation system because many of the meetings she attends have fewer and fewer people representing their cause as they have no transportation to get to the meetings.

Jan Birkland said she works with youth attending treatment centers and there is very little family involvement due to the fact there is no transportation available to people.

Albert Parisien works with road maintenance. Albert stated that the roads in Rolette County are in very poor condition, and money is tight. If more people were able to use public transportation, there would be fewer vehicle on the roads, and had some concern of the increased use by the heavier vehicles (buses).

Anita Frederick, Dean of Students, stated the college is losing students due to transportation. Among the students, 63% are single females with children. The students do not have the funds to purchase a vehicle, and there is limited public transit.

Dennis Bercier stated he sees a need for a transit system to provide rides to the young and old in the evenings to attend activities such as school events, concerts, and sporting activities.

Alex Albert, Job Service, stated that he has been at his job for 31 years, and the number one problem in Rolette County is no public transit. He stated 60-65% of the people they serve related to work issues transportation is major obstacle

Viola LaFontaine, Turtle Mountain Community School Superintendent, stated we need a transit system in place so the parents of school individuals become familiar with the system and will use it to attend their children's activities. She stated at one time the school sent out buses to pick up the parents, but that was not received well. Apparently the parents were not aware of this option. Viola stated they have approximately 28 buses.

Emil LaRocque, Student Tribal Scholarship Director, stated that 150 students have withdrawn, and 95% of those students did not have transportation.

Bruce Fuchs, Transportation Program Manager of DOT, informed the group there will be an increase in 5311 Federal funds and State Aid funds. We need to find ways to pool our money together to match available dollars.

Jim Hamley, Royal Coach Transportation, stated that he has been in business since 1992. He sees the need to expand transportation to help the general population get to medical appointments, school and recreation. Jim stated that Medicaid pays him for the transportation for a client to and from their medical appointments; however, if they need to stop at a pharmacy, that is not covered. Jim stops anyway and doesn't charge the client.

JoAnn Hamley, Royal Coach Transportation, stated that they do quite a bit of service for Medicaid and they are reimbursed at 25 cents per mile. They can't continue on that amount of money.

Jeremy Laducer, Transportation Planner for Turtle Mountain Community College, stated that there are many items to address. Jeremy stated roads and transportation are two on the top of his list. We need a transit system in Rolette County to enable the population of that area independent living. He stated that with Nutrition United (Rolla), Nutrition & Support (Belcourt) and Royal Coach Transportation (Belcourt) we should be able to expand these programs to provide more rides to the people of Rolette County.

Jon Mielke, SURTC-Bismarck, stated that he will be doing research for a transit program in Rolette County.

Todd Bercier, Indian Health Services Administrator, stated that he has about a 60% no show rate for appointments. The reason - - no transportation.

Wannette Bennet, Turtle Mountain Grant Programs, stated there is no money to give to the students for transportation. Therefore a transit program is very much needed.

Les LaFountain, Turtle Mountain Community College, Health Career Opportunity Program Director, stated that the roads are very poor in the community; drinking is a real problem; and they are one of the poorest counties in North Dakota. Les stated that the community needs to step-up and go forward with this project.

Gary spoke about coordinating funds. Discussion followed on 5311 operating funds, 5309 elderly and disabled funds and tribal funds. During the pursuing discussion, it became apparent that a separate committee should be formed to deal with the transportation issues that need to be addressed in the short term. The following individuals volunteered to serve on the short range planning committee:

- Jeremy Laducer, Chairman
- JoAnn and Jim Hamley
- Alex Albert
- Merle Boucher
- Willie Davis and
- Jan Birkland.

This committee will function outside the long range planning study that is the focus of the advisory committee and SURTC's contract with the North Dakota Department of Transportation. SURTC's researchers are, however, available to serve as a resource to the committee. A June meeting is planned.

During this discussion, it was pointed out that the local operators have at least one vehicle that is not being used and that all of the operators have vehicles that could be used for expanded hours of service such as evenings and weekends. A lack of operating monies is a primary obstacle.

Following introductions Gary gave a presentation on some of the planning, training and research programs offered by SURTC and the Upper Great Plains Institute at NDSU. Gary also introduced a five step model that the federal United We Ride Program has developed to assist regions or communities develop a coordinated plan for their area.

It was pointed out that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is recommending that communities use this model to assist in developing the coordinated plans that will be required under the new highway bill, SAFETEA-LU. Gary pointed out the FTA will be requiring a coordinated plan for all future grants funded under FTA including 5311, 5310, and Jobs Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grants as well as the new programs identified as "New Freedoms" and Tribal funding.

Jon Mielke presented the committee with information concerning North Dakota's coordination efforts and then outlined proposed tasks and timelines for this study.

A working meal was sponsored by SURTC and provided by the college cafeteria at noon.

In the afternoon Gary asked committee members to provide insights on the following three points.

- Existing transportation programs that the agencies and clients use
- Transportation needs of the community from committee members perspective
- What they can contribute to the coordinating effort

The following are the lists that the group developed:

Existing Means of Transportation

- Royal Coach
- Nutrition United
- Nutrition & Support
- Personal vehicles
- Family & friends
- Walk
- Ambulance
- School buses & other school vehicles
- Hospital vehicles
- Head Start vehicles
- Recreational vehicles
- Car-pooling

Transportation Needs

- Medical transportation
 - Indian Health Service in Belcourt
 - Rolla Hospital
 - Regional (e.g. Minot)
 - Clinics: Belcourt, Dunseith, Rolette, & Rolla
- Employment/Work
 - Public/tribe
 - Indian Health Service
- Education
 - TMCC
 - GED
 - Alternative School
- Shopping (Rolla & Belcourt)
- Recreation
 - Athletic & sporting events
 - Camping
- Program compliance
 - AA

- Al-anon
- JSND
- Probation (youth & adult)
- Work experience
- Social/church
 - Bingo
 - Casinos
 - School functions
 - Weddings/funerals
 - Pow Wows

Contribution to the Coordinated Efforts

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANIF)
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA)
- Other Federal Programs
- Medicaid
- In-kind (e.g. staff, drivers, work study, vehicle maintenance & storage)
- Student activity fees
- Tribe?

Jon and Gary spoke of compiling all the information which will go into the coordinated transit development plan. There will be additional information included in the plan which will come from surveys, agency visits, one-on-one meetings, whatever it takes to collect the needed information put an applicable coordinated plan together in the fashion that will meet the needs of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and Rolette County.

Gary and Jon thanked everyone for coming and adding so much pertinent information.

Respectfully submitted;
 Jacque Senger
 North Central Planning Council

Supplemental Information:

Based on short term needs transportation needs identified at the advisory committee meeting, Gary contacted the three federally funded transit operators that serve the region and suggested that they double their 2006 FTA 5311 grant requests. Contacted operators included Jim & Joann Hamley of Royal Coach, Alfreda Morin of Nutrition & Support Services, and Larry Leonard, Jr. of Nutrition United, Inc. Bruce Fuchs (NDDOT) agreed to accept revised requests until May 5th.

All three operators and the North Central Planning Council agreed to the plan. If this is approved by NDDOT, it will increase federal funding by approximately \$45,000 for the next operating year. As was indicated at the meeting, FTA 5311 operating grant money requires a 50% local match. Operator budgets indicate that some of the additional match required may already be available but additional amounts will be needed. A closer analysis will be made when the short term planning committee meets in June.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Turtle Mountain Community College
Belcourt, North Dakota
August 15, 2006 10:30 a.m.

Attendees:

Albert, Alex	Job Service North Dakota, Rolla
Hamley, Jim	Royal Coach Transportation, Belcourt
Hamley, JoAnn	Royal Coach Transportation, Belcourt
Hegland, Gary	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Fargo
Laducer, Jeremy	Turtle Mountain Transportation Director, Belcourt
LaRocque, Emil	Tribal Scholarship Director, Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt
Leonard Jr., Larry	Nutrition United/Rolette County Transportation, Rolla
Marcellais, Roman	Turtle Mountain Schools, Belcourt
Mielke, Jon	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Bismarck
Morin, Alfreda	Nutrition & Support Services, Belcourt
Senger, Jacque	North Central Planning Council, Devils Lake
Wright, Carol	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Fargo

Grant Update

Gary Hegland welcomed everyone to the meeting and self-introductions were made. Hegland reported that the North Dakota Department of Transportation agreed to allow amended Section 5311 grant applications to be submitted for Royal Coach, Rolette County Transit, and Nutrition and Support Services to allow for increased funding. The funding level increased from about \$25,000 to approximately \$100,000.

Study Progress Report – Jon Mielke and Gary Hegland

Jon Mielke gave an overview of the study's section layout.

- Section 1 – Introduction
- Section 2 – Demographics
- Section 3 – Inventory of Existing Means of Transportation
- Section 4 – Projections/Population and Economic Development
- Section 5 – Unmet Needs
- Section 6 – Currently in progress...Section 6 will be Recommendations from SURTC as generated by the study and through discussion with the transit providers. A meeting with the providers is scheduled for later today to go over the preliminary recommendations.
- Section 7 – Implementation

Beginning with Section 2, Jon went over the highlights of each Section and group discussion was held on each of the topics presented. Electronic versions of Sections 2-4 had been sent to committee members about a week prior to the meeting. Attendees were given a hardcopy at the meeting. Mielke encouraged attendees to send him their comments so related revisions could be incorporated into the final report.

Section 2

Demographics is the focus of Section 2. The population of Rolette County was analyzed. These figures were further broken down to the population density. The Turtle Mountain Reservation has the highest population density of people per square mile of anywhere in the state. It surpasses Cass County/Fargo in population density.

Questions arose regarding the Census Bureau's population and poverty numbers versus the figures that are used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Jeremy Laducer will get information to Jon regarding the BIA figures. Jon will include tribal numbers and will note the difference in figures between the two sources.

Section 3

An inventory of available transportation services and other means of personal mobility was presented. The study also looks at trip generators. Trip generators are origin and destination locations and related trip purposes that cause people to want or need to go somewhere. In order to determine what transportation services should be provided, you need to evaluate where people live and where they need/want to go. Trip destinations might be for employment, medical appointments, education, shopping, compliance trips, social, church, recreational, etc.

Roman Marcellais noted that in Table 3.12 BIA Education should be listed as a major employer. They have over 100 employees.

Section 4

Projected population figures suggest that Rolette County's overall population will remain relatively stable, while reservation and tribal land populations are expected to increase. It is expected that the senior and disabled populations will also rise. The number of jobs in the county is expected to increase by approximately 8% between now and 2012.

It was suggested that SURTC look at the Northwest Area Foundation Labor Force numbers and add some data into the narrative. Alex Albert has access to this data and can get it to Jon Mielke.

Section 5

Gary Hegland discussed unmet transportation needs as presented in Section 5. This section was not included in the Section Highlights that were handed out since it was "hot off the press." It covers unmet transportation needs in Rolette County which were determined through an interview process with transportation and human service providers in the area. One item that became apparent in many of the interviews SURTC conducted was the lack of awareness of public transportation availability in the county. Marketing is key to promoting the availability of services. Another point of interest was the large amount of money that human service agencies were spending on providing transportation for their individual clients.

Subsidizing transit operations was discussed. A question was asked whether or not TANF dollars could be diverted to help subsidize public transit. This might require legislative action. It was also mentioned

that Indian Health Services may be interested in coordinating its transportation services and contributing funds to another provider that would provide related services.

Lunch Break – The meeting was resumed after a break for lunch.

Prioritize Transportation Services

Discussion was held on the prioritization of transportation services. While recognizing that all transportation needs are important, it was decided by consensus that medical rides should receive the highest priority, followed by education (in particular, transportation to the Turtle Mountain Community College), and employment.

Implementation Phase

A question was asked regarding what happens after the study is completed. Jon Mielke explained that the current contract with SURTC was only for the study, and that implementation would be the responsibility of the local providers, North Central Planning Council, and the Advisory Committee. SURTC will have a number of specific suggestions for the local groups to review and to determine what should be implemented and on what kind of timetable. The Advisory Committee becomes a very important part of the implementation phase. It is important that they work together with the providers and North Central Planning Council to develop the transportation services in Rolette County.

Coordinated Services

One of the keys to improving the availability of transportation services in Rolette County will be coordinating services among the three providers – Royal Coach, Nutrition and Support Services and Nutrition United/Rolette County Transportation. SURTC's suggestions include finding more ways for the three projects to coordinate, the possibility of having one overall name for public transit in the area (while still maintaining separate corporate entities) and the option of having a central dispatch system. Other examples included coordinating with the hospital for non-emergency medical transportation and with the college for helping students pay for rides. Some discussion has already been held regarding Royal Coach working with the hospital to provide transportation services to Minot. This may even be feasible to start this fall.

Economic Impact Study

Jeremy Laducer mentioned an Economic Impact Study that had been done for the area. He will supply those numbers and other information from the study to Jon Mielke and Gary Hegland for supplemental information for the report, if needed.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00 p.m. A final meeting will be scheduled for October to review the final draft of the study.

TRANSIT PROVIDERS MEETING
Turtle Mountain Community College
Belcourt, North Dakota
August 15, 2006 2:30 p.m.

Attendees:

Jon Mielke	SURTC
Gary Hegland	SURTC
Jacque Senger	North Central Planning Council
Alfreda Morin	Nutrition and Support Services
Larry Leonard	Nutrition United/Rolette County Transportation
Jim and JoAnn Hamley	Royal Coach
Carol Wright	SURTC.

The purpose of this meeting was to review draft recommendations with the area's transit operators and to solicit their input. Gary Hegland and Jon Mielke went over the proposed recommendations that are included in Section 6 of the draft study.

Turtle Mountain Transit Development Plan

Jon Mielke recommended treating the Reservation, Rolette County, and Tribal Trust Lands as one entity when it comes to determining population status. By combining these three areas into one, the combined entity falls into the North Dakota Mobility Goals of cities that range from 4,500 – 20,000 in population. This area's mobility goals should at least meet those proposed in the NDDOT's personal mobility plan.

Existing Services

At a minimum, efforts should be made to maintain existing levels of transportation services. It is recommended that hours of operation be expanded to provide more coverage.

New Services

New services could be provided using existing providers. There are 6 Service Components that are recommended:

- 1) Modified Fixed Route and Dial-a-Ride – Recommendations include a modified fixed route bus system serving Dunseith-Belcourt-Rolla, and Dial-a-Ride services in Rolla. This could operate Monday through Friday from 7 am – 6 pm, with the Rolla Dial-a-Ride operation from 8 am – 11 am and from 1 pm – 5 pm.
- 2) Fixed route through the housing clusters and to Turtle Mountain Community College – Recommend operating this route Monday through Friday from 7 am – 6 pm.
- 3) Commuter Run – Fixed route to west Belcourt destinations and Belcourt Dial-a-Ride (backup). This would operate Monday through Friday from 7:45 am – 5:15 pm.

- 4) Rural Dial-a-Ride in western Rolette county including St. John and Rolette -- This would operate Monday through Friday from 9 am – 5 pm.
- 5) Fixed Route from Rolla to Minot – This route would include the communities of Belcourt, Dunseith, and Bottineau. It would operate Monday through Friday, 7:30 am – 5:30 pm.
- 6) County-wide Taxi Service based in Belcourt – This could be a regular taxi service but also serve to fill-in gaps in other proposed and existing transportation services.

Coordinate Services

Efforts should be made to coordinate the operations of local transit service providers. This coordination could include such things as a centralized call dispatch center; joint marketing efforts (both initial to announce new service availability and on-going); the creation of a Transit Advisory Board which could provide ongoing direction to the local service providers and create a sense of ownership of the transit operations overall success in the county; and the adoption of uniform and expanded record keeping practices which will facilitate accurate operational assessments.

Monitor Operations

System operations should be monitored on an ongoing basis to assess current transportation operations, public awareness, utilization, and to evaluate unmet needs.

Service Provision Modifications

As appropriate and affordable, the transit system services should be modified to meet the changing personal mobility needs of the residents of Rolette County.

Personalized Initiatives

Specialized services such as ride sharing, as well as expanded friends and family transportation, should be initiated and encouraged to help satisfy low volume transit needs.

Discussion was held on each of the above recommendations. The providers reached consensus on the importance of coordinating the existing transportation services and on the need for expanded service hours and coverage. Priorities will need to be given to the recommendations, since funding probably does not exist (even with the additional federal dollars) to implement all of the suggestions at this time.

Implementation

Jon Mielke and Gary Hegland indicated that input was needed from the three providers for the implementation phase of the study recommendations (Section 7). It will be up to the providers, the North Central Planning Council and the Advisory Committee to figure out how to proceed with the implementation of the study recommendations.

Operator Responses

The service providers were receptive to the recommendations presented. Mielke presented the operators with a short questionnaire concerning each of the six service components/route that had been presented. The operators agreed to provide related feedback by September 10th. The providers were also encouraged to provide comments on any of the other recommendations that had been presented.

Next Meeting

The three providers and Jacque Senger from North Central Planning Council agreed to meet in early September to discuss coordination efforts.

SHORT-TERM PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
Turtle Mountain Transit Development Plan
Turtle Mountain Community College
August 16, 2006

Attendees:

Hamley, Jim	Royal Coach Transportation, Belcourt
Hamley, JoAnn	Royal Coach Transportation, Belcourt
Hegland, Gary	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Fargo
Laducer, Jeremy	Turtle Mountain Transportation Director, Belcourt
LaRocque, Emil	Tribal Scholarship Director, Turtle Mountain Community College, Belcourt
Leonard Jr., Larry	Nutrition United/Rolette County Transportation, Rolla
Marcellais, Duane	Burdick Healthcare, Indian Health Services, Belcourt
Mielke, Jon	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Bismarck
Morin, Alfreda	Nutrition & Support Services, Belcourt
Senger, Jacque	North Central Planning Council, Devils Lake
Wright, Carol	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, Fargo

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Gary Hegland. Jeremy Laducer, Committee Chair, was unavailable at the start of the meeting but arrived shortly thereafter.

Initiating a Coordinated Transportation Plan

Short-term planning is a bridge between now and the implementation phase of the recommendations from the study conducted by SURTC. The main topic for discussion for this meeting was to examine what could be done right now (and in the near future) to get a coordinated transportation plan started in Rolette County.

Fixed Route Medical Trip to Minot

As identified in the interviews conducted by SURTC, medical transportation to Minot is a critical need. It is proposed that a medical trip to Minot from Belcourt be established to run a minimum of 4 days per week under a contract between Royal Coach and the Quentin N Burdick Indian Health Services, with a cost sharing from each of the two entities. This would be a fixed-route system and would be available for use by the general public. The contract money from the hospital can be counted as local match for the requirements Royal Coach has for Section 5311. Other funding sources might include Medicaid and passenger fares.

Centralized Dispatch

The concept of providing one centralized dispatch center for all three transit providers was discussed. In order for this to be accomplished, Nutrition and Support Services would need to put 2-way radios in their

vehicles. Currently they dispatch using cell phones. Several provisions would need to be decided early on in the process. It would need to be determined where the dispatch center would be located; dispatch procedures would need to be established; and the transit operators would need to determine what specific services each would be providing. One phone number would be used for passengers to call for a ride to any of the locations served by any of the three transportation providers. All three providers would need to share in the cost of providing the dispatch services.

Fares and Route Transfers

In order for coordinated transit to work, the providers would need to meet and agree upon standard fares between specific locations. They would also need to discuss how to handle bus transfers (passengers who ride on one system to the “hub” and then continue their trip on a vehicle operated by another provider). The goal would be to make transfers between providers as smooth and convenient as possible for the passengers and leave the business arrangements of how to divide up the fares to be determined by the providers.

Operating Public Transit Under One Name

It was suggested that all rides provided under Section 5311 be operated as Rolette County Transit. This would minimize confusion for passengers when they call a central dispatch to schedule a ride. This would also make marketing efforts easier. Each of the three entities would still retain their individual programs; the name change would only apply to rides funded under 5311.

Advisory Committee

It was recommended that an Advisory Committee be established for the coordinated transportation system. An Advisory Committee could help prioritize needs and services as well as serve as advocates for the coordinated system. They would also be valuable in marketing the new services to their constituents and others in the service area. Discussion was held on the number of people who should serve on an Advisory Committee and who those members might be. No decisions were made at this time. Suggested organizations are included in the recommendation section of SURTC’s TDP report.

Administration

Discussion was held on who would coordinate the administration of the public transit services. North Central Planning Council already serves in this capacity for the Section 5311 funds. They would be the most logical choice for administering this expanded coordination. It may, however, be necessary to have a local administrator to manage day-to-day operations and centralized dispatch.

Transportation Subsidy for Turtle Mountain Community College Students

Gary Hegland explained how North Dakota State University helps subsidize bus transportation on the NDSU campus by adding transportation fees to the students’ tuition. The students can ride the campus buses at no cost. Many of the Turtle Mountain Community College students need to travel from area communities and residential housing clusters to the school. Discussions were held concerning the

possibility of the college collecting fees from the students as part of their tuition or activity fees and then using those fees to help subsidize the cost for students to access public transportation.

Cooperative Agreement/Contract

Nutrition and Support Services, Nutrition United/Rolette County Transit and Royal Coach would need to get together and decide on a comprehensive cooperative agreement and put together a contract which would delineate how the coordinated transportation services within Rolette County would be provided. It should specify the roles and responsibilities of each of the three organizations. Alfreda Morin, Larry Leonard, Jr., Jim and JoAnn Hamley, and Jacque Senger agreed to meet in early September to begin the process of laying out some of the parameters for a coordinated transportation program. Jeremy Laducer indicated that a tribal attorney may be available to provide related assistance.

Supplemental Post-Meeting Note: On August 15, 2006, the Federal Transit Administration released guidelines and related deadlines concerning the submission of grants under the new tribal transit program (5311 (f)). SURTC staff members forwarded related information to Jeremy Laducer, Jacque Senger, and the three local services providers on August 17, 2006.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE – TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN
Turtle Mountain Community College
Belcourt, North Dakota
November 6, 2006 1:00 p.m.

Attendees:

Bercier, Dennis	Turtle Mountain CC - Infrastructure Director
Frederick, Anita	Turtle Mountain CC - Dean of Students
Hamley, Jim	Royal Coach Transportation
Hamley, JoAnn	Royal Coach Transportation
Hegland, Gary	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
Laducer, Jeremy	Turtle Mountain Transportation Director
LaFontaine, Viola	Turtle Mountain Community School
LaRocque, Emil	Tribal Scholarship Director
Leftwich, Dave	North Dakota Department of Transportation
Leonard Jr., Larry	Nutrition United
Mielke, Jon	Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
Senger, Jacque	North Central Planning Council

The final meeting of the advisory committee convened at 1 p.m. at the Turtle Mountain Community College. Following a welcome and introductions, Jon Mielke presented a Power Point presentation which summarized the transit development plan's draft recommendations and implementation strategies (Sections 6 and 7). Other sections of the report had been presented to the committee at its meeting on August 18th.

Mielke pointed out that the report's draft recommendations had been shared with area transit providers in mid-August and that the current version of the report reflected their comments. He also noted that SURTC had accelerated its original timetable on the report to get it finalized in time to assist the tribe in its application for new FTA 5311(c) tribal transit funds. Those applications were due on October 18th.

Following his presentation, Mielke called on Jeremy Laducer, tribal transportation planner, for a report on the tribe's grant application. Mr. Laducer explained that the tribe had executed a memorandum of understanding with the area's three public transit providers and that the tribe had adopted the findings and recommendations of SURTC's draft report.

Based on these actions, the tribe submitted a grant application seeking funds to implement the report's Phase II and Phase III recommendations; Phase I recommendations are already being implemented with new 5311 and state transit monies. The grant was submitted in mid-October and award announcements are expected in mid-December. The funding request was for four years.

Mielke then thanked the North Dakota Department of Transportation for its help in funding the study effort and called on Dave Leftwich for comments concerning implementation. Mr. Leftwich congratulated the advisory committee on the report and thanked its members for their efforts. He emphasized that future efforts should focus on establishing the advisory board recommended in the report and hiring a mobility manager who would oversee future coordination and implementation efforts.

Mielke asked the committee if it had any specific comments or concerning on the report's draft recommendations and implementation strategies. The group indicated that it endorsed the contents of the draft report.

Committee members then discussed the make-up of the recommended advisory board, the hiring of a mobility manager, and the possibility of seeking FTA 5309 funds to construct a facility that could be used for administration, passenger transfers, and vehicle storage and maintenance. Mielke referred the group to report's specific recommendation concerning membership on the advisory committee.

Subsequent discussions focused on what entities should be represented on the board and specific individuals that should be contacted concerning participation. The group hopes to form the long-term in the near future and to have it operational before the announcement of 5311(c) grants in mid-December. Mielke pointed out that the advisory board should be created even if new 5311(c) monies are not received.

In closing, Mielke thanked the tribe, advisory committee members, and the Department of Transportation for their dedication to transit and for their involvement in the project. Numerous attendees thanked SURTC for its expertise and its contributions to what is considered an excellent report.

The meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Appendix C

Employer Survey – Employee Commuting Needs and Economic Development Expectations

July 12, 2006

Dear Rolette County Employer:

The Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, in cooperation with Turtle Mountain Reservation and the North Dakota Department of Transportation, is developing a personal mobility transportation plan for Rolette County. The goal of this undertaking is to improve local residents' access to places of employment, appointments, shopping, etc.

As a part of this study, we are surveying major employers to identify the employment-related transportation needs of their employees. Your input is considered very important and would be greatly appreciated.

Please take a few moments to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. A return envelop in enclosed for your convenience.

A prompt reply would be greatly appreciated. Thanks in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jon Mielke
SURTC Researcher

Enclosures (2)

August 8, 2006

Dear Rolette County Employer:

In mid-July we sent you a questionnaire concerning a transit plan that the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center is working on for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and the North Dakota Department of Transportation. We believe that your input is vital so we are sending out this reminder in an attempt to achieve a maximum response rate. Please disregard this request if our mailings crossed in the mail.

The goal of this study is to improve local residents' access to places of employment, appointments, shopping, etc. In addition to conducting numerous personal interviews, we are surveying all major employers in Rolette County. Hopefully the implementation of related recommendations will have a positive impact on area employers, both in terms of recruitment and daily operations.

Please take a few moments to complete and return the enclosed questionnaire. A return envelope is enclosed for your convenience.

A prompt reply would be greatly appreciated. Thanks in advance for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jon Mielke
SURTC Researcher

Enclosures (2)

Rolette County Employer Transportation Survey

1. Is your firm:
☐ Public
☐ Private non-profit
☐ Private for-profit
☐ Tribally-owned
☐ Other (please specify: _____)
2. How many people does your firm employ in Rolette County?
☐ Less than 25
☐ 25-49
☐ 50-99
☐ 100-199
☐ 200-299
☐ 300-399
☐ 400-499
☐ 500 or more (please specify: _____)
3. How many locations does your firm have in Rolette County?
☐ One
☐ Two
☐ Three
☐ Four
☐ Five or more (please specify: _____)
4. How many days per week is your firm in operation?
☐ Four
☐ Five
☐ Six
☐ Seven
☐ Other (please specify: _____)
5. How many shifts does your firm typically operate per workday?
☐ One
☐ Two
☐ Three
☐ Other (please specify: _____)

6. At what time does your day shift typically report to work?
- ☐ 7:00 a.m.
☐ 7:30 a.m.
☐ 8:00 a.m.
☐ Other (please specify: _____)
7. At what time does your day shift typically leave work?
- ☐ 4:00 p.m.
☐ 4:30 p.m.
☐ 5:00 p.m.
☐ Other (please specify: _____)
8. Please estimate how far your employees commute to work.
- ☐ Less than 5 miles _____ %
☐ 5-9 miles _____ %
☐ 10-19 miles _____ %
☐ 20 miles or more _____ %
9. Please estimate how your employees commute to work.
- ☐ Drive alone _____ %
☐ Carpool _____ %
☐ Walk or Bike _____ %
☐ Public transportation _____ %
☐ Other _____ % (Please specify: _____)
10. Is transportation to and from work a factor when you are recruiting new employees?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know
11. Is transportation to and from work a factor for current employees?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know
12. Would the provision of expanded public transportation services in Rolette County be beneficial to your firm?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know

13. Would the provision of expanded public transportation services in Rolette County be beneficial to your employees?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know
14. If Rolette County's public transportation services were expanded in a way that would make them usable by your employees, would your firm consider subsidizing the employees' use of those services (please note that tax advantages may accrue to the benefit of participating employers)?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know
15. If Rolette County's public transportation services were expanded, would your firm be willing and able to make slight modifications in work schedules to make these services usable by your employees?
- ☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Don't Know
16. What are your expectations in terms of the size of your workforce over the next five years?
- _____ Decline by 25-50%
_____ Decline by up to 25%
_____ No change
_____ Increase by up to 25%
_____ Increase by 25-50%
_____ Other (Please specify: _____)
17. What are your overall expectations for economic development in Rolette County during the next five years?

Optional: The provision of contact information would be very beneficial to the development of this transportation plan. It would also allow researchers to contact you regarding the workability of proposed service times and routes and to present you with a copy of the final report.

Company Name: _____

Contact Person & Title: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Please return your completed survey to:

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center / NDSU
500 E. Front Avenue – Suite 221
Bismarck, ND 58504

A prompt reply would be greatly appreciated.