



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

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## Agenda

### **Citizen Advisory Committee**

SECOG Center – Board Room  
500 N Western Ave, Sioux Falls, SD  
**September 13, 2023, at 3:00 PM**

Interested parties may also participate via Microsoft Teams

**Join on your computer, mobile app or room device**

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 260 543 075 454

Passcode: 9Hko7L

#### CAC Meeting – 3:00 PM – Roll Call

- |  |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Public Input on Non-Agenda Items <i>(3-minute comment period per individual)</i>  | Chair                         |
| 2. Approval of the August 9, 2023 Minutes <i>(Approval Requested)</i>  | Chair                         |
| 3. 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Revision #23-006 <i>(Recommendation for Approval Requested)</i>                | Sarah Gilkerson               |
| 4. Market Research Study – Underserved and Transit Surveys <i>(Informational)</i>  | Chris Tatham, ETC             |
| 5. First Draft of the 2020 Census Urbanized Area Smoothing Map <i>(Informational)</i>  | Sarah Gilkerson<br>Larry Dean |
| 6. First Draft of the 2023 Sioux Falls MPO Area Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan <i>(Informational)</i> | Sean Hegyi                    |
| 7. Other Business  | Sean Hegyi                    |
| a. CAC Membership Terms Ending in 2023   |                               |
| i. First Term: Ryan Groeneweg, Mark Hoffman, Luke Jessen, Amanda Snoozy  |                               |
| ii. Second Term: Cory Diedrich   |                               |
| b. Upcoming Meetings   |                               |

**Next CAC Meeting: November 8, 2023**

*Persons with special needs for which the MPO can provide accommodations may call 605.681.8176 at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.*

# Minutes

Citizens Advisory Committee of the  
Sioux Falls MPO

August 9, 2023

## **Members Present**

Cory Diedrich  
Collin Enstad (joined 3:14pm)  
Ryan Groeneweg  
Mark Hoffman  
Luke Jessen  
Rick Laughlin  
F. Butch Oseby  
Rachel Neiman

## **Members Absent**

Mollie Keating  
David Jackson  
Chuck Parsons

## **Others Present**

## **Staff Present**

Sean Hegyi, SECOG  
Sarah Gilkerson, SDDOT  
Greg Heitmann, FHWA  
Sam Trebilcock, City of Sioux Falls  
Fletcher Lacock, City of Sioux Falls  
Danaca Schettler, City of Sioux Falls

The meeting was called to order by Chair Cory Diedrich at 3:07 p.m. The roll was taken, and a quorum was present.

1. **Public Input on Non-Agenda Items:** There was no public input.
2. **Approval of the July 12, 2023 Minutes:** Rick Laughlin made a motion to approve the July 12, 2023, minutes and was seconded by F. Butch Oseby. A voice vote was called, and the motion carried unanimously.
3. **Letter of Support for the South Veterans Parkway MPDG Application:** Sean Hegyi presented the Letter of Support. Luke Jessen made a motion to recommend the approval of the Letter of Support and was seconded by Rick Laughlin. A voice vote was called, and the motion carried unanimously.
4. **2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP):** Sean Hegyi presented the 2024-2027 TIP. F. Butch Oseby made a motion to recommend approval of the 2024-2027 TIP and was seconded by Mark Hoffman. A voice vote was called, and the motion carried unanimously.
5. **Other Business:**
  - a. Sean Hegyi presented an update on the Market Research Study. This was for informational purposes only.
  - b. Sean Hegyi presented information on the MPO's new website. This was for informational purposes only.
  - c. Sean Hegyi presented the dates of upcoming meetings. This was for informational purposes only.
6. **Adjourn:** Chair Cory Diedrich adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
**SIOUX FALLS AREA MPO TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM**  
**REVISIONS/ADDITIONS**

*Program Fiscal Year is October 1 Through September 30*

TIP Revision: **23-006**

Committee Action Requested: **Approval**

SDDOT STIP REVISION: **N/A to Tentative**

**FUNDING CATEGORY: Interstate Maintenance**

ITEM#	PROJECT	PCN	LOCATION	IMPROVEMENT	YEAR	ORIG COST	REVISED COST	NET CHANGE
N/A	CR 000S(418)	080J	Statewide Rapid City & Pierre Region on the Interstate System	Install Dynamic Message Boards	2025	1.910	0.000	- 1.910
<b>JUSTIFICATION:</b> Staff recommended change from state-wide to region-wide during development of the Tentative 2024-2027 STIP after the approved TIP project sort of the SDDOT-sponsored projects. Administrative correction.								
<b>PROPOSED CHANGE:</b> Remove project.								

**FUNDING CATEGORY: Interstate Maintenance**

ITEM#	PROJECT	PCN	LOCATION	IMPROVEMENT	YEAR	ORIG COST	REVISED COST	NET CHANGE
N/A	IM 000S(462)	09L5	Aberdeen & Mitchell Region on the Interstate System	Install Dynamic Message Boards	2025	0.000	3.184	+ 3.184
<b>JUSTIFICATION:</b> Added new need per staff recommendation to add to 2025 during development of the Tentative 2024-2027 STIP. Project was not included in the approved TIP project sort of the SDDOT-sponsored projects. Administrative correction.								
<b>PROPOSED CHANGE:</b> Add to FY2025 IntMaint Category at a cost of \$3.184. Fed = \$2.729, State = \$0.271, Local = \$0.								

	YEAR		REVISED COST	NET CHANGE
TOTAL CHANGE TO CATEGORY:				
Interstate Maintenance	2025		0.000	- 1.910
Interstate Maintenance	2025		3.000	+ 3.184
TOTAL CHANGE FOR REVISION:				+ 1.274

☐ Approve

☐ Disapprove

*(Please Check A Box)*

NAME:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Urbanized Development Commission Chair / Date

COMMENTS:

☐ Approve

☐ Disapprove

*(Please Check A Box)*

NAME:

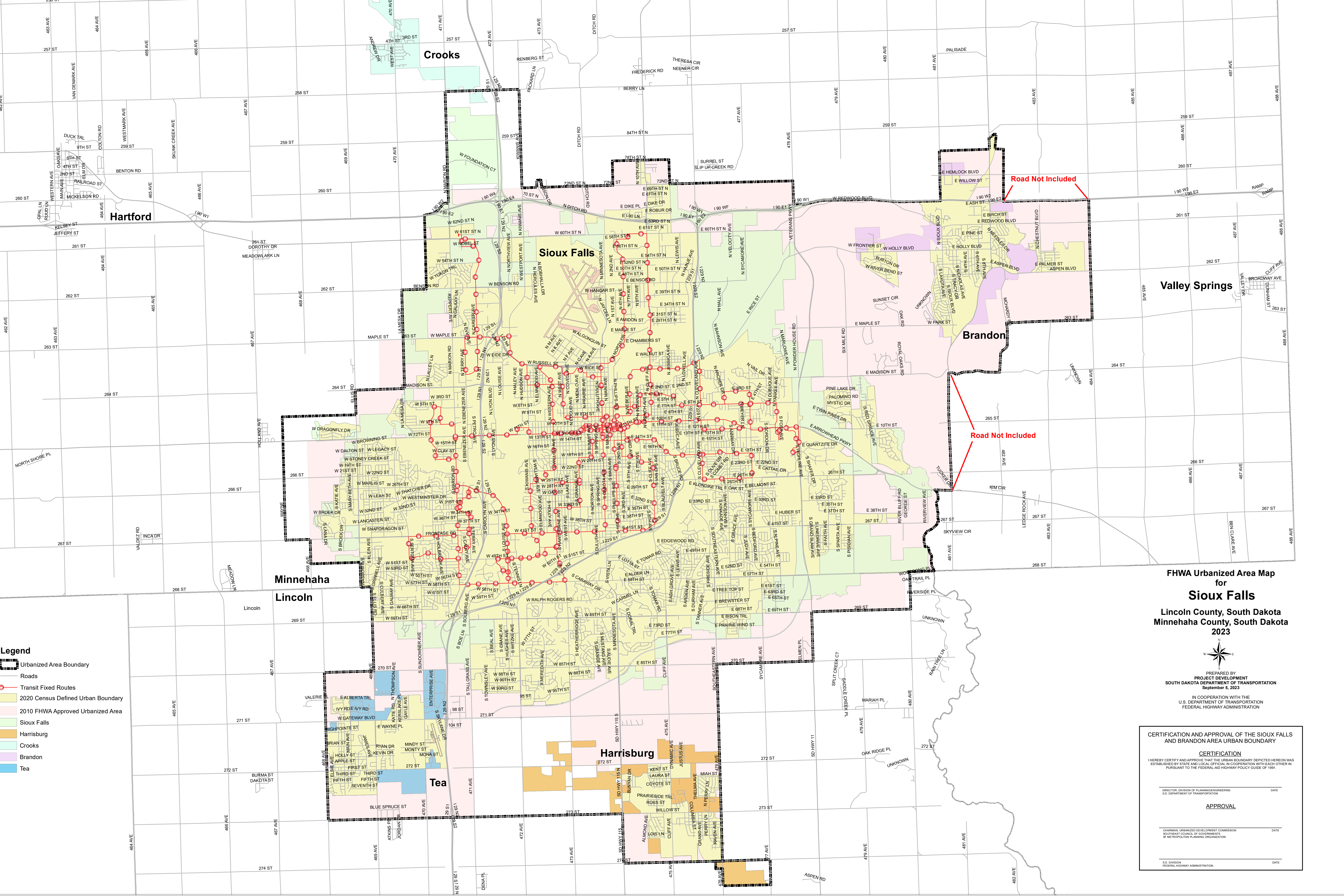
\_\_\_\_\_  
SDDOT / Date

COMMENTS:

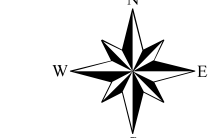


**Legend**

- Urbanized Area Boundary
- Roads
- Transit Fixed Routes
- 2020 Census Defined Urban Boundary
- 2010 FHWA Approved Urbanized Area
- Sioux Falls
- Harrisburg
- Crooks
- Brandon
- Tea



**FHWA Urbanized Area Map  
for  
Sioux Falls**  
Lincoln County, South Dakota  
Minnehaha County, South Dakota  
2023



PREPARED BY  
PROJECT DEVELOPMENT  
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
September 5, 2023

IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

**CERTIFICATION AND APPROVAL OF THE SIOUX FALLS  
AND BRANDON AREA URBAN BOUNDARY**

**CERTIFICATION**

I HEREBY CERTIFY AND APPROVE THAT THE URBAN BOUNDARY DEPICTED HEREON WAS  
ESTABLISHED BY STATE AND LOCAL OFFICIALS IN COOPERATION WITH EACH OTHER IN  
PURSUANCE TO THE FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY POLICY GUIDE OF 1991.

DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PLANNING/ENGINEERING DATE  
S.D. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

**APPROVAL**

CHAIRMAN, URBANIZED DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION DATE  
SOUTHEAST COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS  
BY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

ED, DIVISION DATE  
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION



# **SIoux FALLS MPO AREA COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT – HUMAN SERVICES TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

November 9, 2023

## **Acknowledgments:**

This document was prepared by:  
The South Eastern Council of Governments,  
the Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Harrisburg, Hartford, Sioux Falls and Tea,  
Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties,  
and the  
South Dakota Department of Transportation

In cooperation with:  
The Federal Highway Administration  
and the Federal Transit Administration of the  
United States Department of Transportation

*The Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) provides services without regard to race, color, gender, religion, national origin, age or disability, according to the provisions contained in SDCL 20-13, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990 and Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, 1994.*

*Any person who has questions concerning this policy or who believes they have been discriminated against should contact the Sioux Falls MPO at 605-367-5390.*

*"The preparation of this report has been financed in part through grant[s] from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, under the State Planning and Research Program, Section 505 [or Metropolitan Planning Program, Section 104(f)] of Title 23, U.S. Code. The contents of this report do not necessarily reflect the official views or policy of the U.S. Department of Transportation."*

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### ***PURPOSE OF THE PLAN***

The purpose of the *Sioux Falls MPO Area Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan* is to:

1. Identify the unmet transportation needs for seniors and individuals with disabilities; and
2. Develop strategies, activities, and/or projects to address the identified gaps between current services and needs, as well as opportunities to achieve efficiencies in service delivery.

This plan corresponds with current federal transportation policy which requires that a locally-developed, coordinated public transit/human services planning process be undertaken as a condition of receiving funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) program directed at meeting the needs of the plan's target populations: seniors and individuals with disabilities.

In recent years, coordination efforts have focused on mobility management, a term that represents a transportation strategy that focuses more on the customers and their needs, and meeting those needs through the coordinated use of variety providers.

### ***MOBILITY MANAGEMENT***

The National Center for Mobility Management (NCMM) notes that mobility management is an approach to designing and delivering transportation services that starts and ends with the customer. It begins with a community vision in which the entire transportation network – public transit, human services agencies, private operators, volunteer drivers, and others – work together with customers, planners, and stakeholders to deliver transportation options that best meet the community's needs. Mobility management encourages:

1. Innovation and flexibility to reach the “right fit” solution for customers;
2. Plans for sustainability
3. Strives for easy access to information and referral to assist customers in learning about and using services; and
4. Continuously incorporates customer feedback as services are evaluated and adjusted.

The customized approach of mobility management means no two programs are exactly alike, and a variety of entities, including urban public transit providers and the Sioux Falls MPO, could serve as a mobility manager in a community. Some components commonly found in a mobility management program include, but are not limited to:

1. Partnerships between multiple agencies and organizations;

2. Customer-driven, market-based approach that provides customers with a variety of transportation options through individualized trip planning;
3. One-stop travel information and trip planning centers that provide information on available transportation options and coordinate requests for transportation services. Locally, Helpline Center is a central call center for customers to gain information on available transportation options.

### ***COMPONENTS OF THE COORDINATED PLAN***

A Variety of tools were utilized to build awareness and solicit input from the public and transportation stakeholders throughout the planning process.

#### **Public Participation and Outreach**

A variety of tools were utilized to build awareness and solicit input from the public and transportation stakeholders throughout the planning process. Public participation efforts included:

- A providers and user survey;
- Provider and stakeholder meetings with key community members, including the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB), the Urbanized Development Commission (UDC), and the Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC);
- Community presentations to provide information and gather feedback; and
- Utilization of the Sioux Falls MPO website.

#### **Needs Assessment and Program Design**

Couples with community outreach, successful mobility management practices are sensitive to local and regional transportation needs and build their program around these needs by:

- Listening to the local community;
- Conducting ongoing needs assessments; and
- Designing services and programs to fit the identified needs

#### **Program Evaluation and Assessment**

Monitoring and evaluation are important considerations for any mobility management program, especially as funding continues to be constrained for transportation projects and services.

#### **Summary of Transportation Services**

One of the first steps in this planning process was to collect information on existing transportation services from agencies and organizations that serve the plan's target populations,

either through direct transportation services or through the provision of other services. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of the mobility services available to the target populations as well as their unmet transportation needs.

### **Summary of Strategies**

Using the above processes, information is collected on existing transit services, inviting new resources to the table, and gathering survey and feedback from the community, with the goal of assessing the plan's target populations, will help determine transportation gaps and/or needs.

A primary task in the development of the Sioux Falls Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan was the identification of strategies for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Needs were primarily identified based on information provided by the providers and stakeholders through various means including surveys and meetings. The identified strategies included:

- ✓ Support the Transit Development Plan drafted and approved by the City of Sioux Falls, allowing improved routes, enhances coverage area through implementation on On-Demand transit;
- ✓ Implement transit focused technology for statistics of trip frequency and bus stop frequency, scheduling, fare collection, location tracking, and increased efficiencies;
- ✓ Market and deploy training programs to engage the community and encourage ridership;
- ✓ Engage with community through Social Media venues where available;
- ✓ Encourage State and Regional Transit Systems to help provide options to outlying MPO communities to access transit services within the region;
- ✓ Collaborate with local providers and agencies, such as the Helpline Center, to maintain a current and consistently updated database of transportation options available. Such as:
  - Public Transit System;
  - Volunteer driver/car programs;
  - Non-profit human service providers;
  - Non-profit transportation providers;
  - Private transportation providers; and
  - State focused collaborations to determine transportation gaps.
- ✓ Keep paratransit services parallel to all fixed-route service levels and within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of all fixed-route bus services;
- ✓ Reimagine a community-wide volunteer driver program that agencies can access as a volunteer driver resource;



- ✓ Develop an agency rate structure based on the full-cost allocation models to help off-set agency day trip costs on paratransit;
- ✓ Educate state and local policy-makers about the specific benefits of human service transportation and public transit and how both play different roles in providing transportation to different rider needs;
- ✓ Start a statewide Human Services Transportation Coordination process. The goals of a statewide coordination process would provide the benefits for all involved in the process.

### ***PLAN APPROVAL***

The update to the Sioux Falls MPO Area Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan was approved by the Urbanized Development Commission of the Sioux Falls MPO on November 9, 2023. The South Dakota Department of Transportation subsequently approved the Plan on \_\_\_\_\_, 2023. The approval letter can be found in Appendix A.

## **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND OF THE COORDINATED PLAN**

### ***BACKGROUND***

There are numerous different entities in the Sioux Falls metropolitan area, including public agencies, human service agencies, residential facilities, and private companies, involved with planning, funding, and providing transportation services. These services provide necessary mobility and access to employment, education, medical services, recreation/social engagements, and retail services to the region's residents.

With so many entities involved in transportation services, often serving a specific rider population and purpose, it is common for there to be a duplication of services, underutilization of capital, or inefficient use of resources. Frequently the result is that there are areas and populations of a community that are underserved.

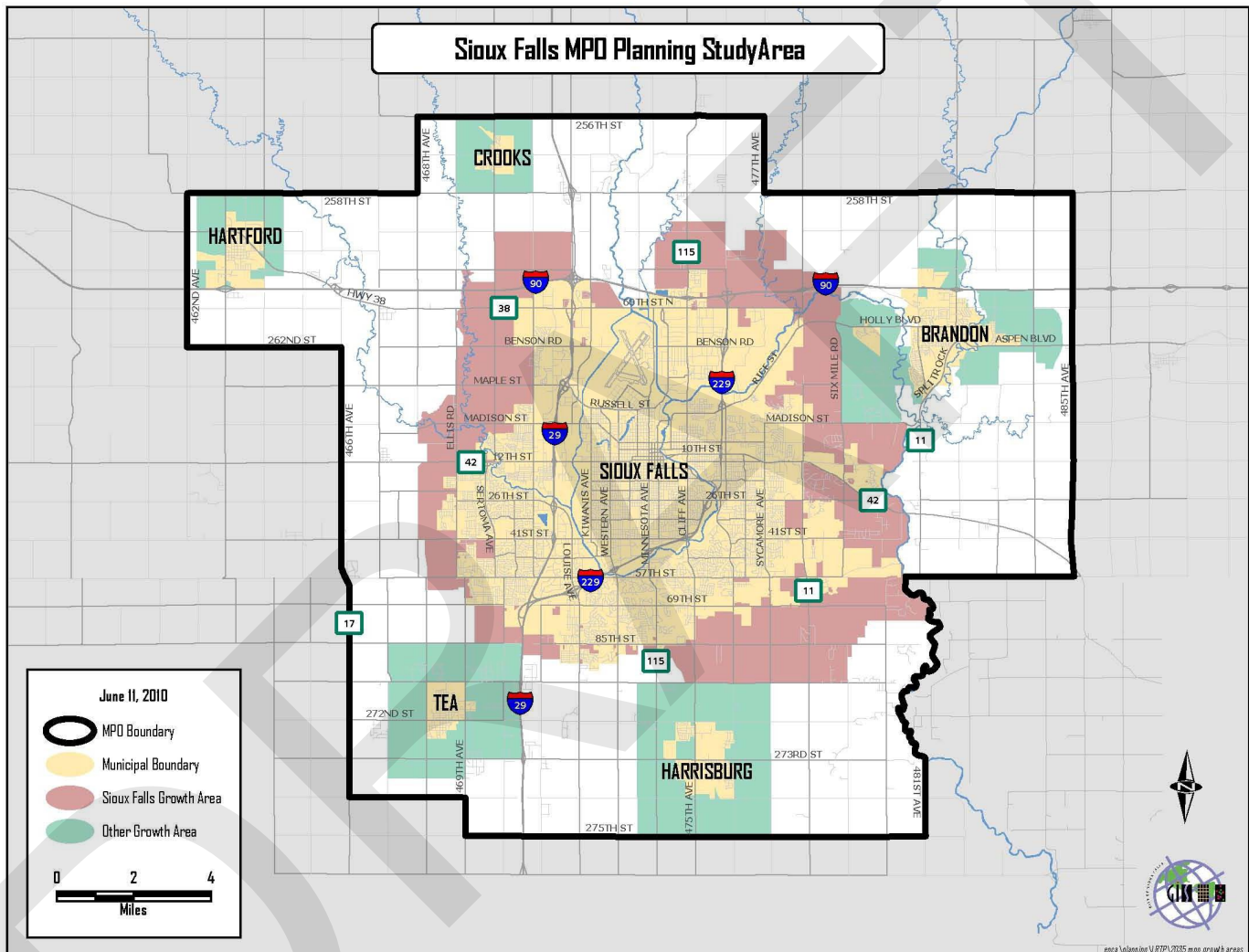
In 2018, the Sioux Falls Area Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) was updated with the following recommended priorities:

1. Work to implement the strategies of the Sioux Falls Transit Development Plan that includes improvements and expansion of the fixed-route system;
2. Develop travel training sessions as a major marketing effort that engages the community and help train new and potential riders;
3. Help create State Regional Transit Systems to help provide options to outlying MPO communities to access transit services within the region;
4. Reimagine a community-wide volunteer driver program that agencies can access as a volunteer driver resource;
5. Keep paratransit services parallel to all fixed-route service levels and within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of all fixed-route bus services;
6. Develop an agency rate structure based on the full-cost allocation models to help off-set agency day trip costs on paratransit;
7. Educate state and local policymakers about specific benefits of human service transportation and public transit and how both play different roles in providing transportation to different rider needs;
8. Start a statewide Human Services Transportation Coordination process. The goal of a statewide coordination process would provide benefits for all involved in the process.

This 2023 update to the Coordinated Plan was undertaken to refine the 2018 priorities based upon the results of provider and user surveys completed and analyzed in 2023, the stakeholder and provider meetings held in June 2023 and September 2023, and the public open house held in October 2023.

## REGIONAL PROFILE

This Sioux Falls Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) planning area includes approximately 321 square miles in southeastern South Dakota, including the Cities of Brandon, Crooks, Harrisburg, Hartford, Sioux Falls, and Tea, as well as portions of Lincoln and Minnehaha Counties.



## Regional Population Characteristics

One of the greatest determinants of transportation need is total population and population concentration or density. According to the 2020 Census, the total population of the Sioux Falls MPO region is 233,818. The population in the MPO region represents 26% of the total population of the State of South Dakota.

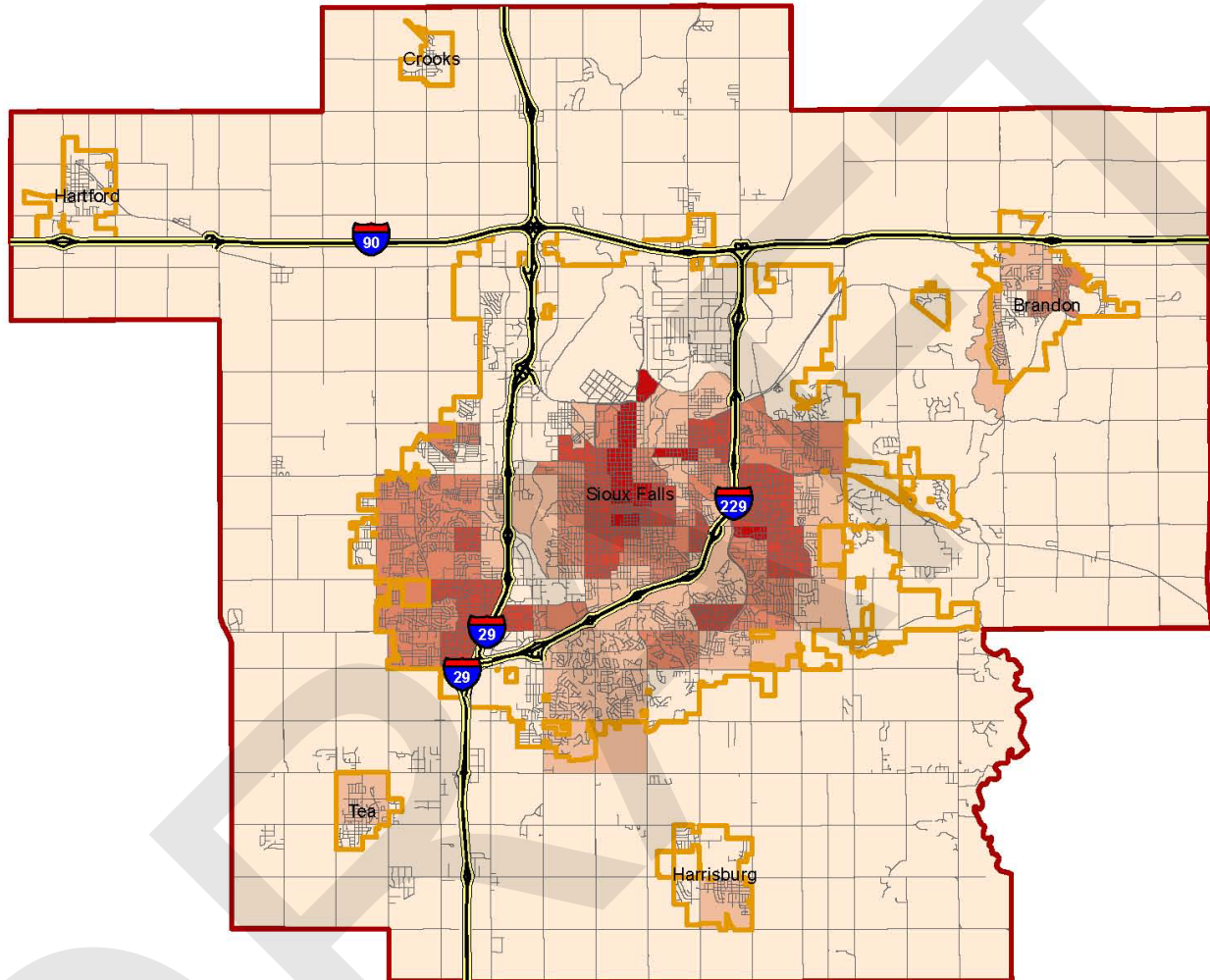
The estimated population of the City of Sioux Falls is 196,528 (2021) which is an increase of 28% over the 2017 population of 153,888. Other communities in the region have experienced

strong population growth as well. Most notably, the City of Harrisburg has seen a 17% increase in population since 2010, and the City of Brandon has seen a 12% increase in the same timeframe. The figure below details the population increases for all the communities in the MPO planning area.

<b>MPO Community</b>	<b>2000 Census Population</b>	<b>2010 Census Population</b>	<b>2020 Census Population</b>	<b>2022 Population (Est.)</b>	<b>Population Increase Since 2010</b>
<b>Brandon</b>	5,693	8,785	10,986	11,110	+26.5%
<b>Crooks</b>	859	1,269	1,352	1,364	+7.5%
<b>Harrisburg</b>	958	4,089	6,843	8,451	+106.7%
<b>Hartford</b>	1,844	2,534	3,347	3,376	+33.2%
<b>Sioux Falls</b>	123,975	153,888	193,233	208,884	+35.7%
<b>Tea</b>	1,742	3,806	5,677	6,918	+81.8%

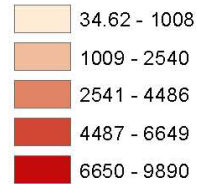
With the exceptions of Brandon, Harrisburg, Sioux Falls, and Tea, the population density is less than 1,009 persons per square mile in the region. The highest density areas (>6,650 persons per square mile) are in the central and east-central portions of the City of Sioux Falls. The map on the following page shows the population density for the Sioux Falls MPO region. (From 2010 Census)





**Population Density**

**Population / Square Mile**



US Census Block Group, 2010

**Legend**

- Interstates
- Local Roads and Streets
- MPO Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries



## ***TARGET POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS***

The coordinated plan specifically addresses the transportation needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities.

### **Seniors:**

Includes all persons 65 years of age and older.

Based on the 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, the population of persons age 65 varies for each community in the MPO region. The two municipalities with the highest percentage of the population age 65 and over are Hartford, with 18.6% of the total population at age 65 or older, and Sioux Falls, with 13.7% of the total population at age 65 or older.

All municipalities in the MPO planning area, except for Hartford, are below the statewide average of 17.6% and the nationwide average of 16.8%. The MPO communities, excluding Hartford and Sioux Falls, range from 10.4% to as low as 2.2% of the total population at 65 years of age or older. The proportion of persons age 65 and older indicates the region has a relatively younger population because of the significant number of people that are relocating to the Sioux Falls MPO area for employment opportunities.

Around the country, census figures have shown that the elderly population is growing faster than the general population nationally. However, for the past 30 years, the Sioux Falls MPO age 65 and over population has remained stable at 9.4% of the total population. Sioux Falls continues to be a destination for people to locate after they retire with two major hospitals and many other clinics and health care options in the community. Regarding senior living opportunities, Sioux Falls has many nursing homes, assisted living and independent living apartments available plus many other housing options including townhomes and twin homes that appeal older and retired populations. The table below shows the percent of population age 65 or older for the Sioux Falls MPO planning area communities.

**Percent of Population Age 65 and over – Sioux Falls MPO Area**

Brandon	10.4%
Crooks	6.2%
Harrisburg	2.2%
Hartford	18.6%
Sioux Falls	13.7%
Tea	5.5%
South Dakota	17.6%
United States	16.8%

### **Individuals with Disabilities:**

The U.S. Census details that disability is broadly defined as the consequence of an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these. Disabilities is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Impairments may include physical, sensory, and cognitive or developmental disabilities. Mental disorders (also known as psychiatric or psychosocial disability) and various types of chronic disease may also qualify as disabilities. A disability may occur during a person's lifetime or may be present from birth.

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, the Sioux Falls MPO area has a lower percentage of persons with disabilities compared to the nationwide average of 13% and South Dakota statewide average of 12.4%. There are approximately 19,203 individuals with disabilities in Sioux Falls or 9.9% of the total population. Apart from Hartford, the remainder of the MPO planning area has a lower percentage of persons with disabilities.

#### **Percent of Persons with Disabilities in Sioux Falls MPO Communities**

Brandon	7.3%
Crooks	7.4%
Harrisburg	9.3%
Hartford	11.1%
Sioux Falls	9.9%
Tea	4.4%
South Dakota	12.4%
United States	13.0%

### ***FEDERAL POLICY ON TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION***

A 2003 report issued by the U.S. General Accounting Office (GAO)<sup>1</sup> found that there are more than 60 different federal programs, across nearly a dozen federal departments that fund transportation services for transportation-disadvantaged persons. There is often little or no coordination of services among those that operate the federal programs within the same community.

Following the release of the GAO report, President Bush issued Executive Order 13330 in February 2004. The Executive Order established the Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) consisting of the secretaries of Transportation, Health and Human Services, Education, Labor, Veterans Affairs, Agriculture, Housing and Urban Development, and the Interior and the Attorney General and the Commissioner of Social Security.

<sup>1</sup> US General Accounting Office, *Transportation Disadvantaged Populations: Some Coordination Efforts Among Programs Providing Transportation Services, but Obstacles Persist*, 2003, 1-5.

## **Executive Order 13330—Human Service Transportation Coordination**

*February 24, 2004*

A broad range of Federal program funding allows for the purchase or provision of transportation services and resources for persons who are transportation-disadvantaged. Yet, in too many communities, these services and resources are fragmented, unused, or altogether unavailable.

Federally assisted community transportation services should be seamless, comprehensive, and accessible to those who rely on them for their lives and livelihoods. For persons with mobility limitations related to advanced age, persons with disabilities, and persons struggling for self-sufficiency, transportation within and between our communities should be as available and affordable as possible.

The development, implementation, and maintenance of responsive, comprehensive, coordinated community transportation systems is essential for persons with disabilities, persons with low incomes, and older adults who rely on such transportation to fully participate in their communities.

As a result of Executive Order 13330, the Federal Interagency Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility (CCAM) launched United We Ride (UWR). United We Ride is an initiative that includes 11 federal departments working together to simplify access, reduce duplication, and enhance cost efficiencies in community human service transportation.

In its *Report to the President* (CCAM, 2005a), the CCAM outlines accomplishments over the preceding year, collective actions of the council, and each CCAM member's action plan to enhance human service transportation for older adults, individuals with disabilities of all ages, and people with lower incomes. The report also outlines *five key recommendations* that are targeted to enhance community initiatives in order to build coordinated services at the state and local levels. Those five key recommendations, excerpted from the report, are:

- *Recommendation 1 – Coordinated Transportation Planning:* In order to effectively promote the development and delivery of coordinated transportation services, the CCAM recommends that the Administration seek mechanisms (statutory, regulatory, or administrative) to require participation in a community transportation planning process for human service transportation programs. By promoting shared responsibility for transportation services, joint planning promises increased cost-effectiveness and increased access for consumers by eliminating duplicative efforts and wasted resources.
- *Recommendation 2 – Vehicle Sharing:* In order to reduce duplicate transportation services as well as idle time for drivers and vehicles, the CCAM recommends that vehicles used in human service transportation be made available to other federally funded programs.
- *Recommendation 3 – Cost Allocation:* In order to ensure that adequate resources are available for transportation services for persons with disabilities, older adults and individuals with lower incomes, and to encourage the shared use of vehicles and existing public transportation services, the CCAM recommends where statutorily permitted that



standard cost allocation principles for transportation be developed and endorsed by federal human service and transportation agencies.

- *Recommendation 4 – Reporting and Evaluation:* The Council recommends the development of a method to permit cross agency analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency, and progress of States, communities, and tribes toward improved coordination of transportation programs.
- *Recommendation 5 – Consolidated Access Transportation Demonstration Program:* CCAM recommended the development of a single transportation system (not necessarily a single provider) financed through a consolidated federally funded stream would meet the total needs of transportation-disadvantaged populations.

Enacted in 2005, SAFETEA-LU created a requirement that a locally-developed, coordinated public transit/human services planning process be undertaken as a condition of receiving funding for three Federal Transit Administration (FTA) programs directed at meeting the needs of older individuals, persons with disabilities, and low-income persons.

Over the course of the next decade, many communities and states adopted interagency coordination committees and coordination plans. Much of the emphasis was placed on vehicle sharing (Recommendation 2). Sioux Falls also tried vehicle sharing concepts and pilot projects. In all cases, vehicle sharing was not found to be feasible or practical. Recommendation 1 has been implemented in some respects in that coordinated plans have been required for local and regional transportation agencies, but there has been very little in regard to “shared responsibility for transportation services”.

Recommendation 4 (Reporting and Evaluation) has only been done at a very basic level with continued data available on local and regional transit ridership, but with very spotty reporting by human service agencies. Recommendation 5 (Transportation Demonstration) has only recently been tried by bringing in a new non-profit transportation provider to Sioux Falls to target agency day trips with LifeScape and DakotAbilities. This demonstration project was successful and has been expanded over the last 4 years. Recommendation 3 (Cost Allocation) has not been considered in South Dakota. Other states are implementing cost allocation models to ensure there are adequate dollars for transportation. In many cases, local and regional transportation providers are asked to provide rides at very low or non-existent cost allocation levels. This plan needs to begin to address cost allocation to find ways to share the cost of human service and public transit in Sioux Falls MPO area and South Dakota.

### **MPO Area – The State of Transit**

Within the Sioux Falls MPO area two rural providers are available. Brandon Transit and ICAP (Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership) Transit provide services to the cities of Brandon and Hartford, respectively. Also, private providers are available to provide Medicaid NEMT services especially from area nursing homes or assisted living facilities. Otherwise, transportation services are very limited within the Sioux Falls MPO area outside of Sioux Falls. This is in part because all the communities have a young median age and low percentage of people with disabilities. However, as the communities grow, provisions should be made to begin to develop a regional transit system that can feed into the Sioux Falls transportation system.

## South Dakota Rural Transit Effectiveness Study Findings

Outside of Sioux Falls, the outlying communities and county area within the MPO are under a rural area designation for transit. The needs for rural transit are similar to urban transit, but only a patchwork of transit providers is available. Therefore, this plan cites the “South Dakota Rural Effectiveness Study” in the details of how rural transit has changed in South Dakota over the past decade. This includes problems and recommendations for solutions. While the “South Dakota Rural Effectiveness Study” was completed in March 2015, these recommendations should be implemented through a statewide coordinated process.

Below are excerpts from the Rural Transit Effectiveness Study.

*The primary focus of this study is on the effectiveness of rural transit services in a variety of communities in our state.*

*A critical part of effectiveness is looking at how provision of rural transit services has evolved in South Dakota in response to the needs of those who rely upon these services to fully participate within their communities and maintain their independence.*

### **Problems**

- *The use of contracts between transit systems and other community agencies/organizations has seemed to plateau in many communities.*
- *In some communities, agencies/organizations (i.e. nursing homes, assisted living) are purchasing their own vehicles and supporting those they serve directly rather than using public transit.*
- *Emphasis on coordination at all levels – state and local – seems to have waned.*
- *Planning for rural transit services and the needs of non-drivers is not on the table at the local and state levels when leaders talk about “infrastructure” rather roads, bridges and other type of infrastructure are the focus.*
- *Older American Act funds going to transit systems have remained relatively stable for many years; Department of Social Services (DSS) determines how much of the total Older American Act funds gets allocated to transit services.*
- *The State of South Dakota has not made a major new investment of State dollars in transit service for many years.*

### **Recommendations**

- *South Dakota needs to establish a coordinating council to bring together representatives of state agencies with a stake in coordinated human services transportation, as well as, representatives of councils of governments, transportation providers, non-profit organizations to serve as a focal point for advocating for better transportation through coordination. Examples of responsibilities for this council could be conducting needs assessments, determining how gaps should be filled and creating inventories of services.*

- *Federal and State leaders must develop and implement ways to incentivize coordination in ways that “it pays” to coordinate beyond current approaches.*
- *Advocacy efforts must occur at the state level for needed dedicated investment in transit services that will demonstrate the State’s commitment to all citizens having access to affordable and safe travel options, thus supporting them in accessing the goods and services available within their communities.*
- *Based on the growing older population of our State, DSS must be challenged to put more Older American Act dollars towards providing greater access to transit services for our aging citizens.*

### **Condition of Urban Transit and Human Service Coordination**

Over the past six (6) years, funding increases have been minimal with the rare and unprecedented influx of COVID-19 funds. These additional funds came with limitations and could not be factored in as a consistent revenue stream. The negative impact of COVID-19 on the urban transit systems has been a factor that cannot be dismissed. While urban public transit ridership overall has been declining in recent years, COVID-19’s impact on ridership was significant. The return of riders to urban public transit has been slow, which has increased the urgency to revisit transit with Sioux Area Metro to maintain a sustainable system. Below are the major Sioux Area Metro challenges that must be addressed within the Transit Development Plan:

- Federal funding levels are never adequate, however, 5307 funds (urban operating appropriation) and 5339 funds (capital allowance) have slightly increased with the updated Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Locally, this reflected an increase of \$792,303.58. This was followed by a onetime supplemental funding during the 2020 and 2021 COVID-19 pandemic. The CARES (\$7,738,249) and ARP (\$3,955,820) funding was applied to operations and capital (buses).
- With 4,000 to 7,000 additional people locating in Sioux Falls each year, the demand to update the current transit system is essential. The updated 2023 Transit Development Plan (TDP) addresses the need to update the current transit system. Forty (40) year-old routes are being updated and the On-Demand platform will help expand the service area. This outcome is due to the creation of the Innovation Transportation Team that was created in 2019.
  - The On-Demand platform was a pilot program for the Saturday service until it was fully implemented in late 2022. This stop-to-stop model has allowed data-driven statistics to dictate a ‘cross-town’ route, increasing efficiency. Nation-wide and beyond, transit programs are remaking transit through innovative design and technology opportunities.
  - On-Demand stops allow passengers to request rides from one stop to another through a phone application, website, or by calling SAM. The concept of On-Demand is provide bus stops outside of the fixed route

system, essentially expanding the footprint of transit service without the expense of increasing fixed routes to areas that are not as frequently utilized.

- The Transit Development Plan has projected the On-Demand service using the software Pantonium to be implemented through Saturday.
- Implementation of technology has been a focus for SAM. Technology in the transportation industry has been expanding at incredible rates. This includes ride scheduling software, passenger counters, fare collection, bus tracking (GPS), and surveillance systems. Integrating these tools has been time intensive and financially limiting. The goal of these technologies is to increase efficiencies and to allow data to drive the service changes to better meet the needs of the passengers.
- Educating, promoting, and marketing the transit system is a continuous process. With ridership for urban systems struggling, the need for transit remains. On a national, state, and local level, the financial investment has not been at levels needed to provide more robust systems. Marketing and education about the public transit systems and public input creates an opportunity to increase ridership.

The lack of human services transit coordination in Sioux Falls has become very apparent over that past twenty years. Transit agencies are required by SDDOT to have Public Transportation Human Services Coordination Plans, but there has been very little engagement, let alone coordination during that time. Most impacts from lack of coordination is experienced within the Paratransit system. Paratransit is a curb-to-curb shared ride transportation service for persons who are, due to their functional limitation(s), unable to use accessible fixed route bus service either some or all of the time. If a person is found eligible for a Paratransit trip, the urban transit system must provide services within one-hour of the person's requested trip time.

Paratransit service ridership in Sioux Falls was extremely high 4 years ago when compared to other urban Paratransit systems. In fact, both Rapid City and Sioux Falls consistently had two of the three highest paratransit riderships when comparing 20 urban transit systems (see Sioux Falls Transit Development Plan). Paratransit was established as a parallel method for individuals to use when they cannot always use fixed-route services. Paratransit is expensive and an inefficient method to provide human and social service group trips. This has left Sioux Falls (Sioux Area Metro) to make a choice between the following:

- Providing human and social service rides at artificially low or non-existent allocated rates which stretches other budgetary resources and limits ability to provide public transit rides.
- Begin to find ways to reduce agencies rides through a variety of methods including reduction of subscription rides, reduction of paratransit services areas, cost-allocation models, constriction of fixed-route services, and separate transit coordinated services.



Human services agency trips significantly increase the paratransit operating budget and make it difficult to develop a sustainable long-term transit budget. Coordination with human service agencies and with Community Coordinated Transit Services (CCTS) was implemented to relieve the burden on paratransit. However, the funding for these human services agency trips has been subsidized by the City of Sioux Falls and adds approximately \$1.5 million to the overall transit budget each year. The cost of these trips must be equitably carried by the human service agencies and not be the sole responsibility of the transit system.

Transit is now viewed as a public service that someone else pays the costs. This misperception is making it very difficult for transit to maintain financial sustainability throughout South Dakota. For example, it has forced the City of Sioux Falls to enter into direct contracts with Lifescape, Dakotabilities, and the Sioux Falls School District to provide a direct subsidy to the agencies for human service transportation costs. Although less costly than paratransit, the full costs of the transportation services are completely borne by the City of Sioux Falls. The City of Sioux Falls will spend approximately \$1.5 million on transportation for the South Dakota State Human Service Department's rehabilitation and pre-vocational programs that are operated by Dakotabilities, Lifescape, and Southeastern Behavioral Health in which the agency is paying for services through the Medicaid Choices Waiver Program.

To create a more equitable cost share for agency rides, paratransit agency rates should be considered. An agency rate is allowed by ADA regulations for agency group trips. Currently, paratransit struggles to maximize services with limited financial resources. Without an equitable agency fare, federal and state public transit monies are spread out more thinly across transit systems. Therefore, transit agencies may be forced to cut budgets that could then lead to service cuts for all riders if local taxes are not able to cover the additional share.

Agency fares would be a compromise (to be negotiated with the local human service agencies and approved by FTA) so that public transit systems can recover some costs while human service organizations can utilize public transit for a lower cost than would be paid to private providers.

### ***RELATIONSHIP TO THE METROPOLITAN AND STATEWIDE PLANNING PROCESSES***

The development and content of coordinated plans are intended to be specific to the transportation needs and issues of an urbanized area or defined region and are to be undertaken to guide the development of projects that address the identified transportation gaps and issues. A coordinated plan is a required element of the Sioux Falls MPO's long-range transportation plan. Coordinated plans may be developed as a part of the long-range transportation planning process or developed separately and then incorporated into the long-range transportation plan. The current long-range transportation plan was adopted in November 2020. The 2023 update to the coordinated plan is being developed separately and will be incorporated into the MPO's 2025 long-range transportation plan through adoption by the MPO's Urbanized Development Commission.

Projects identified through the coordinated planning process and selected for funding through a Federal Transit Administration program must be incorporated into the MPO's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). If the competitive selection process utilized to select projects for funding does not coincide with the development of the TIP/STIP, the TIP/STIP amendment processes will be used to include the competitively selected projects into the TIP/STIP before FTA award.

## **SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

The seniors and individuals with disabilities populations in the Sioux Falls area are served by a variety of transportation entities, each often has its own service area, target population, and unique and widely variable operating parameters. In the region, transportation service providers to seniors and individuals with disabilities include public transit, volunteer driver programs, human service agencies and residential facilities, and private companies.

As described in the Public Participation and Outreach section of this document, one of the first steps in this planning process was a survey of agencies and organizations that serve the plan's target populations, either through direct transportation services or through the provision of other services.

### ***TRANSPORTATION PROVIDERS INVENTORY***

The purpose of a transportation provider inventory is to assist in coordination efforts by identifying possible duplications and gaps in transportation services. Appendix C includes an inventory of available services in the area, including information on the characteristics of the existing public transit, human service agency, and residential facility transportation services provided by the completed provider surveys. The following is a description of some of the services listed in the inventory.

#### **Public Transit**

##### ***Brandon City Transit and Hartford Area Transit (ICAP)***

Brandon City Transit provides demand response transit service within the City of Brandon. Also, Brandon City Transit specifically provides rides for residents of Bethany Meadows Assisted Living and Helping Hands Assisted Living; both facilities are located in Brandon.

All Brandon City Transit trips must be scheduled 24 hours in advance and requests are made by telephone. The current fare is \$2.00 per ride, each way. The system operates Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Brandon City Transit's fleet includes two 12-passenger wheelchair accessible buses.

Hartford Area Transit (ICAP) provides demand response transit service within Hartford and to Sioux Falls with a 10-passenger 2-wheelchair bus. Trips must be scheduled 24 hours in advance. The system operates Monday and Thursday from 8 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. within Hartford and Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. for rides to Sioux Falls. Rides within Hartford have no charge and round-trip rides to Sioux Falls are \$14.

##### ***Sioux Area Metro (SAM)***

###### ***Fixed Route Service***

Sioux Area Metro's fixed route service is provided Monday through Saturday. The fixed route buses are accessible to people with disabilities. Each bus is equipped with a wheelchair lift or

ramp along with two wheelchair securement locations. Sioux Area Metro provides free individualized travel training to assist new passengers in learning how to ride these buses.

Sioux Area Metro operates 12 regular routes each of which provide trip connections to downtown Sioux Falls or to the Southwest Transfer Facility, employment centers, and to numerous neighborhoods and the Sioux Falls School District high schools. Service is available on most routes from 5:45 a.m. to 9:15 p.m. Monday - Friday, and from 7:45 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. Service is available weekday evenings until approximately 9:00 p.m. on five routes.

#### *Paratransit Service*

Those not able to access a bus stop on the fixed-route system due to a functional disability may be eligible for paratransit service. Sioux Area Metro Paratransit is a curb-to-curb shared ride transportation service for persons who are, due to their functional limitation(s), unable to use accessible fixed route bus service. Passengers must be certified eligible per guidelines established in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

#### *Bike and Bus Program*

Sioux Area Metro also offers the Bike and Bus Program, allowing riders to bike to any bus stop and then put their bike on the bus to take with them to any other stop. The rider can then complete the remainder of their trip on their bike.

#### *SAM On-Demand*

Sioux Area Metro allows riders to book rides for Saturday bus services. Riders may schedule a ride between any two Sioux Area Metro bus stops. When requesting a ride, the rider may either choose a pick-up time or a drop-off time to best fit the rider's schedule.

#### *The Pass-It-On Program*

Sioux Area Metro provides 40,000 one-ride passes to the Minnehaha County Human Services Department as the Pass-It-On Program. The Pass-It-On program provides free courtesy bus passes to individuals that are experiencing economic difficulties and cannot afford to pay for a bus pass themselves. The intent of the program is to assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient and thus no longer needing assistance from social service agencies. The bus pass is distributed to several human and social service agencies in Sioux Falls.

#### *Kids Ride Free Program*

Sioux Area Metro allows anyone between ages 11-18, with a current school ID or Freedom Pass, to ride the bus for free. Anyone under the age of 10 is allowed to ride the bus for free without a school ID or Freedom Pass, so long as they are accompanied by an adult. This program is available during weekday services, SAM On Demand, and for paratransit services.

### **Volunteer Driver Programs**

#### *Active Generations/Workers on Wheels*

Active Generations is a non-profit agency that provides a wide range of services for seniors including transportation. Active Generations' Workers on Wheels program is a program in which volunteer drivers provide transportation for eligible seniors to medical appointments and grocery shopping. Eligibility requirements include that the client must be at least 60 years old,

unable to pay for professional services, and have no family available to assist. The volunteer drivers use their own vehicles to provide this service. Workers on Wheels is supported by the Sioux Empire United Way.

#### *Disabled American Veteran's (DAV)*

DAV van resources work with the local Veterans Affairs to provide transportation for veterans to and from veteran health care centers for scheduled medical appointments. Funding for the program is provided through a veterans' grant program and private funding. Volunteers do all the driving for the program. DAV can only provide services to ambulatory passengers.

#### *Project C.A.R.*

Project C.A.R. is a non-profit transportation agency that provides transportation services primarily for seniors to health appointments, church services, and volunteer assignments using volunteer drivers. Transportation services are provided to participants of sponsoring agencies, such as the Senior Companion Program, and other agencies that contract with Project C.A.R. on a trip-by-trip basis. The volunteer drivers provide transportation using Project C.A.R.'s fleet of vehicles. Project C.A.R. is funded through revenue from sponsors, contracts, and fundraisers.

Project C.A.R. provides site-to-site transportation to individuals with associated sponsoring agencies and churches going to specific sponsor activities. All rides must be scheduled one week prior to the appointment.

#### **Community Support Providers**

There are four community support providers providing transportation services in the MPO region to their clients including DakotAbilities, LifeScape, Southeastern Behavioral, and Volunteers of America (VOA). Each agency provides different levels of transportation depending on transportation assistance needs. DakotAbilities and LifeScape frequently utilize Paratransit for agency day trips and Southeastern Behavioral occasionally utilizes Paratransit. VOA typically only transports their clients with their transportation system.

#### **Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities and Residential Facilities**

There are several elderly housing facilities that provide limited transportation services to their clients including the following:

- Touchmark at All Saints
- Southridge Healthcare Center
- Trail Ridge Senior Living
- Sunnycrest Village
- Good Samaritan – 3 facilities
- Avera Prince of Peace
- Southridge Healthcare
- Covington Care
- Bethany Lutheran - Brandon
- Touchmark at All Saints



- Cayman Court Assisted Living
- StoneyBrook Suites

Transportation of their clients may also include private providers and paratransit.

### **Private Companies**

There are also several private transportation providers in the MPO region that provide services to individuals with disabilities and seniors. The private providers include several taxi/wheelchair transport companies with varying rates and hours of service without an advanced reservation requirement. Private transportation providers include: Metro Cab, SiouxLand Paratransit, Sioux Falls Wheelchair Transit Plus Inc., Sioux Empire Wheelchair Transit, and Med-Star Transit.

### **Other Transportation Providers**

Other organizations in Sioux Falls that provide some transportation services for seniors or people with disabilities includes EmBe, Children's Inn and Glory House.

### **Continuum of Transportation Providers**

The Sioux Falls MPO area has a continuum of transportation providers in the area. The providers can be categorized by different levels of supervision and by different levels of flexibility in travel destinations. Private providers such as taxis and Lyft provide great flexibility in destinations and no supervision. However, most of the target population for the Coordinated Plan cannot afford those services unless Medicaid or another subsidy is included. Sioux Area Metro fixed-route services provide very little supervision of a rider's needs but allow for riders to choose many different route destinations at a moment's notice, but the service area within the city is limited. On the other end of the spectrum, human service transportation requires significant levels of supervision to maintain the health and safety of the person. Paratransit requires more independence to ride except when it is an agency trip which has caused confusion and difficulty in providing appropriate levels of supervision and cost reimbursement.

Human Services-Public Transit Continuum of Transportation Providers								
Private	Non-Profit Community Providers	Fixed-Route Bus Services	Volunteer	Paratransit ADA Services	Agency Rides	Non-Profit Providers	Human Services Transportation Community Support Providers	Nursing Homes Assisted Living
Metro Cab	Hartford Transit	Sioux Area Metro	Project CAR	Sioux Area Metro		CCTS	Lifescape	Good Samaritan
Siouxland Paratran	Brandon Transit		Workers on Wheels				Dakotabilities	Southridge Health Center
Med-Star			DAV				VOA	Avera Prince of Peace
Sioux Falls Wheelchair							SEBH	Covington Care
Sioux Falls Empire Wheelchair								Bethany Lutheran - Brandon
								Sunnycrest Village
								Trail Ridge
								Touchmark at All Saints
								Cayman Court Assisted
Most Flexibility				Least Flexibility				
Least Supervision				Most Supervision				

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## **SUMMARY OF NEEDS AND GAPS**

During the provider and stakeholder meeting held on June 21, 2023, a brief overview was given on the FTA 5310 program, coordinated planning, and results from the 2018 provider and user survey, and available transportation services. Discussion began with the identification of transportation needs for senior and individuals with disabilities. The attendees identified the following transportation needs and gaps for individuals with disabilities and seniors:

1. No transit routes to specialty hospitals south of 57<sup>th</sup>/69<sup>th</sup> street.
2. Calling in to schedule a ride for a person that is hard-of-hearing might be difficult or make them feel like a burden.
3. Vulnerable members of the community might struggle to learn new technology or might not have technology available to ride transit.
4. Fixed routes do not always go where they need to go or might not go frequently enough to get people to their destinations on time.
5. Wheel-chair express is no longer accepting Medicaid, which causes a major struggle for people to access rides and transportation.
6. Seniors and individuals with disabilities might not have the ability to get to bus stops.
7. Lack of knowledge regarding applications and technologies that is available for people to schedule rides.
8. Lack of drivers is causing issues getting transit to individuals with disabilities and seniors.
9. Low-income populations might not have money to pay for transit.
10. There is a need for disability awareness for transit drivers.
11. Bus shelters are not available everywhere, which negatively impacts individuals with disabilities and senior citizens.
12. Rides do not run late enough, individuals with disabilities and seniors are unable to go to late night events in downtown because transportation is unavailable.
13. Veterans have issues getting on buses due to ID cards.
14. Keep transit options available during events to promote inclusiveness.
15. Getting to and from work is a struggle because people do not know how to ride the bus and travel training would help.
16. Bus stops are not close enough to places where resources are located for individuals with food insecurities.

The needs and gaps identified at the stakeholder meeting were helpful in providing additional guidance to issues and strategies.

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH**

During the development of the 2023 update to the Coordinated Plan, a public participation process was undertaken to build awareness and solicit input from the public and transportation stakeholders. The public participation process was governed by two sets of guidelines. First, the planning process followed the public participation guidelines as outlined in the Public

Participation Plan for the Sioux Falls MPO. In addition, the planning process conformed to FTA regulations. MAP-21 requires that the plans be “developed and approved through a process that included participation by seniors, individuals with disabilities, representatives of public, private, and non-profit transportation and human service providers and other members of the public.”<sup>2</sup>

The public participation plan approved by the Sioux Falls MPO on May 11, 2023, had five primary components, which are listed below:

- Provider and User Surveys;
- Provider Stakeholder Meeting;
- MPO Committee Meetings;
- Public Open House (held on October 4, 2023); and
- Sioux Falls MPO Website.

## ***COMPONENTS OF THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PLAN***

### **Underserved Population Survey**

To gain updated information on the mobility services available to the target populations, as well as their unmet transportation needs, surveys were conducted of service agencies, private companies, and transportation users across the region. The user survey questions focused primarily on the transportation services used, how transportation services are accessed, and the user’s unmet transportation service needs, and a summary of the user survey results is provided below.

#### **Underserved Population Survey Results<sup>3</sup>**

- Most survey respondents have used public transit within the City of Sioux Falls (69.5%).
- Most survey respondents travel at least once per week for grocery stores (85.2%), general shopping (67.0%), employment (61.6%), and recreation (46.3%).
- Most of the general comments requested additional services and expanded hours.

The full underserved population survey responses are provided in Appendix B.

### **Provider Stakeholder Meeting**

A stakeholder meeting was conducted during the planning process to obtain information and input from existing transportation providers and stakeholder agencies (those that serve one or more of the target populations and/or indirectly support transportation services). The meeting was held on June 21, 2023, at the Siouxland Downtown Library. Information on the 2023 Coordinated Plan was presented, a facilitated discussion on coordination was held, and provider surveys were completed during the meeting at which a mix of both providers and stakeholders attended.

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<sup>2</sup> Chapter 53 of Title 49, United States Code, as Amended by MAP-21, Section 5310.

<sup>3</sup> Due to the limited amount of user surveys completed, results are suggestive rather than representative of the target populations of interest.

### **Coordination Plan Open House**

A draft of the plan was provided for public review and comments were solicited during an open house at the Downtown Public Library on October 4, 2023. Also, plan comments were taken by e-mail and phone.

### **UDC Transportation Coordination Committee**

One meeting was held with the UDC Transportation Coordination Committee to review the survey results and gather input on the draft update to the Coordinated Plan from the committee's members, which include transportation providers and stakeholders, on [REDACTED], at the South Eastern Council of Governments.

### **Sioux Falls MPO Website**

A draft of the update to the Coordinated Plan was made available for comment via the Sioux Falls MPO website at [https://siouxfallsmpo.org/resources/mpo\\_plan\\_development/coordinated\\_plan.php](https://siouxfallsmpo.org/resources/mpo_plan_development/coordinated_plan.php). Emails requesting review of the draft and comments, including a link to the website, were also sent out to the providers and stakeholders.

## STRATEGIES, ACTIVITIES, AND PROJECTS

### OVERVIEW

Based on the needs and gaps identified in the previous section, strategies, activities, and projects were identified based on resources (from multiple sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified. The strategies, described further in this section, included the following:

1. Coordination of Fixed-Route Services
2. Coordination of MPO Area Providers
3. Coordination of Private Transportation
4. Coordination of Volunteer Transportation
5. Coordination of Human Service Transportation
6. Coordination of Paratransit Transportation
7. Coordination of All Transportation Providers

### ISSUES

The following issues have been compiled through public input sessions including stakeholder groups and interviews and provider and user surveys. The issues are then used to help determine goals and strategies.

#### Fixed-Route bus services issues

- Limited service area within the city of Sioux Falls limit the number of destinations that residents can reach.
- Limited service hours create problems for riders to rely on the service for many of their trips.
- Reduced federal funding for capital has made it difficult to budget for the future and create a sustainable system.
- Public transit has a very limited ability to raise funds through fares.
- Fixed-route service has struggled to have people understand how to use the system.
- Fixed-route service is viewed as scary and dangerous.

#### Fixed-Route coordination issues

- Sioux Area Metro needs to better coordinate with human service agencies to find ways to integrate people with developmental disabilities onto the fixed-route system.
- The State of South Dakota and Human Service agencies need to find ways to break down barriers to riding the fixed-route bus service including fear and anxiety.
- Public policy makers at the city and state need more information about who is using public transportation.

#### MPO Community Transportation Providers service issues

- Very limited service in areas outside of Sioux Falls.



MPO Transportation Providers coordination issues.

- Very limited ability to coordinate services with Sioux Area Metro and access Sioux Falls.

Private Transportation Providers service issues

- Limited ability to provide rides at an affordable rate.
- Only NEMT Medicaid is available as a subsidy to provide rides to seniors and persons with disabilities.

Private Transportation providers coordination issues

- Private transportation has never been involved in transportation coordination.
- Private transportation may have limited ability to comply with FTA requirements if used for a project.

Volunteer Transportation service issues

- Limited volunteers stop Project C.A.R. and Workers on Wheels from expanding services.

Volunteer Transportation coordination issues

- The community does not take ownership of the volunteer driver shortage.
- Drive to Help created awareness of the need for volunteer drivers but did not significantly increase the number of volunteer drivers.

Paratransit service issues

- It is important to understand that under the ADA, paratransit functions as a “safety net” for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the regular fixed route transit system. It is not intended to be a comprehensive system of transportation that meets all the needs of persons with disabilities. By statute, complementary paratransit must be provided at a level of service that is comparable to that provided by the fixed-route system.
- Paratransit is not efficient for human service trips because it may not be able to meet the required pick-up and drop-off times for program service hours and staff supervision.
- Paratransit funding should first and foremost be used for public transportation rides. FTA requirements provide that only after needs of public transit riders are met, can federal transit funds then be used to meet the transportation needs of other federal programs (e.g. Medicaid supported agency programs), provided that this use does not interfere with the public transit system. There cannot be a reduction in the service quality or availability of public transit as a result of transporting human service clients.
- Paratransit is not intended to be a supervised ride service. Paratransit will not drop-off riders that require supervision unless an adult is present. However, some riders require supervision and the driver does not have any information as to what the riders’ medical needs are.
- Too many times paratransit is operating as a “natural support” for agency transportation and to a lesser degree nursing home transportation.
- Paratransit is not necessarily a method of community integration. Many paratransit trips are still set-up by a human service agency and are developed as group trips. In those cases, paratransit agency trips become a human service trip without adequate supervision.

Paratransit coordination issues

- Paratransit and human service agencies do not coordinate on level of supervision required of some agency trips.

Human Service Transportation Service issues

- Limited ability to train and fund drivers.
- Limited ability to transport non-ambulatory (wheelchair) riders because of expense of the vehicle and the difficulty in funding a trained driver with a CDL.
- Limited state and federal operational funding to transport clients.

Human Service Transportation Coordination Issues

- With a need to create more independent employment and transportation options for people with developmental disabilities, fixed-route services should be looked at first as a travel option. Paratransit should not be used as an agency support, but rather as an individual trip option when fixed-route will not work.
- There is very limited ability to develop community integration with human service transportation trips. A coordinated transportation provider such as CCTS would have that ability if coordination with the agencies allowed for integrated shared rides with other agency or nursing home or medical riders.
- A coordinated transportation system has not been developed to its potential in Sioux Falls. There is a potential to develop a fully coordinated system in which the many human service agencies (nursing homes, developmental disabilities, etc.) purchase service to safely transport its clients with appropriate supervision.

**GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

Listed on the next several pages are the identified strategies for implementation based on resources, time, type of service and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified.

**Coordination of Fixed-Route Services**

**Overall Goal:** Increased utilization and improved perception of the public transit fixed route system through the utilization of the existing SAM travel training materials and involvement of human service agencies.

**Strategies:**

- ✓ Work to implement the strategies of the Sioux Falls Transit Development Plan that includes improvements and expansion of the fixed-route system.
- ✓ Develop travel training sessions as a major marketing effort that engages the community and help train new and potential riders.
- ✓ Reimagine the buddy system program for new and potential fixed-route riders by working with human service agencies to offer family training events and rider incentives to try a buddy system or other intensive travel training program.

- ✓ Continue agency programs to offer free and/or reduced cost bus passes (Pass-It-On Programs) for low-income clients to access the fixed route system and look for opportunities for community contributions to help augment the program.
- ✓ Cultivate community partnerships to expand funding.
- ✓ Update technology on the fixed-route system including Real-time GPS, automatic counters and mobile ticketing systems to encourage more people to ride.
- ✓ Work with the developers to encourage development of affordable housing where existing transit service is available.
- ✓ Explore deviated fixed route options to see if efficiencies on some or all SAM routes can occur without significantly reducing levels of service.
- ✓ Develop information to share with federal, state, and local public policy makers about the benefits provided by public transit.

Responsible Agency: Sioux Area Metro

Type of Service to Improve: Sioux Area Metro Fixed-Route Bus Service

## Coordination of MPO Area Providers

**Overall Goal:** Expansion of a coordinated community transportation system throughout the MPO planning area to provide a connection between the smaller communities to employment and services within the City of Sioux Falls. This priority is considered a mid-term to long-term priority as it would require a considerable amount of resources that are not adequately available for all communities within the MPO area at this point. However, as resources become available, the following should be considered:

### Strategies:

- ✓ Vanpool service and/or other non-profit provider, such as Brandon and ICAP Transit, to connect ambulatory and non-ambulatory residents of the smaller MPO communities to fixed route and paratransit service in Sioux Falls. The connections could potentially be made at predetermined and coordinated locations that work most appropriately for each transit agency.
- ✓ Help create State Regional Transit Systems to provide options to outlying MPO communities to access transit services within the region.

Responsible Agency: UDC Transportation Coordination Committee and SECOG, MPO City Governments, and non-profit transportation providers.

Type of Service to Improve: Non-Profit Transportation providers

## Coordination of Private Transportation

**Overall Goal:** Leverage Private Transportation services to assist when public and non-profit services are unavailable.

### Strategies:

- ✓ The City of Sioux Falls and private transportation providers should explore voucher service options when additional services are required beyond the Sioux Area Metro service area.
- ✓ The TCC and private providers should explore grant and community giving options for voucher services in a partnership with private transportation providers.

Responsible Agency: UDC Transportation Coordination Committee

Type of Service to Improve: Private Transportation Providers

## Coordination of Volunteer Transportation

**Overall Goal:** Find methods to expand volunteer transportation services as an affordable and flexible transportation option.

### Strategies:

- ✓ Reimagine a community-wide volunteer driver program that agencies can access as a volunteer driver resource.
- ✓ Encourage agencies to enter into contracts with Project C.A.R. to provide medical and work trips rather than beginning new transportation services.
- ✓ Assist volunteer transportation providers in updating schedule and dispatch software.

Responsible Agency: UDC Transportation Coordination Committee

Type of Service to Improve: Volunteer Transportation (i.e. Project CAR and Workers on Wheels)

## Coordination of Human Service Transportation

**Overall Goal:** Find transportation strategies to balance the needs of seniors and people with disabilities that includes safe and improved independence through a sustainable transportation system.

### Strategies:

- ✓ Continue and expand a coordinated non-profit transportation system to help provide a safe, efficient, professional and specialized transportation option for human service agencies for non-ambulatory and ambulatory trips.
- ✓ Work with the State of South Dakota Human Services Department and local human service agencies to develop other transportation options for seniors and people with disabilities.
- ✓ Develop full-cost allocation models to help determine the cost of transportation for human service transportation whether through Paratransit, human service agencies or private providers.
- ✓ Assist human service providers to provide the safest and most cost-effective transportation option possible based on the needs of the agency.
- ✓ Assist human service providers to secure funding when the agency is required to utilize their own transportation services.

- ✓ Coordinate with human service agencies with options to integrate their clients into the community with the most appropriate transportation option possible.

Responsible Agency: TCC - Transportation Coordination Committee and SECOG

Type of Services to Improve: Human Service Transportation and Non-profit community transportation.

## Coordination of Paratransit Transportation

**Overall Goal:** paratransit functions as a “safety net” for people whose disabilities prevent them from using the regular fixed route transit system. Complementary paratransit must be provided at a level of service that is comparable to that provided by the fixed-route system.

### Strategies:

- ✓ Keep paratransit services parallel to all fixed-route service levels and within  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of all fixed-route bus services.
- ✓ Continue to identify opportunities to move agency day trips to CCTS.
- ✓ Work with human service agencies and SD Human Services to adequately assess the supervision needs of riders to ensure that the riders’ medical needs are addressed. This could include strategies where persons with high levels of supervision needs find transportation options with appropriate supervision.
- ✓ Continue and expand where possible a partnership with Active Generations and the City of Sioux Falls to have some clients typically on paratransit to use Project C.A.R. instead.
- ✓ Investigate through private or non-profit providers the development of a voucher program for trips outside the operating times and  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile area of paratransit.
- ✓ Improve the technology of paratransit for scheduling and payment systems.
- ✓ Develop an incentive program where paratransit riders can gain free rides on fixed-route services when trying fixed-route travel training.
- ✓ Partner with Community Campus, DakotAbilities, and LifeScape to do family transportation days to allow families to learn about all transportation including fixed-route, paratransit and community transportation options.
- ✓ Assess people’s travel training potential through Paratransit assessments and provide this information to agencies and State Human Services.
- ✓ Develop groups for human services trips where they park & ride for paratransit or fixed-route pick-up.

Responsible Agency: Sioux Area Metro and City of Sioux Falls

Type of Service Targeted: ADA ambulatory and non-ambulatory services

## Coordination of all Transportation Providers

**Overall Goal:** Foster a more efficient, effective, and seamless Sioux Falls MPO transportation system by focusing on the following coordination strategies.

**Strategies:**

- ✓ Change the Sioux Falls transit system to become more financially sustainable in the long-term by implementing one or more of the following options:
  - Develop a city paratransit agency rate structure based on the full-cost allocation models to help off-set agency day trip costs on paratransit.
  - Cut fixed-route services to reduce costs which would also result in reduced paratransit services.
  - Develop different transit cost delivery systems that are more cost effective.
  - Increase local and state funding to the transit system.
  - Develop transit solutions that are financed and provided through community-based non-profit agencies.
- ✓ Educate state and local policy-makers about the specific benefits of human service transportation and public transit and how both play different roles in providing transportation to different rider needs.
- ✓ TCC assumed the role of soliciting applications for the FTA Section 5310 funds allocated for the Sioux Falls urbanized area and recommending projects for funding to the State. This has enabled the Committee to have a greater influence in ensuring that the funds are used for projects that complement the priorities of this plan, in a coordinated manner, to fulfill the needs stated in this plan.
- ✓ Start a statewide Human Services Transportation Coordination process. The goals of a statewide coordination process would provide the following benefits for all involved in the process.
  - A level of awareness of transit service-levels and cost changes that are projected allowing state agencies to plan services and inform clients.
  - Opportunities for transit coordination projects that if funded cooperatively could maintain and even expand ridership levels for an entire community and/or region of the State.
  - Prioritizing state and federal transit dollars to assist with coordinated transit projects that provide coordinated services.
- ✓ Seek out non-federal funding sources such as the medical community, employers, colleges, and non-profit community organizations such as United Way to provide assistance to the consolidated non-profit transportation provider.

Responsible Agency: TCC - Transportation Coordination Committee and SECOG

Type of Services to Improve: Sioux Falls and MPO Public Transit agencies Human Service Transportation and Non-profit community transportation, and private and volunteer transportation providers.

**CONCLUSION**

The fundamental purpose of a locally developed public transit - human service transportation coordination plan is to identify transportation needs within a community and connect them with strategies. The previous section identifies the strategies, responsible agencies, and types of service to improve. Transportation providers and stakeholders in the Sioux Falls MPO region should refer to these strategies during the consideration of transportation service projects and the application of funding to support those projects.



**SDDOT APPROVAL LETTER**

DRAFT

**PROVIDER AND USER SURVEY**

DRAFT



**TRANSPORTATION SERVICE PROVIDER INVENTORY**

DRAFT

Coordinated Plan Open-House (Downtown Siouxland Library)

October 12, 2023 (4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.)

Citizen Advisory Committee

November 8, 2023

Technical Advisory Committee

November 9, 2023

Urbanized Development Commission

September 14, 2023