Public Transit
Regional Coordination Pilot Projects
in North Dakota

Prepared for

North Dakota Department of Transportation

Prepared by

Jon Mielke, Associate Research Fellow
Carol Wright, Associate Director of Outreach and Training
David Ripplinger, Associate Research Fellow
Dr. James H. Miller, Faculty Affiliate
Del Peterson, Associate Research Fellow

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
a program of the
Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute
North Dakota State University
Fargo, North Dakota

December 2010

Acknowledgements

Disclaimer

The contents of this report reflect the work of the authors, who are responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the information presented.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North Dakota's 2009 Legislature enacted Senate Bill No. 2223, which directed the North Dakota Department of Transportation (NDDOT) to develop two public transportation coordination pilot projects. Related goals included providing cost-effective and efficient transit services, reducing service fragmentation and duplication, developing standards for service providers, and increasing the personal mobility of the state's residents. This report presents findings and recommendations relative to related implementations in North Dakota's south central and west central regions.

Coordination is already taking place in North Dakota's transit industry. There are, however, significant opportunities for additional coordination. A major impediment to taking advantage of these opportunities is the lack of facilitating structures and the lack of time that transit directors have to devote to the issue. Only two of the nine directors in the pilot regions devote 100% of their time to transit operations. Most have numerous non-transit responsibilities, including things such as city administration or senior programs involving congregate and home delivered meals, outreach services, prescription drug assistance programs, food banks, and durable medical equipment loan programs. This report's recommendations address this major barrier to coordination.

In addition to Senate Bill No. 2223's prescriptions regarding transit coordination, there are also federal mandates. This report presents 22 recommendations that are designed to satisfy both state and federal coordination requirements. These recommendations, as summarized on the final page of this executive summary, also include several best practices initiatives that would increase operating and administrative efficiencies in North Dakota's transit industry. This report's recommendations are consistent with related studies undertaken by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

These recommendations were developed after an extensive information gathering process which included a review of other states' coordination plans, interviews with all nine of the regions' transit operators, and eight public input meetings that were held throughout the pilot regions. The recommendations were subsequently reviewed by regional steering committees in each region, the regions' transit operators, and attendees at four public information meetings. Committee members and all of the state's public transit operators were also given an opportunity to review and comment on the draft report. These comments and related responses are presented in Appendix A of the report.

Primary recommendations include the creation of regional coordination committees in each region and a requirement that each transit service provider have a local advisory board comprised of local transit users/advocacy agencies, human service agencies, businesses, local government, economic development organizations, and other local transportation service providers. Many local transit operators already have local advisory boards; the existence of such boards should be universal.

As provided for in Senate Bill No. 2223, each region should have a regional coordination administrator. It is recommended that one administrator will be sufficient for the two pilot regions. This person will facilitate the creation and operations of regional committees and local boards and will be responsible for related planning functions, including multi-year coordination and operating plans. Two related organization charts are presented on the follow page.

Organizational Chart - Regional Coordinating Council
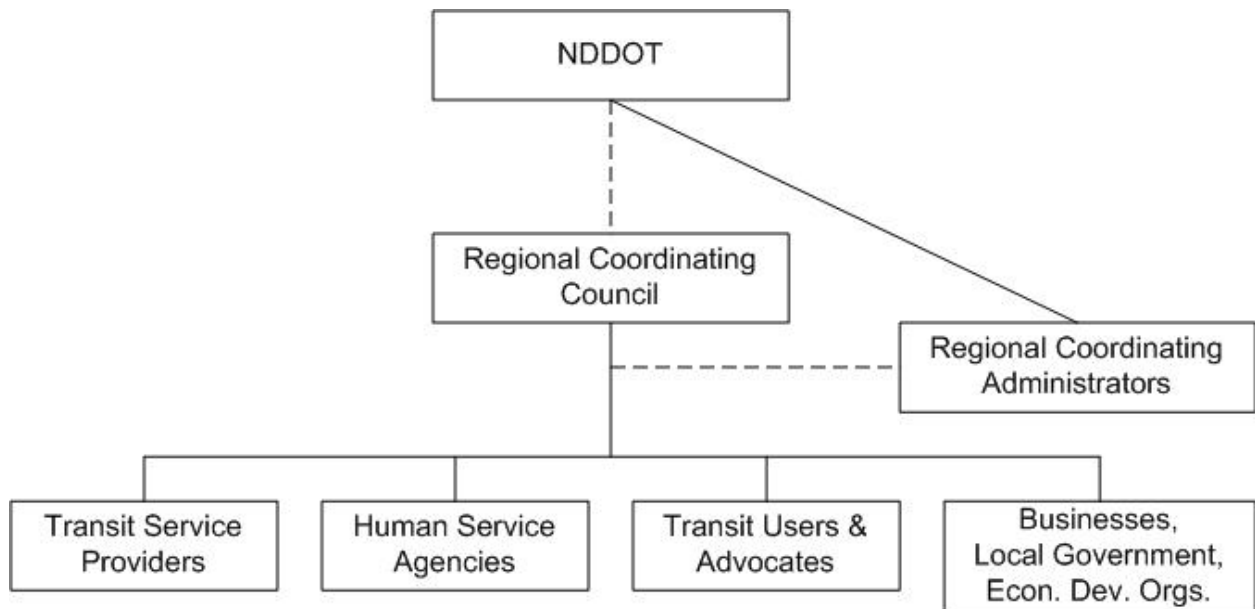
Organization Chart – Local Advisory Board With Separate Governing Board
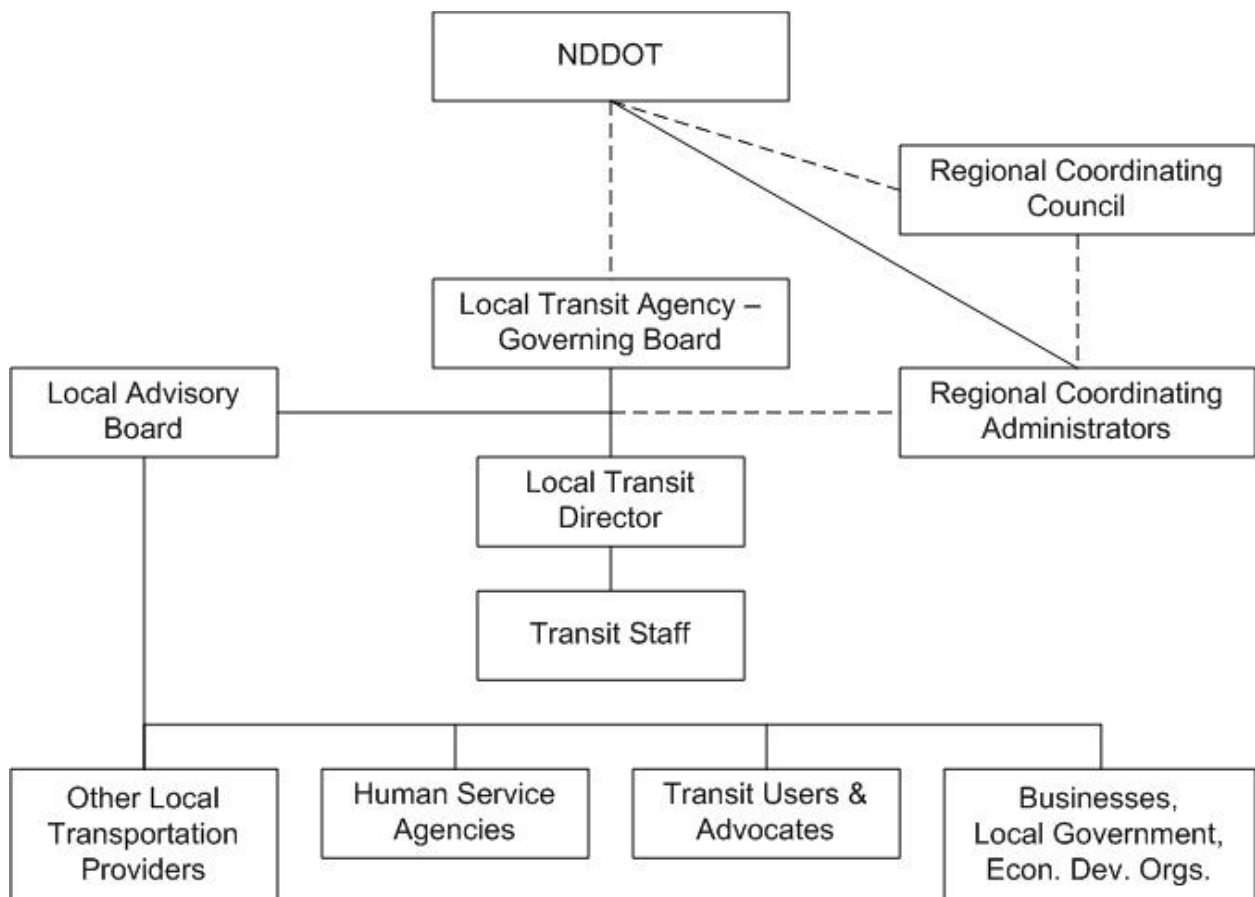
A companion organizational chart is presented in the final section of the report to reflect situations where the local advisory board might also function at the transit agency's governing board.

As may be noted in the comments presented at the end of Appendix A, there was not universal support among the regions' transit operators regarding the need for regional coordination administrators and regional coordination councils. It should also be noted, however, that transit coordination is provided for in S.B. No. 2223 and federal law. Regional coordinating councils and related staff support are an integral part of this process, as documented in the coordination models discussed in Section 5. This report's recommendations concerning regional coordinating councils and regional coordination administrators are consistent with the provisions of S.B. No. 2223 and put structures and processes in place that further the coordination provisions of federal law and the Federal Transit Administration.

The report's recommendations are prioritized and budgets are presented for the 2011-13 and subsequent bienniums. Initial deployment costs total $855,000 for the 2011-13 biennium, much of which is for non-recurring start-up costs and all of which may be paid for with available federal funds. This total includes regional coordinator costs and one-time contract assistance for start-up work, including the formation of local and regional advisory boards and the development of local and regional coordination plans, and expanding the coordination effort to include three more regions of the state.

Biennial costs will increase as more regions of the state are included in the coordination process, but they will eventually decline and stabilize at approximately $920,000 per biennium once the entire state has been through the planning and implementation process. All project costs are eligible expenditures under existing Federal Transit Administration rural transit program guidelines. Other than a possible statutory amendment which would make the coordination of transit services a state priority, all of the report's recommendations may be implemented without additional legislative action.

This report's recommendations regarding coordination put structures and planning processes in place that will facilitate regional and local decision making. It is hoped these structures will bring the right people together to make informed decisions concerning the provision and coordination of future transit services. It is important to note, however, that these recommendations do not prescribe what levels of service should be provided. Those are decisions that should be made at the local level.

RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Recommendation	Directly Related to S.B. 2223	Related to Federal Law and/or Executive Order	Industry Best Practice	Other Research Findings
1. Avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and intermediaries			✓	✓
2. Statutory amendments - make coordination a state priority and consider giving counties the ability to levy a tax to support the provision of transit services		✓	✓	✓
3. Require establishment of regional coordinating councils	✓	✓	✓	✓
4. Require establishment of local advisory boards		✓	✓	✓
5. Require regional coordination plans	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Require local coordination & operating plans		✓	✓	✓
7. Give NDDOT discretion in determining regional transit boundaries and suggest boundaries for two pilot regions	✓		✓	✓
8. Create regional coordination administrator job description	✓		✓	✓
9. Contract for initial implementation support	✓		✓	✓
10. Provide funding for local administrative support	✓	✓	✓	✓
11. Expand coordination effort to other regions	✓	✓	✓	✓
12. Create mechanisms to publicize available services & changes	✓	✓	✓	✓
13. Establish uniform operating standards for all service providers and provide policy and procedure templates	✓		✓	✓
14. Develop consensus on use and deployment of dispatch software		✓	✓	✓
15. Develop long-term vehicle replacement plans	✓		✓	✓
16. Specific recommendations concerning coordination-related cost saving/revenue enhancement efforts	✓			✓
17. Establish guidelines for fare cost recovery & uniformity	✓		✓	✓
18. Use performance measures to track operations	✓		✓	✓
19. Monitor workload of NDDOT transit staff and adjust as appropriate			✓	✓
20. Operator-specific modifications to facilitate coordination, cost-savings, and/or service enhancements	✓			✓
21. Prioritize implementation of recommendations	✓	✓	✓	✓
22. Develop short and long-term budgets and identify possible funding sources	✓		✓	✓

1.   INTRODUCTION

North Dakota's 2009 Legislature enacted Senate Bill No. 2223, which directed the state's Department of Transportation (NDDOT) to develop two public transportation coordination pilot projects. A copy of the bill is presented in Figure 1.1 at the end of the section. This report presents findings and recommendations relative to the implementation of those projects.

The legislation prescribed that each of the two pilot regions was to have a regional coordination administrator who would coordinate the provision of public transportation services in the region. Related goals included cost effectiveness, efficiency, and the reduction of fragmentation and duplication of services. One region was to have a city with a population of over 35,000 and one was to have no city with a population of that size.

NDDOT subsequently solicited proposals and contracted with the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center (SURTC), a program of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University, to study coordination options and develop related implementation recommendations. The final version of the contract provided that an interim version of the final report was to be completed by December 2010, in time for NDDOT to present related findings and recommendations to the 2011 Legislature.

NDDOT and SURTC met in early February to identify regions that should be included in the pilot project. It was decided to focus on the contiguous south central and west regions. Jamestown, with a 2000 census population of 15,527, is the largest city in the nine county south central region. Bismarck, with a 2000 population of 55,532, is the largest city in the ten county west central region. The regions' demographics and existing public transit services will be discussed in Sections 2 and 3.

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was created to oversee and provide direction to the project. Members included NDDOT's project manager, Linda Wurtz of AARP North Dakota, and Sandy Bendewald, director of Stutsman County Social Services.

One of the TAC's initial tasks was to work with SURTC to identify potential members of a Regional Steering Committee (RSC) for each region. Committee functions included identifying the best approaches to gather information within each region, encouraging participation in related processes by potentially interested individuals and entities, and providing assistance with public meeting planning and promotion.

As will be discussed in more detail in Section 6, 10 individuals were invited to serve on the south central RSC and 13 were asked to be on the west central RSC. Each RSC included all of the region's public transit operators and representatives from the social services community, county commissions, senior citizen organizations, and other mobility-dependent organizations. Each RSC had a representative from each county in the region. The initial meetings with the RSCs were held in late March 2010.

In May 2010, SURTC investigators conducted interviews with all of the regions' public transit operators. The focus of these meetings was to verify information concerning current operations and to solicit input concerning regional coordination. Ten interviews were conducted. Related findings are presented in Section 6.

During the first half of July 2010 SURTC held eight public input meetings throughout the south central and west central regions. The times and locations of these meetings were set in consultation with each region's RSC. Each meeting lasted approximately two hours. The initial 40-45 minutes of each meeting were dedicated to presentations concerning the project and transportation services that are currently

available throughout the two regions. The remainder of each meeting was used to pose coordination-related questions to attendees and to solicit related input, suggestions, and concerns. Nearly 200 people attended the meetings. Detailed information on the meetings is presented in Section 6 and Appendix A.

It is important to note that coordinating transportation services is not a new concept to either North Dakota or the nation. On the federal scene, coordination discussions date back to the late 1970s and came to the forefront with Executive Order 13330 in 2004 and again with the passage of the 2005 federal highway and transit funding legislation – the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU).

Executive Order 13330 was signed by President George W. Bush on February 24, 2004. The need for the order stemmed from the critical role that transportation plays in providing access to employment, medical and health care, education, and other community services, and because there were over 60 federal programs in a variety of agencies involved in the provision of transportation services to various segments of the population.

In an attempt to coordinate the provision of these services, the order provided for the establishment of an Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM). Agencies involved with the council included Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and Interior. These and other agencies were to work together to develop, implement, and maintain responsive, comprehensive, coordinated transportation systems that are responsive to the needs of persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes, and older adults who rely on such transportation in order to fully participate in their communities.

A primary initiative of the CCAM was the creation of the United We Ride program. This interagency initiative is aimed at improving the availability, quality, and efficiency of transportation services for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with lower incomes. Many states and local communities have developed related coordination action plans. The National Conference of State Legislatures has also worked with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the U.S. Department of Labor to track related state coordination efforts.

Additional mandates for the coordination of transportation programs and services were established when Congress enacted SAFTETEA-LU in 2005. The FTA's implementation of related provisions require the establishment of locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plans for all of the FTA's human service-related transportation programs. Related goals include enhanced access for mobility-impaired individuals, reduced duplication of services, and increased efficiencies.

In addition to federal mandates and initiatives related to the coordination of transportation services, several states have undertaken formal steps to coordinate the provision of such services. As will be discussed in Sections 4 and 5, SURTC conducted an extensive review of other states' actions regarding transportation funding, staffing, and coordination in an attempt to find models that may have applicability to North Dakota. Learning from other states' successes and failures should aid in the successful implementation of North Dakota's coordination-related efforts.

While North Dakota's initiatives related to the coordination of transportation services have been less formal than those taken at the federal level and by some other states, steps have been taken to increase coordination at both state and local levels. In 2004 NDDOT contracted with SURTC to prepare a coordination plan (*Enhancing Passenger Mobility Services in North Dakota Through Increased Coordination*), and it has had ongoing discussions and cooperative efforts with the North Dakota

Department of Human Services regarding the coordination of programs related to human service and public transportation services.

There is also coordination taking place at the local level regarding the provision of public transportation services. There are, however, barriers that inhibit additional coordination. These barriers will be identified and discussed in Section 7, and related findings and recommendations will be presented in Section 8.

In summary, the coordination of transportation services is a federal priority, and many states have undertaken related initiatives. North Dakota's approach to coordination has been less formal but steps have, nonetheless, been taken at both state and local levels. The 2009 Legislature's passage of Senate Bill No. 2223 made coordination a higher priority. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations presented in Section 8 will move this process forward to the benefit of both the state and its mobility-dependent residents.

Sixty-first Legislative Assembly of North Dakota
In Regular Session Commencing Tuesday, January 6, 2009

SENATE BILL NO. 2223
(Senators Robinson, Nething)
(Representatives Delmore, R. Kelsch, Weisz)

AN ACT to provide for regional public transportation pilot projects; and to provide for a report to

the legislative assembly.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF NORTH DAKOTA:

SECTION 1. REGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION PILOT PROJECTS -- SPENDING AUTHORITY. The department of transportation shall develop two public transportation coordination pilot projects in two of this state's planning regions. One project must focus on coordination in a region that does not have a city with a population over thirty-five thousand and one project must focus on coordination in a region that has a city with a population exceeding thirty-five thousand. The department shall implement one project in 2009 and one project in 2010. Each pilot project must have a regional coordination administrator who coordinates the provision of public transportation services to the residents of the region in a manner that is cost-effective, efficient, and reduces fragmentation and duplication of services. The regional coordination administrator shall assist communities in public transportation planning in the specified region to develop a structure that will support a coordinated public transportation system. The department shall develop standards for public transportation providers and contractors who provide public transportation within the coordinated public transportation system. These standards must promote coordination among public transportation providers. The department may spend additional funds from gifts, grants, or donations and those additional funds are appropriated for the purposes of this section.

SECTION 2. REPORT TO LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY. The director of the department of transportation shall report to the sixty-second legislative assembly with findings and recommendations based on the results of the public transportation coordination pilot projects.

Figure 1.1 Senate Bill No. 2223

2.   REGIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

The design of efficient, effective public transportation systems requires knowledge of the market area. Identifying the number of potential riders is helpful in guiding policy and making local decisions. At the policy level it helps quantify need and assists in making decisions on allocating funding and other resources. At the local level, it helps identify what types of services should be made available as well as assisting in estimating the level of services needed.

To assist in the identification of current and future mobility needs in the project's two regions, population projections were calculated for five-year intervals from 2010 to 2025. In North Dakota, two groups, the elderly and disabled, make up the majority of transit riders. Individuals in these groups are often considered "transportation disadvantaged" due the mobility challenges they face and their relatively high levels of ridership. Consequently, population projections were made for not only the total population but also for these two subgroups.

This section is divided into four sections. The first section describes the cohort-component method used to project future populations. The second and the third sections present the current and projected demographic profile of the south central and west central regions. The final section presents summary comments.

2.1   Projection Methodology

The cohort-component method is the most commonly used technique to project future populations. The method, covered rigorously by Smith, Taymen, and Swanson (2001), is relatively standardized. However, small variations in the application of the method are often needed to accommodate available data or to address special needs. A description of the specific cohort-component method used to calculate the population projections presented in this section, including the projection of senior and disabled populations, is described in Ripplinger (2006).

The basic concept behind the cohort-component method is that previous aggregate behavior will continue in the future. For example, if 10% of females age 25 to 29 moved out of a county during the last five year period, it is expected that 10% of females in that age group will do the same in the next five years. This assumption is quite strong and often erroneous. However, the results of the cohort-component method compare favorably with other methods of population projection.

The cohort-component method considers three components of change that drive changes in population from one period to the next: birth, migration, and death. Projections are made for age-gender groups as migration and mortality rates tend to differ significantly by age and sex. Similarly, the number of births is dependent on the number of females between the ages of 15 and 45. For the cohort-component method, the three components are calculated individually then combined to find the total population.

Projections made using the cohort-component method often use the date of census counts as the starting or launch point. The interval length, the time between the launch and target date, is usually five years. This is because most of the publicly available, no cost data needed to implement the cohort-component method are classified in five-year periods. In this study, the launch date is the year 2005 and projections are made at five-year intervals. Since neither 2010 census nor population estimate data were available at the time of the study, the 2010 data presented in this section are projections based on 2005 and 2009 population estimates.

2.2   Population Projections - South Central Region

The south central region includes Barnes, Dickey, Emmons, Foster, Griggs, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Sheridan, Stutsman, and Wells counties. These counties are predominantly rural. The largest communities in the region are Jamestown in Stutsman County and Valley City in Barnes County. In 2000, Jamestown had a population of 15,527 while Valley City had 6,826 residents. Regional population projections are presented in Table 2.1 and Figure 2.1.

As Table 2.1 indicates, the population of the 11 counties in the region in 2000 was 67,495. In 2010, the population is projected to be 57,919, a decline of 14%. The senior population declined by 9% to 16,445 in 2010. The disabled resident population also declined by 9% to 11,197.   If these population trends continue, the projected population of the region will fall to 46,638 in 2025, a 19% drop from the 2010 projection. The number of seniors will stay relatively constant at about 16,400 residents. The total number of disabled residents in the 11-county region is projected to fall by 12% to 1,349.

Table 2.1 Population Projections – South Central Region

		2,000	2,005	2,010	2,015	2,020	2,025	% Change 2010-2025
Barnes								
	Total Population	11,775	10,993	10,693	10,442	10,176	9,895	-7%
	Seniors	2,872	2,749	2,755	2,866	2,956	3,024	10%
	Disabled	1,515	1,419	1,368	1,341	1,345	1,361	-1%
Dickey								
	Total Population	5,757	5,460	5,047	4,621	4,187	3,762	-25%
	Seniors	1,494	1,433	1,429	1,455	1,528	1,499	5%
	Disabled	755	722	693	652	625	605	-13%
Emmons								
	Total Population	4,331	3,726	3,266	2,862	2,482	2,155	-34%
	Seniors	1,366	1,230	1,160	1,076	1,041	1,032	-11%
	Disabled	623	577	530	479	428	400	-25%
Foster								
	Total Population	3,759	3,523	3,109	2,732	2,353	2,004	-36%
	Seniors	993	933	904	880	880	867	-4%
	Disabled	485	474	446	412	369	339	-24%
Griggs								
	Total Population	2,754	2,470	2,313	2,215	2,086	1,985	-14%
	Seniors	825	777	803	858	879	884	10%
	Disabled	412	382	359	341	332	341	-5%
LaMoure								
	Total Population	4,701	4,281	3,728	3,249	2,806	2,407	-35%
	Seniors	1,357	1,273	1,184	1,128	1,109	1,035	-13%
	Disabled	649	618	562	503	449	409	-27%
Logan								
	Total Population	2,308	2,018	1,831	1,662	1,505	1,390	-24%
	Seniors	780	720	632	571	530	540	-14%
	Disabled	342	321	287	255	227	213	-26%
McIntosh								
	Total Population	3,390	2,952	2,472	2,082	1,747	1,468	-41%
	Seniors	1,380	1,223	1,091	977	878	813	-26%
	Disabled	594	536	474	413	366	325	-31%
Sheridan								
	Total Population	1,710	1,406	1,188	1,001	845	709	-40%
	Seniors	562	522	460	408	367	340	-26%
	Disabled	256	232	196	162	140	125	-36%
Stutsman								
	Total Population	21,908	20,766	20,315	19,683	18,936	18,287	-10%
	Seniors	4,783	4,614	4,633	4,776	4,929	5,010	8%
	Disabled	5,929	5,786	5,641	5,457	5,256	5,244	-7%
Wells								
	Total Population	5,102	4,475	3,958	3,458	3,005	2,575	-35%
	Seniors	1,611	1,502	1,396	1,343	1,343	1,335	-4%
	Disabled	755	700	642	578	527	487	-24%
Total								
	Total Population	67,495	62,070	57,919	54,006	50,128	46,638	-19%
	Seniors	18,023	16,976	16,445	16,338	16,440	16,379	0%
	Disabled	12,316	11,768	11,197	10,594	10,062	9,848	-12%

All counties in the south central region are projected to see population declines from 2010 to 2025. Population losses range from 41% in McIntosh County to 7% in Barnes County. The counties with urban clusters, Stutsman and Barnes, are expected to see the smallest declines. In absolute terms, Stutsman County is project to lose the most people, 2,028, while Griggs County is only expected to lose 328.
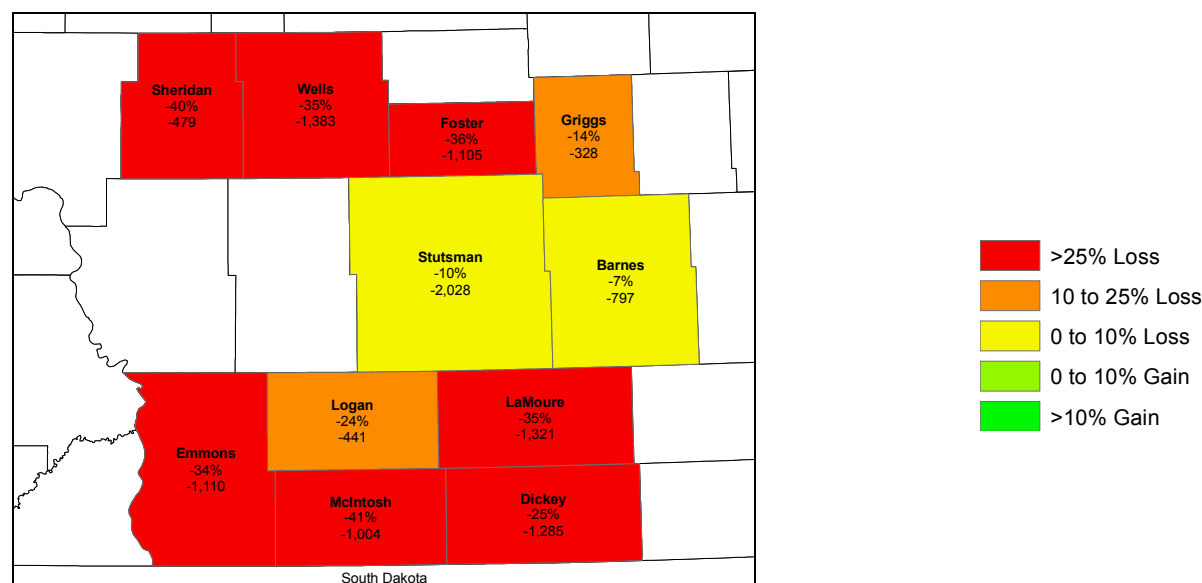
Figure 2.1 Population Change by County – South Central Region 2010 to 2025

Changes in senior populations are projected to vary widely across the south central region from 2010 to 2025. As Table 2.1 and Figure 2.2 indicate, seven of the region's 11 counties are projected to see a decrease in the number of senior residents. Sheridan County is projected to lose 120, or 26%, of its seniors. Stutsman is expected to see an increase of 377 seniors, while Griggs and Barnes County are expected to experience the largest percentage gain, 10%.

Senior population projections for 2010 to 2025 differ from those from previous studies (e.g., Ripplinger 2006). This difference occurs because seniors have been emigrating from rural areas in large numbers. If this occurs as projected, it is an important and significant change that will have serious implications for North Dakota and its counties and cities.
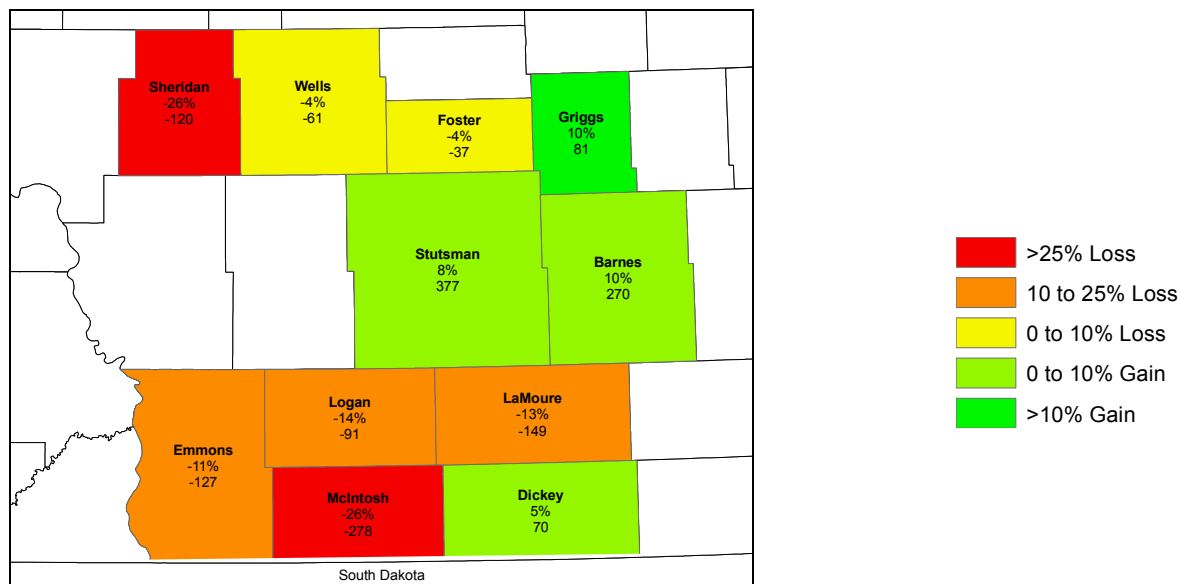
Figure 2.2 Senior Population Change by County - South Central Region 2010 to 2025

As illustrated in Figure 2.3, all counties in the south central region are projected to see a declining disabled population from 2010 to 2025. The losses are greatest in those communities without an urban cluster. Barnes County is projected to lose only seven disabled residents in the next 15 years. LaMoure County is projected to lose 27% or 153 disabled residents.
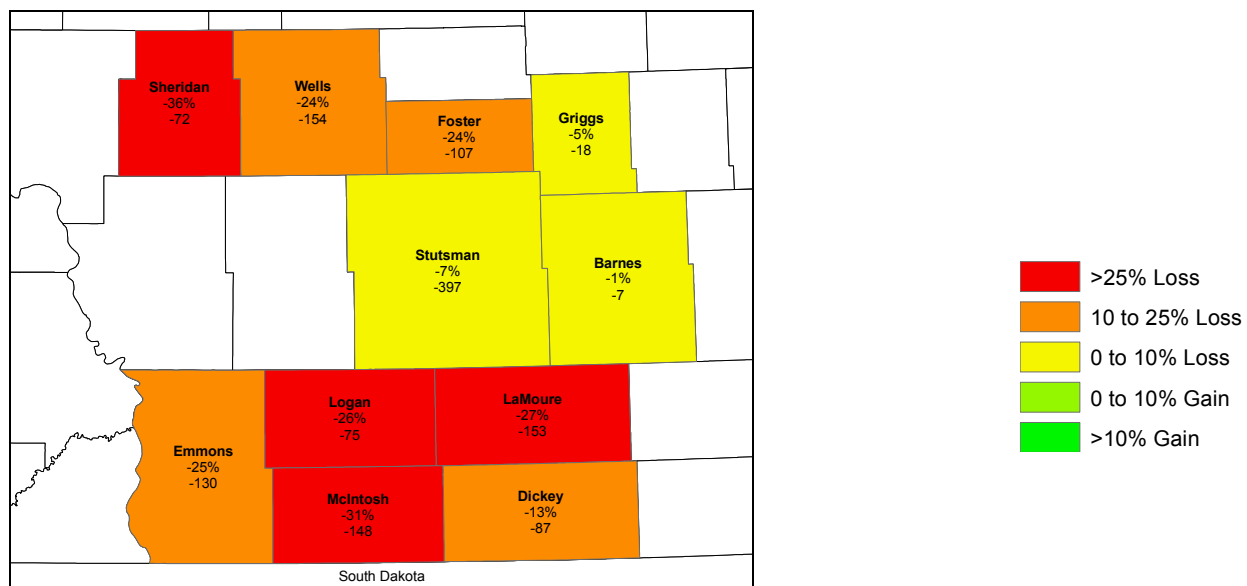
Figure 2.3 Disabled Population Change by County – South Central Region 2010 to 2025

2.3   Population Projections - West Central Region

The west central region includes Burleigh, Grant, Kidder, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, and Sioux Counties. Like the south central region, counties in the west central region are predominantly rural. The cities of Bismarck and Mandan make up the core of the Bismarck-Mandan metropolitan area. Standing Rock Indian Reservation occupies all of Sioux County in North Dakota as well as all or part of three counties in north central South Dakota.

The population of these eight counties was 124,377 in 2000. In 2010, the population is projected to be 133,753, an increase of 8%. The population of seniors was projected to increase by 12% to 25,713 in 2010. The population of disabled residents was projected to increase by 8% to 14,410.   Current and projected populations are presented in Table 2.2.

If the population trends continue, the projected population of the region will increase to 157,263 in 2,025, an 18% increase from the 2010 projection. The number of seniors will increase by 30% to 33,422 residents. The total number of disabled residents in the eight-county region is projected to increase by 20% to 2,886. As subsequent paragraphs indicate, however, projections vary significantly across the region.

Table 2.2 Population Projections - West Central Region

		2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	% Change 2010-2025
Burleigh								
	Total Popul	69,416	74,126	81,473	88,521	96,080	104,250	28%
	Seniors	11,166	12,637	14,404	16,442	18,440	20,084	39%
	Disabled	7,071	7,745	8,410	9,111	9,991	11,001	31%
Grant								
	Total Popul	2,841	2,561	2,272	2,009	1,766	1,577	-31%
	Seniors	868	818	780	768	730	698	-11%
	Disabled	412	383	342	310	276	266	-22%
Kidder								
	Total Popul	2,753	2,390	2,111	1,899	1,740	1,608	-24%
	Seniors	805	727	601	549	540	501	-17%
	Disabled	388	352	294	250	229	216	-26%
McLean								
	Total Popul	9,311	8,438	8,182	7,956	7,769	7,527	-8%
	Seniors	2,366	2,361	2,413	2,602	2,807	2,818	17%
	Disabled	1,237	1,148	1,097	1,068	1,099	1,126	3%
Mercer								
	Total Popul	8,644	8,088	7,698	7,384	7,143	6,915	-10%
	Seniors	1,549	1,635	1,703	1,837	2,066	2,188	28%
	Disabled	976	957	934	905	910	940	1%
Morton								
	Total Popul	25,303	25,245	26,270	27,409	28,730	30,000	14%
	Seniors	4,644	4,829	5,049	5,463	6,019	6,396	27%
	Disabled	2,743	2,825	2,852	2,903	3,081	3,312	16%
Oliver								
	Total Popul	2,065	1,789	1,553	1,349	1,173	1,025	-34%
	Seniors	382	376	371	377	353	310	-16%
	Disabled	231	213	187	165	150	138	-26%
Sioux								
	Total Popul	4,044	4,088	4,194	4,265	4,319	4,362	4%
	Seniors	329	419	394	392	398	427	8%
	Disabled	282	306	294	289	292	296	0%
Total								
	Total Popul	124,377	126,725	133,753	140,793	148,719	157,263	18%
	Seniors	22,109	23,802	25,713	28,430	31,354	33,422	30%
	Disabled	13,340	13,929	14,410	15,001	16,028	17,296	20%

11

As illustrated by Figure 2.4, Morton and Burleigh Counties, which include the Bismarck-Mandan metropolitan area, and Sioux County, which includes Standing Rock Indian Reservation, are the only counties in the region projected to see population increases between 2010 and 2025. Burleigh County is projected to see a 28% increase in population, while Morton County is expected to see a 14% increase. Population losses range from 8% in McLean County to 24% in Oliver County.
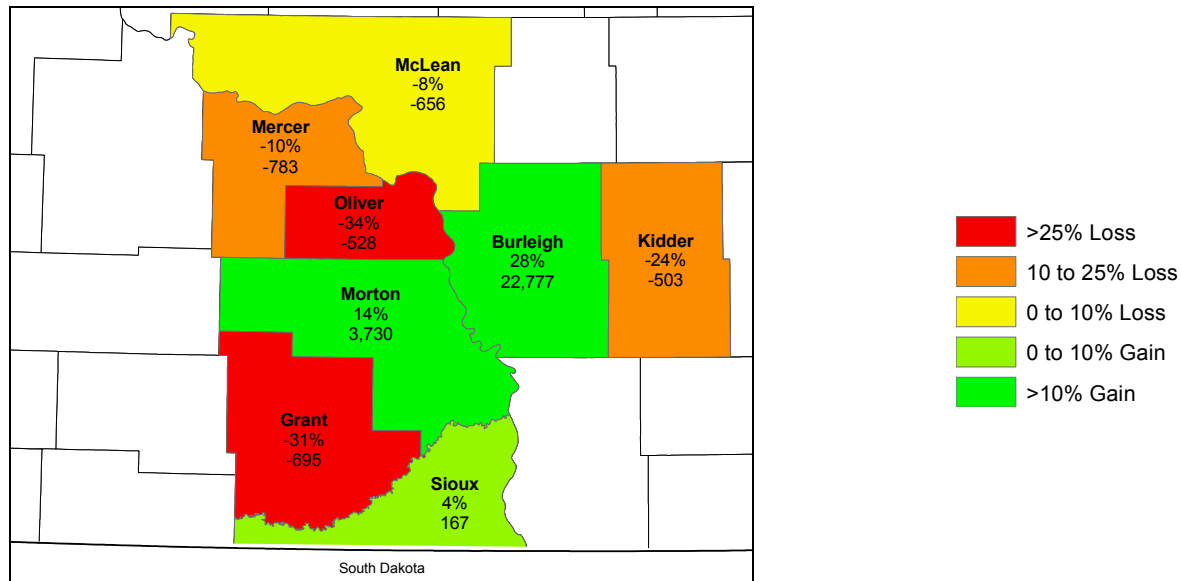
Figure 2.4 Population Change by County - West Central Region 2010 to 2025

Figure 2.5 presents projections relative to the region's senior population. As this figure illustrates, only Oliver, Grant, and Kidder Counties are expected to see a decline in the population of seniors between 2010 and 2025. Kidder County is projected to lose 100 seniors, or 17% of its senior population. Burleigh County is projected to see 5,681 more senior residents by 2025, a 39% increase. Mercer County is projected to have a 28% increase in the number of seniors, followed by Morton County with 27%.
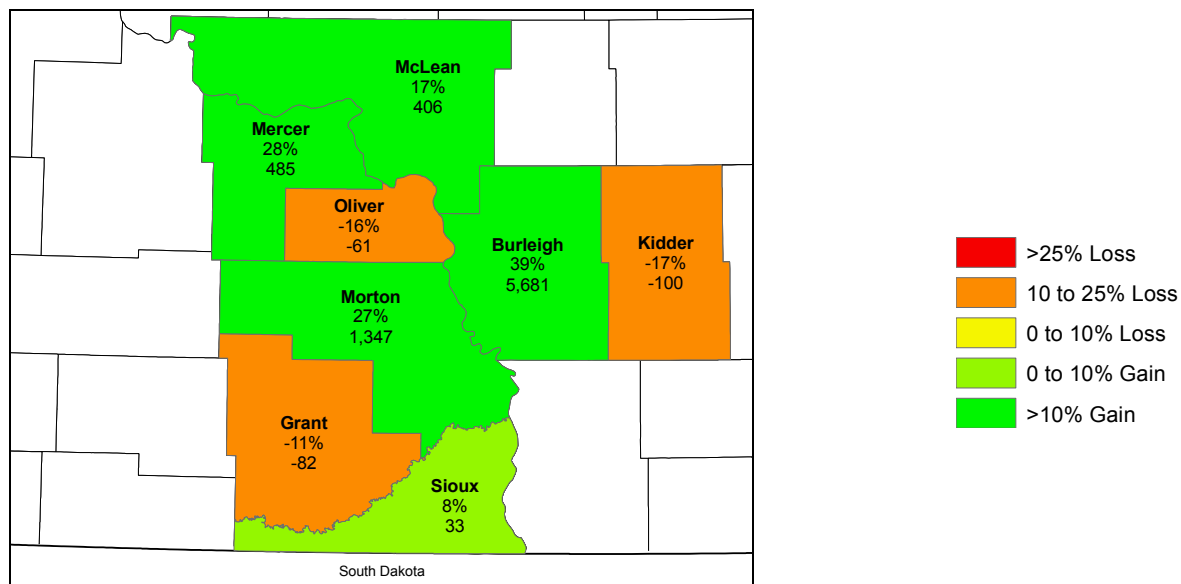
Figure 2.5 Senior Population Change by County – West Central Region 2010 to 2025

Projections concerning the region's disabled population are presented in Figure 2.6. Grant, Kidder, and Oliver Counties are expected to see a sizeable decrease in the size of their disabled population from 2010 to 2025. The latter two counties are both projected to see a 26% decline. Burleigh County is projected to see an increase of 2,590 disabled residents, while Morton is expected to have 460 more disabled residents. Sioux, McLean, and Mercer Counties are expected to see only modest increases in their disabled population.
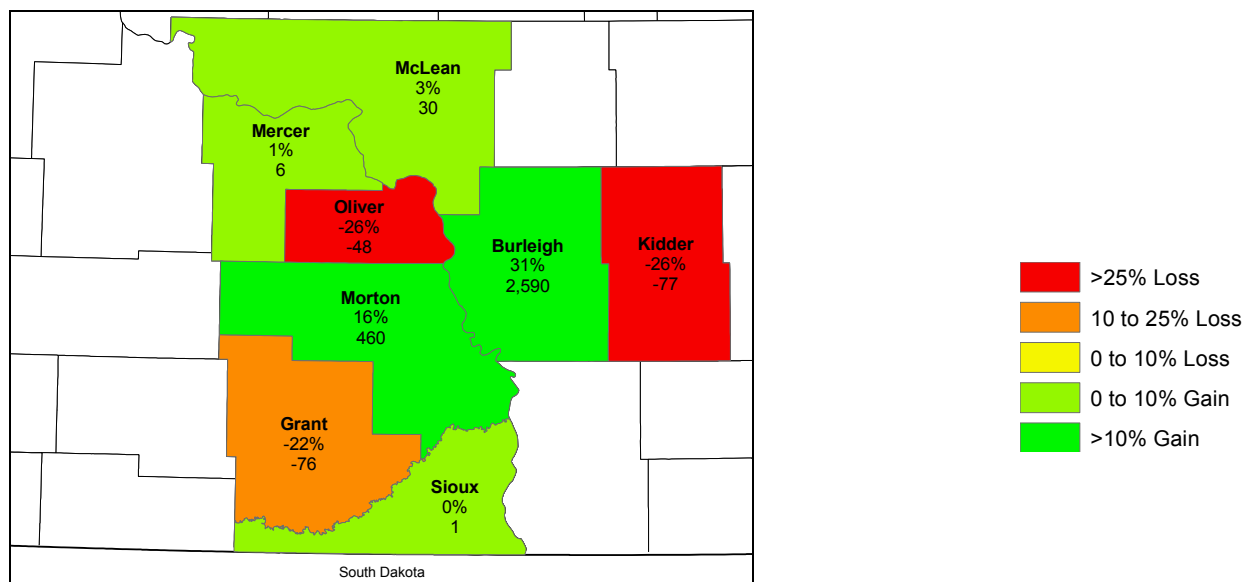
Figure 2.6 Disabled Population Change by County – West Central Region 2010 to 2025

2.4   Summary Observations

Previous sections of this section presented population projections for counties in the south central and west central regions of North Dakota. While they provide some perspective of current and future transportation needs, there are some issues that merit mention.

The high levels of emigration of rural seniors is a significant change in behavior. Traditionally, many seniors in rural areas, including those living in communities with relatively few services, aged in place. This is no longer the case. This behavior, if it persists, will fundamentally change many aspects of rural life within these regions.

The population projections presented in this section rely on the premise that past behaviors will repeat themselves. For example, many areas in western North Dakota have experienced significant growth in the past five years. While current population levels may be sustainable, the rate of growth likely will not. The same is true for population declines in other parts of the state.

Populations projections should not be taken as givens. Birth rates, migration, and mortality rates are not fixed. The first two issues have economic dimensions which can be influenced by economic growth, government policy, and other social intervention. While subjective in measure, a rural community that pursues activities that provide its residents with a higher quality of life, including public transportation, will likely see more positive net migration than those that do not.

3. TRANSIT SERVICE INVENTORY

There are nine transit agencies serving the west central and south central pilot study regions in North Dakota. In total, they cover 19 counties. They range from a one bus program in Glen Ullin to Bis-Man Transit, which operates 33 vehicles. For the purpose of this study, efforts centered on the eight rural transit providers, five in the west central region, and three in the south central area. This section will address the individual agencies and the areas they serve, funding sources, organizational structure, types of operation, service provided, equipment and facilities, dispatch capabilities, staffing, existing coordination efforts, and statistical data regarding each agency.

In addition to the agency profiles, performance data were collected from the operators, NDDOT, and the National Transit Database (NTD). These data were analyzed and will be presented for each agency. Performance measures included one-way passenger trips; annual vehicle revenue miles and vehicle revenue hours; operating expense per hour, per mile, and per one-way trip; one-way trips per revenue hour; and one-way trips per service area population. Performance data analysis helps agencies measure resource efficiency, service effectiveness, and cost effectiveness. When performance is measured over time, it allows agencies to track and evaluate their transit operations and improve decision making on a day-to-day and long-term basis.

This section also includes an analysis of each agency's existing vehicle fleet. Evaluating the capacity, accessibility, mileage, and condition of each agency's fleet helps the agency and NDDOT plan for future procurements.

3.1 Agency Profiles

Data were collected on all of the transit agencies in each of the two pilot regions. Data sources included the NTD, quarterly state aid and Section 5311 reports provided by transit operators to NDDOT, statistics provided by the North Dakota Senior Services providers and members of the Dakota Transit Association, and on-site interviews conducted with each of the regions' service providers. A brief summary of related findings is presented in this section. A more detailed profile of each agency can be found in Appendix B.

3.1.1 Bis-Man Transit

As mentioned earlier, Bis-Man Transit is included in this project only tangentially since the focus of this study is the regions' rural transit service providers. Bis-Man's role in this study is primarily as a current coordination partner with Standing Rock Public Transit, as ticketing agent for area intercity bus services, and as a potential coordination partner with the regions' other rural transit agencies.

Bis-Man Transit is a private, nonprofit agency that receives North Dakota state aid for public transportation and Section 5307 urban funding directly from the FTA. It also receives funding from the cities of Bismarck and Mandan through a city mill levy for public transportation.

Bis-Man Transit serves the cities of Bismarck and Mandan and within a two-mile radius surrounding the two cities (including the adjacent community of Lincoln and the University of Mary). It operates fixed route and paratransit services, providing 301,450 total rides and traveling 983,420 miles in FY 2009. It has a centralized, computer dispatch system designed specifically for their agency.

Bis-Man's fixed route service operates Monday through Saturday (not on holidays), and paratransit is available 24/7, holidays included. It has a governing board that also serves as its advisory board; riders serve as members on the board. The Bis-Man Transit board is under contract with the city of Bismarck to

act as a broker for transit services. In that role, it contracts with Central Nodak for administrative functions and with Taxi 9000 to provide actual transit services. Bis-Man Transit is not included in the performance analysis or fleet inventory portion of this section. A profile of the agency can, however, be found in Appendix B, along with the profiles of the regions' other transit agencies.

3.1.2 Dickey County Transportation

Dickey County Transportation is operated by Dickey County Senior Citizens (DCSC), a private, nonprofit organization that provides transit and administers senior services in Dickey County in south central North Dakota. It is governed by a nine-person board of directors with three representatives from Oakes, three from Ellendale, one from Fullerton, and two at-large positions. The board meets at least three times annually. There are no term limits. Transit services in Dickey County are funded by FTA Section 5311 and state aid monies; there is no city or county mill levy support for transit.

Dickey County's agency director oversees the transit operation along with the aging services programs, including congregate meals, home delivered meals, and outreach. Her time is divided between two main senior center locations in Ellendale and Oakes. Approximately 20% of her time is devoted to transit administration.

Transit staffing consists of two part-time drivers and a third back-up driver who is not paid, but is part of the drug-testing consortium. Riders call the centers in Oakes or Ellendale to reserve rides. Dickey County operates two vehicles, one 7 passenger van and a 14 passenger bus, both of which are handicapped accessible.

Demand-response service is available two days per week in Ellendale from 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. and two and a half days per week in Oakes. Fixed route service is available to Aberdeen, SD, once or twice per month, depending upon demand. This service originates in Oakes and includes stops in Fullerton and Ellendale, if requested. In FY 2009, DCSC provided 5,460 rides and traveled 13,011miles. Coordination agreements are in place with Valley Senior Services and South Central Transit Network.

3.1.3 City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program

The city of Glen Ullin is a community of approximately 800 residents in west central North Dakota. It operates a one bus transit program with twice monthly service to Bismarck and once per month service to Dickinson. The service is a private, nonprofit organization. It does not have a board of directors or an advisory board. It receives state aid funding administered by NDDOT, but it does not receive FTA 5311 funding. There is no local mill levy support for transit.

The director of the program is a part-time employee who works approximately 20 to 30 hours per month. The service also employs a part-time driver and a substitute driver. Its vehicle is handicapped accessible and has a 17 passenger capacity. In FY 2009, the service provided 622 rides and traveled 5,323 miles. At this time, the service does not coordinate with other service providers or area communities.

3.1.4 City of Hazen Busing Project

The city of Hazen operates a local demand-response transit service as well as a fixed route service to Bismarck on a weekly basis and to Dickinson on a monthly basis. Service to Bismarck is also available to outlying Mercer County communities, including Center, Stanton, and Pick City. Within Hazen, service is provided from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except during summer months when hours are reduced to 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The program is governed by the Hazen City Council. It does not have a separate advisory board. The city receives FTA Section 5311 and state aid funding. Hazen is one of only three cities in the two pilot regions that have passed a mill levy to fund public transit. Hazen levies 5 mills for its transportation program.

Hazen operates three vehicles ranging from 7 to 20 passengers; two of these vehicles are handicapped accessible. The city auditor also serves as the director of the transit program. The program has five part-time drivers. Passengers wanting rides call the drivers directly or City Hall to request service. In FY 2009, the program provided 15,706 rides and traveled 23,084 miles. It currently coordinates some of its services with West River Transit.

3.1.5 James River Transit

James River Transit (JRT) serves Stutsman County in south central North Dakota. It is operated by James River Senior Citizen's, Inc. (JRSC), whose central office is in Jamestown. It also manages Wells/Sheridan Transit, which has its main office at the senior center in Harvey. As its name suggests, this portion of JRT's services cover Wells and Sheridan Counties.

In addition to transit services, JRSC also administers aging services programs, including congregate meals, home delivered meals, and outreach in its three county service area. Wells and Sheridan counties also provide a frozen meal delivery program. It also operates a durable medical equipment loan program and a for-profit catering business in Stutsman County. Related proceeds are used to support JRSC programs.

JRSC is a private, nonprofit organization governed by a board of directors with a representative named to the board by the county commission in Stutsman County. Wells/Sheridan County Aging Council (WSCAC) is a separate nonprofit agency which has an advisory board with a county commissioner from each of its respective counties on the board. WSCAC also has a representative on James River's Board of Directors. JRSC's board meets monthly, while the Wells/Sheridan board meets quarterly.

James River Transit is funded by FTA Section 5311 and state aid funding plus a Stutsman County senior programs mill levy. Wells/Sheridan Transit also receives a portion of the Section 5311 funding provided to JRT plus its own allotment of state aid funding. In addition, Wells/Sheridan Transit receives senior programs mill levy money from Wells County. Separate fund accounting tracks each of the two transit operations.

JRT provides demand-response service seven days per week (closed on holidays) within the city of Jamestown with hours of service ranging from 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. weekdays (until 9:00 p.m. on Fridays), from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Saturdays, and from 8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sundays. Fixed route service to Bismarck and Fargo are offered weekly, but only if medical appointments are scheduled. JRT does not provide any service in rural Stutsman County, but Kidder County's transportation program provides residents of Woodworth with rides to and from Jamestown.

In Stutsman County, JRT has nine vehicles ranging from 6 to 14 passengers; all are handicapped accessible. Dispatch is not computerized and is handled through the central office in Jamestown.

Wells/Sheridan Transit provides demand-response service 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday in Harvey (closed holidays). Fixed route scheduled service is provided from Martin to Harvey one day per week and is available weekly upon request from Fessenden and/or Selz to Harvey. Fixed route service is offered from Harvey to Minot monthly and to Bismarck twice per month. Wells/Sheridan Transit operates three vehicles ranging from 6 to 16 passengers; only the minivan is not handicapped accessible.

JRT has an executive director who manages all transit operations, aging services programs for all three counties, and other business interests of the organization. The agency has a full-time secretary and full-time office manager. JRT has a full-time fleet manager who also serves as a driver, a full-time billing clerk who also serves as a backup dispatcher, one full-time and one part-time dispatcher, and 18 part-time drivers.

Wells/Sheridan Transit has a full-time coordinator who oversees transit operations, aging programs, and a gaming operation for the two counties. There is also a part-time secretary. Wells/Sheridan Transit has one full-time and two part-time drivers. Ride reservations are made by calling the main office. Dispatch duties are handled by an Experience Works staff member in the mornings and by the secretary in the afternoon.

In FY 2009, JRT, including Wells/Sheridan Transit, provided 73,542 rides and traveled 219,909 miles. As indicated earlier, JRT utilizes Kidder County's transit service to provide rides for residents in Woodworth. Discussions are taking place for additional coordination efforts in Sheridan County, possibly involving West River Transit and Benson County Transit.

3.1.6 Kidder County

Many rural transit operations are co-located with senior service programs, both in North Dakota and in other parts of the country. Kidder Emmons Senior Services operates transit from its central office in the Steele Senior Citizen's Center. It is a private, nonprofit organization governed by the Kidder County Council on Aging, which serves as its board of directors. The board has two representatives from each city in the county. Term limits are set at six years, unless replacements are unable to be found (which is often the case).

When on-site interviews were held, Kidder Emmons Senior Services had a full-time director who also oversaw the county's senior citizens program and filled in as a substitute driver. It also had a bookkeeper, one full-time driver, and a substitute driver. Since the time of the initial interview, a new director has been hired, they have eliminated the bookkeeper position, and they have a full-time secretary. Kidder County's transit program receives FTA Section 5311 and state aid funding. It also uses part of the county's senior programs mill levy to fund transportation.

Kidder County provides fixed route services from the county's cities to Bismarck and Jamestown and limited demand-response services in Pettibone, Robinson, and Tuttle. In Steele, rides are only available to the senior center for meals.

Kidder County operates one 22 passenger bus (non-accessible) and two 7 passenger vans, one of which is handicapped accessible. One van is located in Tuttle and the other in Pettibone. A new van, which will be located in Steele, is on order. Passengers in the north end of the county call the driver directly to reserve rides, while passengers in the south end of the county call the senior center in Steele. The driver calls the center the day before trips to get a passenger log. In FY 2009, Kidder County provided 6,010 rides and traveled 43,059 miles. Kidder County's transit program coordinates with James River Transit to provide services for residents of Woodworth in rural Stutsman County.

3.1.7 South Central Transit Network

South Central Transit Network (SCTN) operates in seven counties in the south central region of North Dakota and is managed by South Central Adult Services Council, Inc. (SCASC) in Valley City. Its transit service area includes Barnes, Emmons, Foster, Griggs, LaMoure, Logan, and McIntosh counties. It is a private, nonprofit corporation that is also the legal entity for the operation of senior service programs in ten surrounding counties.

Along with the local hospital, SCASC owns and operates a 44-bed assisted living facility in Valley City, and manages a prescription drug program funded by the Dakota Medical Foundation in Fargo. In addition to its senior services program, it operates the Barnes County Food Pantry, a chore service program, a prescription assistance program, and a durable medical equipment loan closet. It also offers a volunteer driver program for people requiring cancer treatments.

SCTN receives FTA Section 5311 and state aid funding. Barnes County is the only one of the program's seven counties that contributes mill levy money to support the provision of transit services.

SCASC has a board of directors with representation from six of the seven counties served by the transit network. The board meets quarterly. Each of the seven counties also has its own aging council, which meets quarterly. These councils are responsible for the transit programs in their counties. The director of SCASC serves as the director of South Central Transit Network and meets individually with each of the aging services councils each quarter.

SCTN operates fixed route service from the region's smaller communities to major hubs and demand-response service within area communities. Service routes and schedules vary by county. SCTN also operates a 24/7 taxi service in Valley City.

SCTN has 26 vehicles, 19 of which are handicapped accessible. These vehicles are located throughout the seven county service area. SCTN does not have centralized dispatch. In some cases, passengers call directly to "their" driver or to a local senior services outreach worker who serves as a central point of contact. In Valley City, the largest community in SCTN's service area, people call the main transit line to reserve rides.

As mentioned earlier, SCTN's director oversees a number of different programs under the SCASC umbrella. She is assisted by a full-time bookkeeper and secretary. There are five part-time outreach workers whose primary functions are under the aging services program, but who also take ride reservations in their respective areas. SCTN has one full-time dispatcher, three part-time dispatchers, four full-time drivers and 25 part-time drivers. In FY 2009, SCTN provided 42,636 rides and traveled 83,472 miles. Current coordination efforts exist with transit providers throughout and outside the region.

3.1.8 Standing Rock Public Transit

Standing Rock Public Transit (SRPT) provides public transportation services to, from, and on the Standing Rock Indian Reservation in Sioux County, North Dakota, and Corson County, South Dakota. As part of tribal government, SRPT receives funding directly from the FTA Section 5311(c) tribal transit program, plus it also receives traditional 5311 funding. It also receives funding from both North Dakota and South Dakota for services provided in each state, and from Sitting Bull College and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

Sitting Bull College is the official grantee for SRPT. The service has an advisory committee comprised of local representatives who have a vested interest in the provision of transit services. SRPT is ultimately responsible to Sitting Bull College's board of trustees. The system employs a full-time director, coordinator, finance clerk, and dispatcher. It has seven full-time and two part-time drivers.

SRPT provides Monday through Friday demand-response and fixed route transit service on the reservation, with additional fixed routes to and from Bismarck-Mandan. Service is provided from early morning to late afternoon. SRPT also provides twice weekly intercity bus service between Munro, SD and Bismarck, ND. This service provides direct connections to both Rapid City and Sioux Falls, SD. SRPT also provides veteran's service twice monthly to Sturgis, SD, and Fargo, ND.

SRPT operates 15 vehicles ranging from 5 to 26 passengers. Nine of its vehicles are handicapped accessible. In North Dakota, in FY 2009, SRPT traveled 257,170 miles and provided 19,876 rides. The majority of its rides are commuter related. All rides are coordinated through SRPT's main office in Fort Yates. SRPT currently coordinates its services with Bis-Man Transit, River Cities Transit in Pierre, SD, and the region's intercity bus companies.

3.1.9 West River Transit

West River Transit (WRT) serves Burleigh, Grant, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, and Dunn counties in west central North Dakota. It is a private, nonprofit agency governed by a board of directors made up of representatives from the counties in the service area; the board meets quarterly, and there are no term limits. It does not have a separate advisory board; however, each county has its own independent transit board.

WRT's primary funding sources are the FTA Section 5311 rural and small urban program, North Dakota's state aid for public transportation program, county mill levy funds from four counties, and other local support. It has two full-time administrative staff members (a director and administrative assistant) and 21 part-time drivers.

WRT provides local demand-response service on scheduled days in 18 communities. Bismarck is a primary destination from numerous communities in the seven county service area with some areas receiving service up to three times per week. Some communities in western counties receive service to Dickinson on a monthly basis. Service is provided Monday through Friday. Hours vary by community but generally extend from 7-8 a.m. to 5-6 p.m. Requests for service from small communities to larger hubs for shopping or medical appointments may be made on a same day basis, but riders are encouraged to call a day in advance.

WRT operates 14 vehicles ranging in size from 7 to 16 passengers; 12 of the 14 vehicles are handicapped accessible. West River provided 32,420 rides in FY 2009 and traveled 111,940 miles. A "pen and paper" dispatch system is utilized; riders call into the main office (or, in some locations, the local driver) to request service. West River currently coordinates its services on an informal basis with other transit providers both in and outside the region.

3.2   Performance Reviews

The performance reviews provided in this section are intended to provide insights into the operations of the regions' eight rural transit agencies. Agency data were reviewed for fiscal years 2007 through 2010 to assess standardized measurements of financial, operating, and performance trends. It is important to note that the data provided for the 2009 and 2010 fiscal years are, to this point, unaudited.

The performance measures presented in this analysis include one-way passenger trips; annual vehicle revenue miles and hours; operating expenses as measured per hour, per mile, and per one-way trip; one-way trips per revenue hour; and one-way trips per service area population. A key measure of performance, one-way trips per vehicle hour, is only reported for 2008, 2009, and 2010 because prior to the 2008 changes in federal reporting requirements, rural transit systems did not report service hour data. The following subsections present the summary analysis for each agency.

3.2.1   Dickey County Transportation

Table 3.1 presents performance statistics for Dickey County Transportation for the past five fiscal years (2006-2010). Ridership over the period has grown by about 16%, while the number of vehicle miles of service provided has declined by about 20%. Vehicle revenue hours have remained relatively constant for the first two years that this statistic has been reported, but grew by about 15% in 2010. Likewise, operating expenses have remained relatively flat, growing by about 14% over five years.

The growth in ridership appears to have been accomplished by increased utilization of existing capacity. Expense per mile has increased by about 43% over the five-year period but has remained relatively constant over the past three years. The increase in per mile expense can be explained by a significant decline in mileage operated between 2006 and 2007, which reduces the number of miles over which fixed expenses can be spread. The reduction in total miles was the result of eliminating deadhead miles when they went from a one vehicle to a two vehicle operation. Dickey County's expense per hour of $25.41 is lower than the statewide rural system average of $29.06 per hour.

Dickey County's one-way trips per vehicle hour equals about 3.25, a level that is higher than North Dakota's 2.64 statewide average for rural systems. Dickey County's productivity increased significantly between 2008 and 2009 and continued to increase in 2010 as ridership increased without a proportionate increase in vehicle hours.

One additional performance measure reported in Table 3.1 is one-way trips per service area population, which is a measure of market penetration. In the case of Dickey County, the service area was defined as the entire county. Using current ridership data and the most recent population estimate (5,237 in 2008), Dickey County provided 1.04 rides per capita in FY 2010. National data reports rural transit rides per capita as a national average of between one and two rides per capita. Dickey County's low result for this measure could be due to several factors, including a low level of service given the size of the service area and population, or more likely, because the service is concentrated on only a portion of the county. While low, Dickey County's riders per capita have been increasing since 2008.

Table 3.1 Dickey County Transportation Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends (Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2006-2010
One-way passenger trips	4,686	2,879	3,108	3,988	5,460	16.52%
Vehicle revenue miles	16,324	14,054	11,765	11,674	13,011	-20.30%
Vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	1,457	1,412	1,681	
Operating expense	$37,547	$37,102	$35,867	$38,051	$42,708	13.75%
Operating expense/hour	N.A.	N.A.	$24.62	$26.95	$25.41	
Operating expense/mile	$2.30	$2.64	$3.05	$3.26	$3.28	42.71%
Operating expense/one-way trip	$8.01	$12.89	$11.54	$9.54	$7.82	-2.38%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	2.13	2.82	3.25	
Service area population			5,237	5,237	5,237	
One-way trips/service area population			0.59	0.76	1.04	

3.2.2 City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program

Glen Ullin's Public Transportation Program's 2007-2010 performance statistics are presented in Table 3.2. The program consists of one bus that provides about five to six revenue hours of service each week. Ridership has been declining over the past few years and averages about 11-12 one-way trips per week that require about 100 vehicle miles of service to provide. Glen Ullin's expense per hour of $27.03 is slightly lower than the statewide rural system average of just over $29.00 per hour.

The program achieved an average of 1.96 one-way trips per vehicle hour. This level of utilization is at the lower end of the typical range for rural demand response systems; the statewide average for rural systems in North Dakota was 2.64 in 2010. The productivity of a system depends on many factors, including internal management decisions, but it also depends on the nature of demand for the system's services (e.g., whether the trips provided are to a single major destination such as a senior center or medical facility, are long distance, or are individual medical trips).

Table 3.2 also reports one-way trips per service area population. In the case of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program, the service area is the city of Glen Ullin with an estimated population of approximately 800. Using current ridership data and a 2008 population estimate of 800, the program provided 0.78 rides per capita in FY 2010, down sharply from 1.85 in 2008. National data reports rural transit rides per capita as a national average of between one and two rides per capita. The program's low result is most likely due to the low level of service provided, approximately three days per month.

Table 3.2 City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program Financial, Operating, and
Performance Trends (Fiscal 2008-2010)

Performance Measures	2007*	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2007-2010
Total one-way passenger trips	906	1,474	577	622	-31.35%
Total annual vehicle revenue miles	5183	5,824	4,952	5,323	2.70%
Total annual vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	431	287	317	
Operating expense	$9,130	$8,344	$7,455	$8,569	-6.15%
Total operating expense per hour	N.A.	$19.36	$25.98	$27.03	
Total operating expense per mile	$1.76	$1.43	$1.51	$1.61	-8.62%
Total operating expense per one-way trip	$10.08	$5.66	$12.92	$13.78	36.70%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	3.42	2.01	1.96	
Service area population		796	796	796	
One-way trips/service area population		1.85	0.72	0.78	

 *Estimated data based on three quarters actual data and one quarter projection

3.2.3 City of Hazen Busing Project

Table 3.3 summarizes Hazen's 2006-2010 statistical performance. The program consists of three vehicles providing about 30 revenue hours of service per week. Over the past five years, ridership has grown by about 34%; most of that increase has occurred in the past year. Vehicle miles of service have increased by about 13%, but overall operating expenses have increased by 75%, although most of that increase was prior to 2008.

Hazen's expense per hour of $35.43 is slightly higher than the statewide rural system average of just over $29.00 per hour. The Hazen transportation program achieved an average of more than 7.8 one-way trips per vehicle hour. This level of utilization is significantly above the typical range for demand-response systems (usually in the 2-8 one-way trips/hour range), but reasonable given that much of Hazen's ridership is on its in-town service that operates in a small geographic area and provides relatively short trips.

Based on the vehicle revenue hour data provided, the Hazen transportation program achieved an average of more than 10 one-way trips per vehicle hour. This level of utilization is significantly above the typical range for demand-response systems (usually in the 2-8 one-way trips/hour range). Since Hazen serves a small geographic area and provides relatively short trips, the hourly productivity is likely to be at the high end of the typical range.

Regarding one-way trips per service area population, Hazen provided an estimated 7.14 trips per capita in FY 2010, well above state averages. This high result is most likely due to a high level of service provided in a relatively small service area.

Table 3.3 City of Hazen Busing Project Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends (Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2006-2010
Total one-way passenger trips	11,722	23,551	14,169	13,632	15,706	33.99%
Total annual vehicle revenue miles	20,458	13,049	15,461	18,186	23,084	12.84%
Total annual vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	2,487	1,860	1,483	
Operating expense	$40,890	$51,657	$58,333	$60,870	$71,612	75.13%
Total operating expense per hour	N.A.	N.A.	$23.46	$32.73	$35.43	
Total operating expense per mile	$2.00	$3.96	$3.77	$3.35	$3.10	55.21%
Total operating expense per one-way trip	$3.49	$3.81	$4.12	$4.47	$4.56	30.71%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	5.70	7.33	7.77	
Service area population			2,200	2,200	2,200	
One-way trips/service area population			6.44	6.20	7.14	

3.2.4 James River Transit

James River's 2006-2010 performance statistics are presented in Table 3.4. Ridership over the period has grown by just over 20%, while the number of vehicle miles of service provided increased at a faster rate – 30.3%. Overall operating expenses have grown by nearly 43%, but expense per mile and per passenger have grown by a much smaller percentage. This phenomenon can most likely be explained by the spreading of the significant fixed costs of a rural transit operation (often 40%-50%) over more miles of operation and increased ridership. James River Transit's 2010 expense per hour of $37.52 is higher than the statewide rural system average of just over $29.00 per hour, but it is still well within the range of current rural transit experience in similar situations.

James River's productivity of 4.75 one-way trips per hour in FY 2010 is very good for rural systems; the statewide average for rural systems in North Dakota in FY 2010 was 2.64. James River's productivity is significantly higher, in part, because of the nature of its service area (largely small urban) and its service characteristics, whereby many of its demand-response trips are to and from local destinations such as employers, medical services, or human service agency programs.

Table 3.4 includes one-way trips per service area population. In the case of James River Transit, the service area was defined to be Stutsman, Sheridan, and Wells Counties. These counties had an estimated population of 25,851 in 2008. Using FY 2010 ridership data and the most recent population estimate produces a rides per capita estimate of 2.84, a number that is virtually unchanged from 2008 to 2010. James River Transit's performance based on this statistic is in the range of good.

Table 3.4. James River Transit Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends (Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2006-2010
One-way passenger trips	61,077	64,416	72,027	72,693	73,542	20.41%
Vehicle revenue miles	168,760	185,085	204,628	215,290	219,909	30.31%
Vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	13,525	14,748	15,471	
Operating expense	$406,509	$463,142	$480,823	$511,012	$580,462	42.79%
Operating expense/hour	N.A.	N.A.	$35.55	$34.65	$37.52	
Operating expense/mile	$2.41	$2.50	$2.35	$2.37	$2.64	9.58%
Operating expense/one-way trip	$6.66	$7.19	$6.68	$7.03	$7.89	18.59%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	5.33	4.93	4.75	
Service area population			25,851	25,851	25,851	
One-way trips/service area population			2.79	2.81	2.84	

As indicated earlier, James River operates two significantly different operations. Its Stutsman County services are largely tied to the city of Jamestown, while its operations in Wells and Sheridan Counties are more typical of a rural transit system. The performance measures presented in Table 3.4 are reflective of its total operations and may, therefore, mask what might be expected of either subpart. James River may, therefore, want to track its performance measures separately for James River and Wells/Sheridan in order to monitor the performance of each of its component systems.

3.2.5 Kidder County

Kidder County transit program's 2006-2010 performance statistics are presented in Table 3.5. Kidder County operates two vehicles a total of about 30 vehicle hours per week. Ridership over the past five years has declined steadily and was 36% lower in 2010 than in 2006. Vehicle miles of service increased from 2009 to 2010 but are down about 11% over the five-year period. Over that same period, total operating expenses increased by about 43%. Because vehicle miles of service have decreased while operating expenses have increased, operating expense per vehicle mile has increased by 60%. Kidder County's expense per hour of $48.23 is significantly higher than the state average for rural systems of about $29.00 per hour.

The Kidder County transportation program achieved an average of 3.92 one-way trips per vehicle hour. This level of utilization is good for a rural system. Its one-way trips per capita for FY 2010 equaled 2.62. Although slightly above the state average for rural transit systems, Kidder County's rides per capita has been declining since 2008.

Table 3.5 Kidder County Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends (Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2006-2010
One-way passenger trips	9,439	8,845	8,023	7,476	6,010	-36.33%
Vehicle revenue miles	48,338	44,609	39,341	41,284	43,059	-10.92%
Vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	1,474	1,323	1,533	
Operating expense	$51,768	$70,854	$63,745	$69,104	$73,929	42.81%
Operating expense/hour	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	$52.23	$48.23	
Operating expense/mile	$1.07	$1.59	N.A.	$1.67	$1.72	60.32%
Operating expense/one-way trip	$5.48	$8.01	N.A.	$9.24	$12.30	124.29%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	5.65	3.92	
Service area population			2,290	2,290	2,290	
One-way trips/service area population			3.50	3.26	2.62	

3.2.6 South Central Transit Network

South Central Transit Network's current and historic performance statistics are presented in Table 4.6. Ridership nearly doubled from 2006 to 2010, while the number of vehicle miles of service provided nearly tripled. As is obvious from these statistics, South Central Transit's transportation program has grown rapidly in the past few years, and it continued to expand as it assumed responsibility for Emmons County transportation in 2009.

Overall operating expenses have grown 160% over the three-year period, but expense per mile declined by about 5%, and per passenger expenses increased by about a third during the same period. This phenomenon can most likely be explained by the spreading of the significant fixed costs of a rural transit operation over more miles of operation and increased ridership. South Central Adult Services' expense per hour of $18.32 is one of the lowest in the state.

South Central Transit Network's productivity of around 2.0 one-way trips per hour is at the lower end of the range for typical rural systems. This lower per-hour trip rate can most likely be explained by the long trips with relatively few passengers per trip that are common in South Central's extremely large seven-county rural area. South Central Transit Network's seven-county service area had an estimated population of 28,432 in 2008. Using 2010 ridership data, South Central provides approximately 2.94 rides per capita; a level that has been increasing steadily in recent years.

Table 3.6 South Central Transit Network Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends (Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2006-2010
One-way passenger trips	42,947	44,000	55,154	65,112	83,472	94.36%
Vehicle revenue miles	216,590	232,500	327,983	443,025	592,519	173.57%
Vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	29,710	36,406	42,636	
Operating expense	$301,234	$360,846	$440,006	$604,790	$781,278	159.36%
Operating expense/hour	N.A.	N.A.	$14.81	$16.61	$18.32	
Operating expense/mile	$1.39	$1.55	$1.34	$1.37	$1.32	-5.19%
Operating expense/one-way trip	$7.01	$8.20	$7.98	$9.29	$9.36	33.44%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	1.86	1.79	1.96	
Service area population			28,432	28,432	28,432	
One-way trips/service area population			1.94	2.29	2.94	

3.2.7 Standing Rock Public Transportation

Table 3.7 summarizes Standing Rock Public Transportation performance statistics for fiscal years 2006-2010. The summary reflects Standing Rock's operations in both North and South Dakota since many related statistics are not allocated separately between the two states.

As Table 3.7 illustrates, Standing Rock's operations have grown dramatically from 2006 to 2009. Ridership more than doubled, vehicle miles of service increased by more than 60%, and total operating expenses experienced more than a two-fold increase. Operating expense per mile increased by about 38%, and per-passenger-trip expense grew by only 3.3%. The smaller increase in per mile operating expense compared with total expenses can most likely be explained by the spreading of the significant fixed costs of a rural transit operation over more miles of operation and increased ridership. The moderate growth in expense per passenger can be explained by the significant growth in ridership.

One-way trips per vehicle hour is only reported for 2008–2009. Standing Rock's 3.21 one-way trips per hour reflects a good level of productivity for rural systems and is above the statewide average for rural systems.

Table 3.7 also reports one-way trips per service area population. In the case of Standing Rock Public Transportation, the service area is defined as all of Sioux County, North Dakota, and Corson County, South Dakota. These two counties had a 2008 estimated population of 8,325. Using 2010 ridership data and the most recent population estimate produces a per capita ridership estimate of 1.9, a number that is typical of rural systems with comparable service area profiles.

Table 3.7 Standing Rock Public Transportation Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends
(Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	Percent Change 2006-2009
Total one-way passenger trips	7,394	6,686	17,434	15,782	113.44%
Total annual vehicle revenue miles	129,793	173,712	227,419	207,737	60.05%
Total annual vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	3,124	4,920	
Operating expense	$280,062	$420,884	$438,833	$617,577	120.51%
Total operating expense per hour	N.A.	N.A.	$140.47	$125.52	
Total operating expense per mile	$2.16	$2.42	$1.93	$2.97	37.78%
Total operating expense per one-way trip	$37.88	$62.95	$25.17	$39.13	3.31%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	5.58	3.21	
Service area population			8,325	8,325	
One-way trips/service area population			2.09	1.90	

*Includes Sioux County, ND and Corson County SD

Standing Rock's expenses per hour showings look unusually high and may be a result of underlying recording and/or reporting errors related to operating hours.

3.2.8 West River Transit

Table 3.8 summarizes West River Transit's performance statistics for fiscal years 2006-2010. Over this period, ridership declined by about 5%, while the number of vehicle miles of service increased by about 8.5%. The sharp decline in 2007 passenger trips suggests a reporting error; however, West River staff was unable to resolve what they acknowledge may be a reporting error on the 2007 National Transit Database report.

Overall operating expenses grew 16% over the five years, while expenses per mile grew by about 7%, and per passenger expenses increased by 23%. This phenomenon can most likely be explained by the spreading of the significant fixed costs of a rural transit operation over more miles of operation and increased ridership. This moderation in the growth of per mile expense did not translate into a slower rate of growth in per trip expenses due to the drop in ridership over the five-year period. West River Transit's expense per hour of $47.05 is significantly higher than the statewide rural system average.

West River Transit's 3.9 one-way trips per hour is a good level of productivity for rural systems and higher than the statewide average for rural systems in North Dakota. West River Transit's service area is defined as the non-MPO areas of Burleigh and Morton Counties and all of Grant, McLean, Mercer, and Oliver Counties. This area had an estimated population of 44,032 in 2008. Using current ridership data and the 2008 population estimate, West River provided .74 rides per capita in FY 2010. National data reports rural transit rides per capita as a national average of between one and two rides per capita. This level of ridership has been virtually unchanged over the past three years.

Table 3.8 West River Transit Financial, Operating, and Performance Trends (Fiscal 2006-2010)

Performance Measures	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Percent Change 2006-2010
One-way passenger trips	34,295	23,349	33,483	33,500	32,420	-5.47%
Vehicle revenue miles	103,185	76,991	125,023	120,944	111,940	8.48%
Vehicle revenue hours	N.A.	N.A.	9,137	8,205	8,340	
Operating expense	$338,191	$251,823	$367,619	$314,301	$392,383	16.02%
Operating expense/hour	N.A.	N.A.	$40.23	$38.31	$47.05	
Operating expense/mile	$3.28	$3.27	$2.94	$2.60	$3.51	6.95%
Operating expense/one-way trip	$9.86	$10.79	$10.98	$9.38	$12.10	22.73%
One-way trips/revenue hour	N.A.	N.A.	3.66	4.08	3.89	
Service area population			44,032	44,032	44,032	
One-way trips/service area population			0.76	0.76	0.74	

3.3   Fleet Analysis

It is important for each transit agency and the state to monitor vehicle fleet needs, both in terms of upcoming vehicle replacement needs and possible fleet expansions. The following subsections review each agency's fleets in terms of vehicle age, mileage, and usage and present recommendations concerning vehicle replacement schedules. A complete fleet roster for each of the regions' transit agencies is provided in Appendix C.

3.3.1 Dickey County Transportation

Dickey County's transit system operates two vehicles, including one minivan and one small bus. Both vehicles are handicapped accessible. On average, Dickey County's vehicles operate about 5,800 miles per year each, a utilization rate that is significantly below the statewide rural average of just over 14,000 miles per year. This low vehicle utilization can likely be explained by limited hours of service (about 25 vehicle hours per week).

As of 2009, Dickey County's average fleet age was 4.5 years. Given the limited mileage operated by its vehicles, this average age is not a concern since even the five-year-old vehicle has traveled less than 70,000 miles – perhaps only one-third to one-half of its useful life measured in terms of total mileage. However, the 2004 bus will likely need to be replaced within the next three years due to age-related deterioration resulting in reliability problems and increasing maintenance expense. Dickey County's 2009 vehicle roster is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.2 City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program

The Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program operates only one vehicle, a 12-year-old small bus that is lift equipped. This bus traveled less than 5,000 miles during FY 2009, a very low level of utilization that can be explained by the limited hours of service (5-6 vehicle hours per week).   Glen Ullin's bus is well beyond what is considered its useful life in terms of age, but not mileage. As long as it remains reliable and cost-effective to maintain, there is no reason to replace it; however, when it is time to replace it, given the low level of utilization it receives, Glen Ullin may wish to consider acquiring a used vehicle rather than a new one. Specific information concerning Glen Ullin's bus is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.3 City of Hazen Busing Project

The city of Hazen operates a van and two buses. One bus and the van are lift or ramp equipped. The fleet averaged just over 5,200 miles per vehicle during FY 2009, a very low level of utilization that can be explained by the limited hours of service (5-6 vehicle hours per day).   The statewide average for this statistic was over 14,000 miles per vehicle in 2009.

The average fleet age for Hazen's three vehicles is just below four years with two of the three vehicles being less than two years old in 2009. No new vehicle acquisitions will be required for two or three years. At that time, a replacement policy of one vehicle every other year would assure that Hazen had a reliable, cost-effective fleet. Complete information concerning Hazen's three vehicles is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.4 James River Transit

James River Transit operates nine vehicles, including small buses and vans that have a capacity of 6 to 14 passengers, in the Jamestown area. It operates an additional three vehicles in Wells and Sheridan counties. All but one vehicle are lift or ramp equipped.

James River Transit's vehicles operate an average of about 18,000 miles per year, a utilization rate that is higher than the statewide rural average of just over 14,000 miles per year. As of 2009, James River Transit's average fleet age was 5.8 years. Since most rural transit vehicles have a useful life of five to six years, James River Transit's fleet age is higher than average.   However, excluding the three vehicles that are 11-14 years old, the average fleet age is 3.8 years, and eight of the 12 vehicles are less than four years old. If James River Transit adopted a conservative replacement policy that would replace vehicles on average after five years, it would need to plan for capital expenditures for three vehicles each year to maintain existing service capabilities. Appendix C presents information on James River's current vehicle roster as reported to NDDOT for 2009.

3.3.5 Kidder County

Kidder County Senior Services operates a transit program with one minivan and one small bus. Neither vehicle is lift or ramp equipped. On average, Kidder County's vehicles operate about 20,600 miles per year each, a utilization rate that is significantly above the statewide rural average of just over 14,000 miles per year. As of 2009, Kidder County's average fleet age was 6.5 years. Given the number of miles traveled each year, Kidder County should plan to replace both vehicles within the next year or two, especially considering that both vehicles have in excess of 100,000 miles of service, and the van has accrued more than 135,000 miles. Specific information on the fleet is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.6 South Central Transit Network

South Central Transit Network operates 25 vehicles, including small buses and vans that have a capacity of 7 to 20 passengers. All but one bus and six vans/minivans are lift or ramp equipped. On average, the agency's vehicles operate about 17,000 miles per year, a utilization rate that is higher than the statewide rural average of just over 14,000 miles per year.

As of 2009, South Central's average fleet age was five years. Since most rural transit vehicles have a useful life of five to six years, the fleet age is higher than average and warrants attention. Nevertheless, its fleet is in good condition.   Only five vehicles have accumulated more than 75,000 miles and should, therefore, have significant additional service life. Nevertheless, if a conservative replacement plan is pursued that would replace vehicles on average after five years, South Central would need to plan for capital expenditures for five to six vehicles each year just to maintain existing service capabilities. Appendix C presents the current vehicle roster for South Central Transit Network as reported to NDDOT for 2009.

3.3.7 Standing Rock Public Transportation

Standing Rock Public Transportation's fleet includes 13 small buses and vans that have a capacity of 5 to 25 passengers. Many of its existing vehicles are not accessible, but all future acquisitions will be either lift or ramp equipped.

Standing Rock's vehicles operate, on average, about 13,400 miles per year, a utilization rate that is slightly below the statewide rural average of just over 14,000 miles per year. As of 2009, Standing Rock's average fleet age was slightly over three years. Since most rural transit vehicles have a useful life of five to six years, Standing Rock Public Transportation's fleet age is better than average. With the acquisition of vehicles on order or funded, the fleet age will be in excellent condition. Related vehicle information is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.8 West River Transit

West River Transit operates 14 small buses and vans that have a capacity of from 7 to 20 passengers. All but one minivan are lift or ramp equipped. On average, West River Transit's vehicles operate about 8,700 vehicle miles per year each, a utilization rate that is much lower than the statewide rural average of just over 14,000 miles per year.

As of 2009, West River's average fleet age was 6.4 years. Since most rural transit vehicles have a useful life of five to six years, their average fleet age is slightly higher than desirable. Furthermore, six of the 14 vehicles have accumulated more than 100,000 miles, and only four are less than four years old.

Even though West River Transit's vehicles travel relatively few miles per year, age-related wear and tear will compromise its reliability of service and unnecessarily increase operating expenses. In order to meet its fleet needs, West River would ideally need to consider an aggressive capital replacement program that would replace at least four vehicles for each of the next three years and then two to three per year thereafter. Detailed information regarding West River's fleet is presented in Appendix C.

3.3.9 Regional Fleet Summaries

Each of the regions' operator vehicle fleets was discussed in early subsections of this section. Table 3.9 presents an aggregate summary of the south central region's combined vehicle fleet.

It should be noted that Table 3.9 includes not only the region's three traditional service providers (Dickey County, James River, and South Central) but also Kidder County. This change was made to reflect a recommendation that will be presented in Section 8, which suggests that Kidder County, because of its residents' travel patterns and the services provided by the south central region's existing service providers, is a better coordination partner with the south central region than with the west central region.

Table 3.9 South Central Region Vehicle Fleet

System	Number of Vehicles	Average Age (as of 2009)	Average Miles/vehicle/ year
Dickey County Transportation	2	4.5	5,837
James River Transit	12	3.9	17,941
Kidder County	2	6.5	20,642
South Central Transit Network	25	5.0	17,039
Regional Total/Average	41	4.8	16,870
Statewide Rural Average			14,164

As Table 3.9 illustrates, the region's four transit services operate a total of 41 buses and vans that average about 16,900 vehicle miles annually. The average fleet age is about 4.8 years. Three of the region's four operators average more vehicle miles per vehicle than the statewide rural average; Dickey County averages only about a third of the statewide average due to the limited service it provides.

All of the south central region's operators have up-to-date fleets, with South Central Adult Services having the oldest fleet with vehicles that average five years of age. A reasonable replacement cycle suggests a capital program for about seven to eight vehicles per year to maintain the 41-vehicle regional fleet.

Excluding Bis-Man Transit and Kidder Senior Services, the west central region has four transit service providers. Table 3.10 presents an aggregate summary of the west central region's vehicle fleet.

Table 3.10 West Central Region Vehicle Fleet

System	Number of Vehicles	Average Age (as of 2009)	Average Miles/vehicle/ year
Glen Ullin	1	11.0	4,952
Hazen	3	3.7	5,213
Standing Rock Public Transit	13	3.8	13,406
West River Transit	14	6.4	8,639
Regional Total/Average	31	5.3	9,842
Statewide Rural Average			14,164

As indicated in Table 3.10, the four systems in the west central region operate 31 buses and vans that average about 9,850 miles per year. The average fleet age is about 5.3 years. The largest system in the region, West River Transit, logs substantially fewer miles per vehicle than the state average (8,639 vs. 14,164); the second largest system, Standing Rock Public Transit, operates close to the statewide average. The smaller systems (Glen Ullin and Hazen) differ significantly from the statewide average with both logging only about one-third the statewide average.

Except for Glen Ullin's one vehicle fleet, West River's fleet is substantially older than the other fleets in the region. As indicated earlier, West River needs to undertake an aggressive fleet modernization program. The second largest system, Standing Rock Public Transit, has an up-to-date fleet with a number of new vehicles being either approved for purchase or on order. A reasonable replacement cycle suggests a capital program for about five to six vehicles per year to maintain the 28-vehicle regional fleet.

While these recommendations would bring the two regions current with their vehicle fleet needs, it is recognized that it will take a concerted effort on the part of local providers and NDDOT to accomplish these goals. It is often difficult for some agencies to come up with the local match necessary for a single vehicle, let alone multiple vehicles in any given funding cycle. Making the state and individual providers aware of current and future fleet needs improves planning for immediate and long-term vehicle replacements.

4. FEDERAL, STATE, AND LOCAL FUNDING AND STATE DOT STAFFING

Like many transit programs across the country, most of North Dakota's rural transit programs began as nutrition-related busing services for senior and disabled citizens. Over the years, these programs have evolved and grown into services that are available to the general public. Federal, state, and local funding for transit has also grown, as have related administrative requirements for both state and local administrators.

This section summarizes major federal, state, and local funding sources that are available to support rural public transportation in North Dakota. This discussion is especially relevant to this study since federal funding sources finance a significant portion of the operating and capital budgets of most of the state's local transit services, and these federal programs have related coordination requirements. This section also discusses how these funds might be used to support coordination activities and state staffing that is in place to administer federal and state funding programs and to provide technical support to local service providers.

4.1 Federal Transit Programs

Federal transit programs provide the largest single source of funding for transit in North Dakota. Historically, these programs have provided funds for both operating and capital expenses. Concurrent with growing federal requirements related to the coordination of transit services, many federal funding sources now also allow a portion of each program's funds to be used for coordination-related activities.

The remaining portions of this subsection focus on five programs that are the primary source of federal funding for rural transit in North Dakota. Each program is administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration (FTA). However, unlike FTA programs directed to urban areas, the rural program funds discussed herein do not flow directly from the federal government to local recipients. Rather, they go to state departments of transportation and then to local subrecipients. Under this scenario, states are responsible for program administration and the distribution of funds to local service providers. In most cases, states may also use a portion of each program's funds to pay costs associated with administration, planning, and technical assistance. As indicated above, coordination-related expenses have also become an eligible administrative expense.

The following discussions do not include federal funding that is provided to support transit services in metropolitan areas such as Bismarck-Mandan. Those funds flow directly from the FTA to urban areas without the involvement of state departments of transportation.

Formula Grants for Other than Urbanized Areas (Section 5311) is the predominant federal funding source for most rural transit providers. As indicated earlier, program funds are administered by the state. Eligible subrecipients may include other governmental entities, nonprofit organizations, public transportation operators, or intercity bus services. Funds may be used for capital and operating expenses. Capital expenditures require a 20% local match, while operating expenses require a 50% local match. States may use up to 15% of allocated funds for program administration, including planning and technical assistance. These state administrative expenditures require no local match. Coordination-related activities are eligible administrative expenditures.

As indicated in Table 4.1, North Dakota's current 5311 allocation is just under $4 million per year. This amount has grown steadily from just under $1.1 million in 2004. Given the program's 15%

administrative provisions, North Dakota could use nearly $600,000 annually for administrative purposes. According to NDDOT, in fiscal year 2010, available 5311 administrative funds were used to finance design work for six bus storage facilities that were being constructed using federal stimulus funds. This expenditure was considered a non-recurring expense, and related funds are, therefore, expected to be available in the future for either other eligible administrative activities or for direct distribution to the state's local service providers.

States may carry over 5311 administrative funds to following years. For example, a state may choose not to use any program administration funds in a given year, but may use 30% of the next year's funds (15% + 15%). Carryover may not exceed three years.

Unlike the funding programs that will be discussed in subsequent paragraphs, the 5311 program does not currently have requirements regarding locally developed, coordinated transportation plans. It is anticipated, however, that the next federal funding bill will combine several of the existing transit programs, and that the coordination planning requirements will become universal.

The 5311(c) program is a relatively new subset of the 5311 program. This program provides transit planning, operating, and capital funding to Native American tribes. Funding flows directly from the FTA to recipient tribes. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has been a recipient of both 5311 and 5311(c) funds.

The **Transportation for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (Section 5310)** program provides an annual apportionment of federal transit capital funds to North Dakota for purchasing buses, vans, and other transportation related hardware and equipment for the transportation of elderly and disabled persons. This program is reserved for capital purchases in rural areas and cities with less than 50,000 residents.

Federal law, as amended by SAFETEA-LU, requires that projects selected for funding under Section 5310 be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit/human services transportation plan. These plans identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation. Eligible subrecipients are private nonprofit organizations, governmental authorities where no non-profit organizations are available to provide service, and intercity carriers, providing all federal qualifications are met.

Unlike the 5311 program where 15% of the program's funds could be used for administrative purposes, only 10% of available 5310 monies may be used for administrative purposes, including planning, technical assistance, and coordination. As Table 4.1 indicates, North Dakota's 5310 allocation for 2010 was only about $400,000, of which only about $40,000 may be used for administrative purposes. Program funds that are used for administrative purposes require no local match.

The **Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) Program (Section 5316)** provides funding for transportation services for welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to obtain and maintain employment. Eligible subrecipients include nonprofit organizations, governments, and public transportation service operators (including private operators). Funds may be used for capital and operating expenses.

As with Section 5310 projects, federal law requires that projects selected for funding under Section 5316 be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit/human services transportation plan. The plan must be developed through a process that includes representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human services providers, as well as including participation by members of the public. These plans must identify the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, older adults, and

people with low incomes, provide strategies for meeting these needs, and prioritize transportation services for funding and implementation.

Like the 5310 program, only 10% of 5316 funds may be used for administrative purposes. As Table 4.1 illustrates, this is also a relatively small program with North Dakota's annual allocation being only $161,000, 10% of which is about $16,000. As with the 5310 program, 5316 funds that are used for administrative purposes require no local match.

The **New Freedom Program (Section 5317)** provides funding to states to overcome barriers facing individuals with disabilities in integrating into the workforce and fully participating in society. The purpose of the New Freedom program is to encourage service and facility improvements beyond those required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) to address the transportation needs of persons with disabilities. Eligible subrecipients include nonprofits, governments, and public transportation service operators (including private operators). Funds may be used for capital and operating expenses.

The FTA requires, as provided for by SAFETEA-LU, that projects selected for funding under Section 5317 be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit/human services transportation plan. Current federal discussions indicate that the JARC and New Freedom programs may be consolidated under Section 5311 when the new federal transportation bill is enacted, bringing with them the federal requirements for coordination plans.

As depicted in Table 4.1, North Dakota's annual allocation for the New Freedom program is currently about $77,000. Given the 10% administrative allowance, North Dakota may use up to $7,700 for administrative activities. No local match is required for 5317 funds that are used for state administrative purposes.

The FTA's **State Transportation Planning Program (Section 5304)** provides funding to support cooperative, continuous, and comprehensive planning to guide transportation investment decisions. Related funding totals nearly $100,000 per year. These funds require a 20% local match.

As discussed throughout this subsection, Table 4.1 summarizes several FTA programs that may be used, in part, to finance state administrative activities, including planning and coordination. The 5311 program provides, by far, the largest amount of funding and is viewed as the most likely source of federal funding to support coordination-related and planning activities, especially since there are no local match requirements.

Table 4.1 Federal Transit Administration/North Dakota FY 2010 Allotments

FTA Program	Program Title	FY 2010 Allocation	Program Administration Rate	Program Administration Funds Available
5304	State Transportation Planning Program	$ 99,418	100%	$99,418
5311	Nonurbanized Area Formula Program	$ 3,970,610	15%	$ 595,592
5310	Special Needs for Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities	$ 406,405	10%	$ 40,641
5316	Job Access and Reverse Commute Program (Nonurbanized Areas)	$ 161,245	10%	$ 16,125
5317	New Freedom Program (Nonurbanized Areas)	$ 76,941	10%	$ 7,694

4.2   State Support for Transit

The state of North Dakota supports the provision of public transportation by providing state funds to local transit agencies. As Table 4.2 illustrates, the level of funding provided by the state has more than doubled in the past eight years. These monies are an important source of non-federal funds that are used by local services providers to satisfy federal match requirements. These funds may be used to cover both capital and operating expenses.

Table 4.2 State Aid for Public Transit – Biennial Funding

	2001-2003 Biennium	2003-2005 Biennium	2005-2007 Biennium	2007-2009 Biennium	2009-2011 Biennium
State Aid	$3,133,333	$3,133,333	$4,700,000	$5,700,000	$6,700,000
Source	$2.00 per license plate	$2.00 per license plate	$3.00 per license plate	$3.00 per license plate Plus $1,000,000	1.5% of High Tax Distribution Fund plus $1,000,000

Source: North Dakota Transit Providers, courtesy of North Dakota Senior Service Providers and Dakota Transit Association

The distribution of state aid funding is prescribed by state law (North Dakota Century Code 39-04.2.-04). Each of the state's 53 counties receives 4/10 of 1% of program funds plus $1.50 per capita. As prescribed by the governing statute, each year NDDOT increases or decreases the per capita amount in order to distribute all available funds. If there are multiple transportation service providers in a county, the base amount is divided equally among the providers, and the per capita amount is distributed based upon the percentage of elderly and handicapped rides provided by each of the county's service providers.

The 2009 allocation of state aid transit funds for counties in the south central region is presented in Table 4.3. Stutsman County, the region's most populous county, received $110,695, while Sheridan, with the fewest residents, received $29,661.

Table 4.3 State Aid for Public Transit - South Central Region

	2009 State Aid
Barnes	$ 70,041
Dickey	$ 45,897
Emmons	$ 40,176
Foster	$ 37,881
Griggs	$ 33,849
LaMoure	$ 41,660
Logan	$ 32,060
McIntosh	$ 36,401
Sheridan	$ 29,661
Stutsman	$ 110,695
Wells	$ 43,269

The 2009 allocation of state aid transit funds for counties in the west central region is presented in Table 4.4. As this table indicates, the region's most populous county, Burleigh County, received $301,297 in 2009, while the region's least populated county, Oliver County, received $31,085.

Table 4.4 State Aid for Public Transit - West Central Region

	2009 State Aid
Burleigh	$ 301,297
Grant	$ 34,198
Kidder	$ 33,845
McLean	$ 60,156
Mercer	$ 57,480
Morton	$ 124,316
Oliver	$ 31,085
Sioux	$ 39,025

4.3   City and County Support for Transit

North Dakota law provides cities with the ability to levy property taxes to support public transportation services. North Dakota Century Code Section 57-15-55 allows cities to assess up to a five mill levy to support the provision of local public transit services. Such an assessment may be authorized by a majority vote of city residents.

As indicated in Table 4.5, three cities in the west central region levy corresponding taxes. Hazen assess 4.57 mills to finance transit services, while Bismarck and Mandan assess 3.00 and 2.00 mills, respectively. There are no cities in the south central region that assess a city mill levy to support the provision of local transit services.

Table 4.5 City Mill Levies to Finance Public Transportation, 2009

	Revenue	Mills
Hazen	$ 14,996	4.57
Bismarck	$ 584,297	3.00
Mandan	$ 80,420	2.00

Source: State of North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner

North Dakota state law does not have a directly comparable provision to allow counties to assess a mill levy to support the provision of local transit services. North Dakota Century Code sections 57-15-06(25) and 57-06-56 do, however, have provisions for an assessment of up to two mills to support programs and activities for older persons. Given the high percentage of seniors who use transit services, some counties that assess such a levy allow generated funds to be used to support the provision of local transit services. As is the case with corresponding city mill levies, an affirmative vote is required of county residents.

Four counties in the south central region (Barnes, Griggs, LaMoure, and McIntosh) levy the maximum rate of 2.00 mills to support programs and activities for the elderly. Emmons County has the lowest assessment at .5 mills. Barnes County has the highest revenue of $97,029 followed by Stutsman County with $82,729. The mill levy rate and tax revenue generated to support programs and activities for the elderly for counties in the south central region is presented in Table 4.6. This table also identifies the amount of senior program funding that is subsequently dedicated to the provision of transit services in each county.

Table 4.6 County Mill Levies for Programs and Activities for the Elderly – South Central Region, 2009

	Mills	Revenue	Funding to Transit
Barnes	2.00	$ 97,029	$ 22,020
Dickey	1.00	$ 22,076	$ -
Emmons	0.50	$ 7,343	$ -
Foster	1.00	$ 12,280	$ -
Griggs	2.00	$ 20,051	$ -
LaMoure	2.00	$ 40,044	$ -
Logan	1.60	$ 12,693	$ -
McIntosh	2.00	$ 21,570	$ -
Sheridan	1.00	$ 6,939	$ -
Stutsman	1.37	$ 82,729	$ 50,000
Wells	1.61	$ 31,966	$ 15,211

Source: State of North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner (Mills and Revenue) and Local Transit Service Providers (Funding to Transit)

In the west central region, Mclean, Mercer, Morton, and Sioux counties assess the maximum two mill levy to support programs and activities for seniors. The other four counties in the region (Burleigh, Grant, Kidder, and Oliver) each levy one mill. As Table 4.7 illustrates, the amount of funds generated range from $4,669 in Sioux County to $258,997 in Burleigh County. The transit-related funding presented in Table 4.7 is provided either directly by each county or, in some cases, by local senior citizens clubs with funding they receive from their respective county.

Table 4.7 County Mill Levies for Programs and Activities for the Elderly – West Central Region, 2009

	Mills	Revenue		Funding to Transit	
Burleigh	1.00	$	258,997	$	5,000
Grant	1.00	$	9,263	$	5,800
Kidder	1.00	$	11,705	$	2,676
McLean	2.00	$	70,158	$	20,000
Mercer	2.00	$	42,152	$	4,500
Morton	2.00	$	151,062	$	10,000
Oliver	1.00	$	8,384	$	5,000
Sioux	2.00	$	4,669	$	-

Source: State of North Dakota Office of State Tax Commissioner (Mills and Revenue) and Local Transit Service Providers (Funding to Transit)

As is the case with state aid funds, city and county tax support for transit services provide significant leverage to local service providers to the extent that they use these funds to match federal operating and capital funds. Other funds that are used to match federal monies include donations from sources such as United Way, fraternal organizations, and fundraisers. Income generated by contracts for service may also be used as a local match. Farebox revenue may not be used to match federal dollars.

4.4   State DOT Staffing

Table 4.8 summarizes federal transit monies that North Dakota has received for various programs since 2004. Most of the money identified in this table is dedicated to rural transit programs. As this table illustrates, related federal aid increased by 229% from FY 2004 to FY 2010.

The current federal highway finance bill, SAFETEA-LU, led to a significant increase in the level of federal funding for transit and introduced additional related mandates. Most notable is the requirement that projects funded by Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 include a locally developed coordinated transit-human services transportation plan.

Table 4.8 State Administered Federal Transit Programs

2004	$310,078	$1,094,647			$1,404,725	--
2005	$319,310	$1,145,749			$1,465,059	4%
2006	$354,324	$3,301,857	$125,851	$60,211	$3,842,243	174%
2007	$368,361	$3,485,128	$132,630	$62,960	$4,049,079	188%
2008	$390,665	$3,761,873	$143,682	$68,012	$4,364,232	211%
2009	$410,833	$3,969,909	$168,645	$78,396	$4,627,783	229%
2010	$406,405	$,970,610	$161,245	$76,941	$4,615,201	229%

The amount of effort required to administer these transit programs has also increased significantly since the passage of SAFETEA-LU in 2005. National Cooperative Highway Research Program's (NCHRP) Research Results Digest 314 surveyed state departments of transportation and found that most do not have adequate staff to administer federal transit programs.

As is the case with the transportation industry as a whole, there are also concerns regarding states' abilities to fill existing openings as staff members retire. NCHRP Research Results Digest 320 echoes many of these same concerns and challenges. It also explicitly details the challenges in meeting coordination mandates imposed by SAFETEA-LU. Primary among these is the requirement that projects funded under Sections 5310, 5316, and 5317 be included in a locally developed coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

In an attempt to document related staffing changes in Upper Midwest states like North Dakota, state departments of transportation were contacted to determine what staffing changes have been made to satisfy increased federal compliance and coordination mandates. Related findings are presented in Table 4.9.

As Table 4.9 illustrates, most states have not increased the size of their transit administrative and support staff. Some states, such as Nebraska, are in the process of adding staff, while other states are seeking a solution through the use of non-FTEs (consultants, university support, regional planning councils, etc.).

Table 4.9 State Transit Staffing

| State | FTEs | | | Use of 5311/5310 Admin | |
	2005	2010	State Salary	Other Admin/Coordination	External Support
Iowa	7	7	No	No	Consultants, Regional Planning Authorities
Kansas	6	6.5	No	Admin. Funding to districts	Kansas University & Consultants
Montana	5.5	5.5	No	No	Consultants
Nebraska	4	4	No		Hiring 6 mobility managers in the next year
North Dakota	1	2.5	No		Hired full-time temporary employee in Oct. 2010
South Dakota	2.1	2.1	No		
Wyoming	1	1	Yes	Distributed to subrecipients beginning in FY 2011	Consultants

The federal transit programs discussed earlier in this section provide states with latitude to use a portion of each program's funds for administrative and planning purposes. To this point, North Dakota has not used these funds to pay for any of its central office transit staff. The recommendations presented in Section 8 will discuss how these administrative and planning funds might be used to implement federal and state coordination mandates in North Dakota.

5.   POTENTIAL COORDINATION MODELS AND BEST PRACTICES

Regional public transportation coordination efforts have been undertaken across the country and vary greatly from state to state. These differences are a product of unique mobility needs, available resources, geography, history, and politics. Studying this diversity in policy and practice is helpful to North Dakota's effort to formalize the coordination of transit services. The approaches of other states can be considered as a menu of possibilities which can be combined or modified to best meet the needs of North Dakota.

The emphasis of this section is on regional coordination of transit agencies as opposed to human services transportation coordination. The latter focuses on the delivery of specialized services to specific clientele groups and has received considerable attention in the past decade. Consequently, there are many successful human services coordination efforts; however, most lie outside of the scope of our study. The focus of this section, therefore, is the identification of common regional coordination frameworks, a description of current coordination practices in seven selected states, and lessons learned from regional coordination efforts in other states.

5.1   Regional Coordination Architecture

Except in situations where local transit services are run directly by the state or by a Native American tribe, there are always two key players in the provision of rural transit services – the state department of transportation and local transit agencies. State departments of transportation are the direct recipients of federal monies to support rural transit and, as such, they allocate funding and monitor compliance with federal requirements. On the other side of the partnership, local transit agencies receive federal funds and provide services to meet the mobility needs of area residents.

Federal law and executive order mandate the coordination of transportation services that are funded with federal monies. According to the 2010 *State Human Service Transportation Coordinating Councils: An Overview and State Profiles* report of the National Conference of State Legislatures, 25 states have state coordinating councils to facilitate the coordination of local transit services. Eleven of these councils were created by statute, and 14 were created either by a governor's executive order or initiative. This diversity illustrates that the way in which coordination is encouraged and enforced is anything but uniform. This section discusses common structures and functions of organizations involved in transit. The titles and definitions used vary from one part of the country to another.

5.1.1 Decentralized Planning and Operations

The most basic form of regional coordination involves decentralized transit planning and operations. This is the model closest to what is currently in existence in most of North Dakota. In the decentralized model, transit agencies interact directly with the state which oversees federal and state funding and program compliance. Local transit agencies typically plan and deliver their service independently. State transit management plans typically require that transit agencies identify other transit service providers that serve the same area and mandate that coordination occur. However, actual coordination efforts may or may not be required. Figure 5.1 graphically presents the relationship between the state, transit agencies, and riders under a decentralized framework.
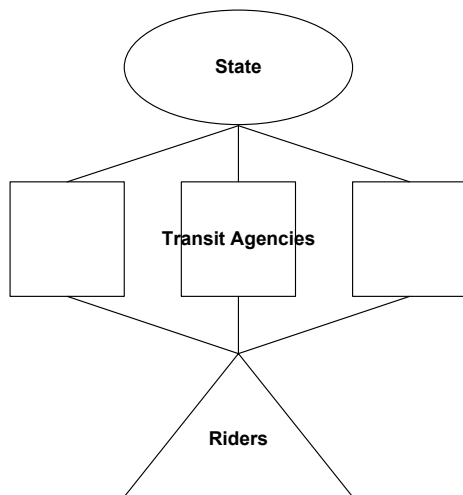
Figure 5.1 Decentralized Planning and Operations

5.1.2 Local Coordinating Groups

The local coordinating group framework is similar to the decentralized model except that transit agencies in a region are required to participate in coordinating activities with other transit agencies. The type of activities conducted by the local coordinating groups may be specifically identified by state statute or rule. The state may provide technical assistance and funding in support of local coordination group or mandate that certain coordination activities be conducted in order for individual agencies to receive funds. The local coordination group model is presented in Figure 5.2.
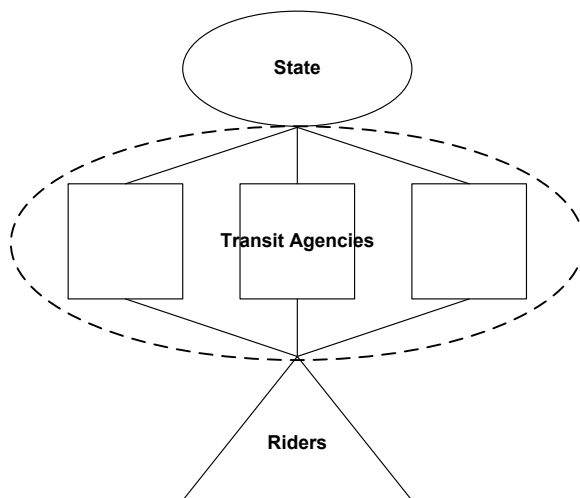
Figure 5.2 Local Coordinating Groups

5.1.3 Lead Transit Agencies

Under the lead transit agency framework, a single agency in a region is designated by the state as the sole recipient of state and federal transit funds for a particular region. This framework is often found in regions where there is a relatively large transit agency and significantly smaller agencies (often with a single part-time administrator). Other local transit agencies subcontract with the lead agency. The lead

agency is responsible for overseeing the funding and operations of all transit services delivered in the region, including subcontracting agencies. The lead transit agency often leads planning efforts with a single annual grant application being prepared for the region. A graphic presenting the lead transit agency model is presented in Figure 5.3.
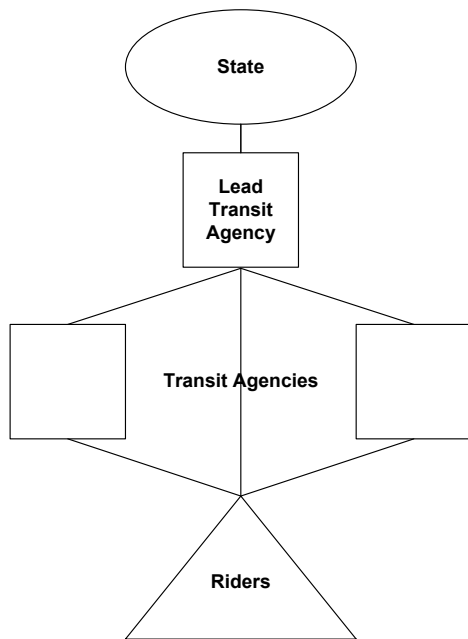
Figure 5.3 Lead Transit Agency

5.1.4 Regional Planning Organizations

In some states, regional planning organizations (RPO) provide transit service planning and other technical assistance to local transit agencies. States may, however, have direct interaction with transit agencies in managing the application for programs and overseeing transit operations and funding use. This framework is presented in Figure 5.4.
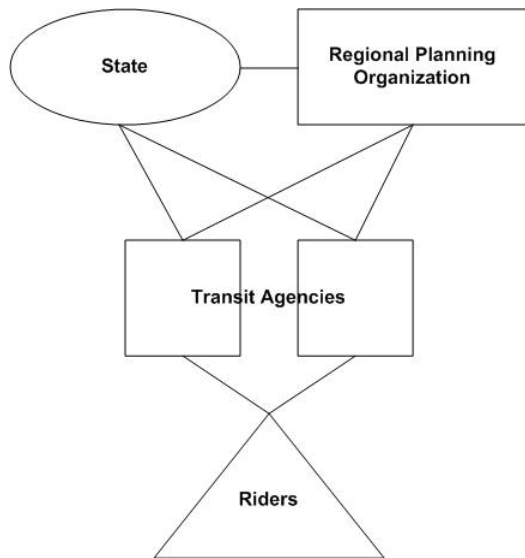
Figure 5.4 Regional Planning Organization I

In an alternative regional planning organization framework, the RPO serves as an intermediary between the state and transit agencies. In this case, the RPO subcontracts with local transit agencies and oversees the spending of funds and compliance with rules. The RPO may also prepare plans, submit grant applications, and report required information to the state. Figure 5.5 presents this regional planning organization framework.
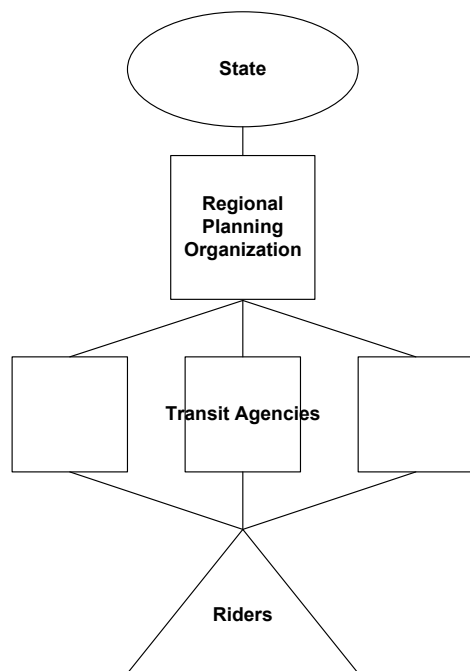
Figure 5.4 Regional Planning Organization II

5.1.5 Regional Transit Authorities

Regional Transit Authorities (RTA) are not true coordinated efforts, but rather, organizations that are given monopoly power to provide transit service in a particular region. RTAs have direct communications with the state, and if they serve a metropolitan area, as is often the case, the Federal Transit Administration. RTAs are responsible for all related functions including planning, grant applications, and the direct provision of transit services. A regional transit authority model is presented in Figure 5.6.
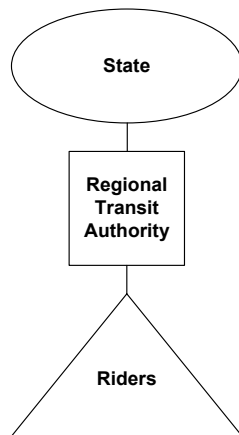
Figure 5.5 Regional Transit Authority

5.2   Case Studies in Regional Coordination

While generalized frameworks provide an understanding of the diverse approaches to regional coordination of public transportation, they do not provide significant detail. This section discusses the experiences of seven states in overseeing and operating regionally coordinated public transportation systems. The states of Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, Washington, and Wisconsin were selected because they demonstrate the diversity of alternatives currently used throughout the country and include elements that may have beneficial applicability in North Dakota. In each case, regional coordinating bodies and administrators, roles and responsibilities, planning and funding sources, and state level activities are described.

5.2.1 Florida Community Transportation Coordination

Florida's Community Transportation Coordination system consists of a statewide coordination commission as well as local planning agencies, coordinating boards, transportation coordinators, service providers, and purchasing agencies. The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged serves as a state level policy board for coordinating transportation. The commission designates an official planning agency for each region. The planning agency in turn appoints members to the local coordinating board. The local board monitors the activities of a community transportation coordinator whose responsibility is to work with transportation providers, riders, and agencies that purchase transportation for their clients.

Local Coordinating Organizations. Local coordinating boards identify local transportation service needs and provide information, advice, and direction to the community transportation coordinator. The composition of the local board is identified by the state coordinating committee while members are selected by the locally designated planning agency. Local coordinating boards meet regularly to review and approve the coordinated transportation disadvantaged service plan, evaluate services, and to review

and provide recommendations to the state commission on funding applications. The board also reviews coordination strategies and evaluates regional transportation opportunities.

Community Transportation Coordinators. Community transportation coordinators bear full responsibility for the delivery of transportation services for the transportation disadvantaged. They approve and coordinate school and public transportation according to the transportation disadvantaged service plan and review all applications for funds and develop coordination strategies. They also develop, negotiate, implement, and monitor memoranda or agreements for submittal to the commission; review and execute contracts; and collect and report operating data.

Roles and Responsibilities. The primary focus of all of the system's efforts is coordination. This includes policy activities at the state level, oversight by the local coordinating board, planning assistance by the designated local agency, and planning and operational activities conducted by the community transportation coordinator.

Planning. The community transportation coordinator and designated local planning agency annually update the coordinated transportation disadvantaged service plan. The plan is reviewed and approved by the local coordinating board and submitted to the Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged. The plan meets the requirements of SAFETEA-LU for coordinated public transit-human service transportation plans.

Funding. The Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged sets guidelines for rates and invoice procedures. It also allocates funds from the Transportation Disadvantaged Trust Fund for capital and planning expenses. Transit operators apply for federal program funds (5303, 5310, and 5311) from the Florida Department of Public Transportation through a separate process.

Statewide Efforts. The Florida Commission for the Transportation Disadvantaged is an independent commission housed within the Florida Department of Transportation. Its membership consists of seven members, two from the disabled community and five from the business community as well as ex officio members from the governor's cabinet. The commission has a wide range of responsibilities, including assembling information on transportation services and needs, establishing statewide objectives, developing coordination policies and procedures, and identifying and pursuing the elimination of barriers to coordination. The commission also assists communities in the development of transportation plans, approves the appointment of community transportation coordinators, and prepares a five-year plan to enhance the provision of transportation services to disadvantaged residents.

5.2.2 Iowa Regional Transit Systems

Iowa has 16 transit systems that serve all rural areas of the state. Within each system, local officials designate a single agency that is responsible for the administration and provision of transit services to the general public. Iowa mandates that transit systems coordinate to the maximum extent possible.

Regional Coordinating Organization. Designated regional transit systems may be free-standing organizations or part of planning or social service agencies. Agencies other than designated systems may provide service under pass-through agreements. These agencies must coordinate with the designated agency and other providers in the area.

Regional Planning Affiliations. The Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT) created Regional Planning Affiliations (RPA) to allow for local participation in the transportation planning and programming process as part of the implementation of provisions of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). RPAs serve communities outside the state's metropolitan areas.

RPAs have responsibility for the development and maintenance of a number of planning documents, including a long-range transportation plan and transportation improvement program. RPAs serve as the home of half of Iowa's regional transit systems.

Roles and Responsibilities. Iowa requires that transit systems make all service, including client transportation, open to the public. Designated transit systems are responsible for overseeing that subcontracted services comply with state and federal requirements including state requirements for coordination.

Planning. Transit systems actively participate with their respective RPA to develop various plans, including long-range transportation plans, passenger transportation plans, annual work plans, and transportation coordination plans.

Funding. The state requires that agencies coordinate and consolidate funding. Designated transit systems are eligible to apply for capital and operating funding using a consolidated application form. Providers operating under contract with a designated transit system are included in the application of the designated system. Agencies found to be in noncompliance with coordination requirements will have funds withheld.

Statewide Efforts. The Iowa Transportation Coordination Council provides statewide leadership on transportation coordination issues, addresses institutional and regulatory barriers, and ensures that public investments in transit are put to their most effective use. Council membership consists of representatives from several state departments, the Federal Transit Administration, the Iowa Public Transit Association, the Iowa Association of School Boards, the Iowa State Association of Counties, the United Way, the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, and the Iowa League of Cities, as well as an MPO representative.

5.2.3 Kansas Coordinated Transit Districts

Overview. Kansas coordinates public transportation through its 15 Coordinated Transit Districts (CTD). CDTs range in size from one to 19 counties. Their boundaries are based on administrative borders, not travel patterns. Coordinated transit districts play a key role in planning, reporting, and fund allocation for agencies that provide rural and specialized transportation services.

Regional Organizations. CTDs are established as separate non-profit organizations with their own bylaws and officers. All recipients of state or federal grants for the provision of rural public specialized transportation services are required to become members of and be in good standing with their respective CTD. CDTs are funded using federal 5311 transit monies with no local match requirement. Related funding ranges from $12,000 to $15,000 per year.

Coordinated Transit District Administrators. CTD administrators are selected by the state from existing district grantees in each district. CDTs are often run out of the designated CDT administrator's transit agency office.

Roles and Responsibilities. CTDs handle all reimbursements for capital and operating expenses. They also collect, compile, and report operational and financial data on a regular basis.

Planning. CTDs serve as lead organizations for the development of coordinated human service transportation plans required by SAFETEA-LU. These plans include a description of each CDT, the services provided, prioritized needs, and an action plan.

Funding. Each agency prepares its own grant applications for operating and capital funds. Membership and participation in a CDT is part of the application as is the level of coordination between the applicant and other service providers.

Statewide Efforts. The state of Kansas and Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) provide vision and assistance to local and specialized transportation service providers. Most deliberation and decision making is made at the local and regional level. However, KDOT makes final decisions on operational and capital funding.   KDOT staff attends regular CDT meetings, which are usually held between four and six times per year. Kansas has a state-level directive mandating operational coordination. However, the actual level of coordination varies. KDOT is working on increasing the level of operational coordination, where possible, and ensuring that funds are put to their best use.

5.2.4 Michigan's Community Partnership Program

The Suburban Mobility Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART) provides transportation to three counties in the Detroit metropolitan area. SMART employs an innovative Community Partnership Program that leverages state and local funding to provide high levels of service. The program also mandates coordination among transportation services designed and operated by local communities and SMART to ensure efficient and effective service.

Transit Service. SMART directly operates fixed-route and ADA compliant paratransit service throughout the three county region. Local communities provide diverse transportation services that best meet their unique needs while having access to the larger regional public transportation system. These community transit services are supported by SMART but are designed and operated by local communities.

Roles and Responsibilities. Local communities that participate in the Community Partnership Program are required to coordinate their local service with those provided by SMART and other participating communities. The primary mechanism for coordination is the development of Community Based Service Plans (CBSP).

Planning. The development of CBSPs is the primary mechanism for coordination. These plans are prepared annually by individual communities with assistance from SMART. Emphasis is on meeting community mobility needs and integration between locally provided service with regional service provided by SMART and services provided by neighboring communities.

Funding. Local funds are generated by mill levy. SMART's Community Credits Program guarantees that funds generated by mill levy will be returned to communities in the form of a rebate for locally provided service. SMART provides additional support for locally operated services by distributing state funds under its Municipal Credits Program.

Statewide Efforts. SMART's Community Partnership, Community Credit, and Municipal Credit Programs were designed and are administered by SMART. The state provides funds to SMART based on the population of the three counties it serves; these funds, in turn, are allocated to local providers by its Municipal Credits Program.

5.2.5 New Mexico Regional Transit Districts

New Mexico state law allows for the creation of Regional Transit Districts (RTDs). RTDs are separate government entities that have the authority to finance, plan, construct, operate, maintain, and promote a regional public transit system. As many New Mexico communities already have public transportation, RTDs typically assist in coordinating existing service. They may also operate or contract for new service or serve as the ultimate home of consolidated services within the region.

Regional Organizations. RTDs consist of two or more governmental units that exercise joint authority over transit. Government units may include cities, counties, Indian tribes, or the state. Government units may elect to join or leave an RTD. All members of an RTD have voting rights, although graduated voting power based on the population of member parties is common.

Roles and Responsibilities. Options available to regional transit districts are broad and may include coordinating existing services, overseeing planning and contracts, as well as directly operating services. Although not required, RTDs may serve as the ultimate home of consolidated regional transit services.

Coordination. RTDs are required to develop a regional mobility concept as part of their certification document. This document identifies the geographic boundaries of the RTD, available services, and plans for operation, coordination, and expansion of services. Development of regional mobility concepts is done with cooperation from existing service providers and regional planning organizations.

Funding. RTDs have the ability to raise revenue through local taxes if agreed to by a majority of voters. In addition to other state and federal program, a regional transit district certified by the state is eligible to receive matching funds on an 80/20 share ratio.

Statewide Efforts. While the state transportation commission certifies the organization of new RTDs, it plays a limited role in RTD decision-making and operations. The state may become a member of an RTD; however, that has not yet occurred.

5.5.6 Washington Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation

Regional public transportation coordination in Washington relies upon local stakeholders organized as coordinating coalitions, Regional Transportation Planning Organizations (RTPO), and a state coordinating commission ─ the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT).

Regional Organizations. Local coordinating coalitions consist of representatives from public, private, and community-based transportation providers, system users, human service agencies, and schools. Coalitions are supported by the RTPO and in some cases by a lead agency selected by coalition members. The role of a lead agency is to manage member financial contributions, provide technical staff for committee activities, and provide transit expertise.

Roles and Responsibilities. Local coordinating coalitions identify existing services, needs, gaps, and barriers. They consider strategies to address gaps and identify common connectivity standards. This is done primarily through supporting planning activities.

Coordination. Local coordinating coalitions develop their own framework for local evaluation of projects (e.g., new or expanded transit service). These evaluation criteria typically include non-duplication and coordination of existing service. Each year, transportation providers submit their projects to the local coalition for prioritization. Each project is then ranked against other submitted projects according to the agreed upon criteria. This local ranking is explicitly considered by the state when selecting projects.

Planning. Local coordinating coalitions play a leading role in developing human services transportation coordination plans required by SAFETEA-LU. Coalition planning activities are supported by funding or resources provided by the RTPO. At the same time, coalition members are active in the development of transportation planning conducted by their RTPO.

Funding. The Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT) has a consolidated application for capital and operating funds. Projects are compared against every other project in the state. The ranking of a project, identified by the local coordinating coalition, accounts for one-third of the total possible value of the competition process. Application evaluation includes a number of criteria that are directly impacted by the prioritization guided by the local coordinating coalition.

Regional Transportation Planning Organization Role. RTPOs assist local coordinating coalitions during the planning process. The cost of their efforts is covered by federal and state planning funds.

Statewide Efforts. The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) was created in 1998 to coordinate affordable and accessible transportation for people with special needs. Council membership includes state cabinet level staff, system users, representatives from the Washington Association of Pupil Transportation, Washington State Transit Association, the Community Transportation Association of the Northwest, and non-voting members of the legislature. ACCT develops a biennial work plan to identify and address barriers in laws, policies, and procedures. The plan also identifies and advocates for transportation system improvements as well as convenes groups to develop and implement coordinated transportation. ACCT certifies regional transportation planning organization local plans and provides an annual progress report to the legislature. ACCT provides funding to create local plans and to conduct demonstration projects.

5.2.7 Wisconsin Mobility Managers

Wisconsin has established a robust mobility management program. The state currently funds 59 mobility managers who are employed by 43 organizations throughout the state. While there is a statewide program that supports mobility managers, their roles vary greatly based on locally identified needs.

Regional Organizations. Mobility managers are locally employed by diverse types of organizations. These include workforce development agencies, aging services, community action programs, transit agencies, and tribes. In many cases the organizations provide public transportation. In addition to the presence of mobility managers, some Wisconsin communities are served by regional or local coordinating councils that coordinate human services transportation.

Roles and Responsibilities. Mobility managers may serve in a number of roles, including policy and service coordination, service brokerage, and travel trainers. Mobility managers may assist in the development of coordination plans and policies as well as build local partnerships.

Coordination. The coordination activities conducted by mobility managers are determined at the local level. Specific activities can include assisting with coordinated planning, operating transportation brokerage systems, coordinating finance, and implementing new coordination policies and technology.

Planning. Wisconsin developed county-level coordination plans to satisfy SAFETEA-LU requirements in 2008. Mobility managers often play a key role in planning since they have community-wide knowledge of transportation services, resources, and mobility needs.

Funding. Many mobility management positions are funded using federal New Freedom or JARC funds. Two other programs are also used. The Wisconsin Employment Transportation Assistance Program (WETAP) funds transportation for low-income individuals to jobs, and the Supplemental Transportation Rural Assistance Program (STRAP) funds new or expanded service in rural areas.

Statewide Efforts. Wisconsin's Department of Transportation manages the state's mobility management program. This includes selection and oversight of local mobility management programs as well as facilitating extensive and ongoing training opportunities. In addition to its mobility management program, Wisconsin has an Interagency Council on Transportation Coordination (ICTC) that serves as the lead organization for statewide coordinated efforts. The ICTC identified a statewide mobility management program as a priority in 2006.

5.2.8 Case Study Summary

The seven regional public transportation coordination efforts described in the preceding subsections illustrate the diverse nature of current practice. Unfortunately, regional coordination does not easily adhere to classification or grading, which would help identify the states that have more coordination than others. A summary of the differences in regional coordination efforts for the seven states is presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.3 Regional Public Transportation Coordination

	Community Transportation Coordination	Regional Transit Systems	Coordinated Transit Districts	Community Partnership Program	Regional Transit Districts	Local Coordinating Coalitions	Mobility Managers
State	Florida	Iowa	Kansas	Michigan	New Mexico	Washington	Wisconsin
Regional Organization	Local Coordinating Board	Designated Regional Transit Agency	Coordinated Transit District	Regional Transit Authority	Regional Transit District	Local body of stakeholders	Coordinating councils in some areas
Roles	Ensure compliance with state standards and policies	Adminstration and provision of service	Allocate funds to operators; collect and report financial and operating data	Collect funds from local communities; allocates state funds and redistributes local funds; provides coordinated regional service	May include finance, planning, construction, operation, maintenance, marketing	Identify and address barriers to coordination; rank projects	Coordinate policy and service, assist with planning, partnership building
Coordinator Position	Community Transportation Coordinator	-	Coordinator Transit Administrator		-	-	Mobility Manager
Planning	Responsible for development of local coordination plans	Conduct regular planning as required by state and federal government	CDTs play lead role in HST coordination planning	Prepare Community Based Service Plans	Conduct required planning prior to certification; most conduct planning as key function	Work with RTPOs to develop plans	County level coordination plans
Funding	Capital and planning funds;	Planning efforts supported by state and federal funds	Membership in CDT part of application evaluation	Local and state funds	Ability to tax; 80/20 state/local share	Local ranking plays role in project selection	State and Federal funds including JARC and New Freedom
Regional Planning Assistance	Officially designated planning agency	Regional Planning Affiliation			Usually coordinate with MPOs/RPOs	Regional Transportation Planning Organizations	RPAs assist with development of county level plans
Statewide Efforts	Commission for the Transportation Advantaged - state level policy board	Iowa Transportation Coordinating Council	KDOT staff attends meetings	State provides funding to regional agency	DOT certifies new regional transit districts	Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation	Interagency Council on Coordinated Transprotation

5.3   Regional Coordination Best Practices

As is evident by the diversity in regional coordination efforts highlighted in the previous section, there is no "one size fits all" coordination model. However, there are some characteristics that seem well-suited to North Dakota.

This section reviews best practices in regional coordination based on the experiences of the seven states reviewed in the preceding section.

Regional coordination systems have evolved over time. Regional coordination efforts, including the most recent efforts by Kansas, have changed over time to meet needs in a changing environment. One of the primary catalysts and supporters of change has been the federal government. The most recent transportation bill, SAFETEA-LU, requires coordination of transportation services funded with federal dollars. It also specifically mandates coordinated planning for human services transportation.

While changes have occurred, few states indicated that any changes to their regionally coordinated public transportation system were under consideration. For those locations where changes are being considered, they were relatively minor.

While each state has rules that impact how regional coordination occurs, none are so inflexible that the system is unable to adapt to meet local mobility needs and other changes. In fact, the opposite is true as many changes have been made to accommodate increased levels of coordination. This is evident in the increased level of coordinated planning.

Regional coordinating bodies are necessary. All seven states rely on a regional entity to assist with coordination efforts. These entities range from coordinating groups in Kansas and Washington to large regional transportation authorities in Iowa and Michigan. The purposes of these groups vary, but typically include facilitating planning, project identification and prioritization, and providing a venue for communication among transit agencies and other organizations.

In Iowa and Kansas, existing organizations were designated as leading regional organizations. In Iowa, the existing organizations were regional planning organizations. Kansas used existing transit agencies. In New Mexico, state law provided power to create new regional coordinating organizations. In Florida, Washington, and Wisconsin, regional coordinating boards were mandated and provided with financial and technical support.

Leverage existing transit expertise. Many states rely on other organizations to provide technical assistance, especially transit planning expertise, for regional coordination efforts. In Iowa and Washington, regional planning organizations provide this type of support. In Kansas, where RPOs do not exist, much of the technical assistance is provided by the Kansas University Transportation Center (KUTC) at the University of Kansas. North Dakota has a similar resource in the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center at North Dakota State University.

States must provide leadership. State government played a key leadership role in initiating regional coordination in each of the seven states, but the level of ongoing support has varied. Florida maintains a large well-developed, well-defined, and well-funded state level organization. Iowa and Wisconsin maintain smaller state level organizations that provide ongoing leadership for coordination. In Kansas, the state led initial efforts to coordinate, and the DOT provides ongoing support; the amount of resources dedicated to state level coordination is relatively low.

Some states have experienced a waxing and waning of state leadership on the issue of regional coordination. For example, Wisconsin made great strides by harnessing the initial energy generated by the leadership of its statewide coordinating coalition. This original momentum was lost, but efforts to rekindle it are in place.

Coordination standards. All seven states have coordination standards in addition to those mandated by the federal government. Many standards are duplicates of federal standards. In some cases, states already had coordination standards in place and at much stricter levels. State standards may be prescribed by state law, executive orders, administrative rules, or contractual requirements prescribed by the state department of transportation for transit fund recipients. Florida has by far the most well-defined standards of the seven states presented as well as a structure that enforces compliance at the local level. Among the states reviewed, standards vary from vague (e.g., mandating "high levels" of coordination) to specific.

The enforcement of standards has a direct impact on the level of coordination. In Florida, community transportation coordinators are responsible for standard enforcement at the local level and are evaluated based on their enforcement of statewide standards.

Surprisingly, two states with strong mandates for coordinated services stated that as a practical matter, requirements for high levels of coordination are not enforced. Two reasons were given. One is that most agencies are quite responsive to state investigations into compliance. The second is that the "death penalty" for uncoordinated service is unlikely to be politically acceptable.

Regional efforts need specifically identified purposes and responsibilities. Related to the issue of standards are enumerated purposes and responsibilities for regional coordination organizations. All states have some type of related requirements.

Coordination begins with planning. Each of the seven states conduct regional coordinated planning at regular intervals. Many used SAFETEA-LU's mandated coordinated human service transportation plans as the impetus to prepare plans for the first time. These planning efforts typically utilize federal funds, although in some cases state funds were used as local match or to fund the entire project. There are a number of federal programs which may be used for planning. In some states, coordinated transit planning is a primary function of the regional coordinating entity.

Financing coordination with existing funding programs. While there is variation in how coordination is financed, many states use federal funds to cover the costs of regional coordination. This includes using 5311 administrative funds which require no match, 5317 New Freedom funds to hire mobility managers, and dedicating various federal planning monies for coordination planning projects.

Coordinated operations. In the seven states reviewed in this section, coordination efforts have resulted in better designed services where duplication and other inefficiencies are minimized or totally avoided. Occasional problems, such as dealing with multi-agency/multi-leg trips, still occur but they are rare and are handled on a case-by-case basis.

Summary

This section reviewed common regional coordination frameworks and current regional coordination efforts and assembled best practices based on other states' experiences with regional coordination. While there is no template for regional coordination, the information presented in this section is helpful in identifying the alternatives and considerations that will assist North Dakota in its efforts to design an effective, efficient, and sustainable regional coordination system.

6. REGIONAL STEERING COMMITTEES, OPERATOR INTERVIEWS, AND PUBLIC MEETINGS

Successful coordination requires people being willing and able to work together. It is predicated on accurate information, consensus building, and the availability of adequate financial and human resources. For the purpose of this project's design and information gathering phases, it was deemed vital that people with a vested interest in transit be made aware of the project and given opportunities to provide related input. The direct involvement of regions' transit operators, system users, and entities that represent users was considered essential.

The involvement of these individuals and groups was garnered in three ways. First, a regional steering committee was formed in each region to help oversee and manage the project. Second, each of the regions' transit operators was interviewed to clarify the purpose of the project, to collect and verify information concerning existing transit services, and to solicit their input concerning coordination-related options. And third, eight public input meetings were held throughout the regions to educate participants on available transit services and the intent of the project and to solicit their input concerning possible program designs.

These processes are discussed in the remaining subsections of this section. Many of this report's findings and recommendations are a direct result of the information gathered from the processes discussed in this section.

6.1 Regional Steering Committees

As indicated earlier, grass roots involvement and support was deemed essential to the eventual success of a regional coordination project. In an attempt to create related awareness and involvement, a regional steering committee (RSC) was created in each region. Committee functions included:

- Identifying the best approaches to gather information for the coordination projects;
- Encouraging participation by transit operators, clients (transit riders and contracting agencies) and the public;
- Providing essential information regarding the public input meetings and the follow-up public information meetings, including potential meeting sites, meeting times, invitation lists, related promotions, etc.

Potential steering committee members were identified with input from a technical advisory committee comprised of NDDOT staff members, Linda Wurtz of AARP North Dakota, and Sandy Bendewald, director of Stutsman County Social Services. It was decided that each region's committee should include directors of all of the area's public transit services plus representatives of local social service agencies, aging councils, local governments, etc. Broad geographic representation from across each region was also deemed important.

With these constituencies in mind, individuals were identified and ultimately invited to be a part of each region's RSC. Ten individuals were recruited to serve on the south central RSC while the west central RSC region had 13 members. Each RSC's members are identified in Tables 6.1 and 6.2.

Each RSC met for the first time in late March 2010. Discussions included a review of S.B. No. 2223, the project's work plan and timelines, the role of the committee, and possible dates and locations for future public input meetings. Committee members were engaged and extremely helpful concerning the design of the project and ways to encourage citizen involvement in the public input meetings which will be

discussed in the following subsection. Most committee members also attended one or more of the public input and public information meetings.

It should be noted that it became very obvious at the initial RSC meetings that there was considerable misunderstanding concerning the provisions and the intent of S.B. No. 2223. Many committee members and especially transit operators were of the impression that the goal of the legislation was to bring about consolidation within North Dakota's transit systems and to create large regional service providers. It was emphasized, to the contrary, that S.B. No. 2223 was not about regionalization; its focus was coordination. This misunderstanding became a major point of clarification at all the operator interviews and public input meetings that will be discussed in the latter subsections of this section.

Table 6.1 South Central RSC Members

Deb Brandner – Wishek Area Transit Driver/Coordinator
Pat Hansen – Transit Director, South Central Transit Network
Tim Huseth – Hav-it Industries (Harvey)
Cheryl Jongerius – Transit Director, Dickey County Transportation
Bruce Klein – LaMoure County Commission
Laurie McGuire – Transit Director, James River Transit
Paul Rahlf – Griggs County Council on Aging
Maria Regner – Logan County Social Services
Royce Topp – Foster County Council on Aging
Alvin Tschosik – Emmons County Commission

Table 6.2 West Central RSC Members

Carol Anderson – Transit Director, West River Transit
Darrell Bjerke – City of Beulah
Sandy Bohrer – Transit Director, City of Hazen Busing Project
Kathy Boschee – Transit Director, City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program
Delphia Nelson – City of Center Senior Center Coordinator
Shelia Olson – Turtle Lake Area Transit Driver
Bob Owens – City of New Salem, Morton County, & Elm Crest Manor
Renee Price – Transit Director, Kidder County
Pat Randall – Former Transit and Senior Services Director (Robinson)
Steve Saunders – Bismarck-Mandan MPO
Pam Ternes – Transit Director, Standing Rock Public Transit
Robin Werre – Transit Director, Bis-Man Transit
Vicki Zimmerman – Grant County Social Services

Both RSCs met again in mid-October 2010 to receive a status report on the project and to review a preliminary list of possible findings and recommendations. RSC affirmation of these preliminary findings and recommendations cleared the way to proceed with the preparation of the project's written report. Both RSCs and the technical advisory committee met again in a joint meeting in mid-December 2010 to receive a briefing on the final report that NDDOT would ultimately present to the 2011 Legislature.

6.2   Operator Interviews

In addition to the public input meetings, SURTC researchers conducted on-site interviews during May 1020 with each of the regions' nine transit operators plus the Wells-Sheridan portion of James River Transit. In order to enhance the information gathering phase of this study, it is essential that those who are closest to the direct provision of transit services be included in identifying existing services and current coordination efforts, as well as gaining operators' perspectives on the implementation of the legislative directive. A copy of the interview schedule and the standard list of interview questions are presented in Appendix D.

The initial portion of each interview was used to reinforce an understanding concerning the provisions of S.B. No. 2223 and to emphasize that the project was about coordinating existing transit services and not about consolidation and regionalization. Each operator had heard a similar presentation at one of the early RSC meetings, but it was deemed important that this point be reiterated.

The next portion of each interview focused on verifying agency data such as each operator's service area covered, services provided, schedules, vehicle inventories, primary funding sources, ridership data, and existing coordination efforts. Related questions and available data had been provided to the operators prior to the interviews for ease in verification. SURTC interviewers also shared demographic data for the counties served by each of the transit providers and for the region as whole.

Following this data verification process, each interview then focused on organizational and operational issues, including each operator's organizational structure (e.g., non-profit, for profit, city government); board of directors/administrative composition; types of operation (e.g., demand/response, fixed route, intercity); facilities; dispatch capabilities; staffing; maintenance; marketing; and existing contracts for provision of service.

Beyond the parameters of their existing operations, it was critical to gain the transit providers' perspectives on the most effective means of achieving regional coordination. Related questions centered on potential coordination efforts with other public service providers within their region as well as those in neighboring regions.

Additional questions were asked regarding the potential employer, job description, and base of operations for the regional coordination administrator described in the legislation. Other topics included regional and/or state coordination councils, local advisory boards, dispatch options, and possible coordination standards or mandates. Discussion also involved possible efficiency and cost saving measures and potential service enhancements that might result from increased coordination, as well as barriers that might potentially impede coordination.

The following subsections summarize comments received from service providers during the interview process.

6.2.1 Existing Coordination Efforts

Discussions with the regions' transit operators highlighted the fact that there are coordination efforts taking place in each of the pilot regions as well as throughout the state. Currently, these coordination efforts are the result of individual agencies taking the responsibility for working with other transit providers to ensure a greater number of transit options for the residents of their service area. While more limited in scope than what is proposed in this study's recommendations, those existing efforts form a base for the continuing expansion of coordination within and between regions.

Operator interviews also highlighted the fact that program directors are extremely busy; job functions often include duties that go well beyond running their transit system. Typical job duties include directing activities such as congregate and home delivered meals, outreach services, prescription drug assistance programs, food banks, and durable medical equipment loan programs. Only two of the regions' transit directors are full-time transit employees.

When asked about additional coordination efforts, program directors said that they endorse the concept, but many indicated that they simply do not have time to dedicate to related initiatives. Unless coordination was made a higher priority and given additional resources, significantly expanded coordination was unlikely.

6.2.2 Regional Coordinator Responsibilities

System operators uniformly agreed that it would be beneficial if regional coordinators have transit experience. Since a key element of the regional coordinator's responsibilities will be to facilitate communications between the NDDOT and providers as well as among transit operators, users and advocates, it was also deemed essential that coordinators have excellent oral and written communication skills and be able to relate well with people on all levels. Providers believe that a regional coordinator could assist with tasks such as facilitating efforts to get all transit providers "to the table," identifying needs, planning, establishing and organizing regional coordination boards, marketing and public education efforts, helping determine schedules among existing transit operations, and networking with human service agencies and other groups who have and/or require transportation.

When asked who the regional coordinator should be employed by, the uniform response from all providers was that they would like NDDOT to serve as the employer versus having the coordinator employed by an entity such as a regional planning council.   The reasons for this arrangement included: the person would be less biased toward a single provider, it would facilitate communications with NDDOT, and they would have the authority to make decisions.

It was noted, however, that the regional coordinator, while serving as a liaison between local transit directors and NDDOT, should not prevent agency operators from being able to communicate directly with other NDDOT staff as they have been able to in the past. It was clear that this position should not be allowed to become a barrier or another layer of bureaucracy between local service providers and NDDOT.

In terms of the regional coordinator's base of operations, operators felt the position should be located in Bismarck. All agreed that the regional coordinator should be easily accessible to the region and available for frequent face-to-face meetings. There was also consensus that the person should not be located with any particular transit operator or be associated with a regional planning organization.

6.2.3 Regional Coordination Councils

During the interview process, agency directors were asked to provide feedback on the development of regional coordination councils to assist with efforts to coordinate services among and between transit agencies, human service agencies, and other interested stakeholders. Operators agreed that members of a regional coordination council could help identify unmet and evolving transit needs in the communities they represented and provide feedback concerning the effectiveness of existing services. Committee members could also help identify opportunities for coordination.

Agency directors emphasized that if these councils exist, they must have a specific function that includes planning. There was concern that these councils should not be entities that meet just for the sake of meeting and serve no real purpose. It was felt that regional councils might assist with educational efforts to inform local citizens that transit is for the general public and not restricted to the elderly and people with disabilities, to enhance efforts to build positive working relationships within the region, and to assist in identifying transit needs that are not currently being met.

6.2.4 Local Advisory Boards

Most transit agency directors indicated that they had a local governing and/or advisory board. However, many operators indicated that their current boards were not as effective as they could be. Some directors commented that many local boards have people who are willing to serve, but they are not working boards. Several operators indicated that they have perpetual boards with no term limits; board members are well intended but provide little value to the organization. Some agencies do not have an advisory board.

Many of the operators felt their agency operations could be enhanced by an active advisory board. However, many of the managers also felt that they needed assistance in creating an advisory board or making modifications to their existing board of directors. Transit managers also indicated that it would be desirable to have a common set of organizational standards for their local advisory board.

6.2.5 Efficiency/Cost Savings Measures and Service Enhancements

Transit directors were asked about efficiencies, cost savings, and service enhancements that might occur as a result of the regional coordination process. The operators anticipate increased communication between public transit providers and with human service agencies. Most felt that few, if any, dollars would be saved as a result of increased coordination. In fact, coordination might result in higher overall costs. Coordination might, however, help identify and eliminate duplicate routes and increase travel opportunities for area residents. Ultimately, it is hoped that operators would carry more passengers per mile, and overall personal mobility would increase.

6.2.6 Barriers to Coordination

Agency directors were asked about potential roadblocks and inhibitors to coordination. Barriers identified by the transit providers included concerns about reduced funding if their passenger counts drops as a result of sharing passengers with other providers, fears of eventual consolidation, and apprehension regarding fare structures, collection, and recordkeeping. Some operators also voiced concerns about enforcement of coordination mandates, increased workloads that might result from additional requirements, transitioning riders between agencies, and the willingness of all providers to fully participate in the process. Potential barriers to coordination will be discussed in greater detail in Section 7.

6.2.7 Possible Coordination Standards or Mandates

Transit operators favored state assistance in developing more uniform policies and standards for quality control for all transit agencies, including a request for templates provided by NDDOT. They also emphasized the need to maintain local flexibility in administering their individual programs. As part of this process, agencies favored measurable tools or benchmarks for assessing their services, but they wanted to avoid direct comparisons between transit programs across the state.

Topics of discussion also included the collection of data for the development of performance measures, standards for fare computation and recovery, determination of an acceptable range for administrative costs relative to direct or operational costs, and training requirements for staff and managers. Operators indicated that any mandates prescribed by the state as a result of regional coordination should recognize and take into account the range in sizes of transit operations and their ability to meet any standards that might be established.

6.2.8 Dispatch

Transit operators were eager to suggest that the NDDOT, in the process of promoting coordination, not force agencies to incorporate centralized dispatch or one-call centers. Some of the regions' operators have central dispatch systems but many local operators function without such as system. Rather, they typically assign cell phones to local drivers, and area residents call directly to "their" driver to arrange for a future trip.

Operators agreed that if computerized dispatch is deployed by some of the larger operators, NDDOT should have advanced discussions with all the state's transit operators to identify a mutually acceptable operating system that might be eventually be used by other operators. The goal should be the deployment of dispatch systems that have the ability to interface with each other.

Many operators believe that the decision of whether or not to use a computerized dispatch system should be left up to individual agencies. Many feared that abandoning their existing system would reduce operating efficiencies (i.e., a bus driver taking reservation directly for passengers) and might result in the loss of passengers and staff who are not comfortable with related technology.

6.2.9 Miscellaneous Operator Comments

At the conclusion of the interviews, transit operators were given the opportunity to provide additional comments on the regional coordination effort. Several operators pointed out that coordination has increased in recent years. Agencies have also been able to provide more service over the last several years because of increases in federal and state funding for public transit. Agency directors universally praised NDDOT for its ability to work directly with local service providers and its willingness to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy related to reporting and reimbursement requirements.

Transit operators were willing to participate in regional coordination, but emphasized that efforts should be taken to measure related success. Performance measures that may be used to monitor the operations of individual operators could also be used on a regional or statewide basis to determine if personal mobility and overall efficiencies (e.g., passengers per vehicle mile) improved.

6.3   Public Input Meetings

In addition to the regional steering committee meetings and operator interviews discussed in the preceding subsections of this section, eight public input meetings were held throughout the two pilot regions. These meetings were held in July 2010 and were designed to provide attendees with background information on area transit services, the purpose of the coordination project, and to solicit input concerning how to best structure coordination efforts to maximize personal mobility for area residents.

The meetings were held in Fort Yates, Beulah, Bismarck, Napoleon, Carrington, Jamestown, Edgeley, and Valley City. The Bismarck and Valley City meetings were webcast live through the project's website, www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination, and were recorded so they would be available for subsequent viewing. Approximately 200 people attended the meetings.

Meeting dates, times, and locations were set based on input received from each region's RSC members. These members also provided ideas concerning the promotion of the meetings. In addition to news releases and direct mail invitations, local promotional efforts included service provider newsletter articles, on-board information pieces, news stories in local newspapers, and postings on local billboards.

The public input meetings provided an opportunity for those present to learn more about the transit services in each region and for researchers to gather information on how the transportation services might be better coordinated to meet the mobility needs of those residing in each region. SURTC researchers presented information on transit services that are currently available, existing funding sources, demographic trends, and coordination efforts that have been undertaken in other states.

Attendees were invited to provide comments concerning adequacy of existing transit services, service improvements that may result from increased coordination, operating efficiency gains that might result from increased coordination, ways to facilitate and increase coordination, regional coordination structure, duties of a coordinator, funding sources to support coordination efforts, and potential barriers to coordination. A copy of the PowerPoint used at the public input meetings is included in Appendix A, along with the promotional news release that was sent out prior to the meetings.

The agenda at each meeting was identical, and participants were queried on specific issues related to existing transit services and potential impacts of increased coordination among service providers. The remaining pages of this section summarize major areas of input provided by participants via the public input process. A summary of the input received at the public input meetings is presented in the following subsections.

6.3.1 Adequacy of Existing Transit Services

Attendees at virtually every meeting lauded the value and levels of serviced provided by local transit operations. Services in rural areas allow senior citizens to remain in their homes and in their home communities, thereby avoiding the need to relocate to more urban areas to access various services. This ability reduces related societal costs and is a form of economic development for smaller communities. A mayor from one city noted that when a person leaves the community, they take their bank account with them.

Regardless of this high level of satisfaction, many participants commented that more education is needed regarding the availability of services. Despite ongoing efforts in many communities, many people still believe that existing transit services are only available for senior citizens or individuals with disabilities. It was suggested that some providers should adjust their service hours to accommodate commuters.

Comments also reflected on the extreme rural nature of many communities and the fact that trips to regional service centers often result in 10-12 hour days for passengers. These trips are especially tiring for some senior citizens and riders with medical problems. Concerns were also expressed regarding individuals who live on farms and who may have difficulty getting to a nearby town to access bus services for trips to regional centers.

6.3.2 Coordination-related Service Improvements and Operating Efficiencies

Meeting attendees hoped that increased coordination among rural transit providers might eliminate or at least reduce any duplications of service that might exist. It was also projected that such reductions might make drivers and vehicles available for the provision of additional services in other areas.

Participants also expected that coordinating services might increase service options on trips to regional centers and that having more passengers on each bus would reduce overall per passenger operating costs. It was also anticipated that increased coordination might result in more fare consistency within each region.

6.3.3 Ways to Facilitate and Increase Coordination

Attendees at several meetings expressed concern with the lack of availability of information on service schedules, routes, and fares. This concern related not only to services in their area but also to those in other parts of the state. This lack of information makes it difficult for people to plan trips, both local and beyond. This was also viewed as a problem for service providers who might be trying to help local residents plan trips; is difficult to coordinate services if program directors do not know what other providers are doing. Travel planning and coordination would be enhanced if current and complete information on available services was readily available.

The establishment of regional and local advisory boards with representatives of human service agencies and other transit dependent populations was viewed as a way to facilitate and increase coordination. Attendees were of the opinion that people are willing to coordinate, but that it is important to get all the right people working together to seek solutions to existing voids in service. These boards could focus on developing plans for coordinated transit service at the local and regional level and even between neighboring regions.

6.3.4 Regional Coordination Structure

Meeting attendees were asked to comment on what kind of organizational structure might best facilitate regional coordination efforts. People universally expressed the need to avoid the creation of additional layers of bureaucracy that would insulate service providers from either NDDOT or riders. Regional coordinators should be located somewhere in or near the region in order to have direct, face-to-face contacts with local providers and coordinating boards or councils. Coordinators should also be NDDOT employees who are available to organize local and regional boards, to facilitate related meetings, and to work on coordination plans. These individuals should not inhibit the ability of local service providers to have direct contacts with other NDDOT staff members.

6.3.5 Funding Sources to Support Coordination Efforts

Presenters at the public input meetings provided attendees with information concerning federal, state, and local levels of support that are being provided to finance the provision of local transit services. Attendees were asked for ideas concerning the provision of increased levels of local support.

Attendees suggested that it might be beneficial to initiate a regional or statewide effort to sell advertising in and on transit vehicles. Local operators might also benefit if a consortium was formed to negotiate with a fuel distributor for a reduced price on fuel for participating transit operators.

It was also suggested that local transit services should attempt to negotiate new contracts for services with entities such as nursing homes, social service organizations, etc. These contracts could increase ridership and create a revenue stream that could be used to match federal grants.

Meeting participants also encouraged local transit services to make as many purchases locally as possible. Supporting the local economy would, in the long run, create local support for transit.

6.3.6 Potential Barriers to Coordination

Meeting attendees were asked to identify potential barriers to expanded coordination efforts. Responses included:

- Turf protection/territorialism

- Time constraints – most operators are not full-time transit managers, and they are already overloaded

- Fear of losing jobs/funding/independent status of local transit programs

- Unwillingness of agencies to transfer passengers from one operator to another and/or unwillingness of riders to use an unfamiliar provider

These and other potential barriers to coordination are discussed in more detail in Section 7.

6.3.7 Miscellaneous Public Input Comments

In addition to the comments generated on specific topics, participants were also given the opportunity to provide general comments regarding regional coordination. Attendees addressed issues concerning possible incentives and related disincentives for nonparticipating operators.

Attendees also emphasized a need for expertise on how to initiate coordination efforts among providers and other agencies. Participants stressed the need for increased efforts to inform and educate the public about accessing existing public transportation services and understanding who is eligible to ride. Emphasis was also placed on making transfers between agencies and the availability to schedule rides as easily as possible.

Overall, the consensus was that coordination efforts need to take place on multiple levels – local, regional, and statewide. Efforts must be made to reach out to other agencies that provide rides and/or have transit dependent clients and educate them on how they can be involved in the coordination efforts as well.

Support for public transit was unmistakable at the public input meetings. A concerted effort should be made by everyone involved to let legislators, local governments, and the public know how vital transit services are to a large segment of the population. Similarly, stakeholders must stress the economic impacts that public transit has on rural areas, given the fact that these services let residents age in place in their own homes and in their communities as long as possible.

6.4   Public Information Meetings and Subsequent Input

In addition to the public input meetings discussed in the preceding subsection, four public information meetings were held in November 2010 to share anticipated study findings and recommendations with potentially interested parties. The meetings were held in Hazen, Bismarck, Napoleon, and Valley City.

The meetings were publicized via news releases, and direct mail invitations were sent to individuals who attended one of the eight public input meetings and to the regions' legislators, county commissioners, and mayors. The Bismarck meeting was also broadcast via the Internet. Approximately 60 people attended the four meetings. A copy of the related news release and letter of invitation are presented in Appendix A, along with a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that was used at each meeting.

The public information meetings provided attendees with information concerning the report's information gathering process and subsequent findings and recommendations. Questions and comments were encouraged throughout each meeting. A concern brought forward by a state legislator at the first public information meeting in Hazen prompted a related elaboration at each of the subsequent meetings. The concern expressed dealt with an impression that regional coordination mandates would diminish local control and decision making regarding levels of service.

SURTC investigators and NDDOT representatives responded that the report's recommendations propose a structure around which local coordination efforts can be built. This structure is intended to get the right people to the table to discuss the best way to enhance and coordinate local and regional transportation services. The structure is not designed to prescribe local levels of services. Those decisions are currently made at the local level, and implementing the proposed recommendations will not alter that ability.

Public access to information on existing transit services was a topic raised at several meetings. Attendees supported the proposed recommendation regarding the publicizing of service providers' routes and schedules, along with related contact information. Attendees were less concerned with how this need is met than having access to the information as soon as it is feasible to do so.

Transit providers present at the Valley City meeting asked if they would be given the opportunity to review and comment on the draft report. NDDOT indicated that a draft copy of the report would be posted on the Internet, and people would be given 14 days to provide related comments.

A transit provider at the Valley City meeting also questioned the need for a regional coordinator and expressed concern regarding the creation of another level of bureaucracy. SURTC researchers pointed out that the regional coordinator position was provided for in Senate Bill No. 2223, and that the person in that position would provide significant planning services to local and regional boards and individual transit operators without being a required intermediary between service providers and NDDOT's central office.

NDDOT's representative at the meeting also pointed out that the department's central office staff is not available to provide the services that will be provided by the regional coordinator. The increased work load that has come with increased federal funding makes it impossible for existing staff to take care of those requirements and provide increased coordination-related support to regions and individual operators. NDDOT assured providers that they would still have direct access to the department's central office staff, just as they currently do.

Discussions were held on variations that currently exist regarding the fares that are charged by various operators for similar services. Because there is currently no standard for fare recovery, transit agencies are allowed to set whatever fares they choose. The coordination plan recommends that fares reflect, within parameters, the recovery of a reasonable level of related operating costs. This occurrence would facilitate coordination by establishing a commonality among providers for fares for similar services. Some meeting participants questioned whether implementing some of the recommendations had to wait until the study was completed. To the contrary, SURTC researchers commented that implementing some recommendations could commence immediately and that, in some instances, had already begun. Some local service providers have, since the initial public input meetings, discussed coordination-related service changes. NDDOT has also begun to provide some of the policy and handbook templates that were recommended by transit directors during the study's operator interview process.

Many of the recommendations presented in Section 8 were modified from their original form to reflect the suggestions presented at one or more of the public information meetings.

As indicated earlier, NDDOT indicated at the Valley City public information meeting that it would provide an opportunity for transit operators to submit comments once the full report was available in draft form. On November 30, SURTC posted the entire draft report on the project's website and sent an e-mail invitation to all TAC and RSC members and to all of North Dakota's public transit operators to review and comment on the report. Members without e-mail were sent invitations via hardcopy mail. Recipients were given until noon on December 14, 2010, to comment. Reminder notices were sent on December 8. Comments were received from three transit directors; two of which are from outside the project's two pilot regions. Their verbatim submittals and related responses are presented in Appendix A.

7. BARRIERS TO COORDINATION

Other states' experiences with transit coordination, as well as input received at this study's public input meetings and interviews with transit managers, suggest that there are numerous potential barriers to the successful implementation of regional coordination efforts. Some of these barriers are real, while others are perceived. In either case, these barriers must be identified and addressed if implementation is to be successful.

The following sections of this section identify potential barriers to coordination. Many of the barriers identified as a part of this study mirror those discussed in the National Conference of State Legislatures' 2005 report entitled *Coordinated Human Services Transportation State Legislative Approaches*. The recommendations presented in Section 8 are crafted in an attempt to overcome these barriers.

7.1 Time and Prioritization

There are nine local transit project managers in the two pilot regions. Only two of those individuals are full-time employees who devote 100% of their time to transit (West River Transit and Bis-Man Transit). The remaining managers are either full-time employees who have other non-transit responsibilities, or they are part-time employees.

Most of the regions' transit managers have a wide variety of job functions. These duties include responsibilities such as grant writing, grant management and compliance, vehicle procurement and maintenance, human resource management, advisory board management, routing, scheduling, marketing, and community relations. While these duties may, in many instances, warrant the attention of a full-time employee, most of the regions' transit operators are only able to provide them with part-time attention. Other non-transit responsibilities include functions ranging from city auditor to senior programs involving congregate and home delivered meals, outreach services, prescription drug assistance programs, food banks, and durable medical equipment loan programs.

Transit project managers, like all administrators, prioritize their work. Given the immediate demands of many of the duties identified above and the limited number of hours available, coordinating transportation services both within the community and with the region's other public services providers is sometimes a low priority.

Altering this situation requires the dedication of additional human resources to transit administration and/or prescriptive mandates. As discussed in earlier sections, there are federal directives, via both federal legislation and executive order, regarding the need to coordinate services. Additional attention via state law and/or NDDOT enforcement may be required to make coordination a higher priority.

As discussed in earlier sections, coordination is not totally neglected within North Dakota's transit community. There is already coordination taking place within some communities and among some of the regions' service providers. Discussions at public input meetings and during operator interviews indicate, however, that more coordination opportunities exist.

It appears that the amount of time available to facilitate and monitor coordination is also problematic at the state level. As discussed in Section 3, related transit staffing within NDDOT and perhaps other agencies is relatively small, and job functions are numerous. Coordination is viewed as important, but competing job functions sometimes leaves little time to devote to facilitating coordination.

7.2   Workload, Budget, and Bureaucracy

In an area closely related to time availability and prioritization, many public input and program director interview comments expressed reservations concerning regional coordination because of possible related impacts on workloads and program budgets. These comments focused on the fact that coordination initiatives would have related workload and cost increases associated with them and would, therefore, impose additional administrative burdens and costs on local transit programs – if it takes time, it costs money. Without additional funding, increased administrative costs would result in reduced funding for the direct provision of transit services to area residents.

Many commenters expressed similar concerns regarding the coordination models that have been implemented in some other states. As discussed in Section 5, some of these models limit the state department of transportation's direct contacts to entities such as a regional agency or a region's primary service provider. All other local service providers must work through the region's transit authority rather than directly with the state's department of transportation.

Such arrangements were viewed by many as being an additional and unnecessary layer of bureaucracy. Without exception, the regions' transit managers expressed pleasure with their working relationship with NDDOT. They expressed a desire for more direct communications with department personnel and do not support initiatives that would inhibit such contacts. While these managers are not opposed to regional coordination, they would not support any related implementations that would insulate them from NDDOT through the creation of additional layers of bureaucracy.

7.3   Statutory Misperceptions and Negative Prior Experiences

Initial meetings with the project's Regional Steering Committees and local transit operators indicated that there were significant misperceptions with S.B. No. 2223's prescriptions.   Despite the legislation's repeated references to coordination, people tended to focus on the word "regional" and assumed that the intent of the legislation was to regionalize transit services. The end result of this regionalization, in their minds, was the loss of local services and forced consolidations.

These misperceptions prompted project researchers to make concerted and repeated efforts to educate transit operators and the public concerning the focus of S.B No. 2223 – coordination vs. regionalization. Despite these efforts, related misperceptions and suspicions may persist.

Related misgivings concerning anything to do with regional activities were evident during discussions with program managers whose job duties include human services-related senior service program management. These individuals have prior experience with regionalization related to senior programs. They perceive that these efforts worked well in some regions but were far from successful in others. They were concerned that any type of regional program related to transit might have a similar negative outcome. Consequently, efforts must be taken to learn from these prior failures, whether real or perceived, and to address them in well-crafted regional coordination initiatives.

7.4 Territorialism and Protectionism

Some local transit operators may resist coordination efforts if they result in other operators providing services outside their traditional service areas. Such a situation might exist, for example, when an operator travels through another agency's service area and picks up passengers on the way to a regional center.

This occurrence may produce both advantages and disadvantages. Advantages result if the operators can coordinate their schedules and ultimately provide local residents with more travel options. It could also result in cost savings, depending on total demand, if one operator is able to discontinue a route because the other carrier is able to provide all the service that is required by area residents. This would also free up a vehicle for the provision of local services rather than having to dedicate it, on a particular day, to long distance service to a regional center.

Having another operator transport riders also creates a possible problem to the extent that the local operator may experience a loss in total ridership. In some instances, state transportation funds are distributed, in part, based on ridership. As prescribed by N.D.C.C. 39-04.2-04, a county's per capita allocation is distributed based on ridership if there are multiple service providers in the county. Therefore, a loss of ridership could result in a decline in state funding to an affected operator.

There may also be a related fear on the part of very small operators with minimal ridership. The perception may be that the ability of another operator to satisfy most of a community's need for intercity service may ultimately result in the total dissolution of a local operator's service.

7.5 Resistance to Change and Lack of Local Champion

Coordinating services with other transit operators may result in services being provided on other than traditional days (e.g., days of trips to regional centers). At the outset, it may also result in passengers having to board an unfamiliar bus that is driven by a person they do not know. Passengers' resistance to change could inhibit their willingness to adapt to any change in service, even though it represents a service enhancement or a cost savings to them and/or the system.

Resistance to change may also occur relative to program managers and/or local advisory boards. Some local transit operations have, for example, operated in the same manner since their inception as senior busing programs several decades ago. Local managers and/or advisory boards may perceive little or no reason to consider the possibility of new local service options or to alter their services to coordinate with other operators. Doing nothing and avoiding risk and/or more work may win out over effectuating advantageous change. Perceived benefits must be evident to encourage change.

Overcoming resistance to change often requires local leadership and a champion who recognizes potential benefits and is willing to take associated risks. The absence of a champion/leader may be a significant barrier to initiating coordinated transit services at the local, regional, or even the state level.

7.6 Misunderstandings and Prejudices

Rider misunderstandings and/or prejudices may also serve as inhibitors to successful coordination. A common public misunderstanding concerning the regions' public transportation services relates to public versus senior citizen busing.

As discussed earlier, many of the state's public transportation systems, especially in rural areas, started out as senior citizen programs. In fact, some systems still have the word "senior" in their name even though the services they provide are now available to the public.

Many of the regions' service providers have overcome related misperceptions by the public. In some communities, however, potential system riders are unaware that they are eligible to ride what they consider to be a senior citizens bus.

It was also observed that some local transit operations do, in fact, structure their services to cater to senior citizens. Such an operational structure is appropriate if, in fact, those are the only services required by the local community. That may not be the case, however, if the local operator has failed to work within the community to identify a broader set of potential unmet needs and to design services that are capable of satisfying those needs.

Some public input comments also suggested that carrying a broader array of passengers could result in less usage by some segments of the population. For example, it was suggested that having more youth riding on transit vehicles could discourage use by some older adults. Similarly, racial prejudices might manifest themselves if certain riders suddenly found themselves sharing rides with other racial groups. Other riders may be similarly hesitant to travel with passengers with disabilities.

7.7   Rider Needs

Actual rider needs may serve as a barrier to what might otherwise be perceived as a potential for coordination. Such situations may exist when certain riders have specific travel needs, such as daily commutes versus trips that provide for some flexibility.

Another common occurrence that may inhibit coordination involves medical trips that result in a rider's inability to spend additional time away from home to accommodate other riders' desire to spend time shopping, etc. A prime and common occurrence involves regular kidney dialysis which leaves patients with severe energy loss. Special rider needs may, therefore, restrict operators' abilities to combine what might otherwise appear to be overlapping trips and opportunities for coordination.

7.8   Operator Personalities

As with any effort to work collectively, regional transit coordination may be undermined by personality conflicts among the region's transit managers. These conflicts could involve matters such as perceptions of over-aggressiveness or lack thereof, mistrust of intentions, differences in operating practices, or any other issues that contribute to interpersonal conflicts. These problems may be real or perceived.

Fortunately, interviews with the regions' program managers suggest that all individuals involved show a mutual respect for one another and an outward willingness to cooperate and coordinate.

7.9   Lack of Expertise

Even given sufficient time, budgetary resources, and willingness on the part of cooperating partners, coordinating transit services within a community or a region may not necessarily be an easy task. Effective organizational planning must occur to put a supporting structure in place.

This organizational planning involves the creation of an advisory board that is representative of the community or region with members that are insightful, actively engaged in the process, and believers in

the benefits that may be achieved through meaningful coordination. Attention is also required to insure that the board or committee has a clear understanding of its responsibilities, and that all meetings and related activities are well planned. Board and committee members are typically volunteers or are paid by outside employers. Their participation in coordination efforts is frustrated if meetings and other activities are poorly structured and a poor use of time.

Planning and carrying out coordination-related activities is not necessarily a job skill that is possessed by all local transit program managers. This is a potential barrier that must be addressed to help insure the success of local, regional, and even state-level coordination initiatives.

7.10 Differing Fare Structures

A portion of the time spent interviewing local transit program managers was dedicated to soliciting and verifying information on program operations, including fares. In some instances, wide variations were noted from one program to another for what appear to be similar services.

This occurrence poses a potential problem relative to coordination. This problem arises if an operator began offering services in a neighboring community, and there were drastic differences in related fares. For example, if the local operator charged $20 for a trip to a regional center, and the new coordinating operator began offering service on an alternative day for its traditional rate of $10, problems would obviously arise. Riders would notice the difference, and pressure would be applied on the local operator to reduce its rates, even though those fares might be economically justifiable.

Relative consistency in fare structures is necessary if coordination is to work, especially in areas where there are service overlaps with trip options being provided by two or more operators.

7.11 Institutional Requirements

As discussed in Section 1, federal Executive Order 13330 was based, in part, on the fact that there were over 60 federal programs in a variety of agencies that involved the provision of transportation services to various segments of the population. The order represented an attempt to coordinate the provision of related services.

Coordinating these services proved to be challenging because each program had its own specific clientele group and varying eligibility, operating, and administrative requirements. Some programs, for example, may have required vehicles with seat beats while others did not. Some operators may have had insurance requirements that limited their ability to provide service to different segments of the population. Some programs may have had reimbursement limitations or procedures that discouraged the provision of services by some operators. Some of these inhibitors were real, while others were only perceived. In either case, in some communities they had a chilling impact on potential coordination.

Federal agencies have been working together to address these policy and regulatory barriers to coordination. Similar barriers may exist and need to be addressed at state, regional, and local levels.

7.12 State Initiatives

Despite the 2004 mandates of presidential Executive Order 13330 and additional coordination-related provisions of SAFETEA-LU in 2005, a 2010 report of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) identified eight states that did not have a human services transportation coordinating council or some form of legislative or executive directive to coordinate. North Dakota was listed as one of those states, even though there is a coordination-related memorandum of understanding between NDDOT and the North Dakota Department of Human Services. Some additional action may help effectuate a broader level of coordination in the state.

According to the NCSL report, several states reported that their coordinating council had been created by legislative action, while others indicated that their councils were established by executive order. Other states reported that some other form of mandate had precipitated their coordination efforts. In any case, someone at the state level had championed the cause to initiate state-level transportation coordination. Conversely, a lack of meaningful state leadership may suggest to local program operators that coordination is not a priority.

Comments received at public input meetings across the regions indicated that state-level coordination is necessary if local and regional coordination efforts are to be successful. Some of the resulting consistency is perceptual in that it sends a message that coordination is, in fact, a priority and that it is being pursued at all levels.

State level leadership and involvement can also play a meaningful role to the extent that having legislators, agencies, and upper tier personnel involved may make it easier to enact legislation, procure funding, and initiate programs and policies that support local and regional coordination initiatives. The lack of state involvement may serve as a major barrier to the coordination of transportation services.

8. FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prior to discussing specific recommendations, it may be beneficial to review this study's major findings concerning the status of transit coordination in the two pilot regions. Understanding the way things are and why they are that way should contribute to developing mechanisms that will promote the achievement of coordination-related goals prescribed by federal enactments and North Dakota's Legislature.

One of this report's initial findings is that there is coordination taking place among several transit service providers in the two pilot regions. There are, however, significant opportunities for additional coordination. These opportunities may be realized by creating a structure that will bring service providers and stakeholders together on a regular basis to discuss existing service levels, unmet needs, and possible ways to address those needs.

Missed opportunities regarding additional coordination may best be understood by looking at the time that many program directors have to devote to coordination. Many of the regions' transit services began as nutrition-related programs that served the communities' senior population. These programs have grown significantly, along with residents' needs and increases in funding from the federal and state governments.

What were once relatively small undertakings are now, in many instances, sizeable programs. Quite often, however, organizational structures have not been adjusted to adequately address program demands. Only two of the regions' nine program directors are full-time transit employees. Many directors oversee multiple functions ranging from city auditor to senior programs involving congregate and home delivered meals, outreach services, prescription drug assistance programs, food banks, and durable medical equipment loan programs.

Given the many demands that face transit directors, dedicating significant time to pursue increased coordination with other service providers or local client groups is not an option. It would not, therefore, be prudent to institute coordination-related mandates that place additional requirements on local program directors without providing them with the resources that are required to help them be successful. The recommendations outlined in this section do place additional requirements on local transit operators, but they also provide additional resources that should enable them to be successful partners in the state's coordination efforts.

Regarding potential coordination structures, Section 5's discussions illustrate that coordination models vary greatly from state to state. Similarly, this project's public input meetings and discussions with the regions' public transit operators and regional steering committee members indicate that people have widely varying ideas on what regional coordination entails and how it should be implemented.

The challenge, therefore, is to develop a model that is specifically suited for North Dakota and the two pilot regions. The goal is to create a model that achieves meaningful coordination, not only among public transportation service providers, but also for human service-related agencies and clients, and to do so without unnecessarily burdensome bureaucracy. If policymakers decide that further deployment is in the public interest, the resulting model must also be affordable and sustainable for the two pilot regions and the entire state.

While North Dakota state law has been silent relative to transit coordination, Senate Bill No. 2223 gave coordination priority status in the two pilot regions. The recommendations set forth in this section address the goals and objectives laid out in S.B. No. 2223 while avoiding the creation of unnecessary layers of bureaucracy. These recommendations also address barriers identified in Section 7 that may stand in the way of meaningful coordination.

It should be noted that the recommendations presented in this section go beyond what is needed to satisfy the requirements of S.B. No. 2223. This approach appears prudent given related mandates set forth in SAFTETEA-LU and federal Executive Order 13330. Therefore, these recommendations address the requirements of S.B. No. 2223 and provide a foundation that will help the state address other coordination-related prescriptions of federal law and executive order.

This section is divided into five sections, the first four of which have several corresponding recommendations. These sections include:

8.1	Satisfying Federal and State Coordination Mandates
8.2	NDDOT Prescriptions and Operator Assistance
8.3	Operator-specific Recommendations
8.4	Priorities, Timelines, Budget, and Funding Sources
8.5	Summary

Table 8.1 identifies each of the recommendations presented in this section. The table also indicates if the recommendation relates specifically to the implementation of S.B. No. 2223, related federal coordination mandates, and/or best practices identified by sources such as the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Cooperative Highway Research Program, the Transit Cooperative Research Program, and direct contacts that project researchers had with other states during this research effort.

Each of the recommendations identified in Table 8.1 will be discussed in narrative form in the following sections of this section. A corresponding prioritization list and budget are presented at the end of the section.

Table 8.1 Recommendations Summary

Recommendation	Directly Related to S.B 2223	Related to Federal Law and/or Executive Order	Industry Best Practice	Other Research Findings
23. Avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and intermediaries			✓	✓
24. Statutory amendments - make coordination a state priority and consider giving counties the ability to levy a tax to support the provision of transit services		✓	✓	✓
25. Require establishment of regional coordinating councils	✓	✓	✓	✓
26. Require establishment of local advisory boards		✓	✓	✓
27. Require regional coordination plans	✓	✓	✓	✓
28. Require local coordination & operating plans		✓	✓	✓
29. Give NDDOT discretion in determining regional transit boundaries and suggest boundaries for two pilot regions	✓		✓	✓
30. Create regional coordination administrator job description	✓		✓	✓
31. Contract for initial implementation support	✓		✓	✓
32. Provide funding for local administrative support	✓	✓	✓	✓
33. Expand coordination effort to other regions	✓	✓	✓	✓
34. Create mechanisms to publicize available services & changes	✓	✓	✓	✓
35. Establish uniform operating standards for all service providers and provide policy and procedure templates	✓		✓	✓
36. Develop consensus on use and deployment of dispatch software		✓	✓	✓
37. Develop long-term vehicle replacement plans	✓		✓	✓
38. Specific recommendations concerning coordination-related cost saving/revenue enhancement efforts	✓			✓
39. Establish guidelines for fare cost recovery & uniformity	✓		✓	✓
40. Use performance measures to track operations	✓		✓	✓
41. Monitor workload of NDDOT transit staff and adjust as appropriate			✓	✓
42. Operator-specific modifications to facilitate coordination, cost-savings, and/or service enhancements	✓			✓
43. Prioritize implementation of recommendations	✓	✓	✓	✓
44. Develop short and long-term budgets and identify possible funding sources	✓		✓	✓

8.1   Satisfying Federal and State Coordination Mandates

Subsections 8.1.1 through 8.1.11 present recommendations that satisfy the coordination-related mandates of federal law, federal executive order, and S.B. No. 2223. As will be discussed at the end of this section, these recommendations should be the state's top priority.

8.1.1   Unnecessary Bureaucracy and Intermediaries

As discussed in Section 5, North Dakota has a very flat organizational structure relative to relationships between NDDOT and local rural transit service providers. In most regions, there are direct lines of communications and contractual agreements between the department and local providers.

Comments received at this project's public input meetings and directly from the regions' transit operators indicate that this organizational structure should be maintained. Operators appreciate the relationship they have with NDDOT and oppose any organizational change that would create a layer of bureaucracy between them and the department.

As the recommendations presented in the remainder of this section indicate, increased coordination can be achieved without insulating NDDOT from local operators. The existing system facilitates efficiencies and may be used to achieve increased coordination in a cost-effective and straightforward manner. It is recommended that the existing model be maintained, and that coordination be pursued without the creation of intermediary entities that would inhibit existing relationships.

8.1.2   Statutory Amendments

The 2009 Legislature's passage of S.B. No. 2223 reflects the sentiment that coordination of public transportation services should be pursued in North Dakota. State law is, however, otherwise silent concerning coordination. Conversely, federal law and executive order require the coordination of certain public and human services transportation.

As discussed in earlier sections, a 2010 report of the National Conference of State Legislatures found that 11 states had pursued implementation of federal coordination mandates via statutory enactments and that another 14 had done so by either a governor's executive order or some other initiative. North Dakota is not one of those states.

To move North Dakota toward compliance with federal transit coordination mandates and to further the apparent intentions of S.B. No. 2223, it is recommended that N.D.C.C. 39-04.2 be amended, either now or in a future biennium, to provide that:

- The coordination of public transportation services is in the public interest and should be facilitated by state agencies that have a role in personal mobility.

- Public transportation service providers that receive state transportation aid funding must coordinate their services with other public transportation service providers and entities that represent clients with personal mobility needs.

These changes would provide direction and incentives to pursue coordination at the state and local level. It would also create a coordination mandate for those North Dakota service providers that do not receive federal financial support. The Legislature may also want to consider the creation of a disincentive for failing to coordinate by giving NDDOT the ability to withhold public transportation funds from counties and/or service providers that fail to adequately pursue coordination.

The timing of any related revisions to N.D.C.C. 39-04.2, if deemed appropriate, is a policy decision that is obviously in the hands of the Legislature. Such amendments could be pursued immediately or the Legislature could wait and monitor related deployments in the two pilot regions and future implementations in other regions of the state.

As indicated above, some states have used governor-issued executive orders to initiate coordination and to thereby comply with federal mandates. Executive orders have been used in North Dakota in the past to create various boards and commissions.

Regarding the appropriateness of executive orders versus legislative enactments, a 2005 National Conference of State Legislatures report concerning coordinated transportation pointed out that, "States without legislation that are dependent on an executive order will want to consider whether this approach adequately addresses coordination concerns. State executive orders generally do not survive the executive and are threatened when the governor leaves office. A more permanent coordination mechanism may be achieved through legislation." Given the attention paid to transit coordination by North Dakota's 2009 Legislature, it may be appropriate to defer to the Legislature regarding further coordination-related directives.

Legislators may also want to take note of the fact that cities may, with voter approval, levy a tax to support the provision of transit services; counties do not have a comparable ability. N.D.C.C. 57-15-10(25) and N.D.C.C. 57-15-55 gives cities the ability, with voter approval, to levy a tax of up to five mills to support the provision of transit services. An amendment to N.D.C.C. Section 57-15 might be considered to give counties the same ability.

It should be noted, however, that several transit service providers expressed concern regarding such an enactment, fearing that creating a new revenue source might negatively impact the state's willingness to provide funding to support the provision of local transit services. Giving counties the ability to levy a tax to support the provision of transit services should not be viewed as a reason to diminish state aid for transit. Rather, the potential revenue source would be a means of raising additional funds that could be used to match federal funds, thereby leveraging state and local monies to make more funds available to satisfy the personal mobility needs of area residents.

It should also be noted that N.D.C.C. 57-15-06.7(25) gives counties the ability to levy a tax to support programs and activities for senior citizens. As pointed out in Section 6, some counties use senior program tax revenues to support the provision of transit services based on the fact that senior citizens are major uses of these services.

8.1.3 Regional Coordinating Councils

Contacts with public transportation service providers indicate that some coordination is already taking place in the two pilot regions. This coordination is especially apparent in situations where program directors have occasions to meet and to become familiar with one another's programs and services. The same may be said concerning situations where program directors interact with entities that represent groups of mobility dependent individuals (group homes, nursing homes, human service agencies, etc.).

As indicated in Section 6, NDDOT and SURTC created a regional steering committee (RSC) in each pilot region to create an awareness of the project, provide related direction, and publicize various public meetings. These committees were formulated to insure participation by each region's counties, transit service providers, government officials, transit users, etc. In many instances, conversations at RSC meetings were revealing in that they created awareness among participants concerning opportunities to

coordinate the provision of services, both among existing service providers and with existing or potential users.

To perpetuate these coordination opportunities and to assist with the development of long range transit plans discussed in subsequent sections of this section, it is recommended that a regional coordinating council be created in each region. This occurrence would facilitate the state's compliance with federal coordination mandates.

To coordinate this recommendation with related federal prescriptions, it is recommended that consideration be given to including the following entities on each council:

- Transportation partners, such as all of each region's publicly financed public transportation service providers and other private and non-profit transportation service providers
- Transit passengers and advocates
- Human service partners, such as human service agencies, Job Services, health care facilities, etc.
- Other entities such, as tribal representatives, economic development organizations, governmental entities, and representatives of the business community

The primary purposes of each regional council would be to create awareness of available transit services within the region, to help identify unmet personal mobility needs, to look for opportunities to satisfy these unmet needs, and to coordinate the provision of transit services to increase efficiency and enhance service. To formalize this coordinated planning process, each regional council would be required to facilitate and oversee the development of a regional coordination plan. This planning function will be discussed further in subsequent sections, as will assistance that should be provided to aid with the preparation of these plans. It is anticipated that regional councils will need to meet at least quarterly.

Figure 8.1 presents an organizational chart that depicts entities that would comprise a regional coordinating council and the relationship between the council and NDDOT. The figure also illustrates the relationship between the council, NDDOT, and the regional coordination administrator, a position that is specifically provided for in Senate Bill No. No. 2223, and that will be discussed further in a subsequent recommendation. As indicated in Figure 8.1, the regional coordination administrator would work for NDDOT and have a direct line of communication with the regional coordinating council.
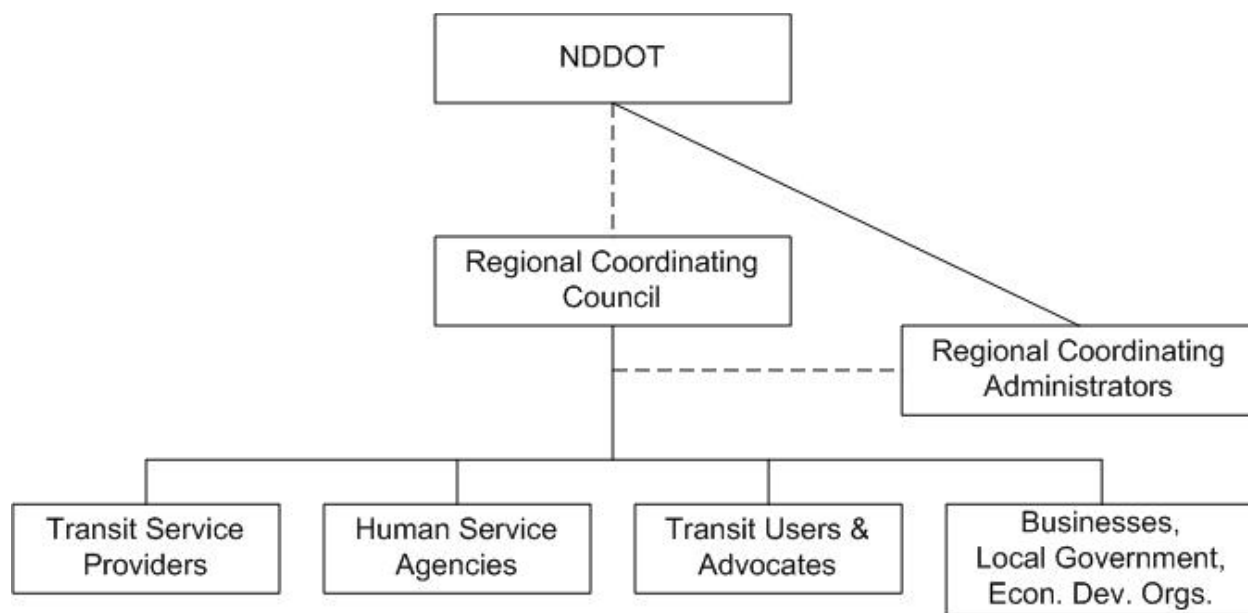
Figure 8.1 Organizational Chart – Regional Coordinating Council

As may be noted in the comments presented at the end of Appendix A, there was not universal support among the regions' transit operators regarding the need for regional coordination councils or the regional coordination administrator position that will be discussed in a subsequent recommendation. It should also be noted, however, that transit coordination is provided for in S.B. No. 2223 and federal law. Regional coordinating councils and related staff support are an integral part of this process, as documented in the coordination models discussed in Section 5. This report's recommendations concerning regional coordinating councils and regional coordination administrators are consistent with the provisions of S.B. No. 2223 and put structures and processes in place that further the coordination provisions of SAFETEA-LU and the FTA.

8.1.4 Local Advisory Boards

As discussed in Section 6, personal interviews were conducted with each of the regions' public transit service providers. A portion of each interview was dedicated to discussing the existence and activities of the provider's local transit advisory board. Responses varied. Some operators have very active local boards, while other boards are only marginally active or even non-existent.

Ideally, local transit advisory boards represent a wide variety of interests within the community or service territory and serve several functions. In many respects, board membership should include entities discussed in the preceding section regarding regional coordination boards.

Active boards typically meet at least quarterly and discuss evolving transit needs within the community and how transit services might be modified to help satisfy these and other unmet needs. Local advisory boards also serve as a resource to discuss proposed service and fare changes to see if they are responsive to local needs. These boards also help publicize the availability of local transit services and upcoming modifications. They can also lend support to local fundraising efforts.

It is recommended that NDDOT require all entities that receive federal or state transit monies administered by the department have a local advisory board, which functions as discussed in the preceding paragraphs. Local boards should meet at least quarterly and official copies of printed, signed board meeting minutes should be kept on file by all transit operators.

Local advisory boards should also work with the service operator to prepare local coordination and operating plans, which will be discussed in subsequent sections. Assistance in the preparation of these plans will also be discussed later in this Section.

Several of North Dakota's transit operators have very functional advisory boards. NDDOT should work with operators to develop uniform standards and expectations concerning board functions, membership, term limits, etc.

Figures 8.2 and 8.3 present organizational charts that identify entities that would comprise a local advisory board. The figure also illustrates the relationship between the advisory board, NDDOT, and the regional coordination administrator. Figure 8.2 reflects a situation where the advisory board would be separate from the transit operation's governing board, a condition that might be especially common where the transit system is run by city government or an organization that has other additional responsibilities, such as senior citizen programs and activities.
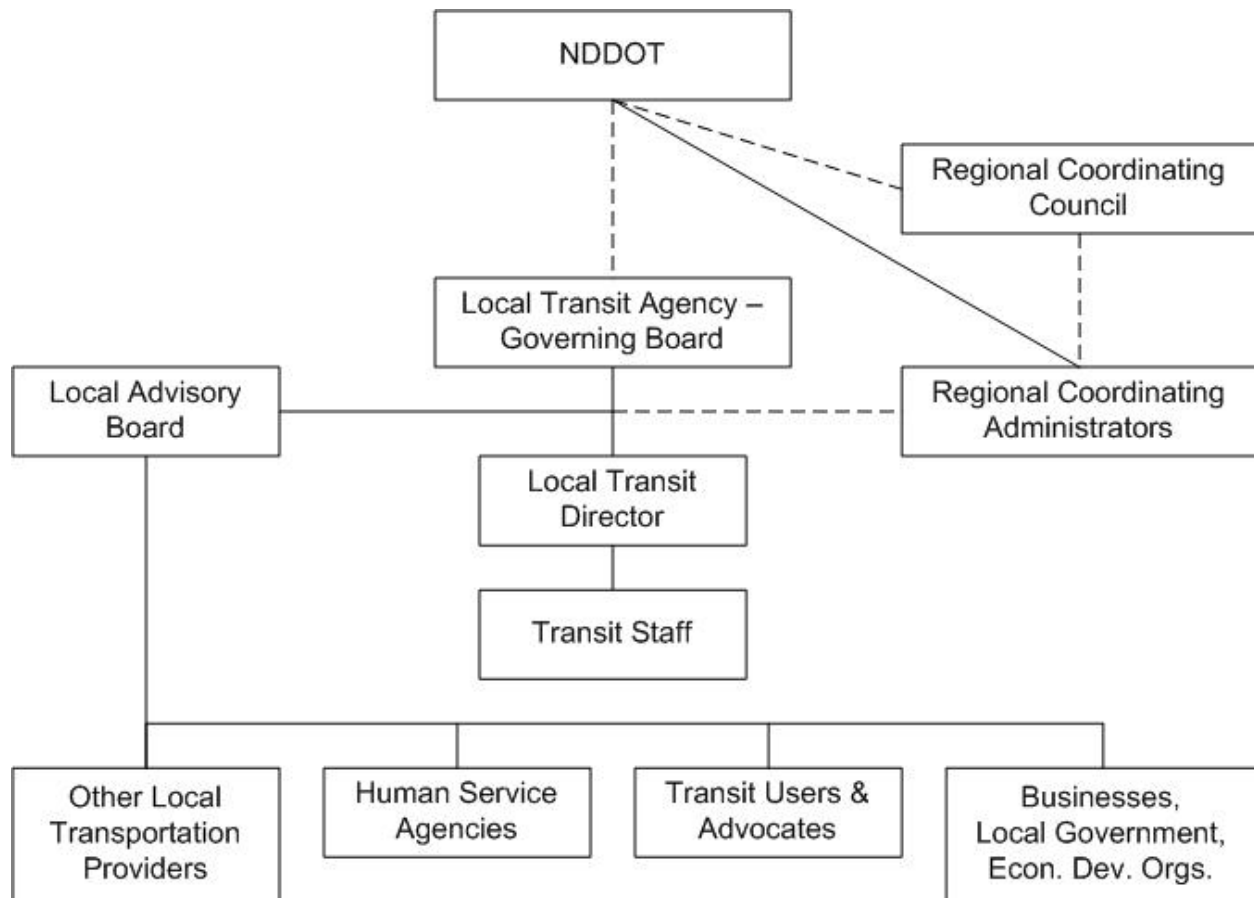
Figure 8.2 Organization Chart – Local Advisory Board with Separate Governing Board

Figure 8.3 illustrates a situation where transit is an organization's primary focus, and where its governing board might include individuals who are representative of a wide variety of transit interests. In such a case, the organization's board of directors might also serve as its advisory board.
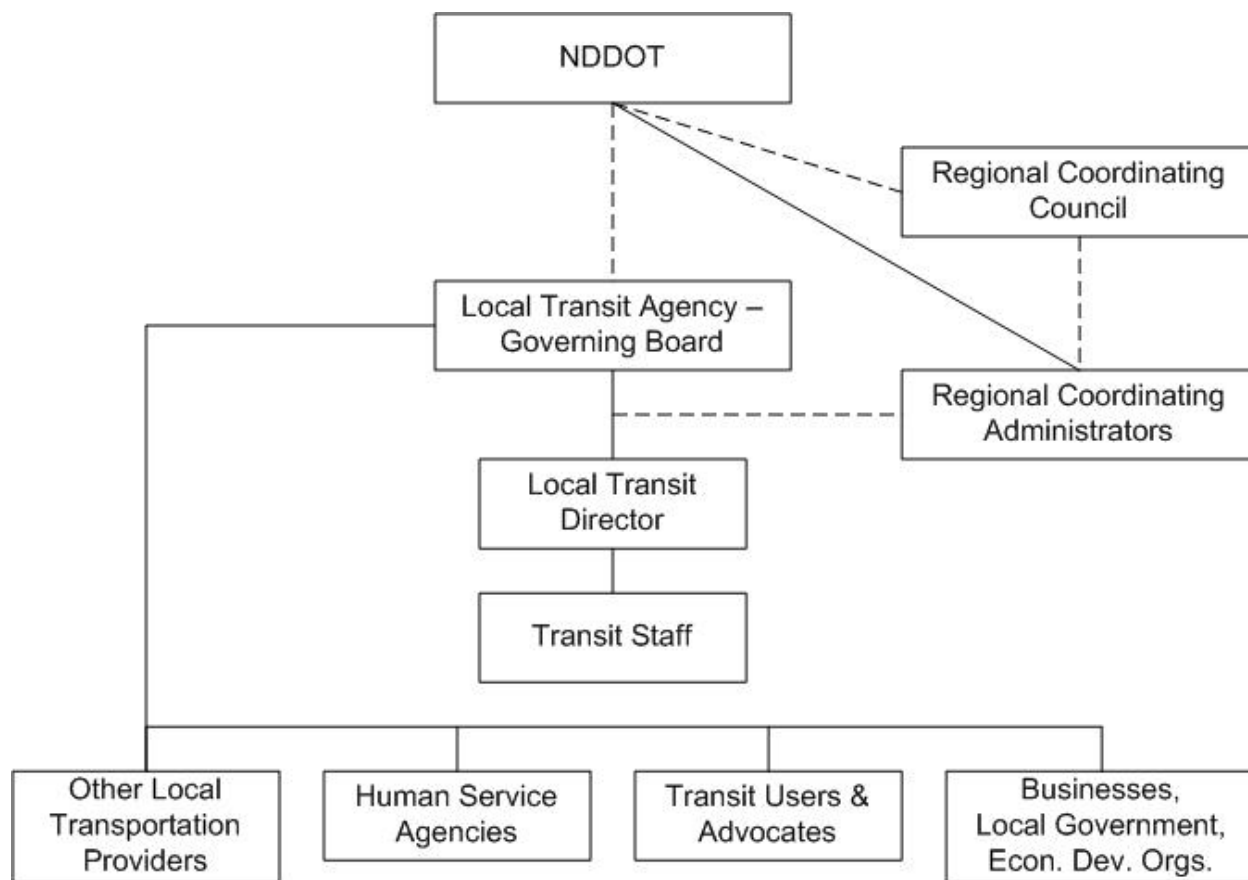
Figure 8.3 Organization Chart – Combined Local Advisory and Governing Board

As depicted in both Figures 8.2 and 8.3, local transit agencies would continue to have direct lines of communication with NDDOT, but decisions regarding levels of service would remain local. The regional coordination administrator would be a resource available to local agencies.

8.1.5 Regional Coordination Plans

Compliance with federal transit coordination mandates requires the preparation of "a locally developed, coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan." These plans are to include a local transportation service inventory, needs assessment, strategies for meeting these needs, and priorities related to funding and implementation. Plan development is to include all the entities discussed in the preceding section regarding regional coordination councils.

Even without these federal prescriptions, the preparation of regional coordination plans is a sound idea. Doing so formalizes the needs identification process and helps design coordinated services that are responsive to identified needs.

The need for regional plans is further exemplified by the 2010 *North Dakota Rural Public Transit Assessment,* which was prepared for NDDOT. That study attempted to identify unmet transit needs on a regional basis. An apparent next step to satisfying these unmet needs is the development of related regional plans. Similar to locally developed transportation improvement plans (TIP) that are developed in

North Dakota to project long range transportation infrastructure needs, it is envisioned that regional coordination plans would project transit-related plans four years into the future. As with TIPs, regional plans would be updated annually.

NDDOT may need to contract for the initial preparation of each region's plan. Each region's coordination administrator may be capable of preparing subsequent annual updates, with oversight provided by each region's coordination council. Cost estimates for the initial preparation of these plans are presented at the end of this section.

8.1.6 Local Coordination and Operating Plans

Just as the provision of transit services should be coordinated at the regional level, such services should also be coordinated locally. Even though there may only be one public transit service provider in many rural areas, there is still a need to coordinate these services with other entities such as nursing homes, human service agencies, etc. Therefore, the regional planning requirements discussed in the preceding section should also apply to each individual public transportation service provider.

In addition to coordination, it is recommended that NDDOT work with each of the regions' public transit providers to develop a four-year business plan. As discussed in earlier sections, most of North Dakota's public transit operators grew from local senior nutrition busing programs and are now far bigger businesses than they once were. Many have large vehicle fleets, sizeable staffs, and significant budgets. Unfortunately, many do not have long-term operating plans which assess their current operations and outline plans for future operations and related resource needs.

The South Dakota Department of Transportation recently contracted to have multi-year business plans prepared for several of its rural transit services. These plans reviewed each operator's organizational structure and existing services and facilities and proposed long-term service options and related operating and capital budgets. These plans also paid specific attention to internal management succession plans – an item that is of critical importance to many of North Dakota's transit agencies.

The information contained in these plans, especially in terms of long-term operating and capital needs, could be valuable to NDDOT's corresponding long-term plans. As was the case in South Dakota, NDDOT could contract for the preparation of these plans.

While an entire business plan would not need to be updated annually, specific sections related to performance measures, service options, and long range operating and capital needs should be revisited yearly and could be done locally in conjunction with the preparation of annual coordination plan updates. As with regional plans, cost estimates for the development of initial local plans are presented at the end of this section.

8.1.7 Establishing Boundaries for Transit Regions

S.B. No. 2223 requires the development of public transportation coordination pilot projects in two of the state's planning regions. North Dakota's 53 counties are divided into eight planning regions.

It should be noted, however, that residents' travel patterns and the operations of the state's local transit services do not necessarily follow traditional planning region boundaries. For example, Sheridan and Emmons Counties are in the west central planning region (Region 7). For transit purposes, however, both counties are served by multi-county operators based in the south central planning region (Region 6). Their transit services are best coordinated with other counties being served by their transit service providers.

Similarly, Kidder County is in the west central planning region, but transit services in the Jamestown region regularly pass through the county on the way to Bismarck, the primary destination for Kidder County passengers. Coordinating with the south central region's service providers would be most beneficial to Kidder County.

It is also important to note that coordination should not stop at regional or even state boundaries. Conversations throughout this study process indicated that opportunities for coordination transcend artificial lines on a map. Efforts must, therefore, be made to coordinate not only within but also among regions.

Similarly, North Dakota's transit coordination map may not necessarily have eight regions. It may be determined that seven or six or even five may be the right number of regions, plus ideal regional configurations may change over time. NDDOT should, therefore, be given discretion in establishing both regional coordination boundaries and the actual number of regions in the state.

This point is further verified by independent recommendations presented in the 2010 *North Dakota Rural Public Transit Assessment,* which was prepared for NDDOT. That plan divided the state into seven planning regions. Flexibility in identifying the appropriate number of regions and corresponding regional boundaries will facilitate North Dakota's coordination efforts and will contribute to system efficiencies.

Regarding the two regions in this pilot project, it is recommended, based on existing transit system operations and residents' travel patterns, that the south central region include Barnes, Dickey, Emmons, Foster, Griggs, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, McIntosh, Sheridan, Stutsman, and Wells counties. It is recommended that the west central region include Burleigh, Grant, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, and Sioux counties.

8.1.8 Regional Coordination Administrators

S.B. No. 2223 provides that each of the two pilot regions must have a regional coordination administrator. It is important to remember, however, that a coordinator's workload is going to depend on assigned job functions. In addition, some tasks may be front-end loaded to the extent that there is considerable work to be done initially, but related tasks in subsequent years will be less time consuming. Related staffing structures must also be sustainable over the long haul.

With these points in mind, several of the recommendations presented in this section call for the use of contracted assistance to complete start-up tasks such as establishing regional and local boards and completing initial coordination and operating plans. Coordination administrators would be involved with these tasks and would responsible for related activities in subsequent years. With this framework in mind, it is recommended that the job description of regional coordination administrators include:

1. Working with local providers to configure/reconfigure their local advisory board.
2. Helping plan for and run initial local advisory board meetings, if needed.
3. Working with a contractor to develop initial four-year coordination and operating plans for local service providers and to thereafter help with preparation of annual updates.
4. Working with a contractor to establish regional coordination boards.
5. Working with a contractor to plan for and run initial regional board meetings and to thereafter be the staff person assigned to facilitate regional board meetings.
6. Working with a contractor to develop initial four-year regional coordination plans and to thereafter work with each regional coordination council to prepare annual updates.
7. Serving as an information source for local service providers.

Conversations with transit operators and various RSC and TAC members identified numerous other tasks that might be included in a coordination administrator's job description. While most of these ideas had merit, it appears that many of those suggestions involved tasks that might be best performed by NDDOT's central office transit staff versus a regional coordinator. These tasks will be addressed in a later recommendation.

Given this list of job duties and the availability of start-up assistance, it is recommended that the two pilot regions be staffed by a single coordination administrator. Evolving job functions and workloads should be monitored to determine if this level of staffing is appropriate in the long term. Corresponding cost estimates for this position are presented in the final portion of this section.

As discussed in this section's initial recommendation, there is a unanimous consensus that regional coordination administrators should be NDDOT employees, either on an FTE or contract basis. Such an arrangement would strengthen existing lines of communication and avoid the creation of structures that might insulate the department from local service providers.

Given the two pilot regions' location, it is recommended that the initial regional coordination administrator be based in Bismarck, possibly co-located with NDDOT's other transit staff. This arrangement would make the coordinator accessible to NDDOT, operators, and related boards in both regions. This close working relationship with NDDOT's central office should also help create operational mechanisms that should benefit coordination-related deployments in other regions in future years.

Based on the assumption that this pilot coordination process will eventually be expanded to encompass the entire state, it is envisioned that more coordination administrators will eventually be added. These administrators should be domiciled in or near the regions they serve. Possible office locations might include NDDOT district offices. There was a consensus throughout this project that regional coordinators should not be based at transit provider offices since doing so might be construed as granting special treatment to one operator versus others.

The relationship between the regional coordination administrator and the regional coordinating councils and local advisory boards was illustrated earlier in Figures 8.1, 8.2, and 8.3.

8.1.9 Support for Initial Implementation

As indicated in previous discussions, much of the work associated with regional coordination and related regional and local boards and corresponding planning functions is front-end loaded. While there is considerable work to be done in the long term, workloads will definitely diminish after the first year or two.

Given this fact and the desire to develop a system that is fiscally sustainable, it is recommended that NDDOT use contractors to complete much of the non-reoccurring work associated with coordination start-up in the two pilot regions. Related tasks would include working with NDDOT and the regions' coordination administrator to:

1. Work with local providers to configure/reconfigure their local advisory board.
2. Help plan for and run initial local advisory board meetings.
3. Develop initial four-year business and coordination plans for local service providers.
4. Establish regional coordination boards.
5. Work with the coordination administrator to plan for and run initial coordination board meetings.
6. Develop initial four-year regional coordination plans.

Cost estimates for the provision of these services are presented in the final portions of this section.

8.1.10 Funding for Local Administrative Activities

As indicated in numerous places throughout this report, local transit service directors in the two pilot regions are extremely busy. Only two of the regions' directors are employees who spend 100% of their time administering transit operations. One operator is a part-time employee while the rest have multiple job functions ranging from city auditor to directing activities such as congregate and home delivered meals, outreach services, prescription drug assistance programs, food banks, and durable medical equipment loan programs.

It was also indicated earlier that many of the regions' transit services began as local senior citizen nutrition-related transportation programs. Given expanding needs and federal funding, many of these services have grown from small undertakings to sizeable businesses. In many instances, organizational structures and administrative staffing have not kept pace, and critical functions, such as long range planning and coordination, are underserved.

It is recommended that NDDOT monitor the administrative portions of operator budgets. While it is commendable that local operators want to spend more operating dollars on delivering services versus administering programs, long-term efficiency and program viability demand a certain amount of attention. In some cases, local administrative costs may have to increase to complete related tasks and even to promote succession planning within the organization. Quantifying related needs would be facilitated via the completion of the local business and coordination plans discussed in subsection 8.1.6.

8.1.11 Expand Coordination Efforts to Other Regions

Given the fact that S.B. No. 2223 provided for two regional coordination pilot projects, it is anticipated that a successful deployment effort in those two regions would be followed by subsequent deployments that would eventually encompass the entire state. Based on information gathered via this project's public input process and the reception given the initial outline of study recommendations presented to each region's regional steering committee and at subsequent public information presentations, there also appears to be local support for increased coordination.

It is, therefore, recommended that the state proceed with efforts to expanded regional coordination efforts to other regions of the state. Staged multi-year implementation using the approach used in the initial pilot regions may be considered in order to promote operator and public education, input, and support for the resulting structure. Based on the experience gained during the pilot project effort and the fact that some functions will not have to be undertaken again (e.g., a review of other states' coordination efforts), it is envisioned that the next biennium's effort might entail three regions, thereby reducing statewide deployment from six more years down to four. The budget presented at the end of this section reflects this shortened deployment schedule.

8.2   NDDOT Prescriptions and Operator Assistance

This project provided numerous opportunities for public input and direct communication with the regions' transit operators. These points of contact include regional steering committee meetings, on-site operator interviews, and public input meetings. Related discussions involved both local transit operations and services provided to these operators by NDDOT.

This section's recommendations focus on service and operational issues related to both local operators and NDDOT's central office transit staff. It is envisioned that many of these recommendations could be

implemented without significant cost and that doing so would enhance local operator efficiencies and effectiveness. Providing related services to local operators would also promote statewide continuity and free up operator time for other job functions such as the pursuit of increased coordination at both the local and regional level.

8.2.1 Publicize Transit Services

Discussions at several of the project's public input meetings highlighted the fact that many local transit providers do not have a convenient way to find out what transit services are being provided by other operators. Similarly, members of the public do not have access to information on either local services or those available in other areas of the state.

The lack of ready access to current information on the services, routes, and fares of other transit operators impairs operators' abilities to coordinate with other area operators, plus it makes it difficult for local operators to help patrons who are looking for means to travel to other parts of the state. On multiple occasions during the public input process, it became apparent that coordination opportunities existed, and local operators were willing to do so once they became aware of such opportunities.

A prime example involved two operators who served neighboring communities, both of whom traveled to a distant regional center on the same day with vehicles with excess capacity. One operator could obviously discontinue its service and have it provided by the other operator, or the services could be offered on different days, thereby giving local residents multiple trip options. Other examples involved transit agencies that travel through another operator's traditional service territory on the way to a regional hub. Transportation could easily be offered to local residents on a space available basis.

It is anticipated that bringing each region's transit operators together via the regional coordinating council process will help these operators become aware of each other's services and provide related means of increasing coordination. Additional steps should also be taken to create mechanisms so operators and the public have ready access to current information on available schedules, routes, and fares.

One way to create such an information source would be for NDDOT to require that all public transportation service providers maintain a Web site with complete and current service, schedule, route, fare, and contact information. With these sites in place, NDDOT could maintain a Web site of its own with links to each local operator's site. Such a site could also include a state map which showed each of the state's 53 counties. By clicking on any county, system users would be directed to information on service providers operating in that area.

In addition to creating and regularly updating these sites, services providers should be required to provide public notice whenever there is a change to existing schedules, routes, or fares. Meeting this requirement could be as simple as providing notices to patrons on transit vehicles, posting notices on area senior meal sites, and sending out electronic notices to the local media, the state's other transit operators, and NDDOT. Such a notice could detail upcoming changes and direct recipients to go to the operator's website for more complete information.

During the public information meeting process, it was also suggested that marketing efforts be undertaken at the regional and/or state level to create public awareness concerning the state's public transit services, their availability to the public, and related sources of information regarding specific local services.

8.2.2 Uniform Operating Standards

Operator interviews, conducted as a part of this project's information gathering process, identified several areas where NDDOT could provide leadership and assistance that would simplify local administrative requirements and create higher and more uniform operating standards among the state's rural transit operators. Examples include driver qualifications and ongoing training and standardized operating documents involving drug and alcohol testing, vehicle maintenance, building maintenance, and employee handbooks.

Rural transit operators who receive federal transit funding are required, by the FTA, to have policies and procedures in place to govern the handling of operational matters such as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Rather than having each of the state's 30-plus operators develop their own documents, it would be far less complicated and expensive if NDDOT provided operators with a set of standardized documents that could be adopted for local use. Thereafter, NDDOT should monitor corresponding federal regulations to insure continuing compliance with changing federal requirements.

There are numerous examples of federally approved operator documents that address the topical areas outlined above, plus others. Operator compliance would be greatly facilitated and local administrative workloads would be greatly reduced if NDDOT would identify appropriate templates and provide those and related updates to individual operators, as the need arises.

It appears that NDDOT has initiated related efforts since this project was initiated. Service providers have voiced their appreciation with the provision of this service.

8.2.3 Scheduling Software and Centralized Dispatch

Transit systems that utilize scheduling software and centralized dispatch have office personnel who take calls from patrons and plan routes for that or the following day. Related information is subsequently transmitted to drivers. Scheduling software and centralized dispatch is commonly used in metropolitan areas, other large communities, and in some rural areas.

During this project's operator interview process, system directors were asked about the mechanisms that they use to receive calls for service and how a centralized system might work for them. Such a system might be specific to just their operations, or it might involve all the transit providers in a region.

Most of the regions' operators oppose the mandatory deployment of centralized dispatch systems, at least for the time being. At the present time, most rural services have local phone numbers that patrons use to talk directly to local transit drivers. Patrons who want to schedule a trip call directly to "their" driver and make corresponding arrangements. System directors speculated that a centralized dispatch system would result in lower levels of service. They also believed that such a system might result in lower levels of ridership because patrons would feel threatened by the changes. Directors also speculated that some drivers (especially older employees) might resign if they were forced to use some form of computerized dispatch system.

It should be noted that there are several national computerized scheduling and dispatch systems available for use by transit operators. System directors agreed that any state funding for centralized and/or computerized dispatch deployments should be well suited for use by all transit services and that each operator's system should be able to interact with other systems in the state.

The Code of Federal Regulations requires that a systems engineering process must be followed if federal transportation funds are used to purchase items such as scheduling software for regional deployment. The

process requires conducting a needs assessment that involves all impacted parties (49 CFR 940.11). It is recommended that NDDOT work with the state's transit agencies and other stakeholders to identify what types of computerized dispatch and scheduling software, if any, are best suited for use in the state and to take steps to insure that future installations will be capable of interacting with other systems as they may be deployed elsewhere in the state.

As an aside, it should be noted that transit drivers' use of cell phones should be governed by prescribed safety standards, especially while the vehicle is in motion. A related policy should be included in each transit service's driver handbook.

8.2.4 Long-term Vehicle Needs

As discussed earlier, most rural transit systems in North Dakota lack detailed long-term plans. Rather, the planning process is often based on each year's federal grant request that is submitted to NDDOT. There is often a concurrent lack of planning regarding each operator's long-term vehicle needs. The trickle-up extension of this deficiency is a lack of state-level information regarding statewide vehicle needs. This shortcoming is burdensome under normal operating conditions, but it is especially troublesome if and when unique funding opportunities such as the 2009-10 federal stimulus program become available. Good data and good planning promote effective and efficient expenditures.

It is recommended that NDDOT require local transit operators to develop and maintain data concerning long-term vehicle needs. These plans should include information on each operator's existing fleet, including vehicle ages, current mileages, projected usage, accessibility features, projected vehicle life and replacement dates, and the expected type of replacement vehicle and projected replacement costs. Compiling and maintaining this information would facilitate local operating plans and provide NDDOT with current information on the short- and long-term vehicle needs of individual operators and the state as a whole. This process would be a component of the business and coordination plan recommended in subsection 8.1.6.

Regional coordination would also be better served if each operator was aware of its long-term needs and the vehicles in use or being planned for by other area service providers. Coordinating services might make it possible for some operators to have more specialized fleets or to depend on other area providers to provide certain specialized services.

8.2.5 Cost Savings and Revenue Enhancements

Other states' experiences with coordination, along with input received from North Dakota's transit directors and NDDOT staff, indicate that coordinating transit services will not result in significantly lower expenditures, either now or in the future. While coordination may result in the elimination of some duplicative routes, direct operating expenses will remain largely unchanged. It is anticipated, however, that system efficiencies will increase to the extent that passenger trips per vehicle mile will increase, and that overall citizen mobility will be enhanced.

As will be noted in latter portions of this section, coordination activities will also have related costs. These costs will involve staffing costs associated with regional coordination administrators and initial contract services. These expenditures will enhance individual operator efficiencies, both short and long term, plus they will increase coordination, both among public transit operations and with human service agencies, nursing homes, etc.

Related comments and suggestions were solicited during operator interviews and at public input meetings. Several individuals suggested that cost savings might be attained by having transit operators work with

each region's coordinator or NDDOT's central office staff to create transit consortiums to purchase supplies such as fuel. Attaining discounts of 10 cents per gallon or more could, for example, have a significant impact on local operating budgets.

A similar suggestion was received concerning the sale of advertising on and in transit vehicles. While such advertising is a common practice on transit vehicles in metropolitan areas such as Bismarck-Mandan, it is far less common among agencies that operate in rural areas. The absence of such advertising is often due to a lack of staff time to pursue such sales. It was suggested that rural operators might work as a consortium to sell advertising. One such approach might involve sending a request for proposals to advertising agencies that would then be responsible for selling advertising and preparing materials for placement in or on buses. Any proceeds would be an increase over what operators are currently generating. Local operators could also choose not to participate in the program.

It is anticipated that frequent meetings involving local transit directors and regional coordinators might generate other ideas concerning possible coordination-related cost saving or revenue enhancement efforts.

8.2.6 Fare Cost Recovery Guidelines

A review of the fares charged by the regions' rural transit services indicates there are wide variations for similar services. Prior work with other transit systems indicated occasions when there were also similar variations for services provided by a single operator.

These variations may be justifiable given the specifics related to certain services. In most cases, however, fares may bear little or no relationship to the costs associated with the provision of certain services.

Fare variations among different transit systems can be especially troublesome as coordination increases. For example, if one operator charges $20 for a round trip to a regional center and a new coordination partner charges only $10 for the same services, problems will undoubtedly arise. There needs to be some level of consistency among fares.

Legal problems may also arise if a transit operator is charging unjustifiably different rates for similar services. This might occur, for example, if an operator charged $3 for a local round trip but charged nursing home residents, via a contract with the nursing home, $10 for the same trip.

In order to facilitate coordination and to avoid both perceptual and legal problems that might be associated with widely varying fares, it is recommended that NDDOT provide the state's transit industry with educational resources to help operators understand the costs associated with providing various types of service and to provide guidelines to help operators establish fares that result in fare cost recovery within established parameters. Regional coordination councils could also play a role in pursuing fare consistency within the region.

8.2.7 Performance Measures to Track Operations

Perhaps the most important outcome resulting from increased coordination among rural transit providers in the two pilot regions will be the provision of an increased number of safe, efficient, and effective rides to the regions' residents. One way to track how well coordination efforts meet these and other objectives is to maintain and use performance measures. All transit organizations can benefit by tracking key performance measures since they provide feedback on management and policy decisions. Furthermore, in the case of the coordination pilot projects, tracking performance metrics will also assist state and local policymakers determine if coordination efforts have achieved related goals.

Table 8.2 presents a suggested list of performance measures that each transit operator should compile, use for internal management, and report locally and to NDDOT. The same measures can also be aggregated to report on the progress of regional operations. Most indicators can be reported monthly, but doing so on a quarterly and annual basis is deemed sufficient, especially since financial indicators require revenue and expense data that might only be available on a quarterly basis.

Local transit agencies already collect most of the data required to calculate the recommended performance measures; it is required by the FTA for use with the National Transit Database (NTD). It should be noted, however, that the expense per hour statistic, to be most meaningful, should reflect expense data reported on an accrual basis versus a cash basis since the hours and expenses should cover the same time period. The NTD also requires the use of accrual basis account for all financial recordkeeping.

There are, however, three quality-of-service measures in Table 8.2 that will require the collection of new pieces of information. The complaint and road call measures will require that each operator develop a tracking system to record when an unscheduled vehicle switch-out occurs. Likewise, complaints will need to be tracked to identify the time, date, person complaining, and nature of complaints along with follow-up actions. On-time performance (the percentage of trip pickups made within the allowable on-time window, typically plus or minus 15 minutes of scheduled time) will need to be monitored. These data are easily tracked on driver logs.

It is important to note that these performance measures can be used over time for an agency to track its own performance. They are not intended for use to compare various operators with one another. Rather, they allow transit agencies to set goals and check their performance against those standards, to identify positive and negative trends, and to measure their cost effectiveness, resource efficiency, and service effectiveness.

Table 8.2 Performance Monitoring Measures

Key Performance Statistics	Definition and Purpose	Source of Data	Method of Comparison	Goal	Guideline or Standard
One-way trips	The number of one-way passenger trips provided during the period. Purpose is to track growth or decline in the use of the service.	Driver logs, scheduling and dispatching software reports, manual scheduling reports	Time series by month for system	In line with budget and increasing	NA
One-way trips per capita	The number of one-way passenger trips provided during the period divided by the total population of the service area.	Driver logs, scheduling and dispatching software reports, manual scheduling reports, and annual U.S. Census estimates.	Time series by month for system	In line with budget and increasing	NA
Total vehicle miles	Vehicle miles driven to provide transit service. Indicates the amount of service offered; important to compare with budget projections.	Scheduling and dispatching software reports or driver logs	Time series by month for system	In line with budget	NA
Total vehicle hours	Measures the total vehicle hours that were expended providing service. Since driver wages and benefits are the largest single expense, this is a key measure to track to ensure budget compliance.	Scheduling and dispatching software reports, driver logs	Time series by month for system	In line with budget	NA
Total operating expense	Measures the total operating fund outlays reported monthly on an accrual basis.	Accounting records and financial reports	Time series by month for system	In line with budget	NA
Total revenue	Measures total income from riders, other operating revenue, and service contracts.	Accounting records and financial reports	Time series by month for system	In line with budget	NA

Key Performance Statistics	Definition and Purpose	Source of Data	Method of Comparison	Goal	Guideline or Standard
Expense per vehicle hour	Total operating expenses divided by total vehicle hours during the period.	Financial reports and reports from scheduling and dispatching system, or driver logs	Time series by month, also compare annually to other peer systems	In line with budget	Increasing at a rate less than or equal to overall inflation
One-way trips/vehicle hour	Key measure of overall system productivity that measures the fit between the number of hours of service provided and the demand for service. Calculated by dividing one-way trips by vehicle hours. Can be calculated and tracked for system and for individual routes or services.	Scheduling and dispatching records, driver logs	Time series by month	Improvement from year to year	Typical range for demand response system is 2 - 6 one-way trips/hour
Percent trips on time	Defined as percentage of trips provided within the "on-time" window for the demand response service (e.g., within + or - 15 minutes of the scheduled time). A key measure of quality of service.	Scheduling and dispatching software reports, or sampling of driver logs from manual systems	Time series by month	100 percent on time is goal	Set an internal standard of, for example, 90 percent + or - 15 minutes of requested pick up
Number of road calls	Defined as the number of vehicle service interruptions that result in passenger delays and/or require a non-scheduled vehicle switch. A key measure of service quality and maintenance effectiveness.	Either separate paper log or from entries in scheduling and dispatching software reports	Time series by month	Zero is the goal, but not likely, so reduction over time	No standard
Number non-policy complaints	A non-policy complaint is one that is related to on-time performance, driver conduct or attitude, or other concern about the quality or safety of service. It does not include complaints such as areas not served, hours of service, or fares.	Separately kept paper log and file	Time series by month	Zero is the goal, but unlikely, so reduction over time is the goal	No standard

8.2.8 State Administrative Staffing

As discussed in Section 4, the workloads of state transit staffs across the country have increased along with compliance-related demands tied to increases in federal transit funding. Nationally, state transit staffing is viewed as insufficient. As is the case with many local transit services, state transit programs have become major functions and, in some cases, administrative structures have not kept pace with evolving demands.

Within the Upper Midwest region, North Dakota is one of the few states that has increased the size of its transit staff in recent years. This increase has been relatively modest, going from one FTE in 2005 to 2.5 in 2010. An additional full-time temporary employee was added in October 2010. Some states are currently contemplating increases, while others have chosen to address expanding demands by contracting for services from consultants or other entities such as universities or regional planning authorities.

NDDOT has been responsive to the increasing demands placed on its transit staff. It should continue to monitor related capabilities and workloads to determine if its existing staff is appropriately sized. If further changes are warranted, decisions will have to be made concerning required skill sets and whether additional staff should be in the form of FTEs or contracted services.

As has been discussed earlier, numerous input sessions during this project have suggested job duties that might be performed by regional coordination administrators. In many instances, however, the duties mentioned are better suited for NDDOT central office personnel. Providing related services to North Dakota's public transit industry would place additional demands on NDDOT's transit staff.

8.3 Operator-specific Recommendations

As discussed earlier, this project included numerous opportunities for direct communication with the regions' transit operators. These points of contact included regional steering committee meetings, on-site operator interviews, and public input meetings. Related discussions identified opportunities for coordination involving each of the regions' transit systems.

These opportunities for coordination and other operational changes are presented in bullet form in this section's subsections. Some of these opportunities may already have been pursued following initial discussions with and among operators. Others may be starting points of discussion if and when a regional coordination administrator is hired.

8.3.1 Bis-Man Transit

- Be involved in regional coordination efforts and participate in regional council processes.

- Coordinate, to the extent possible, with rural operators that are destined for metro area.

- Coordinate metro services with commuter services being provided by rural operators.

8.3.2 Dickey County Transportation

- Coordinate services with South Dakota communities along U.S. Highway 281 to provide services, on a space-available basis, when making scheduled trips to Aberdeen.

- Look for opportunities to increase coordination efforts with South Central Transit Network and Valley Senior Services.

8.3.3 City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program

- Provide service, on a space-available basis, to other communities along I-94 when making trips to Dickinson and Bismarck.

- Work with West River Transit to have its services promoted to residents of Glen Ullin when West River vehicles are traveling near the city on the way to Dickinson or Bismarck.

8.3.4 City of Hazen Busing Project

- Coordinate schedules with West River Transit so trips to Bismarck and Dickinson are provided on different days.

- Consider eliminating long-distance trips; leave the provision of related trips to West River Transit and focus on local services. Increased local service option could include service to Beulah, thereby treating Beulah-Hazen as one community.

8.3.5 James River Transit

- In Stutsman County, consider focusing services on city of Jamestown and coordinate with South Central Transit and Kidder County concerning services in rural areas.

- Coordinate with public service providers along the I-94 corridor between Bismarck and Fargo to provide services to those communities, on a space available basis.

- In Wells and Sheridan Counties, work with West River Transit to coordinate and enhance services in central and southern Sheridan County.

- In Wells and Sheridan Counties, work with Benson County Transit to coordinate the provision of services to Bismarck.

8.3.6 Kidder County

- Work with local advisory board to identify local needs in Steele and the county's northern communities and expand local services beyond those currently provided.

- Work with James River Transit, South Central Transit, and Benson County Transit to coordinate and possibly enhance the provision of services from the county to Bismarck.

- Local transit vehicle signage says only "Kidder County". This signage does not imply that the service is available to the public. Changing vehicle signage to reflect that it is a transportation

service and that it is available to the public may be in order. Related promotional materials should also reflect that services are available to the public.

8.3.7 South Central Transit

- Coordinate with public service providers that serve communities along I-94 between Bismarck and Fargo to provide services, on a space available basis, to Bismarck and Fargo.

- Coordinate with James River Transit concerning possible provision of services in rural Stutsman County.

8.3.8 Standing Rock Public Transportation

- Coordinate veteran-related services to Fargo with other communities along the route to offer transportation in handicapped accessible vehicle on a space-available basis.

- Continue to coordinate pick-up points and schedules of commuter services with Bis-Man Transit.

8.3.9 West River Transit

- Work with James River Transit to coordinate and possibly enhance services in central and southern Sheridan County.

- Work with Benson County Transit to coordinate and possibly enhance serve in areas traversed by Benson County Transit during its trips to Bismarck.

- Work with cities of Hazen and Glen Ullin concerning the provision of services involving those communities.

8.4 Priorities, Timelines, Budget, and Funding Sources

Fulfilling legislative mandates is an obvious priority for state agencies such as NDDOT. Fortunately, with regard to transit coordination, doing so can and should be done in concert with federal mandates on the same subject. Failing to comply with these federal prescriptions could cost North Dakota millions of dollars per year in rural transit monies.

Enacting the statutory amendment discussed in Section 8.1 regarding N.D.C.C. 39-04.2, either immediately or in a future biennium, warrants consideration. Doing so would make state and local coordination a statutory priority and move the state toward compliance with federal coordination mandates. Regardless of the direction taken regarding this statutory amendment, the remaining recommendations present in Section 8.1 of this section should be given top priority. Doing so will move the state toward compliance with state and federal prescriptions; it should also increase operating efficiencies within the state's transit industry and enhance the overall mobility of residents in the two pilot regions.

The recommendations presented in Section 8.2 are reflective of sound operating practices that should be pursued regardless of other efforts that might be taken regarding coordination. Those recommendations would upgrade the levels of service that NDDOT provides to rural transit operators and would similarly improve the levels of service provided by these agencies. It is envisioned that those recommendations may be pursued without additional NDDOT staffing or appropriations.

The operator-specific recommendations summarized in Section 8.3 are a starting point to enhancing and coordinating local transit services in the two pilot regions. Those recommendations may be pursued immediately with no negative impacts on local operating budgets.

Implementing the recommendations presented in Section 8.1 and bringing statewide transit coordination to North Dakota may be done incrementally. In fact, doing so will allow the state to learn from its own experiences and to achieve an end product that is efficient, effective, consensus driven, and sustainable. In pursuit of these objectives, it is recommended that the following steps be taken during the 2011-13 biennium:

- Hire one regional coordination administrator (FTE or contract) and move forward with the implementation of coordination plans in the south central and west central regions.

- Develop regional coordination plans for three additional regions.

- Contract for assistance with the formation and initial activities of regional coordination councils and local advisory boards in the two pilot regions.

- Prepare four-year coordination and operating plans for operators in two pilot regions.

It is estimated that pursuing implementation of the recommendations outlined in Section 8.1 would incur costs totaling $855,000 during the 2011-13 biennium. These costs are itemized in Table 8.3. Of these costs, $230,000 is of a recurring nature while the remainder are one-time costs associated with initial program start-up and planning. As discussed in Section 4 and restated in Table 8.3, all related implementation costs may be financed with existing federal program funds.

For administrative ease, it might be less burdensome if all related funds were taken from a single federal funding source. The only such transit fund that has sufficient administrative monies to finance the program is the 5311 small urban and rural transit program. Another significant funding source might be the Federal Highway Administration and state planning and research (SPR) monies available to NDDOT. There are, however, significant demands for related funding to do highway planning in North Dakota, including impacts in the state's oil producing counties. Using a portion of these funds for transit coordination planning would, therefore, be a matter of prioritization by NDDOT.

Appropriating additional state funds to pursue implementation of some or all of these recommendations is also an option. Doing so would make more federal funds available for use by the state's local transit operators.

Table 8.3 Implementation Priorities, Biennial Budget, & Funding Sources

---

Priority #1 - Implement coordination recommendations in two pilot regions – regional coordinator expenses

Salary & fringes (@ 30%)	$160,000
Travel	$ 50,000
Printing, Supplies, & Equipment	$ 20,000
Total	$230,000

Possible funding sources: 5304, 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317, and/or SPR funds

Priority #2 - Develop regional coordination plans in three additional regions

Possible funding sources: 5304, 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317, and/or SPR funds $200,000

Priority #3 - Contract for start-up and technical assistance and preparation of initial regional coordination plans

Assist with organization and initial meetings of regional & local boards	$ 75,000
Preparation of initial regional coordination plans	$100,000
Total	$175,000

Possible funding sources: 5304, 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317, and/or SPR funds

Priority #4 - Develop initial four-year local coordination and business plans

Preparation of initial local business & coordination plans for all operators $250,000

Possible funding sources: 5304, 5310, 5311, 5316, 5317, and/or SPR funds

Total Implementation Budget – 2011-13 Biennium $855,000

Long-term program costs should also be considered. Based on the assumption that the state would continue with regional planning and deployment on a three regions per biennium basis, coordination-related costs would stabilize after statewide coordination planning and implementation are completed.

Table 8.4 identifies what biennial costs might be incurred until full deployment is achieved. Related costs are not adjusted for inflation. Table 8.4 assumes that the state's transit regions may be adequately served with four regional coordination administrators. If it is determined that the state is adequately served with fewer regions and/or few regional coordinators, related costs would be reduced proportionately.

Table 8.4 Long-term Budget Projections

	2011-13 Biennium	2013-15 Biennium	2015-17 Biennium	2017-19 Biennium
Region coordinator – salary & expenses	$230,000	$460,000	$690,000	$920,000
Development of coordination plans for 3 additional regions	$200,000	$200,000	$0	$0
Contract assistance for start-up & initial coordination plans	$175,000	$175,000	$175,000	$0
Contract assistance for local business & coordination plans	$250,000	$250,000	$250,000	$0
TOTAL	$855,000	$1,085,000	$1,115,000	$920,000

As Table 8.4 illustrates, biennial costs for coordination-related regional planning and implementation rise each biennium until the system is fully in place. Thereafter, biennial costs are tied to the cost of regional coordination administrators, and those costs will be dictated by the number of coordinators needed to adequately serve the state. As indicated earlier, eventual biennial budgets equal salary and travel-related costs for four regional coordinators. If it is determined that fewer coordinators are required, long-term costs will be reduced proportionately (e.g., employing three coordinators instead of four reduces biennial costs from $920,000 to $690,000).

Despite the sizeable budgets projected in Table 8.4, it is important to note that deciding not to pursue some form of transit coordination is not an option. Coordination is mandated by federal law and executive order, and the state's receipt of millions of dollars per year to support the provision of related services requires related compliance. As discussed in Section 6, the costs projected in Tables 8.2 and 8.3 are eligible uses of administrative and planning funds in existing rural federal transit programs.

Fortunately, federal support for the provision of transit services has increased exponentially in recent years. While there are certainly no guarantees that federal support will continue to rise, it appears that there is strong federal support for the provision of transit services. This support will give states like North Dakota access to related administrative funds to support coordination and planning activities such as those recommended herein.

8.5   Summary

As this project evolved, it became important to address federal and state prescriptions regarding transit coordination and the availability of financial and human resources required to initiate and sustain related mechanisms. The recommendations outlined in this section address all these issues.   They establish a structure that will facilitate local and regional coordination efforts. It is important to note, however, that these recommendations do not establish state prescriptions regarding the provision of local transit services. Those decisions are left up to local decision makers.

These recommendations have been reviewed by members of the project's technical advisory committee and both regional steering committees (which include all of the regions' transit operators). They have also been presented to the public via a series of public information meetings that have been held in the respective regions.

There appears to be a consensus that these recommendations are workable, and that they address the barriers to coordination that are identified in Section 7. They can be implemented by NDDOT without legislative action with federal administrative funds that are available to the department. The only immediate legislative action that may be required relates to the provision of an employee position to serve as a regional coordination administrator, unless NDDOT has a position available or if it is decided to satisfy that function with contract personnel.

As pointed out by the National Conference of State Legislatures, many states have used either legislative enactments or executive orders to effectuate transit coordination. North Dakota may want to consider taking similar action to make the coordination of transit services a priority at the state, regional, and local levels. Such an action could be taken immediately, or the Legislature may want to delay action until the state gains experience related to the implementation of coordination-related measures presented in this report.

APPENDIX A:
PUBLIC INPUT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETINGS

**Meetings Set to Gather Input
on Public Transit in South Central and West Central North Dakota**

A series of meetings will be held July 6-15 to solicit input about the coordination of transit services in south central and west central North Dakota. The public meetings will provide an opportunity to learn more about transit services in each region and to provide input on how these services might be better coordinated to meet the mobility needs of residents.

The meetings are being hosted by the North Dakota Department of Transportation and the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center which is part of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University. Meeting locations, dates and times are:

Ft. Yates	July 6 - Tuesday	2 p.m.	Sitting Bull College – Science & Tech. Bldg.	9299 Hwy. 24
Beulah	July 7 – Wednesday	2 p.m.	Civic Center	120 7th St. NE
Bismarck	July 8 – Thursday	2 p.m.	West River Transit	3750 E. Rosser Ave.
Napoleon	July 9 – Friday 1 p.m.		Reuben's Restaurant	305 Main St.
Carrington	July 12 - Monday	1 p.m.	Senior Center	36 10th Ave. S.
Jamestown	July 13 – Tuesday	1 p.m.	James River Transit	502 10th Ave. SE
Edgeley	July 14 – Wednesday	1 p.m.	Teddy's Restaurant	Highway 13 & 281
Valley City	July 15 – Thursday	1 p.m.	Senior Center	139 2nd Ave. SE

Efforts to enhance the coordination of transit services were mandated by the 2009 North Dakota Legislature. The public input meetings will present information concerning services that are currently available, existing funding sources, demographic trends, and coordination efforts that have been undertaken in other states.

More

Attendees will be invited to provide comments concerning efficiency gains that might result from increased coordination, potential barriers to coordination, and job duties that might be assigned to a regional coordination administrator.

The Bismarck and Valley City meetings will be webcast through the project's website at www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination. The information presented at these meetings will be identical to what is presented at the other six meetings, and anyone who is unable to attend a meeting in person is invited to participate via the Internet. Pre-registration through the project's website is required to participate via Internet. These meetings will also be recorded and available for subsequent viewing. Related input may also be submitted at a later time. Additional project information is also available on the project's website.

#####

Agenda
Public Input Meetings
Public Transit Regional Coordination Pilot Projects
July 2010

Introductions

State & Federal Mandates, Coordination Goals, & Existing Voluntary Efforts

Selected Regions & County Demographics

Approaches to Regional Coordination Used Elsewhere

Existing Public Transportation Services in the Region

Potential Coordination Partners

Current Transit Funding Sources & Conditions on Use

Public Input on Issues Related to Regional Coordination

- Adequacy of Existing Transit Services

- Service Improvements that May Result from Increased Coordination

- Operating Efficiencies that May Result from Increased Coordination

- Ways to Facilitate and Increase Coordination

- Regional Coordination – Structure, Duties, Participation, Budget, etc.

- Funding Sources that Might Support Coordination Efforts

- Potential Barriers to Coordination

Where Do We Go From Here?

Adjourn

Welcome!

**Transit Coordination
Public Input Meeting
July 2010**

Hosted by:
Small Urban & Rural Transit Center
and
North Dakota Department of Transportation

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Purpose of Meeting

Provide information on:
- Legislation to facilitate transit coordination
- Existing transit services in selected regions
- Approach taken to study coordination options

Solicit public input on:
- Ways to improve services through increased coordination
- How to administer a better coordinated system
- Efficiencies that may result from increased coordination

Legislation

Regional Coordination Pilot Projects

- Two projects – 1 in "large" region & 1 in "small" region
- Regional coordination administrator
- Coordinate provision of public transportation services

Goals

Regional Coordination Pilot Projects

- Provide cost-effective & efficient services
- Reduce fragmentation & duplication
- Develop standards for service providers
- Increase personal mobility

Legislation

What the legislation does not require:

- Consolidation of existing services
- Elimination of local operations
- Loss of local buses
- Elimination of jobs

SURTC & NDDOT

NDDOT contracted with SURTC to:

- Find out what has been done elsewhere across the U.S.
- Gather information and input from transit operators & the public
- Identify alternatives for implementing the coordination process
- Present findings and recommendations

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **Selected Regions**

Legend
- West Central Region
- South Central Region
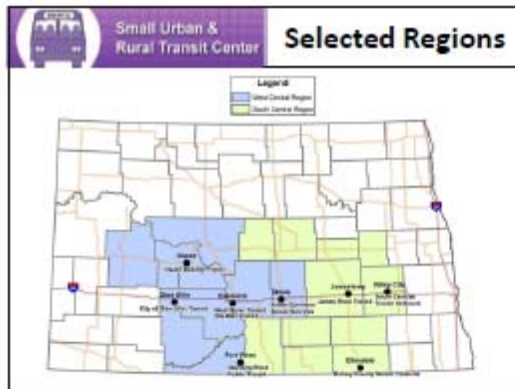
Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **West Central Demographics**

County	2008 Population	Since 2000	Seniors Age 65 & Over	Low Income
Burleigh	78,689	+13.3%	13.5%	7.8%
Grant	3,377	-15.0%	26.9%	17.4%
Kidder	2,290	-16.1%	23.6%	15.2%
McLean	8,337	-10.5%	15.4%	10.4%
Mercer	7,854	-9.1%	15.4%	7.7%
Morton	26,255	+3.8%	14.5%	9.1%
Oliver	1,695	-17.9%	17.2%	10.2%
Sioux	4,232	+4.6%	8.1%	32.7%

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **South Central Demographics**

County	2008 Population	Since 2000	Seniors Age 65 & Over	Low Income
Barnes	10,682	-9.3%	19.6%	10.5%
Dickey	5,237	-9.0%	21.2%	13.5%
Emmons	3,377	-22.0%	26.7%	14.0%
Foster	3,447	-8.3%	23.0%	8.6%
Griggs	2,358	-14.3%	25.7%	10.6%
LaMoure	3,986	-15.2%	24.3%	10.8%

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **South Central Demographics**

County	2008 Population	Since 2000	Seniors Age 65 & Over	Low Income
Logan	1,943	-16.1%	29.5%	13.4%
McIntosh	2,639	-22.2%	36.2%	14.3%
Sheridan	1,266	-26.0%	32.1%	18.3%
Stutsman	21,908	-6.9%	18.0%	11.4%
Wells	4,191	-17.9%	28.5%	12.3%

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **Models of Regional Coordination**

- Transit agencies interact directly with state, riders, local governments
- Transit agencies usually serve different areas with some overlap
- Varying levels of coordination among transit agencies

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **Models of Regional Coordination**

Regional agency responsible for planning and service delivery (not always sole transit provider in region)

Models of Regional Coordination

Lead agency provides transit services and performs administrative duties for all other service providers in the region

State

Lead Transit Agency

Transit Agencies

Riders

Models of Regional Coordination

- Regional agency responsible for planning and service delivery (not always sole transit provider in region)
- Interacts directly with state, riders, local governments

State

Regional Transit Authority

Riders

Models of Regional Coordination

- State directly operates transit service
- Often broken into regional divisions

State

Riders

North Dakota's Model(s)

- No decisions have been made on a North Dakota model
- North Dakota's model may be unique – bits & pieces from various states
- Do what fits best and works best for North Dakota
- Acceptable approaches may vary by region
- Interim report to NDDOT in December (prior to 2011 legislative session)

West Central Region

West Central Service Providers

Bis-Man Transit

West River Transit

City of Glen Ullin

City of Hazen

Standing Rock Public Transportation

Kidder Senior Services

Bis-Man Transit

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Service Area: Bismarck-Mandan & 2 miles out

Services: Fixed route and Paratransit

Schedule: Monday-Saturday & 24/7

Number of Vehicles: 32 – 6 to 35 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal, State, & Local

Ridership: 133,000/year

West River Transit

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Service Area: Burleigh, Grant, McLean, Mercer, Morton, Oliver, & Dunn Counties

Services: Local demand-response
Trips to Bismarck, Minot, & Dickinson

Schedule: Monday-Saturday

Number of Vehicles: 14 – 7 to 16 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal, State, & Local

Ridership: 35,000/year

City of Glen Ullin

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Service Area: City of Glen Ullin (pop. 865)

Services: Glen Ullin to Bismarck & Dickinson

Schedule: Bismarck twice/month
Dickinson once/month

Number of Vehicles: 1 – 17 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: State plus local contributions

Ridership: 580/year

City of Hazen

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Service Area: City of Hazen (pop. 2,500) & outlying communities

Services: Local demand-response & trips to Bismarck & Dickinson

Schedule: 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Summer – 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Number of Vehicles: 3 – 7 to 20 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal, State, & Local

Ridership: 10,800/year

Standing Rock Public Transportation

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Service Area: Standing Rock Reservation – ND & SD

Services: Demand-response fixed route on reservation
& to Bismarck-Mandan
Intercity between Rapid City, Sioux Falls &
Bismarck

Schedule: Monday-Friday
Intercity bus twice weekly

Number of Vehicles: 15 – 5 to 26 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal, State, Tribal, & Local

Ridership: 15,700/year

Services – Kidder Senior Services

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Service Area: Kidder County

Services: Area communities to Bismarck & Jamestown
Some local services to neighboring
communities or local meal sites

Schedule: Bismarck 2/week & Jamestown 1/week

Number of Vehicles: 2 – 7 to 22 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal & State

Riders: 7,500/year

South Central Region

South Central Service Providers

South Central Transit Network

James River Transit

Dickey County Senior Citizens

South Central Transit Network

Service Area: Barnes, LaMoure, Foster, Logan, McIntosh, Griggs, & Emmons Counties

Services: Local demand-response
Fixed route trips to Fargo, Bismarck, Jamestown & Valley City

Schedule: 7 Days per week Valley City; Fixed routes vary Monday-Saturday; Taxi 24/7

Number of Vehicles: 27 – 7 to 20 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal, State, & Local

Ridership: 62,400/year (prior to adding Emmons County)

James River Transit

Service Area: City of Jamestown and Stutsman, Wells, & Sheridan Counties

Services: Jamestown – demand-response
Fixed route trips to Bismarck & Fargo
Wells-Sheridan – local service in Harvey & Fessenden
Fixed route trips to Bismarck & Minot

Schedule: Jamestown – 7 days per week
Weekly medical trips to Bismarck & Fargo
Wells-Sheridan – local service in Harvey & Fessenden
Trips to Bismarck & Minot 1-2/month

Number of Vehicles: 12 – 6 to 16 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal, State, & Local

Ridership: 72,700/year (65263 JRT + 7411 W/S)

Dickey County

Service Area: Dickey County – primarily Cities of Ellendale & Oakes

Services: Local demand-response with monthly trip to Aberdeen

Schedule: 8:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. two days/week - Ellendale two and a half days/week – Oakes

Number of Vehicles: 2 – 7 to 14 passengers

Primary Funding Sources: Federal & State

Ridership: 4,000/year

Coordination Partners

Potential Coordination Partners:

- Other public transit service providers
- For-profit service providers
- Human service agencies
- Assisted living & nursing homes
- Group homes
- Head Start & day care centers
- Schools
- Others

Slide 1

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Rural Transit Funding Sources

- Federal
- State
- Fares
- Local
  - Mill Levy
  - Contracts
  - United Way
  - Fundraising
  - Grants
  - Other

08-09 ND Rural Transit Funding Sources

- Federal
- State
- Fares
- Local

Slide 2

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Discussion Topics

- Adequacy of existing transit services

- Ways to facilitate and increase coordination

Slide 3

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Discussion Topics

- Regional coordination – structure, duties, participation, budget, etc.

- Operating efficiencies that may result from increased coordination

Slide 4

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Discussion Topics

- Service improvements that may result from increased coordination

- Funding sources that might support coordination efforts (local & other)

Slide 5

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Discussion Topics

- Potential barriers to coordination

- Other discussion topics?

Slide 6

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Contact Information

- Project website: www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination
- Principle investigators:

  Jon Mielke at jon.mielke@ndsu.edu
  701-328-9865

  Carol Wright at carol.wright@ndsu.edu
  701-231-8231

  Thank You!

**Meetings Set to Present Findings and Implementation Options
on Public Transit in South Central and West Central North Dakota**

A series of meetings will be held November 9-16 to present findings and implementation options concerning the coordination of transit services in south central and west central North Dakota. The public meetings will provide an opportunity to learn more about transit services in each region and hear how increased coordination can help meet the mobility needs of area residents.

The meetings are being hosted by the North Dakota Department of Transportation and the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center which is part of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University. Meeting locations, dates and times are:

Hazen	Nov. 9 - Tuesday	1 p.m.	City Hall	146 W. Main St.
Bismarck	Nov. 10 - Wednesday	1 p.m.	Bis-Man Transit	3750 E. Rosser Ave.
Valley City	Nov. 15 – Monday	12:30 p.m.	Senior Center	139 2nd Ave. SE
Napoleon	Nov. 16 - Tuesday	1 p.m.	Reuben's Restaurant	305 Main St.

Efforts to enhance the coordination of transit services were mandated by the 2009 North Dakota Legislature. The public information meetings will present information concerning the ongoing research effort and its preliminary findings and implementation options. When the research effort is complete, it will be presented to the North Dakota Department of Transportation. The Department will then work with the 2011 Legislature to pursue selected recommendations.

Additional information on this coordination project is available on project's website at www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination. The Bismarck meeting will also be webcast through this site. Anyone who is unable to attend a meeting in person is invited to participate via the Internet. Pre-registration through the project's website is required to participate via Internet. The meeting will also be recorded and available for subsequent viewing.

#####

October 18, 2010

Dear:

The North Dakota Department of Transportation and the Small Urban & Rural Transit Center, which is part of the Upper Great Plains Transportation Institute at North Dakota State University, are hosting a series of meetings to present findings and implementation options related to an ongoing study concerning the coordination of transit services in south central and west central North Dakota. You are invited to attend.

These meetings are a follow-up to public input meetings that were held throughout the regions in mid-July. Researchers are now in a position to share their preliminary findings and related implementation options with community leaders and other interested individuals. Meeting locations, dates and times are:

Hazen	Nov. 9 - Tuesday	1 p.m.	City Hall	146 W. Main St.
Bismarck	Nov. 10 - Wednesday	1 p.m.	Bis-Man Transit	3750 E. Rosser Ave.
Valley City	Nov. 15 – Monday	12:30 p.m.	Senior Center	139 2nd Ave. SE
Napoleon	Nov. 16 - Tuesday	1 p.m.	Reuben's Restaurant	305 Main St.

Efforts to enhance the coordination of transit services were mandated by the 2009 North Dakota Legislature. When this research effort is complete, it will be presented to the North Dakota Department of Transportation. The Department will then work with the 2011 Legislature to pursue selected recommendations.

Additional information of this coordination project is available on project's website at www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination. The Bismarck meeting will also be webcast through this site. Anyone who is unable to attend a meeting in person is invited to participate via the Internet. Pre-registration through the project's website is required to participate via Internet. The meeting will also be recorded and available for subsequent viewing.

Thank you for your interest in this project and we look forward to hopefully seeing you at one of the public information meetings.

<div align="center">Sincerely,</div>

Paul M. Benning, P.E.   Jon Mielke
Interim Local Government Engineer   Principle Investigator
North Dakota Department of Transportation   Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Agenda
Public Information Meetings
Public Transit Regional Coordination Pilot Projects
November 2010

Introductions

State & Federal Coordination Mandates and Best Practices

Information Gathering Processes

- Review of Other States' Coordination Structures

- Meetings with TAC & RSCs

- Operator Interviews

- Public Input Meetings

Recommendation Alternatives

- Going Beyond S.B. 2223

- Possible Statutory Amendments

- Regional Coordination Alternatives

- Operator-Specific Alternatives

- Implementation Timeline

- Immediate & Long-term Budgets

Questions & Comments

Adjourn

Welcome!

Transit Coordination

Regional Public Information Meetings

November 2010

Purpose of Public Information Meetings

- Review State Legislation

- Update on Information Gathering Process

- Presentation of Preliminary Findings & Recommendations

- Solicit Public Reactions

- Timetable for Future Actions

Reasons for Coordinating Transit Services

- State Legislation

- Federal Mandates

- Economic Efficiencies

- Industry Best Practices

- Enhanced Personal Mobility

Information Gathering Process

- Review Other States' Coordination Structures

- Create and Work with TAC and Regional Steering Committees

- Operator Interviews

- Public Input Meetings

Possible Recommendations

- Go Beyond S.B. 2223
- Statutory Amendments
- Regional Coordination Alternatives
- Operator-specific Modifications
- Implementation Timeline
- Immediate & Long-term Budgets

Possible Recommendations

Avoid Unnecessary Bureaucracy & Intermediaries

Statutory Amendments - N.D.C.C. Chapter 39-04.2

- Make Coordination a State Priority

- Require Local Coordination

- Give Counties Ability to Levy Tax to Support Transit

Recommendation Options

Regional Coordinating Councils

- Require creation

- Specify members and duties

Local Advisory Boards

- Require creation

- Specify members and duties

Possible Recommendations

Regional Coordination Plans

- Model after typical transit business plans and NDDOT Transportation Improvement Plans – four year plans which are updated annually

Local Coordination and Operating Plans

- Model after typical transit business plans and NDDOT Transportation Improvement Plans – four year plans which are updated annually

Possible Recommendations

Establishing Boundaries for Transit Regions

- Give NDDOT discretion in establishing number of regions and related boundaries; consider current operator territories and citizen travel patterns.

Regional Coordination Administrators

- Employer

- Base of Operations

- Job Description

- Number of Administrators

Possible Recommendations

Contract for Initial Implementation Support

- Work with regional administrator to establish local and regional boards and conducting initial meetings

- Preparation of initial operating and coordination plans

Provide Funding for Local Admin. Activities

- Increase funding for local administrative duties to facilitate coordination activities

Possible Recommendations

Expand Coordination Efforts to Other Regions

- Expand current coordination project to two additional regions during the upcoming biennium

Possible Recommendations

NDDOT Prescriptions & Assistance

Publicize Transit Services

- All service providers - website with current routes, schedules, and fares

- All service providers - provide notification of changes to clients, local media, other operators, and NDDOT

- NDDOT - maintain a webpage with links to all operator websites

Possible Recommendations

Uniform Operating Standards

- Driver qualifications & training
- Drug and alcohol testing
- Vehicle maintenance
- Building maintenance
- Employee handbooks
- Performance measures

Possible Recommendations

Cost Savings and Revenue Enhancements

- Reduce costs where duplicate routes may be eliminated

- Consider consortium purchases of fuel, etc.

- Consider consortium sales of on-board advertising

Possible Recommendations

Scheduling Software & Centralized Dispatch

- Do not mandate near-term deployment
- Future deployments – insure state-wide compatibility

Long-term Vehicle Needs

- Provide a vehicle replacement plan for each region's fleet and recommend development of a corresponding state-wide plan

Possible Recommendations

Cost Savings and Revenue Enhancements

- Reduce costs where duplicate routes may be eliminated

- Consider consortium purchases of fuel

- Consider consortium sales of on-board advertising

Possible Recommendations

Fare Cost Recovery Guidelines
- Establish fare recovery guidelines and to create internal & external consistency

State Administrative Staffing
- Monitor workloads to insure compliance with federal program requirements and ability to be responsive to operator needs

Operator-Specific Options

Bis-Man Transit

- Be involved in regional coordination efforts and participate in regional council process

- Coordinate, to the extent possible, with rural operators that are destine for metro area.

- Coordinate metro services with commuter services being provided by rural operators

Operator-Specific Options

Dickey County Senior Citizens

- Coordinate services with SD communities along U.S. Highway 281 to provide services, on a space-available basis, when making scheduled trips to Aberdeen.

- Insure that "senior citizens" portion of name is not reflected in any transit-related services – avoid perception that local transit services are available for only senior citizens.

Operator-Specific Options

City of Glen Ullin

- Provide service, on a space-available basis, to other communities along I-94 when making trips to Dickinson and Bismarck.

- Work with West River Transit to have its services promoted to residents of Glen Ullin when West River vehicles are traveling near the city on the way to Dickinson or Bismarck.

Operator-Specific Options

City of Hazen

- Coordinate schedules with West River Transit so trips to Bismarck and Dickinson are provided on different days.

- Consider eliminating long-distance trips; leave the provision of related trips to West River Transit & focus on local services. Increased local service option could include service to Beulah, thereby treating Beulah-Hazen as one community.

Operator-Specific Options

James River Transit

- In rural Stutsman County, consider focusing services on city of Jamestown & coordinate with South Central Transit concerning services in rural areas.

- Coordinate with public service providers along I-94 between Bismarck and Fargo to provide services to those communities, on a space available basis.

- In Wells and Sheridan Counties, work with West River Transit to coordinate and enhance services in central and southern Sheridan County.

- In Wells and Sheridan Counties, work with Benson County Transit coordinate the provision of services to Bismarck.

Operator-Specific Options

Kidder Senior Services

- Work with local advisory board to identify local needs in Steele & northern communities and expand local services beyond those being provided.

- Work with James River Transit, South Central Transit, and Benson County Transit to coordinate and possibly enhance the provision of services from the county to Bismarck.

- Insure that "senior services" portion of name is not reflected in any transit-related services to avoid the perception that local transit services are available for only senior citizens.

Operator-Specific Options

South Central Transit

- Coordinate with public service providers that serve communities along I-94 between Bismarck and Fargo to provide services, on a space available basis, to Bismarck and Fargo.

- Coordinate with James River Transit concerning possible provision of services in rural Stutsman County.

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Operator-Specific Options

Standing Rock Public Transportation

- When veteran-related medical service is initiated to Fargo, coordinate with other communities along the route to offer transportation in handicapped accessible vehicle on a space-available basis.

- Continue to coordinate pick-up points and schedules of commuter services with BisMan Transit.

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Operator-Specific Options

West River Transit

- Work with James River Transit to coordinate and possibly enhance services in central and southern Sheridan County.

- Work with Benson County Transit to coordinate and possibly enhance serve in areas traversed by Benson County Transit during its trips to Bismarck.

- Work with cities of Hazen and Glen Ullin concerning the provision of services involving those communities.

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Implementation Timetable

- Hire one regional coordination administrator (FTE or contract) and move forward with implementation of coordination plan in south central and west central regions.

- Contract for assistance with formation and initial activities of regional coordination councils and local advisory boards.

- Contract for assistance with preparation of four year coordination and operating plans within two pilot regions.

- Develop regional coordination plans for two additional regions.

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Possible Recommendations

Budget & Funding

- Develop a budget for implementing recommendations – short & long-term

- Include discussion on affordability, sustainability, & leveraging

- Identify funding sources

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center

Transit Coordination

Public Response / Attempts to Develop Consensus

What Happens Next?

Questions?

Suggestions?

Concerns?

Small Urban & Rural Transit Center — **Contact Information**

- Project website: www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination

- Principle investigators:

   Jon Mielke at jon.mielke@ndsu.edu
   701-328-9865

   Carol Wright at carol.wright@ndsu.edu
   701-231-8231

   Thank You!

Comments on Draft Interim Report

On November 30, 2010, a draft of the interim report was posted on the project's website (http://www.surtc.org/regionalcoordination/). Members of the project's Technical Advisory Committee and two Regional Steering Committees were notified of its availability and were invited to submit comments. Directors of the state's 30+ transit service providers were also notified and invited to comment. Reminder notices were sent on December 8, 2010. Comments were due by noon on December 14.

Comments were received from two transit operators, both from outside the project's pilot regions. Their verbatim comments and SURTC's corresponding responses are presented below.

Comment #1

Commenter: Darrell Francis, Project Director
                      Souris Basin Transportation
Dated: 11/29/10

I attended the Nov. 10 meeting at Bis-Man transit conference room on the results of the recent studies proposed by SURTC. As a transit provider in North Dakota I believe that the results of this study will eventually affect the whole state and should therefore be addressed by the providers. I have a number of concerns that I believe would be duplicating everything we are trying to do in the past few years and using funds that we cannot afford to share, would be detrimental to all transit budgets.

1. Adding another layer of an administrator and staff to a number of proposed regions is not cost effective. Doing a service we are already trying to coordinate with other projects should be left to those who have a direct affect to the implementation of such services and committees involved.

2. By developing coordination plans now through this special legislative project and stretching it out for a number of sessions/years to cover the state is expensive and time consuming. It creates another costly project above and beyond our system already in place between the DOT and transit projects.

3. Valuable local funds would be required to make such a huge project viable. Robbing the dollars we must justify each and every year to maintain what transit we have or for improvements would be a greater strain on those who have less to work with.

4. Coordination plans that were discussed at this meeting are either already locally or in their regions by the committees and staff personnel that are already in place. We don't need another beuacracy layer explaining what we already know or can provide.

5. Guidance from the ND DOT transit division can be done for all the projects through state wide meetings like we are doing at this time on a limited basis and provide the transit guidance we need.

6. Federal Transit Administration and the NDDOT are watching us to help prevent duplication of services and show financial accountability for the valuable Federal, State and Local dollars. At this time we are doing more with less funding. Doing less with more funding would not work.

7. Making State-wide plans based on two projects, I would not support and therefore unable to ask our legislatures the same.

8. The results that have been paid for by this biennium can be shared without further expense through the present system of the DOT and transit providers working together for improvements of transit in the State.

9. The decision to add transit personnel at each project should be up to them, as funding permits. Use the $900,000 per biennium to assist those projects, not creating a consultant over the next 6 years.

I believe working with a statewide coordinator towards mobility management can facilitate the necessary coordination, expansion, regionalization changes by working with the transit projects. There is room for changes but I don't believe adding regional administrators is the way to achieve those goals or justify the expense.

Response:

Mr. Francis is the director of a multi-county transit system based in Minot. Minot is not in either of the project's two pilot regions.

Mr. Francis takes issue with the creation of regional coordinator positions. He suggests that local and regional coordination plans are already in place and opposes making state-wide plans based on the two pilot projects. Mr. Francis believes that the report's results can be implemented by NDDOT's existing staff.

The planning process and coordination-related structures proposed by the report are based on the provisions of Senate Bill No. 2223, existing federal law, and corresponding findings of the National Conference of State Legislatures. The local and regional coordination plans referred to by Mr. Francis do not exist in either of the two pilot regions. NDDOT personnel commented at the public information meetings that the department's transit staff is unable to satisfy necessary planning functions.

Mr. Francis suggests that a single statewide coordinator should be capable of facilitating necessary changes. Given the heavy workload and wide-ranging responsibilities of most transit directors, it does not appear that one coordinator would be capable of working with all of the state's 30-plus local operators and the proposed regional councils to prepare and implement local and regional coordination plans. The report does, however, recommend that NDDOT be given the discretion to determine how many regions and regional coordinators there should be. Once the planning process is fully implemented, NDDOT may determine that fewer regional coordinators are required to manage an effective planning and coordination process.

Comment #2

Commenter: Linda Freeman, Director
                     Kenmare Wheels and Meals, Inc.
Dated: 12/2/10

After reading your study information, I'd like to make a few comments:

1. I agree that coordination can increase and improve transit availability for the citizens of North Dakota.

2. Suggestion for the process: Rather than hiring "regional coordinators" which will vastly increase the cost of provision of transit, would it be possible to: Contract with an agency (or individual) who would do the groundwork on a statewide basis including actual needs, getting the backing of local communities, and working with existing providers to set up coordinated transit which could and should include rail service.

3. I believe that the existing transit providers can then take the reins and would be able to maintain & expand as needs happen.

The cost of adding a layer would take a great deal of money away from the actual provision of service which is the focus of transit at present!

Thanks for listening.

Response:

Ms. Freeman is the director of a local dial-a-ride transit service in Kenmare in northern Ward County. Kenmare is not in either of the project's two pilot regions.

Ms. Freeman suggests that the state contract with an agency or individual to assist with implementation on a statewide basis. She suggests that once this implementation is complete, existing transit providers would be able to manage the system.

The report's recommendations do, in fact, call for initially hiring one person, either as a NDDOT employee or on a contract basis, to assist with the implementation process in the two pilot regions. It also recommends that NDDOT have the discretion to determine how many regions and how many coordinators there should eventually be.

It is envisioned that local transit operators will eventually be responsible for most local coordination activities. It is anticipated, however, that some additional staff support will be required for coordination activities at the regional level. Again, NDDOT would ultimately be responsible for determining what level of staffing this activity would require. The NDDOT has advised SURTC that funding this activity would not diminish the amount of funding that local service providers are currently receiving.

Comment #3

Commenter: Cheryl Jongerius, Director
Dickey County Transportation Program
Dated: 12/12/10

Several things that I heard at the meetings I went to do not seem to be mentioned. Specifically – a website where public or transit providers can go to see how to get from one place to another and what other transit providers are doing. It would seem to be a very straightforward way to coordinate rides and services. Also, coordinated marketing efforts for transit statewide were talked about and I do not see that either.

Something that did not occur to me earlier, but there is precedent for it in the State of ND. For these "regional" coordination plans – why not designate the entire state of ND as ONE regional planning area? It's obvious even with whatever boundaries are talked about in state – that vehicles drive through one area to another. With such a low population state, and relatively few transit providers it would seem more efficient to have one regional/statewide Coordination plan supported by the local coordination plans instead of adding the "regional" level in which no one seemed particularly enthused about

Several places the "2010 North Dakota Rural Public Transit Assessment" is referred to. Is that the Ulteig Study? Is it done? If it is referred to it needs to be available

Section 8.1.8. Regional Coordinators – at the very first meeting we were at in Valley City, I specifically asked Linda Wurtz what her idea was when she wrote the legislation about Regional Coordinators. Linda said the language was put in to "enable" coordinators to be hired, IF it was found they were needed. At every meeting I was at, the necessity for a regional coordinator was lukewarm at best. The report talks seems to indicate the regional coordinator is a done deal – was that really the consensus of people at the meetings – or was the question more like "if we had one – what would we do with them – not should there even be one?

Also the talk about the regional coordination board was less than enthusiastic. As one of my fellow transit directors said " I am not going to 4 more meetings a year" Is there Grassroots support for this – do other non-transit entities want (and support) a regional coordination council? It does not seem like there was support for regional councils at the meetings I attended, and I don't think this document reflects that. My view from the start is how does this produce more rides?

If there ends up being a regional coordinator – why does there also have to be a contractor. Can't a coordinator write coordination plans? Then you could skip the whole RFP – bid - negoitiate process than can be hugely time consuming. Just do the work that needs to be done. Again I will re-state – what about viewing ND as ONE planning unit - with each transit agency having a local plan.

Section 8.3. I feel the budget ($855,000) is totally out of line when you compare what is spent statewide for ALL rural transit operations ($6.8 million year). There again does there really need to be a contractor? The level of proposed salary/benefits for a coordinator would be a real slap in the face to full time directors who have given their all for many years and make considerably less salary and benefits than the amount proposed.

The Rest is Specific to Dickey County:

For Dickey County, (Section 3.1.2 and appendix B) I don't think we are getting credit for coordination that we do that is the same as other transit entities are doing – and what they do "counts" as coordination – but not for us. In appendix "B" other transit providers are given credit for coordinating rides with nursing homes or assisted living. We provide rides every week (and have for years) to residents at the Assisted living facility in Oakes (Royal Oakes) and the Basic Care/Assisted Living facility in Ellendale – Evergreen Place. Particularly with Evergreen Place, probably half our riders and rides on Thursdays are produced from persons who live in that building. It also says in the appendix that DCSC has agreements in place with South Central Transit Network and Valley Senior Services but the next line says "no current coordination efforts". We have been promoting the services of our two neighboring agencies for several years – its' just that so far no riders have chosen to use those options. Another option for riders to get to Fargo that I know we talked about is our acting as a match maker with volunteer drivers (in Oakes) who use their own vehicles to take people to Fargo for medical appointments. So I think we should get some credit for coordination in both the text and appendix.

Section 3.1.2 could clarify that our reduction in total miles was the elimination of 6,000 deadhead miles per year (to be both more cost effective) when we went from a one vehicle to 2 vehicle operation in 2008.

In section 3.2.1 of this report - page 8 – it says about our 1.04 rides per capita is low but within the national average. However, on page 16 (same section) that covers West River – nothing is said about 0.74 trips per capita being low- only that it is unchanged over 3 years – but it is 25% lower the stated national standard. In fairness, if this report is going to say ours is low, than anything less than ours needs to be pointed out also.

Supplemental Comment Dated 12/13/10

Something occurred to me last night that needs clarification.

At our October meeting in Jamestown, we had a discussion about "what's in a name" Both Laurie and Pat said that they use their legal agency names on their funding applications or when they join transit groups - but on their vehicles and brochures they call themselves something else - even though they do not have DBA (doing business as).

So everywhere in this report we have James River Transit and South Central Transit Network. (not their legal names) just what they use on vehicles and brochures.

For us we use "**Dickey County Transportation**" on our vehicles and our transit brochures - however our legal name Dickey County Senior Citizens (with the dreaded "senior" word) is used everywhere in this report for us.

Why the different standard? The last time we had a vehicle that said "senior" on it was 1992.

So to be consistent - I am requesting that this report use either Legal Agency Names for all entities (including the Bismarck region) or we all get listed in this report with the moniker that we run transit under. Thanks

Response:

Ms. Jongerius' first comment relates to the need for a website to publicize the availability of transit services in various parts of the state and possible benefits of a coordinated marketing effort regarding such services. The report addresses both items in Section 8.2.1 of Section 8.

Ms. Jongerius' second comment suggests that perhaps the entire state could be one regional planning area rather than having multiple plans for various parts of the state. This comment has some merit and the report does, in fact, suggest that NDDOT should have discretion in determining how many regions there should be (Section 8.1.7 of Section 8). While it may be premature to designate the state as a single region, having fewer than the traditional eight planning regions is effected in the report's recommendations.

Ms. Jongerius' next comment relates to the *2010 North Dakota Rural Public Transit Assessment* study. Copies of that report are available from NDDOT.

The next points addressed in Ms. Jongerius' comments involve the need for regional coordinators and regional coordination boards. She suggests that the creation of regional coordination administrator positions should not be taken for granted, and that there was not support for regional coordination councils at the meetings she attended.

In response, transit coordination is provided for in S.B. No. 2223 and federal law. Regional coordinating councils and related staff support are an integral part of this process, as documented in the coordination models discussed in Section 5. This report's recommendations concerning regional coordinating councils and regional coordination administrators are consistent with the provisions of S.B. No. 2223 and put structures and processes in place that further the coordination provisions of SAFETEA-LU and the FTA.

Ms. Jongerius questions the need for contract support, if coordination administrators are hired. Section 8.1.9 in Section 8 points out that many local and regional coordination and planning tasks are front-end loaded and may be beyond what could be reasonably expected of the one regional coordination administrator that is recommended for the two pilot regions. For that reason, it is recommended that short-term assistance be contracted for to get related structures and plans in place. Once these tasks are completed, further contract assistance will be unnecessary.

Ms. Jongerius also feels that the $855,000 budget presented in Section 8.3 of Section 8 is unreasonable. That amount certainly does represent a significant increase, given the fact that there is no concerted transit coordination and/or long-range planning effort in place at the present time. The initiation of such an effort is, however, consistent with the planning effort that takes place relative to North Dakota's state and local roadway system.

Also concerning the proposed budget, Ms. Jongerius compares the $855,000 cost with $6.8 million in annual statewide transit operation expenditures. It should be noted that the $855,000 implementation budget is a biennial amount. Annual costs would, therefore, be $427,500. It should also be noted that the budget set forth in Section 8.3 is prioritized and may be reduced, depending on funding availability.

The remainder of Ms. Jongerius' comments related to services provided by Dickey County Transportation Program, as discussed in Section 3 and Appendix B. Revisions have been made in the report, as appropriate, to reflect her input.

APPENDIX B:
TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDERS AGENCY PROFILES

Bis-Man Transit

Headquarters/Facilities

Bis-Man Transit, co-located in same building with West River Transit, Taxi 9000 and Rimrock Stages – 3750 E. Rosser Avenue, Bismarck, ND

Organizational Structure

Private, nonprofit 501 (c) 3

The 15 member Bis-Man Transit Board is the broker for transportation services for the cities of Bismarck and Mandan. The managerial provider for the Bis-Man Transit Board is Central NoDak Development Corporation and the operational provider is Taxi 9000.

As broker, the Bis-Man Transit Board is responsible for:
- Administering the transit system
- Providing facilities, personnel, and equipment necessary to carry out transportation services
- Raising the local non-federal share of funds to match the UMTA transit grant
- Soliciting all proposals for service providers
- Verifying and paying provider invoices
- Monitoring provider compliance
- Providing monthly operating and financial reports
- Distributing service information materials
- Selling fare tickets
- Certifying Bis-Man Transit eligible riders and maintaining a rider database
- Handling and resolution of complaints and suggestions for improvement

As operational provider, Taxi 9000 is responsible for:
- Providing transportation services for Bis-Man Transit and The Capital Area Transit (CAT)
- Providing maintenance necessary to carry out transportation services

The City of Bismarck owns the facilities, vehicles, and equipment and is responsible for:
- Establishing all major service policies and procedures
- Final review and approval of administrative documents and budgets

Type of Operation

Fixed route (d.b.a. Capital Area Transit – CAT) and paratransit
Ticketing agent for Rimrock Stages

Service Area

City limits of Bismarck and Mandan and within a two mile radius surrounding the two cities (including the adjacent community of Lincoln and the University of Mary campus)

Local / Intercity Services

Fixed route and demand-response paratransit
Operating the intercity bus terminal/serving as ticketing agent for Rimrock Stages

Clients

General public, elderly, and disabled

Perceived Client Needs

Work, medical, social, school, shopping, general transportation

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

Miles – 983,420
Rides – 301,450

Hours of Operation/Schedule

Paratransit – 24/7, holidays included
Fixed Route – Monday through Saturday; times vary, but approximately 6:30 a.m. to
6:30 p.m.

Number of Vehicles

32   Range in size from 6 – 35 passengers - 29 accessible

Dispatch Capabilities

Centralized, computer dispatch system designed specifically for Bis-Man Transit

Staffing

Administration: Central Nodak Development Corporation – full-time executive director; 3 full-
time administrative staff; 1 full-time and 1 part-time bus depot employees
Operations: Taxi 9000 – 23 paratransit drivers; 11 fixed route drivers; plus dispatch, mechanics,
wash bay attendants; and supervisory staff

Maintenance

Taxi 9000 and local commercial providers

Marketing

Website and newspaper, radio and television advertising

Primary Funding Sources

Federal (5307)
State aid for public transportation - North Dakota
County senior programs mill levy (Burleigh and Morton)
City mill levy (Bismarck and Mandan)
Medicaid
United Way
RSVP+
Contracts
Fares

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State aid	$ 392,713	
Federal	$1,347,324	
Mill levy	$ 669,465	
Medicaid	$ 75,270	
Contracts	$ 79,123	
Other	$ 271,201	
Fares	$ 478,921	
Total income	**$3,314,017**	
Total reported expenses		**$3,314,017**

Contracts

YMCA

Current Coordination Partners

West River Transit
Standing Rock Public Transit
Rimrock Stages
New Town Bus Line
Taxi 9000
University of Mary
YMCA

Dickey County Transportation

Headquarters/Facilities
 Ellendale and Oakes at respective senior centers
 Rent garages for vehicles in Oakes and Ellendale

Organizational Structure
 Private, nonprofit 501 (c) 3
 Board of Directors – meets 3 times/year; occasionally quarterly
  3 representatives from Ellendale; 3 from Oakes; 1 from Fullerton; 2 at-large
  No term limits; currently all senior citizens

Type of Operation
 Demand-response; fixed route to Aberdeen

Service Area
 Dickey County

Local / Intercity Services
 Demand-response service in Ellendale
 Demand-response service in Oakes
 Fixed routes to and from Oakes, Fullerton, and Ellendale, ND to/from Aberdeen, SD
 Rural pickups (including farmsteads), Forbes, Fullerton to and from Ellendale and Oakes

Clients
 General public, elderly, and disabled

Perceived Client Needs
 Medical, shopping, and meal sites

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)
 Miles – 13,011
 Rides – 5,460

Hours of Operations/Schedule
 Mondays – Aberdeen 1-2 trips per month depending on demand – fixed routes leave
 in the morning and return late afternoon
 Tuesdays and Thursdays 8:45 a.m. – 4:15 p.m. – demand-response in Ellendale
 Tuesdays 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m., Wednesdays and Fridays 8:45 a.m. – 4 p.m. – demand-response
  in Oakes

Vehicles
 2 1 bus (12 + 2 wheelchair positions)
   1 van (accessible with ramp)

Dispatch Capabilities
 People needing rides call Oakes or Ellendale senior centers

Staffing

Director oversees transit as well as aging services programs
Outreach workers help with taking ride reservations by phone at centers
2 part-time drivers; 2 substitute drivers (1 paid, 1 unpaid)

Maintenance

Private businesses in local communities

Marketing

County senior newsletter; schedules posted on vehicles; information in Oakes paper weekly; outreach workers inform seniors when visiting them in their homes

Primary Funding Sources

Federal (5311)
State aid for public transportation
Fares

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State aid	$ 31,406	
Federal	$ 8,000	
Mill levy	$	
Medicaid	$	
Contracts	$	
Other	$	
Fares	$ 3,302	
Total income	**$ 42,708**	
Total reported expenses		**$42,708**

Contracts

None

Current Coordination Partners

Agreement in place with South Central Transit Network and Valley Senior Services
Royal Oakes Assisted Living Facility – Oakes
Evergreen Place Basic Care/Assisted Living – Ellendale

City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program

Headquarters/Facilities
> None – director operates program out of her home/cell phone

Organizational Structure
> 501 (c) 3 private, non-profit
> No board of directors or advisory board

Type of Operation
> Fixed route

Service Area
> City of Glen Ullin with travel to Bismarck and Dickinson

Local / Intercity Services
> Fixed route from Glen Ullin to Bismarck and Dickinson
> Occasional local transit for special events

Clients
> Elderly, disabled, and general public

Perceived Client Needs
> Medical, shopping, and general transportation to regional centers

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)
> Miles – 5323
> Rides – 622

Hours of Operation/Schedule
> Fixed route – Glen Ullin to Bismarck twice per month – leaves in the morning and returns in the
> late afternoon depending on rider's appointments
> Fixed route – Glen Ullin to Dickinson once per month – leaves in the morning and returns in the
> late afternoon depending on rider's appointments/schedules

Number of Vehicles
> 1   17 passenger bus, accessible

Dispatch Capabilities
> Passengers call the transit director or call the driver directly to reserve rides.

Staffing
> 1   Part-time director (20-30 hours per month)
> 1   Part-time driver
> 1   Substitute driver

Maintenance

Arrangements are made to service/repair vehicle in Bismarck

Marketing

None

Primary Funding Sources

State aid for public transportation

Fares

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State Aid	$ 7,018	
Federal	$	
Mill Levy	$	
Medicaid	$	
Contracts	$	
Other	$	
Fares	$ 1,551	
Total income	**$ 8,569**	
Total reported expenses		**$8,569**

Contracts

None

Current Coordination Partners

None at present time

City of Hazen Busing Project

Headquarters/Facilities
> City Hall, Hazen, ND
> City Hall provides garage space for storage of buses.

Organizational Structure
> Public agency
> Hazen City Council (5 members) serves as the governing body for the transit system. Members are elected by majority vote at city-wide elections.

Type of Operation
> Fixed route
> Demand-response

Service Area
> Within city of Hazen and some outlying communities for trips to Bismarck and Dickinson

Local / Intercity Services
> Fixed route weekly from Hazen to Bismarck
> Fixed route monthly from Hazen to Dickinson
> Demand-response within Hazen

Clients
> General public, elderly, disabled, and children

Perceived Client Needs
> Medical, shopping, school, summer activity programs, and general transportation

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)
> Miles – 22,084
> Rides – 15,706

Hours of Operation/Schedule
> Fixed route – on scheduled days, morning departure and afternoon return with times dependent upon passenger appointments
> Demand-response – Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; summers 8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Number of Vehicles
> 3   7 to 20 passengers - 2 accessible

Dispatch Capabilities
> Passengers call the city hall office or call the driver directly to reserve rides.

Staffing
> 1 director – part-time; also serves as city auditor (budgets 20% of time to transit)
> 5 part-time bus drivers

Maintenance

Arrangements are made locally or in Bismarck, if necessary.

Marketing

City website, flyers, and local newspaper

Primary Funding Sources

Federal
State aid for public transportation
City of Hazen mill levy
Fares

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State Aid Capital	$ 1,350	
State Aid	$ 24,110	
Federal	$ 29,328	
Mill Levy	$ 2,861	
Medicaid	$	
Contracts	$	
Other	$	
Fares	$ 15,313	
Total income	**$ 72,962**	
Total reported expenses		**$71,612**

Contracts

None

Current Coordination Partners

West River Transit

James River Transit

Headquarters/Facilities
> Headquarters is located at James River Senior Citizen's Center, Jamestown.
> Office for Wells/Sheridan is located at Harvey Senior Citizen's Center, Harvey.

Organizational Structure
> Private, nonprofit 501 (c) 3 – James River Senior Citizen's Center, Inc.
> Board of directors with representative from Stutsman County Commission and one representative of the Wells/Sheridan County Aging Council Advisory Board – meets monthly
> Wells/Sheridan County Aging Council Advisory Board – meets quarterly

Type of Operation
> Demand-response; fixed route

Service Area
> Stutsman, Wells, and Sheridan Counties

Local / Intercity Services
> Demand-response service in Jamestown and Harvey
> Fixed route to Bismarck once per week from Jamestown (only if medical appointments)
> Fixed route to Fargo once per week from Jamestown (only if medical appointments)
> Fixed route from Harvey to Bismarck twice per month
> Fixed route from Harvey to Minot once per month
> Fixed route from Martin to Harvey once per week
> Transit available weekly from Fessenden and from Selz to Harvey, upon request

Clients
> General public, elderly, and disabled

Perceived Client Needs
> Medical, shopping, work, meal sites, and social

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)
> Miles – 219,909
> Rides – 73,542

Hours of Operations/Schedule
> Demand-response within Jamestown – 7 days per week
>> 6:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.   Monday – Thursday
>> 8 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.   Friday and Saturday
>> 8 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.   Sundays
>
> Demand-response in Harvey – 5 days per week (M-F)
>> 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
>
> Fixed routes from Jamestown to Bismarck every Tuesday (if medical appointment is scheduled)
> Fixed routes from Jamestown to Fargo every Wednesday (if medical appointment is scheduled)
> Fixed routes from Harvey to Minot the first Tuesday of every month

Fixed routes from Harvey to Bismarck the second and third Tuesday of every month (route
included stops in McClusky, if requested)

Note – Fixed routes generally leave in the morning and return late afternoon, depending on riders'
appointment schedules.

Number of Vehicles

12 – James River Transit has 9 (all accessible); Wells/Sheridan Transit has 3 - 2 accessible

Dispatch Capabilities

Each county has own dispatch system/non-computerized; passengers call central office in
Jamestown or Harvey for their respective counties

Staffing

Executive director oversees transit as well as aging services programs for Stutsman, Wells and
Sheridan Counties and for-profit catering business located in Jamestown.

James River has a full-time secretary and full-time office manager who are part of the overall
administrative team. There is 1 full-time fleet manager who also serves as a driver; 1
full-time billing clerk who also serves as a fill-in dispatcher; 1 full-time dispatcher; 1
part-time dispatcher; and 18 part-time drivers. At Wells/Sheridan, there is a full-time site
coordinator who oversees transit as well as aging services programs and a gaming
operation that provides additional funding for programs; an Experience Works person
who assists with morning dispatch; a part-time secretary who assists with afternoon
dispatch; 1 full-time driver; and 2 part-time drivers.

Maintenance

Private businesses in local communities

Marketing

County senior newsletters; flyers; posters; articles in local papers; radio interviews once or twice
a month in Harvey; speaking to service groups; local cable television in Jamestown (live) every
Monday; transit brochure; interagency council in Wells County; outreach worker visits in senior
citizens' homes; etc.

Primary Funding Sources

Federal (5311)
State aid for public transportation - North Dakota
County senior programs mill levy (Stutsman, Wells, and Sheridan Counties)
Contracts
Fares
Fundraising

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State aid	$172,225
Federal	$215,000
Mill levy	$ 25,476
Medicaid	$ 16,093
Contracts	$ 14,450
Other	$
Fares	<u>$137,218</u>
Total income	**$580,462**
Total reported expenses	**$580,462**

Contracts

Hav-It Industries – Harvey
Progress Enterprises – Jamestown
Trinity Lutheran Church – Jamestown
St. John's Lutheran Church – Jamestown

Current Coordination Partners

Anne Carlsen Center for Children – Jamestown
Ave Maria Village (Nursing Home) – Jamestown
Hi-Acres Nursing Home – Jamestown
St. Aloisius Hospital/Nursing Home – Harvey

Kidder County

Headquarters/Facilities
Steele Senior Citizen's Center, Steele, ND
One van is located in Tuttle and one in Pettibone.

Organizational Structure
501 (c) 3 private, non-profit
Governed by the Kidder County Council on Aging board of directors – the board has two representatives from each city in the county. Term limits are six years (unless replacements are unable to be found).

Type of Operation
Fixed route
Demand-response

Service Area
Kidder County

Local / Intercity Services
Fixed route from county's cities to Bismarck and Jamestown
Demand-response (limited) in Pettibone, Robinson, and Tuttle; in Steele, rides are available only to the senior center for meals

Clients
Elderly, disabled, and general public

Perceived Client Needs
Medical, shopping, and meal sites at senior center

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)
Miles – 43,059
Rides – 6,010

Hours of Operation/Schedule
Fixed route – starts in Robinson and travels a North route (Pettibone, Tuttle, and Woodworth) on
    Tuesdays to Bismarck
Fixed route – starts in Robinson and travels a South route (Steele, Dawson, and Tappen) on
    Thursdays to Bismarck
Fixed route – starts in Robinson and travels to Jamestown 2 Wednesdays/month – one North
    route and one South route
Demand-response – Monday through Friday, limited in Pettibone, Robinson, Tuttle, and Steele

Number of Vehicles
3   2 – 7 passenger vans and 1 – 22 passenger bus
    1 van is accessible
    New van on order

Dispatch Capabilities
> Passengers call the driver directly to reserve rides for all North routes. Passengers for the South routes call the senior center in Steele.

Staffing
> Director is also responsible for overseeing aging services programs.
> 1   Full-time secretary
> 1   Part-time driver
> 1   Substitute driver

Maintenance
> Arrangements are made to service/repair vehicles in Bismarck

Marketing
> Agency brochure; articles in local papers; speaking at local club meetings; flyers; and occasional church bulletins

Primary Funding Sources
> Federal 5311
> State aid for public transportation
> County senior programs mill levy (Kidder)
> Fares

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)
> State aid $ 29,559
> Federal $ 35,479
> Mill levy $ 2,920
> Medicaid $
> Contracts $
> Other $
> Fares $ 5,971
> **Total income**   **$ 73,929**
> **Total reported expenses**   **$73,929**

Contracts
> None

Current Coordination Partners
> James River Transit

South Central Transit Network

Headquarters/Facilities

Barnes County Senior Citizen's Center - Valley City, ND

Outreach workers that serve as dispatchers are located in individual counties.

Organizational Structure

Private, nonprofit 501 (c) 3 – South Central Adult Services Council, Inc.

Board of directors for SCASC with representatives from each of six counties (Barnes, Foster, Griggs, LaMoure, Logan, and McIntosh) – meets quarterly

Each county (including Emmons) has its own County Aging Council – meets quarterly

Type of Operation

Demand-response; fixed route; and taxi 24/7

Service Area

Barnes, Emmons, Foster, Griggs, LaMoure, Logan and McIntosh Counties

Local / Intercity Services

Demand-response service in Valley City, LaMoure (city), Napoleon, Ashley, Wishek, Cooperstown, and Carrington

Fixed routes to, from and within Barnes, Emmons, Foster, Griggs, LaMoure, Logan and McIntosh Counties

Fixed routes from Barnes County to Fargo and Jamestown

Fixed routes from LaMoure (city) to Jamestown, Fargo, Bismarck, Oakes, and Valley City

Fixed routes from Logan County to Bismarck and Jamestown

Fixed routes from Griggs County to Fargo, Valley City, Jamestown, and Grand Forks

Fixed route from Foster County to Fargo and Jamestown

Fixed route from Emmons County to Bismarck

Fixed route from McIntosh County to Bismarck

Taxi service in Valley City

Clients

General public, elderly, disabled, and school-age

Perceived Client Needs

Medical, shopping, work, meal sites, social, and school

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

Miles – 592,519

Rides – 85,472

Hours of Operations

Varies by county and type of service

Fixed routes leave in the morning and return late afternoon

Demand-response in Valley City 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Taxi in Valley City 24/7 (second vehicle available to run on weekends)

Schedule

 Demand-response and fixed routes – Monday through Friday
 Valley City to Jamestown for dialysis – Monday through Saturday
 Valley City to Bismarck daily – Monday through Friday
 Valley City to Fargo daily – Monday through Friday
 Taxi service in Valley City 24/7

Number of Vehicles

 27 4 minivans (6 + 1 wheelchair position)
   15 accessible buses/vans (ranging from 7 + 2 to 18 + 2)
   8 buses/vans (non-accessible, ranging from 7 to 15 passengers)

Dispatch Capabilities

 Each county has own dispatch system/non-computerized. Passengers call an outreach worker in
   the county or the individual driver to schedule their rides. In Valley City, central
   dispatch is located at the senior center.

Staffing

 Executive director oversees transit as well as aging services programs, assisted living facility,
   chore service, prescription drug program (Fargo/Valley City); etc. 43.26% of
   administrative expenses charged to transit based on direct expenses.
 1 full-time dispatcher, 3 part-time dispatchers, 4 full-time drivers, and 25 part-time drivers

Maintenance

 Private businesses in local communities

Marketing

 County senior newsletters; flyers; posters; local newspapers; website; community access channel

Primary Funding Sources

 Federal (5311)
 State aid for public transportation - North Dakota
 County senior programs mill levy (Barnes only)
 Contracts
 Fares
 Fundraising

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State aid capital	$ 27,636	
State aid	$264,432	
Federal	$362,810	
Mill levy	$ 29,671	
Medicaid	$ 4,924	
Contracts	$ 37,033	
Other	$ 500	
Fares	$ 81,908	
Total income	**$808,914**	
Total reported expenses		**$781,278**

Contracts

Bridgeview Estates
Sheyenne Care Center
Maryvale
Head Start
Ashley Nursing Home

Current Coordination Partners

Sheyenne Care Center
Social Services (all 7 Counties)
Sheyenne Valley Special Education Unit
Open Door Center (Valley City)
Veteran's Service Officer (Barnes County)
Head Start (Valley City)
Nursing homes/hospitals/clinics in all 7 counties
Valley Senior Services
Agreement in place with Dickey County Transportation

Standing Rock Public Transit

Headquarters

Standing Rock Public Transit has a free-standing facility in Fort Yates, ND.

Organizational Structure

Legal entity – Sitting Bull College

Sitting Bull College Board of Trustees serves as the governing board. The transit program is required to submit a quarterly report and present at least one annual PowerPoint presentation.

Transit Advisory Committee is comprised of service agency representatives and until recently met on a quarterly basis.

Type of Operation

Fixed route

Demand-response

Intercity bus

Veteran's service

Service Area

To, from and within Standing Rock Reservation (Sioux County, ND and Corson County, SD)

Local / Intercity Services

Fixed route within reservation and to/from Bismarck/Mandan

Demand-response on the reservation

Intercity bus between Munro, SD and Bismarck, ND providing a link to Rapid City and Sioux Falls, SD

Veteran's Hospital service to Sturgis and Fargo

Clients

General public, elderly, and disabled

Perceived Client Needs

Work, medical, school, shopping, and general transportation

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

Miles – 257,170

Rides – 19,876

Hours of Operation/Schedule

Fixed route – Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Demand-Response – Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Intercity Bus – North/South shuttle – Mondays and Thursdays

Veteran's Service –   Fort Meade, SD – 1st and 3rd Wednesdays

Fargo, ND Veteran's Administration – 2nd and 4th Wednesdays

Number of Vehicles

15   5 to 26 passengers - 9 accessible

Dispatch Capabilities

Centralized, computer dispatch which is currently being upgraded
Passengers call the central office to reserve rides.

Staffing

Executive director serves ND and SD, as well as serving as Scenic Byway Coordinator
1 coordinator – full-time (funding: NDDOT)
1 finance clerk – full-time (funding split: ½ SDDOT, ½ NDDOT)
1 dispatcher – full-time (funding: NDDOT)
7 full-time drivers (funding split: 3 NDDOT, 2 FTA Tribal 5311, 2 SDDOT)
2 part-time drivers (funding split: 1 NDDOT, 1 SDDOT)

Maintenance

In-house for as much as possible

Marketing

Website; newspaper, radio and television advertising

Primary Funding Sources

Federal 5311 through NDDOT and SDDOT
Federal 5311(c) tribal transit funds received directly from FTA
State aid for public transportation - North Dakota
SD state funding
Sitting Bull College
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
Medicaid
Fares

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010) * ND only

State Aid	$ 47,375
Federal	$156,860
County senior programs mill levy	$
Medicaid	$ 96
Contracts	$
Other	$204,160
Fares	$ 34,026
Total income	**$442,517**
Total reported expenses	**$442,517**

Contracts

None

Current Coordination Partners

Bis-Man Transit
Jefferson Lines
Rimrock Stages
River Cities Public Transit (SD)
Sitting Bull College

West River Transit

Headquarters

West River Transit, co-located with Bis-Man Transit, Taxi 9000 and Rimrock Stages
3750 E. Rosser Avenue – Bismarck, ND

Organizational Structure

Private, nonprofit 501 (c) 3
Board of directors with representatives from each of the 7 counties in its service area (Burleigh, Dunn, Grant, McLean, Mercer, Morton and Oliver) – meets quarterly
Each county has its own independent transit board.

Type of Operation

Local demand-response service for specified communities on scheduled days
Fixed route service to Bismarck from numerous communities
Fixed route service to Dickinson for specified communities
Fixed route service to Minot from several communities

Service Area

Rural Burleigh, Dunn, Grant, McLean, Mercer, Morton and Oliver Counties

Local / Intercity Services

Demand-response local service in Underwood, Garrison, Turtle Lake, Washburn, Beulah, Center, Hebron, and New Salem on a regularly scheduled basis
Fixed routes to, from and within Burleigh, Dunn, Grant, McLean, Mercer, Morton, and Oliver Counties
Fixed routes from Butte, Garrison, and Max to Minot
Fixed routes from Beulah, Garrison, Center, Wing, Regan, Driscoll, Hebron, Sterling, Moffit, Menoken, McKenzie, New Salem, Almont, Carson, Elgin, Huff, Flasher, New Leipzig, Leith, Heil and Lark to Bismarck
Fixed routes from Beulah and Hebron to Dickinson
Fixed route from Beulah to Golden Valley and Zap
Fixed route from Almont to New Salem
Fixed route from SE Burleigh to Sterling

Clients

General public, elderly, and disabled

Perceived Client Needs

Medical, shopping, meal sites, and social

Miles/Rides   (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

Miles – 111,940
Rides – 32,420

Hours of Operations
>Monday through Friday
>Hours vary by county and type of service – generally between 7 a.m. and 8 a.m. to
>>5 p.m. or 6 p.m.
>Fixed routes leave in the morning and return afternoon

Schedule
>Demand-response and fixed routes – Monday through Friday
>Closed holidays (except for necessary dialysis rides)

Number of Vehicles
>14   Range from 7 to 16 passengers - 12 are accessible

Dispatch Capabilities
>Riders call into the main office or to individual drivers (phone numbers are posted on their website and in printed materials). They do not use a computerized software system. Requests for service from small communities to larger hubs for shopping or medical appointments may be made on a same day basis, but riders are encouraged to call a day in advance.

Staffing
>Full-time executive director; full-time administrative assistant; 21 part-time drivers

Maintenance
>Contract for vehicle repairs/maintenance; most tires, oil changes, and fuel purchases are local within counties

Marketing
>Newly initiated newsletter distributed on buses to passengers and dropped off at popular pick-up locations in local communities; website; church bulletins; flyers; schedule in local papers in all communities served

Primary Funding Sources
>Federal (5311)
>State aid for public transportation
>County senior program mill levy (McLean, Burleigh, Grant, Morton, Mercer, Oliver)
>City of Beulah
>Medicaid
>Fares
>Fundraising

Revenue and Expenses (July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010)

State aid capital	$ 12,664
State aid	$174,850
Federal	$ 98,316
Mill levy	$ 50,300
Medicaid	$ 8,321
Contracts	$ 300
Other	$ 6,485
Fares	$ 53,811
Total Income	**$405,047**
Total Reported Expenses	**$392,383**

Contracts

None at present

Current Coordination Partners

Williston Council for Aging
Elm Crest Manor Nursing Home – New Salem
Informal coordination with other transit providers in and outside region

APPENDIX C:
TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDERS VEHICLE FLEET DATA

Dickey County Transportation – 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
Bus	12+2	Yes	Ford	StarTrans	22"8"	2004	2004	69,100	Good	6	11,500
Van	7	Yes	Chevy	Uplander	15"10"	2008	2007	4,800	Good	3	1,600

City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program – 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
Van	16+1	Yes	Chevy	Cutaway CTV	25'6"	1998	1998	65,100	Good	12	5,400

City of Hazen Busing Project - 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
Bus #1	18	No	Chevy	G3500	24'	2001	2001	69,320	Fair	10	6,900
Bus #2	18 + 2	Yes	Ford	E-450	23'9"	2007	2007	19,062	Good	4	4,800
Van	6 + 1	Yes	Chevy	Uplander	16'8"	2008	2008	18,436	Good	3	6,100

James River Transit - 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
17 Van	6+1	Yes	Ford	Ext. Van	19'2"	2002	2002	178,017	Fair	8	22,300
146 Bus	6+2	Yes	Ford	StarTrans	20'6"	1998	2006	146,815	Good	4	36,700
148 Van	6	Yes	Chrys.	Sport Van	16'4"	2001	2002	123,728	Good	8	15,500
149 Bus	12+2	Yes	Ford	Diamond	22'8"	2006	2007	57,673	Good	3	19,200
152 Bus	12+2	Yes	Ford	Goshen	24'	2007	2007	34,455	Good	3	11,500
153 Bus	12+2	Yes	Ford	Goshen	24'	2007	2007	40,849	Good	3	13,600
154 Van	4+2	Yes	Chevy	Uplander	15'4"	2008	2008	31,256	Good	2	15,600
155 Bus	5+2	Yes	Ford	StarTrans	20'6"	1998	2008	64,783	Good	2	33,400
156 Van	4+2	Yes	Chevy	Uplander	15'4"	2008	2008	30,828	Good	2	15,400
1 Bus	14+2	Yes	Ford	Econo	24'2"	1995	1995	116,972	Fair	15	7,800
7 Van	6+1	Yes	Ford	Ext. Van	19'2"	2002	2002	66,566	Good	8	8,300
2 Van	6	No	Ford	Sport Van	16'4"	2006	2006	33,393	Good	4	8,300

Kidder County - 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
Bus	22+0	No	Ford	Super Duty	25'	2003	2003	113,512	Good	7	16,200
Van	7+0	No	Dodge	Grand Caravan	16'6"	2002	2002	135,107	Fair	8	16,900

South Central Transit Network – 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/ Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
Barnes-91	12	No	Dodge	Maxivan	19'	1997	1997	133,426	Fair	13	10,300
McIntosh-Zeeland	9+2	Yes	Dodge	Conversion	18'6"	1997	2007	11,672	Good	3	3,900
Griggs-Van	11+1	Yes	Dodge	Conversion	19'	2000	2001	174,418	Poor	9	19,400
Foster-Van	11+1	Yes	Dodge	Ram Van	19'3"	2001	2001	65,458	Fair	9	7,300
McIntosh-Ashley	7+2	Yes	Ford	Econoline	19'	2001	2003	54,351	Good	7	7,800
LaMoure-Van	12	No	Dodge	Ram Wagon	19'	2002	2002	120,968	Fair	8	15,100
Barnes-93	7+2	Yes	Ford	Econoline	19'10"	2002	2002	82,668	Fair	8	10,300
Barnes-95	7+2	Yes	Ford	Econoline	19'10"	2002	2002	78,293	Fair	8	9,800
Barnes-97	12	No	Dodge	Ram Wagon	17'4"	2002	2002	26,110	Good	8	3,300
Barnes-99	6+1	Yes	Chevy	Venture	16'9"	2003	2003	67,384	Good	7	9,600
McIntosh-Wishek	10+2	Yes	Ford	Econoline	19'	2003	2003	61,912	Good	7	8,900
Barnes-New Taxi	7	No	Ford	Freestar	16'9"	2006	2005	42,263	Good	5	8,500
Barnes-92	7	No	Ford	Freestar	16'9"	2007	2006	27,007	Good	4	6,800
Barnes-98	13+2	Yes	Ford	Bus	22'7"	2007	2007	8,170	Good	3	2,700
LaMoure-Bus	13+2	Yes	Ford	Starcraft	23'4"	2007	2007	22,444	Good	3	8,500
Griggs-Bus	13+2	Yes	Ford	Starcraft	23'4"	2007	2007	16,361	Good	3	5,500
Logan-Bus	13+2	Yes	Ford	Starcraft	23'4"	2007	2007	10,036	Good	3	3,300
Barnes-94	6+1	Yes	Chevy	Uplander/ Braun	17'	2008	2008	200	Good	2	100
Barnes-96	7	No	Dodge	Caravan	17'	2008	2008	19	Good	2	10
Logan-Van	7	Yes	Chevy	Uplander/ Braun	17'	2008	2008	1,500	Good	2	800
Foster-Minivan	7	Yes	Chevy	Uplander/ Braun	17'	2008	2008	1,500	Good	1	800
Emmons-Bus 15	15	No	Ford		23'4"	2003	2009		Good	1	0
Emmons-Bus 20	20	Yes	Ford			2006	2009		Good	1	0
Emmons-Minivan	7	Yes	Dodge	Caravan/ Conversion	17'	2009	2009	-	Good	1	0
LaMoure-Minivan	6+1	Yes	Dodge	Caravan/ Conversion	17'	2009	2010	-	Good	0	0
Griggs-Minivan	6+1	Yes	Dodge	Caravan/ Conversion	17'	2009	2010	-	Good	0	0

West River Transportation - 2009 Vehicle Roster

Vehicle Desc.	Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/ Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
Mclean Bus	16 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	24' 3"	2001	2001	134,097	Good	8	16,800
Mclean Bus	12 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	22' 7"	2003	2003	42,701	Good	6	7,100
Mclean Bus	16 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	25'	2006	2006	49,205	Good	3	16,400
Burleigh Bus	12 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	22' 6"	2006	2006	53,345	Good	3	17,800
Grant Bus	16 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	24' 3"	2001	2001	128,782	Good	8	16,100
New Salem Bus	16 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	25' 6"	2000	2000	116,858	Good	9	13,000
Hebron Bus	16 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	24' 5"	2002	2002	54,427	Good	7	7,800
Beulah Bus	16 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	25' 6"	2000	2000	166,110	Good	9	18,500
Beulah Bus	17 + 1	Yes	Ford	Goshen	22' 4"	2009	2009	1,509	Good	1	1,500
Center Bus	12 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	22' 6"	2006	2006	35,794	Good	3	11,900
Van	7	No	Dodge	Grand Caravan	16' 8"	2003	2003	26,372	Good	6	4,400
Suburban	7	No	Chevy	Suburban	18'	2001	2005	109,526	Good	4	17,400
Back-up Bus	10 + 1	Yes	Ford	Starstrans	21'	1998	2006	81,857	Good	3	27,300
Back-up Bus	19 + 1	Yes	Ford	Startrans	27' 11"	1989	1989	175,756	Fair	20	8,800

Standing Rock Public Transportation – 2009 Vehicle Roster

Seating: General+ Wheel-chair	Lift/ Ramp	Make	Model	Bus Length	Year Mfr.	First Year of Service	Mileage	Condition	Years of Use	Annual Miles
15	No	Chevy	Express	19'	1999	2000	412,110	Fair	11	37,500
7 + 2	Yes	Chevy	Express	19'	2000	2000	123,534	Good	11	11,200
24	No	Ford	E-450	25'	2002	2002	336,489	Fair	9	37,400
16 + 2	Yes	Ford	E-450	25'	2002	2010	83,256	Good	9	
17	No	Ford	E-450	22'	2002	2002	242,855	Good	9	27,000
10	No	GMC	Savanna	18'	2006	2006	97,000	Good	5	19,400
22	No	Ford	E-450	25'	2007	2007	103,079	Good	4	25800
3 + 2	Yes	Chevy	Uplander	16'	2008	2008	27,608	Good	3	9,200
16 + 2	Yes	Ford	E-450	25'	2008	2008	40,000	Good	3	13,300
16 + 2	Yes	Ford	E-450	25'	2010	2010	1200	Good	0	0
8 + 1	Yes	Ford	E-350	18'	2010	2010	1200	Good	0	0
16 + 2	Yes	Ford	E-350	25'	2010	2010	300	Good	0	0
25	No	Ford	E-450	25'	2010	2010	2000	Good	0	0

APPENDIX D:
TRANSIT SERVICE PROVIDERS OPERATOR INTERVIEWS

Transit Agency Interviews

Wednesday, May 12th   1 p.m.
> Pam Ternes - Standing Rock Public Transit
> Fort Yates, ND

Thursday, May 13th   9 a.m.
> Kathy Boshee - City of Glen Ullin Public Transportation Program
> Glen Ullin, ND

Thursday, May 13th   12:30 p.m. (Mountain Time)
> Sandra Bohrer - City of Hazen Busing Project
> Hazen, ND

Friday, May 14th   9:30 a.m.
> Carol Anderson - West River Transportation
> Bismarck, ND

Friday, May 14th   12:30 p.m.
> Robin Were - Bis-Man Transit
> Bismarck, ND

Tuesday, May 18th   9:00 a.m.
> Pat Hansen - South Central Adult Services
> Valley City, ND

Tuesday, May 18th   1 p.m.
> Cheryl Jongerius – Dickey County Transportation
> Ellendale, ND

Wednesday, May 19th   10:30 a.m.
> Garnet Lukenbach - Wells/Sheridan Transit
> Harvey, ND

Thursday, May 20th   1:30 p.m.
> Laurie McGuire - James River Transit
> Jamestown, ND

Thursday, May 20th   4:30 p.m.
> Neda Irish - Kidder County
> Steele, ND

Interview Questions
Public Transit Service Providers
Public Transit Regional Coordination Pilot Projects

Date:

Place:

Operator/Representative:

Interviewer(s):

Others Present:

Verify Operating Data Tabulated by SURTC

Share Demographic Data Compiled for Region's Counties

Collect Information Not Yet Compiled (cross-check list with already compiled data)
- Organizational structure (non-profit, for profit, etc.)
- Types of operation
- Service area, clients, and perceived client needs (origins, destinations, trip purposes, etc.)
- Hours of operation
- Routes/schedules
- Number of passengers and passenger trips/segment
- Budgets, funding sources, and financial program
- Equipment and facilities
- Dispatching capabilities, systems, and services
- Coordinated efforts with other providers or agencies
- Organization, management, administrative structure(s)
- Staffing
- Maintenance and maintenance agreements
- Marketing efforts
- Contracts to provide service

Current Operations
- What are the major unmet transit needs in your city/service area and how might regional coordination help address some of these needs?
- How does your service currently receive requests for service? How are related service runs scheduled and how is this information transmitted to drivers?
- What, if any specialized dispatch equipment or software does your system use?
- Does your service have an advisory board and, if so, how are its members appointed and what role do they play in your operations?
- What, if any, efforts does your service currently make to coordinate your operations with those of other public transportation services (other transit services, intercity buses, taxis, etc.)?

- What, if any, efforts does your service currently make to coordinate your operations with those of non-public transportation services (Head Start, Voc. Rehab., nursing homes, etc.)?

Perspectives on Implementation of Legislative Directive

- Means of coordinating with other public, non-profit service providers
- Coordinating rural services with those in region's largest city
- Means of coordinating with public, for-profit service providers
- Possible coordination with non-public service providers
- Regional coordination administrator
  - Job description
  - Employer
  - Base of operations
  - Planning functions
- Regional and/or state coordination councils?
- Dispatch coordination options
- Possible coordination-related efficiency/cost saving measures
- Possible service enhancements
- Possible coordination standards or mandates, such as:
  - Uniform requirements regarding policies, fares, etc.
  - Mandated involvement with regional coordination, planning, etc.
  - Regional clearinghouse on grant applications, reporting, etc.

Additional Coordination Issues

- What, if any, roadblocks or inhibitors do potential funding sources put in place that impact your ability to provide service to mobility dependent individuals?

- What, if anything, can or should be done to improve coordination between public transit service providers and entities that require transit services for their clients or program-eligible individuals?