

SURTC Conducts Transit Coordination Study for State of North Dakota

A study completed by SURTC in December detailed efforts to facilitate further regional transit coordination in North Dakota.

The study was commissioned by the ND Department of Transportation as a result of legislative action mandating coordination pilot projects in two regions. The intent of the bill was to coordinate services, reduce fragmentation and duplication, and increase effectiveness and efficiency.

The report summarized implementation efforts underway by NDDOT, including contracts with outside agencies that resulted in the hiring of a regional coordinator for each of the pilot regions. The report presented related budgets and corresponding funding options for a three-



year period. Funding options included the use of Job Access Reverse Commute and New Freedom funding and the use of non-urbanized Section 5311 administrative funds.

With regard to statewide implementation, phased statewide coverage could be

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Study Examines Mobility and Travel Behavior of Older Adults and Other Transportation-Disadvantaged Groups

New research shows how use of transit increases the number of trips taken and provides rides to transportation-disadvantaged individuals who would

otherwise not make a trip.

The recently completed study, conducted by SURTC researcher Jeremy Mattson, examined travel behavior and mobility of older adults, people with disabilities, low-income individuals,

and rural residents by analyzing data from the National Household Travel Survey, a nation-wide survey last conducted in 2009.

Data on driving, trip frequency, staying in the same place all day or week, miles driven per year, mode choice, use of public transportation, trip purpose, trip distance, and issues and concerns regarding transportation were highlighted in the report. Changes over the last decade were also examined to identify trends in travel behavior.

While demonstrating the importance of transit, the study also shows the

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Recent highlights from the SURTC Blog:

- Research Report—Mobility and Travel Behavior of Older Adults and the Transportation-Disadvantaged
- FTA Online Dialogue on Transit Asset Management
- Journal of Public Transportation Special Edition: Rural and Intercity Bus
- Staff Presentations from Rural and Intercity Bus Conference Online

Visit our blog at:
blog.surtc.org

Editors: Jeremy Mattson and Tom Jirik



Message from the Director

Happy New Year! We are thankful for a wonderful 2012 with numerous successful trainings, several completed reports, new partnerships, and more students working with SURTC. We look forward to an even more productive 2013. We welcomed the new year with a new associate research fellow, Ranjit Godavarthy, as well as new projects. Enjoy 2013 and please let us know if we can be of assistance to you. As always, thank you for reading.

Best wishes for a happy, prosperous, and successful 2013!



Jill Hough

Coordination

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attained in 3-5 years and might include one coordinator for the Fargo-Moorhead urban area and up to four coordinators for the remainder of the state.



Jon Mielke

The eventual number of coordinators would be determined based on workloads identified during the implementation process. North Dakota currently has four coordinators – one in the Fargo-Moorhead urban area, one in the northeast region of the state, and one in each of the two pilot regions.

Also as part of the project, SURTC created websites for local operators, upgraded the transit portion of NDDOT's website, developed uniform policies, engaged in efforts to standardized fares, and analyzed rural routes in an attempt to reduce duplication and increase mobility options.

For more details about the project, contact SURTC researcher Jon Mielke at jon.mielke@ndsu.edu or Keven Anderson, coordinator of training and outreach, at keven.anderson@ndsu.edu. The full report is available at www.surtc.org under the Research section.

Welcome Ranjit Prasad Godavarthy

Ranjit Prasad Godavarthy has joined SURTC as an associate research fellow. Ranjit recently received his Ph.D. in transportation engineering from Kansas State University and has received his B.S. degree in civil engineering from Nagarjuna University (Andhra Pradesh, India) and his M.S. degree in transportation engineering from Kansas State University.

Coming from India, where public transportation is the primary mode of travel for much of the population, Ranjit understands the importance of an effective and efficient transit system in both urban and rural areas. During his graduate studies, he worked with a transit provider in the

city of Manhattan, KS, to determine the need for fixed-route transit in the community.



Ranjit Godavarthy

At Kansas State University, Ranjit also conducted research in the areas of transportation and highway safety, low-volume road safety, roundabout design, pedestrian travel, and freight transportation. With SURTC, Ranjit is interested in pursuing research in issues affecting small urban and rural transit, intercity transit, and transportation safety.

Document on Mentorship Program Released

A new report from SURTC highlights the value of a mentorship program for attracting students to transportation careers. The report also addresses reasons to develop a mentorship program and details the process, assignments, and evaluations of a pilot program at NDSU during the Spring Semesters of 2011 and 2012.

The report notes that the next generation of transportation professionals may be attracted to specific segments of the industry and begin their quest for life-long learning while in school by participating in a mentorship program with industry experts. Connecting students with mentors and providing a structured environment for questions and answers can pique interest and attract the next generation of workers.

The document will be available at www.surtc.org by the end of January. If you have questions about the mentorship program, please contact Jill Hough at jill.hough@ndsu.edu

Graduate Course in Public Transportation

The graduate course in public transportation, TL 786, is available spring semester 2013 completely online. The course will cover topics including governance, planning, service design, management, and industry trends during the 16-week semester. Students enrolled in the class will also participate in the mentorship program matching them with an industry expert. Dr. Jill Hough began teaching the class on Jan. 7.

New Study to Research Costs and Benefits of Rural Transit

SURTC researchers are investigating and attempting to quantify the many benefits associated with rural and small urban transit. Researcher Jeremy Mattson and PhD. student Elvis Ndembe will conduct a cost-benefit analysis in these areas.

Transit systems in rural and small urban areas are often viewed as valuable community assets because of the increased mobility they provide to those without other means of travel. The true value of those services, however, has been largely unmeasured, and there are often impacts that go unidentified. As transit systems compete for local dollars, it is important to identify and

quantify the impacts that the service has on the community.

Benefits to the transit user include lower cost trips, new trips that are made, and relocation avoidance. As transit provides access to work, health care, education, shopping, etc., additional trips will be made for these purposes, resulting in increased earnings, improved health, involvement in social activities, and



additional spending in the local community. Furthermore, the service reduces the likelihood of transportation-disadvantaged individuals experiencing isolation and depression.

Transit service can also provide energy and environmental benefits, and benefits through improved safety and security, which may be especially important for older adults with reduced driving abilities. Finally, the existence of transit operations also creates economic activity in the community.

For more details about the project, contact Jeremy Mattson at jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu.

SURTC Partnering with National Center on Senior Transportation

SURTC will be working with the National Center on Senior Transportation (NCST) to develop a plan for conducting technical assistance and training needs assessments.

NCST has been administered by Easter Seals, Inc. and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) since its inception, and these partners were once again selected in 2012 by the Federal Transit

Administration to administer the center.

Easter Seals, Inc. and n4a identified the development of a plan for conducting technical assistance and training needs assessments as one of NCST's milestones.

Ph.D. student Elvis Ndembe and Dr. Jill Hough began work on this project in December. Ndembe and Hough are looking at past successful technical assistance mechanisms NCST has



Elvis Ndembe

utilized and will develop survey instruments, conduct focus groups, and evaluate other appropriate data sources to help with the new assessment. The assessment should be completed

by May 2013.

Mobility

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differences in mobility between different population groups. Half of those 85 or older were found to have a disability or medical condition affecting their ability to travel, and for many of them, it results in reduced day-to-day travel. A strong desire to get out more often was found by those not making a trip within the last week, which shows the importance of mobility on quality of life. People with disabilities or medical conditions were shown to make significantly fewer

trips than others, while expressing a desire to get out more often.

Trends from 2001 to 2009 show increased use of transit. Older women are driving more and making more trips, slowly closing the gap between older men and women. These trends may continue



Jeremy Mattson

as the active baby boom generation retires and expects to maintain their mobility.

For more information about the study, contact Jeremy Mattson at jeremy.w.mattson@ndsu.edu. The full report can be downloaded from the research section at www.surtc.org. A presentation summarizing the project and the main findings can also be found at the SURTC website under Resources and Staff Presentations.

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Transit Policy Resources Posted to SURTC Website

New resources have been added to the SURTC website to assist transit agencies in developing policies and procedures. SURTC collected a number of sample policies, procedures, and report forms from different organizations and posted them online so they can be viewed, downloaded, and adopted by transit agencies.

Included are good examples of advisory board by-laws, driver handbooks, no-show policies, riders' guides, vehicle maintenance programs, accident report forms, guidelines on local planning and coordination, and many others. As with all samples, these should be reviewed by your board of directors and legal counsel if you wish to adopt them.

To find the transit policy examples, go to www.surtc.org, click on the Resources section and then Other Resources. The direct link is www.surtc.org/resources/transit_policies.php

SURTC Wishes You a Happy New Year



From left to right: Del Peterson, Jon Mielke, Jill Hough, Jeremy Mattson, Carol Wright, and Keven Anderson