

**ADDENDUM  
TO THE  
SIOUX FALLS MPO AREA COORDINATED PUBLIC TRANSIT-HUMAN SERVICES  
TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

**2014 ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT**

***Introduction***

The Sioux Falls MPO Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan (Coordinated Plan) was adopted on November 14, 2013, and is required to be updated every five years. The purpose of the Coordinated Plan is to: 1) identify the unmet transportation needs for individuals with disabilities and seniors; 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; and 3) develop priorities for implementation based on resources (from multiple sources), time, and feasibility for implementing specific strategies and/or activities identified. Based on public participation and outreach, existing transportation services, and identified needs and gaps, the following priorities are recommended in the Coordinated Plan:

1. **Travel Training** – 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:
  - Hold agency travel training sessions to train clients, trainers, and/or family members
  - Utilize existing fixed route riders, or peers, to train new and potential riders
  - Implement a buddy system for new and potential riders who are mobility impaired and would otherwise use the paratransit system, or other similar services
  
2. **Coordination of Non-Profit Community Transportation** – Foster a more efficient non-profit community transportation system by focusing on the following priorities:
  - Ensure FTA Program 5310 funds are used for projects that compliment the priorities of this plan, in a coordinated manner, to fulfill the needs stated in this plan.
  - 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.
  - Develop a community-wide volunteer driver program that agencies can access as a volunteer driver resource.
  - Encourage agencies to enter into contracts with Project CAR to provide medical and work trips rather than beginning new transportation services.

3. **Coordination of Paratransit Public Transportation:**

- Provide a full-spectrum of transportation services within ¾ mile of all fixed-route bus services.
- Provide assistance to human service agencies, such as DakotAbilities and Achieve, to help them gain capacity to transport their clients with their own vehicles to free up capacity on the paratransit system especially for persons requiring wheelchair paratransit services.
- Develop tripper bus routes for ambulatory persons for work trips to free up capacity on the paratransit system.
- Consolidate paratransit trips from human service agencies through the coordination of clients' appointment scheduling.
- Investigate a limited program through separate private or non-profit providers such as taxi services and Project Car to develop efficiencies and flexibility to paratransit scheduling for ambulatory trips (no wheelchair required).
- Work with the medical community and developers to encourage development of medical facilities and elderly housing where existing transit service is available.

4. **Maintenance and expansion of the fixed-route transportation system as an affordable and efficient system:**

- 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.

5. **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** – While the previous four

priorities are more immediate and short-term priorities, this priority is considered a long-term priority as it would require a considerable amount of resources that are not adequately available at this point. However, as resources become available, the following should be considered:

- Vanpool service and/or other non-profit provider, such as Brandon Transit, to connect the 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 between Tea and the existing Southwest Transit Center, Harrisburg and a future Southeast Transit Center, Brandon and a future Northeast Transit Center, and Hartford and Crooks and a future Northwest Transit Center.

***Goals Completed in 2014***

A significant amount of time has been dedicated to planning and coordination meetings since the Coordinated Plan was adopted in late 2013. These meetings have included participation by

agencies representing seniors, persons with disabilities, low-income, the medical community, business, government, transit, and others, including AARP, DakotAbilities, Helpline, LifeScape, Project CAR, United Way, and many others. Many of the people involved participated in more than one committee or sub-group. And many are continuing to work together with the ultimate goal of meeting the transportation needs in the MPO planning area.

The Sioux Falls MPO Urbanized Development Commission's (UDC) special committee, the Transportation Coordination Committee (TCC), has been meeting on a regular basis to work toward accomplishing the identified goals.

*Coordinated Plan Goals Addressed:*

2. Coordination of Non-Profit Community Transportation

*Primary Accomplishments:*

- The 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 enabled the Committee to have a greater influence in ensuring that the funds are used for projects that compliment the priorities of this plan, in a coordinated manner, to fulfill the needs stated in this plan.
- A directory of specialized transportation services was developed for the MPO planning area. The Sioux Falls Area Community Foundation awarded a grant to SECOG to print 1,500 copies of the directory. Over half of the printed copies of the directory have been distributed to agencies and public locations across the community at this time. The directory is also posted on the Sioux Falls MPO's website at <http://siouxfallsmo.org/resources/community-transportation-directory/>, and the link to the online directory has been emailed out to numerous agencies and other interested parties.
- A plan for a volunteer driver recruitment and training program has been developed. A part time position will be created at SECOG to oversee the program, including recruiting and screening potential volunteer drivers, and scheduling for orientation and training with Sioux Area Metro. The screened and trained volunteer drivers will then work with existing volunteer driver programs, including Project CAR and Active Generations' Workers On Wheels, to increase the number of rides provided. This position may also manage a buddy system to assist people in riding the Sioux Area Metro fixed route system. SECOG has committed partial funding for this position. The remainder of the funding will be sought out from other sources.

The Sioux Falls City Council formed a Transit Task Force that met monthly through July of 2014, which supported the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan by working toward improving services provided by Sioux Area Metro and improving coordination with other

agencies. Several sub-groups of the Transit Task Force also met throughout that period to work on the individual identified goals.

*Coordinated Plan Goals Addressed:*

1. Travel Training
3. Coordination of Paratransit Public Transportation
4. Maintenance and expansion of the fixed-route transportation system as an affordable and efficient system

*Primary Accomplishments:*

- Several recommendations were developed as a result of the Transit Task Force and its sub-groups. The recommendations were included in the Transit Task Force Report, included as an attachment to this progress report, which was adopted by Sioux Falls City Council in July.

AARP South Dakota facilitated two committees to improve non-profit community transportation and rural transportation for seniors, the Non-Profit Coordination Committee and the Hartford Transit Committee. AARP kicked off the committees by hosting a two-day workshop in December 2013 during which Carolyn Jeske from the Community Transportation Association (CTAA) facilitated a two-day action planning session.

*Coordinated Plan Goals Addressed:*

2. Coordination of Non-Profit Community Transportation
5. 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

*Primary Accomplishments:*

- *Non-Profit Coordination Committee:* A plan was developed to bring in a non-profit provider of paratransit services for the area outside of the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile service area required to be serviced by Sioux Area Metro, the City of Sioux Falls' transit system. This provider, River Cities Public Transit, would begin a pilot project by providing work trips for DakotAbilities and LifeScape clients. One vehicle has been committed by LifeScape for this project and an application for Section 5310 funds has been submitted for a second vehicle and operating costs. It is anticipated that the City of Sioux Falls, DakotAbilities, and LifeScape would each participate in the costs to keep the client portion of the fare minimal. This service is planned to begin in early 2015.
- *Hartford Transit Committee:* A plan was developed to work with an existing non-profit provider, Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership, to begin a small transit service in Hartford that would provide service within the City and also provide service to Sioux

Falls for medical appointments, etc. Local funds were raised and/or committed and an application for FTA Section 5310 funds was submitted. Other funding options are being explored as well. The service is planned to begin late 2014 or early 2015. A video with additional information about the project is posted at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ww4d8Nej1gI&feature=youtu.be>.

### ***Unsuccessful Goals in 2014***

As the Coordinated Plan is a five-year plan, many of the goals and priorities identified in the plan are long-term goals that require significant planning and coordination with several agencies across the community. Also, much of 2014 was spent on planning and laying the groundwork for achieving many of the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan. Therefore, it is too early in the process to consider any of the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan as unsuccessful.

### ***New Goals for 2015***

As the Coordinated Plan is a five-year plan, many of the goals and priorities identified in the plan are long-term goals that require significant planning and coordination with several agencies across the community. Also, much of 2014 was spent on planning and laying the groundwork for achieving many of the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan. Therefore, no new goals or priorities have been identified for 2015.

### ***2015 Goal Timeframes***

Some of the activities that have been worked on over the last year, are planned be implemented beginning in 2015:

- The 2015 round of FTA Section 5310 funding applications should take place in early 2015, pending federal authorization.
- The volunteer driver recruitment and training program is planned to begin in early 2015.
- The pilot project for DakotAbilities and LifeScape work trips is planned to begin in early 2015.
- A buddy system for Sioux Area Metro fixed route system is planned to begin in early to mid 2015.
- The City of Sioux Falls is anticipated to formalize an agreement for Project CAR to begin providing specified paratransit trips in 2015.
- Updates to the fixed route travel training program are anticipated to be implemented in 2015.
- Additional activities consistent with the Coordinated Plan may also be worked on in 2015 as the TCC and others continue to meet.

### ***Sioux Falls MPO Planning Area Changes***

There have been no changes to the Sioux Falls MPO's planning area.

### ***Other Significant Changes to Sioux Falls MPO***

There have been no other significant changes to the Sioux Falls MPO.

### ***Other Agency Coordination Changes***

Great strides have been made in coordination amongst agencies over the past year. Listed below are some of the highlights of that coordination:

- DakotAbilities, LifeScape, River Cities Public Transit, and the City of Sioux Falls are working together to provide service outside the City's required  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile paratransit service area for agency work trips.
- The City of Hartford is working with a Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership to begin a transit service within Hartford and to Sioux Falls.
- LifeScape has reduced its reliance on the City's paratransit service by adjusting staffing, work times, and its routes to provide additional service to its own clients with its own vehicles.
- Project CAR, Active Generations Workers On Wheels, Sioux Area Metro, and SECOG are working together to begin a volunteer driver recruitment and training program to increase the number of rides provided by Project CAR and Workers On Wheels.
- The City of Sioux Falls is working with Project CAR to increase the number of ambulatory paratransit rides provided by Project CAR.

(ATTACHMENT)

## **2014 Transit Task Force Report**

From October 2013 to June 2014 a group of 20 to 25 citizens convened to discuss ways to create a more sustainable transit system. The following goals and recommendations are a result of their work through the Transit Task Force monthly meetings and countless numbers of subcommittee meetings. In addition, the task force recommended a financial strategy to provide the Public Transit Advisory Board (PTAB) and City Council with a guide for future budgets and transit operations.

### **Task Force Membership**

Rex Rolwing	Koni Sims
Greg Jamison	Orlen Tschetter
Kenny Anderson, Jr.	Kate Heligas
Todd Vik	Lon Clemenson
Mark Lee	Jean Crowe
Lynne Hunter	Myron Moore
Lyla Pedersen	Molly Keegan
Betty Oldenkamp	<u>Staff</u>
Chris Schiltz	Jim David
Sarah Jennings	David Bixler
Bob Bohm	Amber Gibson
Vicki Kerkvliet	Sam Trebilcock
Phyllis Arends	

### **What was the task of the Transit Task Force?**

- Recommend a long-term sustainable strategy for Sioux Area Metro and community-based transit to the City Council.
- Further develop work actions based upon Coordinated Transit Plan
- Develop a Fare and Operations Analysis through the year 2026

### **What are the Transit Task Force Goals (measurable)**

**Goal #1:** Reduce the cost of paratransit over the next five years from 48% of the total budget to 25% of the total budget (\$1.8 million reduction in today's dollars)

**Goal #2:** Increase the fixed-route services by \$1.6 million (in today's dollars) to provide reliable transit services for a majority of Sioux Falls residents.

**Goal #3:** Foster a community-based collaboration for funding an annual operating budget of \$500,000 per year for a coordinated non-profit transportation effort to support agency work trips, medical trips, and event trips as a high priority of unmet needs of Sioux Falls.

**Goal #4:** Develop a multi-faceted transit travel training program that helps instruct at least 1,000 people each year on how to ride the bus.

**Goal #5:** Provide a long-term financial status report to the Public Transit Advisory Board and to the City Council each year as part of the budget process.

## Recommendations and Work Actions to Reach Goals

### Objective #1: Increase Fixed-Route Service and Utilize Fixed-Route busses to Reduce Paratransit Trips

Recommendation 1A: Actively encourage people with disabilities to ride the fixed-route transit system to allow for a more independent lifestyle.

Recommendation 1B: Update and invest additional resources into the Transit Travel Training program to increase fixed-route ridership and decrease paratransit.

**1. Work Action: Buddy System - long-term program**

Benefit: Goal is to allow 10 people to gain access to fixed-route system

\$24.23 per ride paratransit x 267 weekdays x 10 riders = \$64,694 per year cost

Cost: \$3.36 per ride fixed-route x 267 weekdays x 10 riders = \$8,971 per year cost

Impact: \$55,723 yearly savings to paratransit budget.

Who: Coordinated by a Volunteer coordinator position at SECOG

**2. Work Action: Buddy System – short-term program**

Benefit: For people with some cognitive impairment, but with a few days of assistance from a buddy can negotiate the transit system.

Who: Coordinated by Volunteer coordinator position at SECOG

**3. Work Action: Develop a tripper bus route for ambulatory persons for work trips.**

Benefit: 35 riders off paratransit = \$226,429 per year savings (35 x 267 weekdays x \$24.23 ride cost)



Cost: 35 riders on a dedicated fixed-route service = \$80,000 per year (267 weekdays x 4 hours x \$75) \$33,333 capital cost per year (\$400,000/12 year life)

Impact: \$113,096 per year savings

Challenge: For this to work, at least 4,700 rides per year must be reduced from paratransit because of the tripper route's cost.

**4. Work Action: Train the Trainer and Peer Training**

Benefit: 50 more riders in first year

Benefit: 25 less paratransit riders in first year

Cost: minimal costs - update travel training video, work with partner agencies

Impact: \$161,735 per year savings minus the cost of the travel training program

Who: Sioux Area Metro with participating agencies and groups.

**5. Work Action: Update Train the Rider Program**

Benefit: Update the current video and training program

Cost : Minimal

Impact: Better understanding of the system for new riders

Who: Sioux Area Metro and CityLink

**6. Work Action: Real-Time Fixed-Route App**

Benefit: This is likely a long-term goal

Short Term Work Action: Google Transit

Cost: Cost of providing route information in text format and keeping it updated

Impact: Positive Marketing

**7. Work Action: Community Partnerships for additional Fixed-Route Services**

Benefit: Additional funds for transit and tax benefits for businesses and employees

What are our options for partnerships? Unlimited Access or Reduced Monthly Passes

**8. Work Action: Increase Fixed-Route Services to the following areas of Sioux Falls**

a. Sycamore and 57<sup>th</sup> Street (2015)

b. 57<sup>th</sup> and Minnesota

c. 26<sup>th</sup> and Tea-Ellis

d. Better core services (more timely on routes #7 and Route #4) and cross-town routes

The fixed-route system is the backbone of the transit system in Sioux Falls. Over the past 15 years, the fixed-route system has doubled ridership from 500,000 to over 1 million rides per year. However, this task force has recognized that the fixed-route system still has the capacity to be used more frequently especially by people that are in need. Organizations throughout

Sioux Falls have targeted transportation as a very high need for their constituencies and/or clients. The fixed-route system is the answer for most people's transportation needs. To accomplish improved utilization of the buses, more knowledge of how the fixed-route system works is needed and also the expansion and an improved fixed-route system. Therefore, the Task Force focused on travel training initiatives including a new buddy system to provide different levels of support for learning how to ride the bus. All of the above work actions have the possibility of reducing paratransit with a very limited cost outlay.

## **Objective #2: Increase Non-Profit Coordination**

### **Recommendation 2A: Encourage services and projects that implement goals of the Coordinated Plan thru the MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee**

#### **1. Work Action: 5310 Grant Process**

Benefit: Available grant dollars for capital for non-profits and cities

Benefit: Available grant dollars for non-profit vehicles travel training and transit buddies

Cost: 80% dollars available – local match provided by applicant

Process: the Sioux Falls MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee will accept and recommend applications.

#### **2. Work Action: Directory of Available Services**

Benefit: Awareness for the public

Cost: Information collection and design should be minimal

Cost: Printing Costs will be a cost depending on number – put on website to save costs

Impact: Increased awareness of all transportation options

#### **3. Work Action: Community Volunteer Driver Recruitment and Training Program**

Benefit: Pool of volunteers for Project CAR, Workers on Wheels and RSVP.

Cost: Time and money for marketing campaign

Impact: Assistance for reduced paratransit demand

Method: Hire a part-time volunteer transportation coordinator through SECOG to coordinate this program

#### **4. Work Action: Develop a comprehensive non-profit transportation system that provides for a coordinated system that efficiently and effectively provides**

**transportation services. This coordinated system should provide for a means to best harness community-based giving.**

Benefit: System coordinated by Transportation Coordinating committee could develop multiple funding sources including federal, state, city, and community donations that could develop a very effective transportation delivery system

Issue: Developing an organizational structure to deliver the most effective and efficient system.

Impact: This system could provide more services to citizens in need and significantly reduce paratransit costs.

To coordinate more effectively, the MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee will work to distribute FTA 5310 funding that will help secure vehicles and create programs that will improve transportation coordination in Sioux Falls. The 5310 program will help fund many of the other work actions that are listed in this report and has the real possibility of helping start a non-profit transportation program that will provide agency work trips, medical trips, and event trips. All 5310 funding applications will need to show that it meets the goals of the MPO Coordination Plan.

The MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee will also continue to work on improving the volunteer driver pool to allow for a better volunteer driver program especially for Project CAR and Workers on Wheels. Also, the committee is committed to providing comprehensive information of the transportation providers available in the Sioux Falls area to help citizens better access transportation services appropriate for their needs.

One of the more important discoveries of the Task Force was the importance of community resources stepping up to provide assistance to improve the capacity of the non-profit transportation. When comparing Sioux Falls to other communities, non-profit transportation services for targeted citizens is very limited. Therefore, a non-profit transportation provider that specializes in transportation services must to be a priority for Sioux Falls and needs to be a priority for community donations and giving.

### **Objective #3: Reduce Reliance on Paratransit**

#### **Recommendation 3A: Focus efforts to reduce paratransit agency work trips. (Sioux Area Metro and Dakotabilities/Lifescape)**

- 1. Work Action: Agencies contract with a non-profit transportation provider to provide agency work trips. Sioux Area Metro and the City will develop phasing plan and work with the agencies to help reduce the work trips over a 5 year period.**

Benefit: This would allow agencies to more efficiently provide their transportation needs for client services.

Benefit: This would allow the city to significantly reduce the cost of the paratransit system

Cost: City may still need to support start-up and some continuing contributions

Cost: Agency costs may be significant

Impact: 1,469 rides per week x 52 weeks per year x \$24.23 = \$1,850,881 per year savings.

**2. Work Action: Institute an agency rate or charge Medicaid for the trip for medical trips from any skilled nursing facility that involves any Medicaid payments.**

Benefit: Cost savings to paratransit

\$24.23 per ride paratransit x 2000 rides per year = \$48,557 per year cost

Issue #1: How many of the 2000 rides per year is Medicaid involved?

Issue #2: Some Medicaid trips are already charged by Sioux Area Metro

Impact: Somewhat minor impact to overall system – so a lower priority

Over 50% of all Sioux Falls paratransit trips are Dakotabilities or Lifescape clients.

Approximately 75,000 trips per year are agency work trips. This costs Sioux Area Metro about \$1.8 million per year. This task force has recognized the importance of showing a significant reduction in the percentage of the budget that is devoted to paratransit expenses. In order to do that, a significant change must take place in the methods of transporting or in linking people with disabilities to their vocational rehabilitation programs (work trips). Unfortunately, now the system is not coordinated which has created inefficiencies. However, progress is already being made in ways to better provide and coordinate these essential transportation services.

Over the course of a 5-year period, Lifescape and Dakotabilities should work towards a goal of providing most of the works trips within their own transportation system or thru the Sioux Area Metro fixed-route system. This change will result in savings that will have the greatest savings to the paratransit system thereby allowing for increases to the fixed-route budget and services into the future.

In order to ensure these savings are realized, a 5-year process should be monitored with the following benchmarks and work actions.

1. Lifescape changes reduce 24 people from Paratransit. Provide driver assistance funding to Lifescape through a small city agreement (Summer 2014)
2. End new people applying for paratransit outside the ¼ mile area (Fall 2014)

3. Begin a pilot project with a Non-Profit Transportation Services Provider and Dakotabilities/Lifescape to serve homes outside the ¾ mile area (Fall 2014)
4. End outside the ¾ mile area services (Spring 2015)
5. Extend fixed-route service to 57<sup>th</sup> and Sycamore (extends ¾ mile area for that area only) (Spring 2015)
6. Non-Profit Transportation + fixed-route provides 30% of all agency work trips (Spring 2016)
7. Non-Profit Transportation + fixed-route provides 50% of all agency work trips (Spring 2017)
8. Non-Profit Transportation + fixed-route provide 75% of all agency work trips (Spring 2018)
9. Non-Profit Transportation + fixed-route provides 90% of all agency work trips (Spring 2019)
10. Establish an Agency Rate to ensure agency work trips do not migrate back to Sioux Area Metro paratransit (Fall 2019)\*

*\*If Benchmarks are not being reached over time, City Council may decide to establish the agency rate sooner.*

What is an agency rate? An agency rate is allowed by Transit providers to negotiate a higher fare for "agency trips," while ADA's requirement of comparable paratransit goes to individuals, not organizations (see CFR 49 CFR 37.131). "Agency trips" are trips provided by Sioux Area Metro that are paid or mandated by another government program. For example, Dakotabilities and Lifescape must provide transportation to and from supervised work sites as a service required by South Dakota Vocational Rehabilitation statutes (SDCL 28-9) and Federal Law (34 CFR Chapter III Subpart B). State Human Services Waiver money is paid to the agencies to provide these transportation services required by state and federal law. Agency rates apply only to agency trips, not to trips provided on behalf of and paid for by an individual client (i.e. shopping and entertainment trips). In Fargo, North Dakota the city's agency rate is the full cost of the paratransit trip provided by their transit agency.

### **Recommendation 3B: Contract with non-profit agencies to provide rides (Sioux Area Metro and Project CAR, Workers on Wheels, etc)**

#### **1. Work Action: 211 helpline to provide as eligibility clearance center.**

Benefit: We could contract with 211 Helpline to increase to a common transportation eligibility clearance center for any non-profit.

Cost: A ¾ of a full-time position would be needed to handle the additional work load.  
Impact: Reduced confusion of public and increased utilization of non-profit programs.

**2. Work Action: Provide assistance to human service agencies to allow them to gain capacity to transport their own clients with their own vehicles.**

Benefit: City could provide funds to pay for drivers with agency vehicles

Benefit: SAM could provide driver training

Disadvantage: Staff driving vehicles are not hired as drivers

Disadvantage: Agencies are not in the transportation business

Impact: Reduction would be based upon the number of rides taken off paratransit

**3. Work Action: Investigate a limited program for some ambulatory paratransit riders to have the option to ride Project CAR.**

Benefit: 10 rides per day could be saved from paratransit =

\$24.23 per ride X 10 = \$230 per weekday x 267 weekdays = \$64,694 Paratransit cost –

Cost: \$4.50 X 10 = \$45.00 per weekday X 267 weekdays = \$12,015 Project Car Cost

Impact: \$49,395 savings per year

**4. Work Action: Consolidate paratransit trips from human service agencies (nursing homes, independent living facilities) through the coordination of clients appointment scheduling.**

Benefit: Goal is to allow 10 people to gain access to fixed-route system

\$24.23 per ride paratransit x 267 weekdays x 10 riders = \$64,694 per year cost

Cost: \$3.36 per ride fixed-route x 267 weekdays x 10 riders = \$8,971 per year cost

Impact: \$55,723 yearly savings

Paratransit is not a service that is designed to provide all the transportation needs for people of Sioux Falls. Therefore, the Transit Task Force looked at options to help improve other transportation services for people that are unable to ride the fixed-route system. These services included Project CAR and Workers on Wheels. Also, 211 HelpLine is an important partner to help people find the appropriate transportation service.

**Recommendation 3C: Develop a paratransit system that parallels the Sioux Area Metro fixed-route system to ensure transportation services are equally provided to all citizens.**

**1. Work Action: Align paratransit services to match the same service area as the fixed-route system.**

Benefit: City would save \$585,000 per year in operating costs

Benefit: City would save 4 paratransit vehicles to be replaced

Benefit: City would save 2 added vehicles every 5 years

Cost: How would people in this area receive transportation?

Option to providing service in this area: Project CAR, non-profit provider, private providers, Workers on Wheels.

**2. Work Action: Work with the medical community and developers to inform and advise where transit service is available. OR pay a non-profit transportation provider to provide the service.**

Benefit: Shorter trips for paratransit

Benefit: Paying providers is similar to #4 and #6 above

Cost: Medical and Developers are only looking to find where the demand is and if growth continues they will follow that growth

Cost: Would private contributions to transportation be feasible?

For transportation services to be available for more Sioux Falls residents, paratransit must parallel the fixed route system. Otherwise, paratransit is the only option to residents in certain areas of the system which creates higher usage and higher ride per trips costs. Also, areas of the city that are not covered by Sioux Area Metro transit services must be informed that services are not available. This information could then allow organizations and businesses to tap into a private or non-profit transportation option as called for in other work actions of this report.

## **Objective #4: Taxis and Private Assistance**

### **Recommendation 4A: Develop a corporate funded project for event transportation to provide rides home for people with disabilities or for people with disabilities that are not within the paratransit service area.**

**1. Work Action: Accessible Taxis**

Benefit: Disabled persons can access destinations throughout the area

Cost: Taxi cab companies would have a hard time affording this

Cost: Wheelchair Express provides this service now.

**2. Work Action: Investigate a limited program for event rides for people with disabilities.**

Benefit: Would ensure that persons with disabilities are able to attend events to their conclusion.

Cost: unknown at this time

Consideration: Would corporations or community partners be willing to help fund?

Impact: Unknown at this time

Private transportation providers have been used in other communities to provide some paratransit rides. The Transit Task Force sat down with some private taxi and transportation providers to see if there was any interest in Sioux Falls. In general, the options seemed limited for two reasons. First, private providers would need to meet FTA standards which seemed to reduce interest. Second, the cost savings may be limited unless it is targeted to a limited number of hours. However, there does seem to be some possibilities to investigate further utilizing private providers for event trips that paratransit is unable to provide because the events end after transit service hours.

**Objective #5: Affordability**

**Recommendation 5A: Maintain and, in the long-term, expand the Pass-it-on Program as the best method to provide assistance to people who are trying to “get back on their feet”.**

**Work Action: Pass-it-on Program**

Benefit: Provides approximately 40,000 free passes to various social service agencies for clients transportation.

Cost: Estimated \$2,610 paid for by Minnehaha County and benefitting agencies

Impact: This program may need to be expanded as the community population grows. The impact of the program is minimal until the transit system has capacity issues.

The Pass-it-on Program is a program that provides free courtesy bus passes to individuals that are experiencing economic difficulties and cannot afford to pay for a bus pass themselves. The bus pass can be used for several purposes that may help improve a person’s economic situation.

The City provides 40,000 bus passes per year and the County Homeless Coordinator administers the agency agreements, distributes the passes to the participating agencies at the Homeless Advisory Board meetings, and fulfills reporting requirements.



The basic premise of the Pass-it-on Program is, if a person is helped with the issues they are dealing with, such as the loss of a job, difficulty finding a job, finding child care so they can go to a job, dealing with substance abuse, etc., they can eventually become economically self-sufficient and no-longer need assistance from various social service agencies.

## **Objective #6: School Services**

### **Recommendation 6A: Emphasize providing adequate fixed-route services to public high schools that do not require dedicated busses.**

#### **Work Action: School Services.**

Benefit: over 55,000 students rode SAM busses in 2012

Cost: We had 6 busses in the fleet that were used for school service in 2012 that would cost \$2.1 million dollars to replace

Changes in 2013: 2 SAM busses were replaced by School Bus Inc. busses in the Fall of 2013.

Impact: \$1.5 million savings in 2015 or 2016 (4 busses) \$150,000 operational savings

Impact: Reduced ridership and valuable public service including good travel training program for youth

Solution 1: End tripper service in May 2015 or May 2016 to reduce the exposure of the bus replacement costs for dedicated busses.

Solution 2: Enhance and coordinate existing fixed-routes (routes #5, #7, #11) that service the public high schools.

Sioux Area Metro has serviced the three public high schools with four special tripper routes for the past 20 years. This service provides a great service and contributes significantly to the ridership of SAM, but because the busses are utilized only two hours per weekday and only during the school years, the capital holding costs are very high. Because funds are not available to replace these busses, the recommendation is instead to improve service to the three high schools with the existing fixed-route services.

## **Objective #7: Fares**

### **Recommendation 7A: Maintain Fares that are very affordable for riders while still providing a consistent level of revenue.**

#### **Work Action: Sioux Area Metro Fare Increase.**

Issue: Fares have not changed since 1995

Method: Increase fares over the course of 5-10 year period

Method: Increase to \$1.50 for 1-ride pass and \$30 for a monthly pass. Increase the monthly pass an additional amount over 8 year period

Option: Add a fee for long-paratransit rides (transfer fee)

Impact: \$150,000 to \$250,000 additional funds for services

Impact: Temporary ridership reduction.

Transit Fares should provide for a reasonable revenue source for Sioux Area Metro's fixed route bus service and Paratransit bus service.

#### HISTORY OF SAM FARE INCREASES

Sioux Area Metro has not raised fares in the past seventeen years. Below is the most recent fare increase history.

<b>Year of Increase</b>	<b>Fare</b>
1986	60 cents
1993	75 cents
1996	\$ 1.00

#### ANALYSIS OF EFFECT OF INFLATION ON CURRENT TRANSIT FARES

Inflation has affected the buying power of the fixed-route transit fares over the last 19 years. By factoring inflation, today's fare would need to be \$1.49 for a single ride and \$36.58 for a monthly pass to have the same buying power that it did in 1996.

#### SURVEY OF COMPARABLE TRANSIT SERVICE FARES

A survey of comparable transit services is included here to determine how Sioux Falls compares to other cities with a comparable population within the Midwest. Because SAM fares have not increased since 1996, most other comparable transit systems have higher fare structures. There are only three transit services that have comparable monthly fares including Billings Montana (\$22), Pocatello Idaho (\$25), and Ft. Collins Colorado (\$25). The median fare of all 20 surveyed communities was \$38 with nine of those communities above \$40. Sioux Falls was also at the low end of the single-rider fee with only five communities at or below \$1.00. The median fare for all twenty communities was \$1.25.

<b>Fare Comparison, Upper Midwest</b>					
<b>City</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Single Ride</b>	<b>Monthly</b>		
Billings	104,170	\$ 1.25	\$ 22.00	<b>Single Rider Fare</b>	
Pocatello, ID	62,498	\$ 0.90	\$ 25.00	Low	\$ 0.90
Sioux Falls	153,888	\$ 1.00	\$ 25.00	Median	\$ 1.25
Ft Collins	143,986	\$ 1.25	\$ 25.00	High	\$ 2.00
Bismark	74,991	\$ 1.25	\$ 30.00	# at \$1.10 or below	5
Rapid City	66,780	\$ 1.50	\$ 30.00	# at \$1.25	7
Pueblo	105,595	\$ 1.10	\$ 32.50	# \$1.50 or above	8
Green Bay	187,316	\$ 1.50	\$ 35.00		
Boise	205,671	\$ 1.00	\$ 36.00	<b>Monthly Rider Fare</b>	
Cedar Rapids	155,334	\$ 1.25	\$ 36.00	Low	\$22
Fargo	105,549	\$ 1.25	\$ 40.00	Median	\$38
Rochester, MN	91,271	\$ 2.00	\$ 42.00	High	\$56
St. Cloud	91,305	\$ 1.10	\$ 45.00	# at \$25 or below	4
Springfield	159,498	\$ 1.25	\$ 45.00	# at \$30-\$40	7
Lincoln	258,379	\$ 1.75	\$ 45.00	# above \$40	9
Des Moines	203,433	\$ 1.75	\$ 48.00		
Sioux City	106,119	\$ 1.80	\$ 48.00		
Omaha	408,958	\$ 1.25	\$ 50.00		
Topeka	127,473	\$ 2.00	\$ 50.00		
Appleton WI	187,683	\$ 1.80	\$ 56.00		

Based upon the above data and the discussion of the task force, the proposed fares in the below chart are recommended to be phased into the Sioux Area Metro fare system beginning January 1, 2015.

**Sioux Area Metro  
Proposed Transit Fares**

FIXED ROUTE SERVICE		PARATRANSIT SERVICE	
Adults and students current	\$1.00	Paratransit eligible Riders current	\$2.00
<b>Adult and students proposed</b>	<b>\$1.50</b>	<b>Paratransit eligible Riders proposed</b>	<b>\$3.00</b>
10-ride pass current	\$8.50		
<b>10-ride pass proposed</b>	<b>\$10.50</b>		
10 yrs. or under current	\$0.50		
<b>10 yrs. or under proposed</b>	<b>\$0.75</b>		
5 yrs. or under current	Free		
<b>5 yrs. or under proposed</b>	<b>Free</b>		
Monthly pass current	\$25		
<b>Monthly pass proposed**</b>	<b>\$30.00</b>		
Weekly pass current	\$10		
<b>Weekly pass proposed**</b>	<b>\$12.50</b>		
Daily pass current	\$3		
<b>Daily pass proposed**</b>	<b>\$3</b>		

*Monthly – Year 2 to \$32.50; Year 4 to \$35.00; Year 6 to \$37.50; Year 8 to \$40.*

*Weekly – Year 2 to \$13.50; Year 4 to \$14.50; Year 6 to \$15.50; Year 8 to \$16.50; No other pass is scheduled to increase in Years 2, 4, 6 and 8.*

## **Financial Impact of Recommendations**

In the beginning of the Transit Task Force, the long-term viability of the system was in question. For the following three major reasons:

- Federal funding is being reduced;
- Paratransit demand is increasing faster than revenues can sustain; and
- Demand for additional fixed route service.

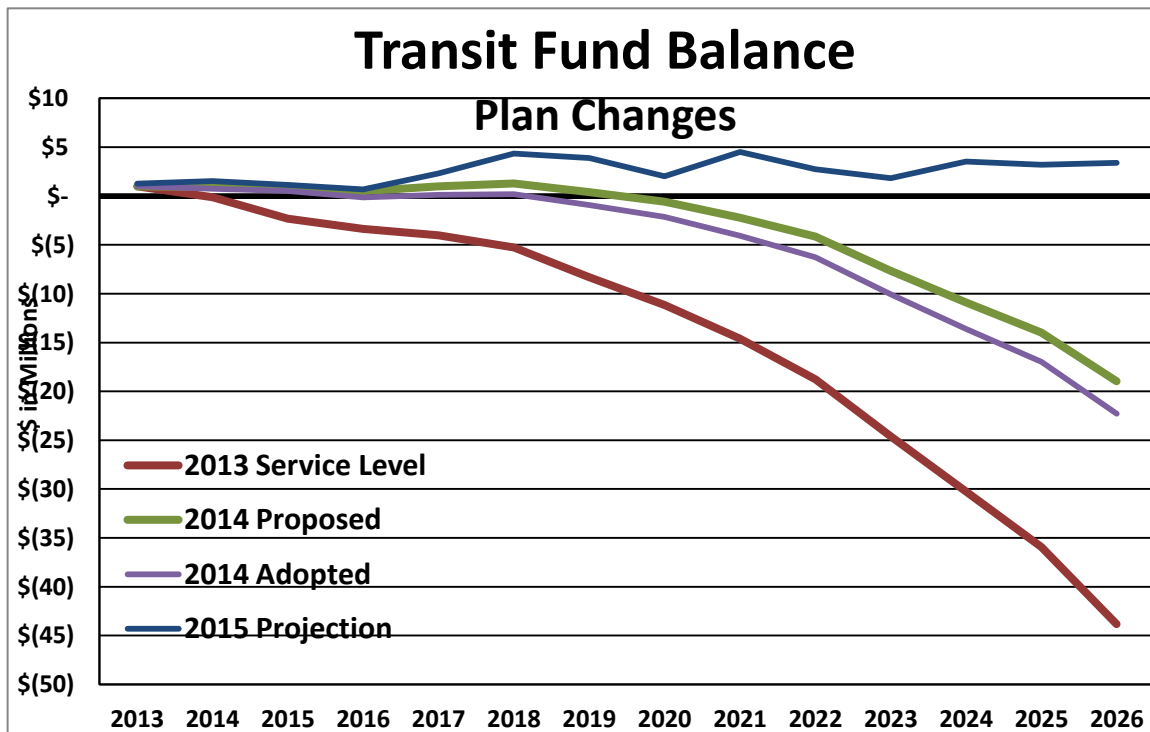
- 17 fixed-route busses that must be replaced beginning in 2019.

The greatest financial impacts of all the Transit Task Force recommendations are illustrated below. The work actions that create the greatest impact include the following in order of greatest impact:

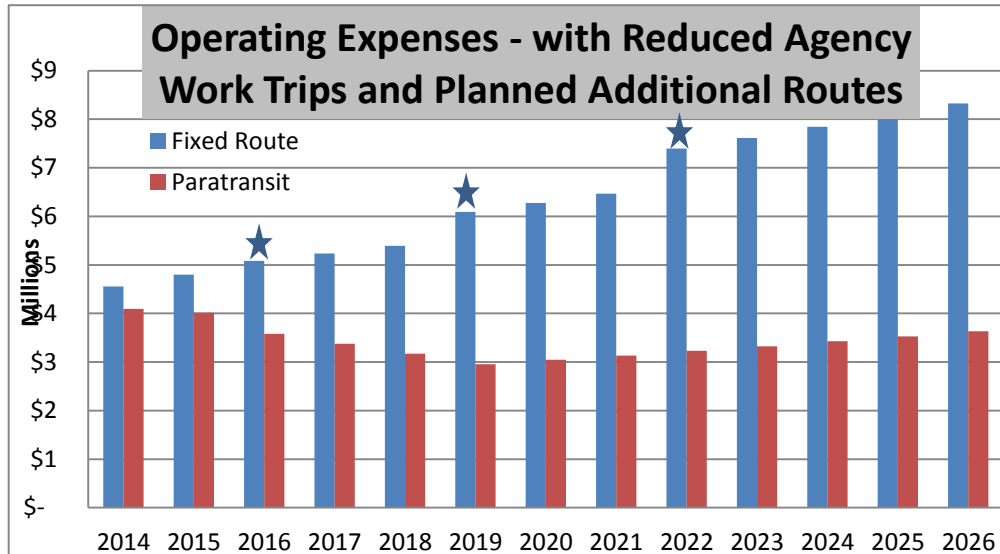
1. Agency work trip reductions - \$1.6 million impact per year (90% reduction of work trips)
2. City capital contributions increases - \$750,000 impact per year
3. Increased General Fund contribution to 4% increase per year
4. Align paratransit service area with ADA required ¼ mile from fixed-route services. - \$240,000 per year impact
5. Discontinuing school tripper services
6. Fare increases would generate an estimated \$230,000 in 2017 if fares are increased in 2015. Further increases in the monthly pass may generate an extra \$50,000 per year.
7. Project CAR agreement

With the financial savings that were found, the long-term financial projections were able to add \$1.6 million in fixed-route improvements over the same time period. With any additional savings that are realized, the additional savings could also go to enhancing the fixed-route system.

With the changes the projected transit fund balance is able to maintain a healthy fund level.

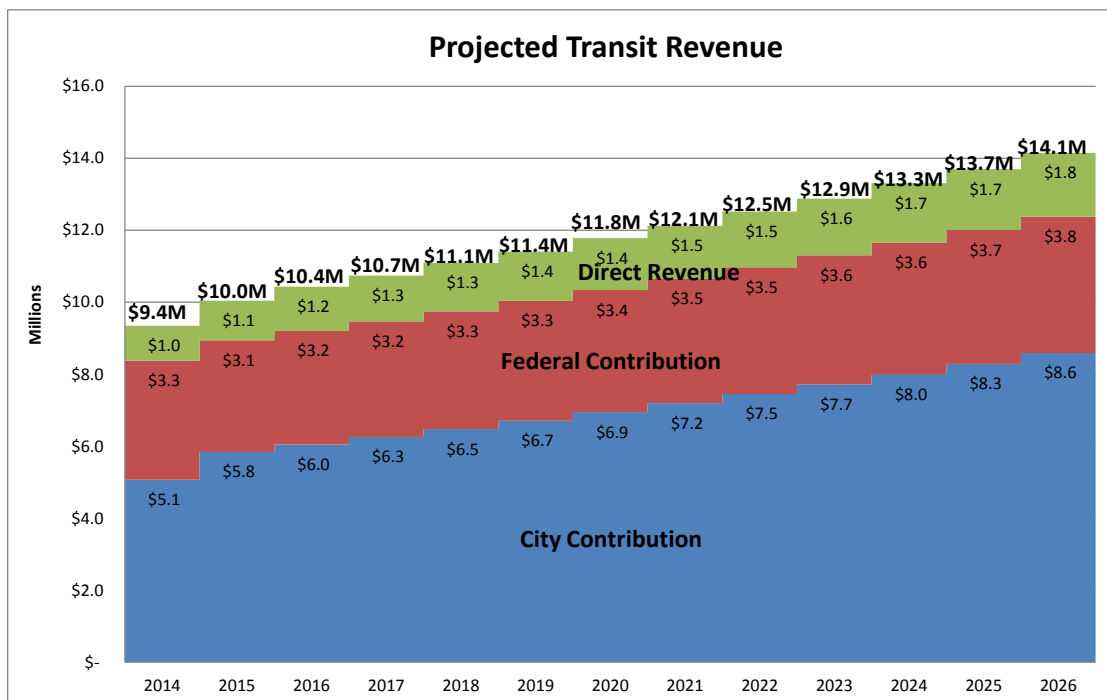


With the projected work trip reductions, the fixed-route budget is 70% of the total and paratransit is at 30% of the total. This would come close to reaching the goal of paratransit becoming 25% of the total transit budget. This information is shown in a full table in Appendix A.

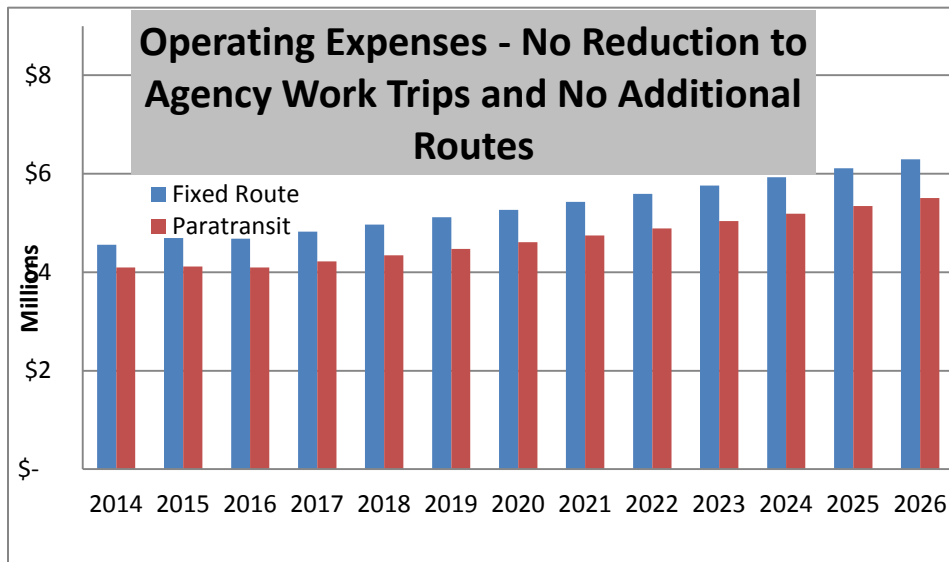


★ Years that fixed-route expansions or enhancements are planned

The below graph illustrates the level of revenue funding received by Sioux Area Metro over the projection period. By the end this period, the city’s contribution to transit increases by \$3.5 million per year while federal contributions and fares are estimated to increase by only \$1.3 million per year.



If work trips are not reduced and no other method is found to reduce paratransit costs, the below projection would be applicable. For this projection to work, no increase in fixed-route services will be financially feasible throughout the projection period. This information is shown in a full table in Appendix A.



*Other estimate assumptions for plan period*

- a. federal operating contribution 2% increase per year
- b. charges for service growth at 2% per year
- c. Operating expenditure growth 3% per year
- d. Ridership numbers were assumed to increase slightly for fare increases
- e. Cost per trip estimates were maintained at the same level except for inflation

# Next Steps – Implementation

The following steps need to be made to successfully implement the Transit Task Force Plan.

## City Steps

- Add 750,000 per year in Capital Appropriation - Beginning in the 2015 City Budget
- Operating Budget Increases 4 percent per year - Beginning in the 2015 City Budget
- Increase Fares – Fall 2014 PTAB recommendation/ Fall 2014 City Council approval
- Reduce Nursing Home Medical Trips
  - Agency Rate - PTAB Recommendation/ City Council approval
- Reduce Dakotabilities and Lifescape Work Trips
  - Provide financial start-up costs for non-profit transportation provider – Beginning in 2015 City Budget
  - Agency Rates – 2019 PTAB Recommendation/ City Council approval (earlier if no progress made)
- Align paratransit service area with fixed route services. – PTAB recommendation/ Fall 2014 City Council approval
  - Determine a phasing plan
    - Grandfather existing riders for a period to provide sufficient time and notice
    - Determine where new fixed-route services may provide future ADA paratransit services
    - Find other service providers for people outside the ¾ mile area
    - End all services outside the ¾ mile area
- Contract with non-profit agencies to reduce paratransit rides
  - Project CAR contract – City council approval and city budget
  - SECOG contract – buddy system and volunteer driver program (cost share)
- Increase Fixed-Route services
- End School Tripper Services – 2016 City Budget – PTAB recommendation/ Fall 2014 City Council approval
- Increase Fixed-Route Services – City Budget
- Expand and Update Travel Training Program – Sioux Area Metro

## Non-Profit and Community Coordination Steps

- Utilize the 5310 Grant Program (through MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee)
- Directory of Available Transportation Services (through MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee)
- Community Volunteer Driver Program (through MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee)
- Buddy System Program (through MPO Transportation Coordinating Committee)
- Comprehensive Non-Profit Transportation System
- 211 Helpline as eligibility clearance center
- Agency travel training of Fixed-Route services
- Expand Project CAR and Workers on Wheels programs
- Corporate funded event transportation for people with disabilities



## Appendix A – Full Paratransit and Fixed-Route Budget Breakdown

Operating Expenses with Reduced Agency Work Trips and Planned Additional Routes													
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Operating FR	\$ 4,558,765	\$ 4,798,528	\$ 5,081,534	\$ 5,233,980	\$ 5,390,999	\$ 6,093,479	\$ 6,276,284	\$ 6,464,572	\$ 7,394,959	\$ 7,616,808	\$ 7,845,312	\$ 8,080,672	\$ 8,323,092
Capital FR	\$ 104,558	\$ 1,565,633	\$ 1,378,633	\$ 134,768	\$ 65,520	\$ 2,154,434	\$ 3,366,692	\$ 26,250	\$ 3,639,272	\$ 1,905,022	\$ 26,250	\$ 2,058,329	\$ 1,435,158
	\$ 4,663,323	\$ 6,364,160	\$ 6,460,167	\$ 5,368,747	\$ 5,456,519	\$ 8,247,913	\$ 9,642,976	\$ 6,490,822	\$ 11,034,231	\$ 9,521,830	\$ 7,871,562	\$ 10,139,001	\$ 9,758,250
Fixed-Route	51%	60%	59%	59%	60%	70%	71%	67%	77%	69%	68%	72%	70%
Operating Para	\$ 4,097,454	\$ 4,014,378	\$ 3,578,609	\$ 3,376,967	\$ 3,169,276	\$ 2,955,355	\$ 3,044,015	\$ 3,135,336	\$ 3,229,396	\$ 3,326,278	\$ 3,426,066	\$ 3,528,848	\$ 3,634,713
Capital Para	\$ 308,600	\$ 174,468	\$ 849,100	\$ 362,653	\$ 434,805	\$ 662,784	\$ 971,474	\$ 23,750	\$ 23,750	\$ 937,516	\$ 340,522	\$ 353,193	\$ 537,681
	\$ 4,406,054	\$ 4,188,845	\$ 4,427,709	\$ 3,739,621	\$ 3,604,081	\$ 3,618,139	\$ 4,015,489	\$ 3,159,086	\$ 3,253,146	\$ 4,263,794	\$ 3,766,588	\$ 3,882,041	\$ 4,172,395
Paratransit	49%	40%	41%	41%	40%	30%	29%	33%	23%	31%	32%	28%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,069,377</b>	<b>\$ 10,553,006</b>	<b>\$ 10,887,876</b>	<b>\$ 9,108,368</b>	<b>\$ 9,060,600</b>	<b>\$ 11,866,052</b>	<b>\$ 13,658,465</b>	<b>\$ 9,649,908</b>	<b>\$ 14,287,377</b>	<b>\$ 13,785,623</b>	<b>\$ 11,638,150</b>	<b>\$ 14,021,042</b>	<b>\$ 13,930,645</b>
Operating Expenses without Reduced Agency Work Trips and No Planned Additional Routes													
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Operating FR	\$ 4,558,765	\$ 4,695,528	\$ 4,681,894	\$ 4,822,351	\$ 4,967,021	\$ 5,116,032	\$ 5,269,513	\$ 5,427,598	\$ 5,590,426	\$ 5,758,139	\$ 5,930,883	\$ 6,108,809	\$ 6,292,074
Capital FR	\$ 104,558	\$ 1,565,633	\$ 1,378,633	\$ 134,768	\$ 65,520	\$ 2,154,434	\$ 3,366,692	\$ 26,250	\$ 3,639,272	\$ 1,905,022	\$ 26,250	\$ 2,058,329	\$ 1,435,158
	\$ 4,663,323	\$ 6,261,160	\$ 6,060,527	\$ 4,957,118	\$ 5,032,541	\$ 7,270,466	\$ 8,636,205	\$ 5,453,848	\$ 9,229,698	\$ 7,663,160	\$ 5,957,133	\$ 8,167,139	\$ 7,727,232
Fixed-Route	51%	59%	55%	52%	51%	59%	61%	53%	65%	56%	52%	59%	56%
Operating Para	\$ 4,097,454	\$ 4,117,378	\$ 4,096,699	\$ 4,219,600	\$ 4,346,188	\$ 4,476,574	\$ 4,610,871	\$ 4,749,197	\$ 4,891,673	\$ 5,038,423	\$ 5,189,576	\$ 5,345,263	\$ 5,505,621
Capital Para	\$ 308,600	\$ 174,468	\$ 849,100	\$ 362,653	\$ 434,805	\$ 662,784	\$ 971,474	\$ 23,750	\$ 23,750	\$ 937,516	\$ 340,522	\$ 353,193	\$ 537,681
	\$ 4,406,054	\$ 4,291,845	\$ 4,945,799	\$ 4,582,253	\$ 4,780,993	\$ 5,139,358	\$ 5,582,345	\$ 4,772,947	\$ 4,915,423	\$ 5,975,939	\$ 5,530,098	\$ 5,698,456	\$ 6,043,302
Paratransit	49%	41%	45%	48%	49%	41%	39%	47%	35%	44%	48%	41%	44%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 9,069,377</b>	<b>\$ 10,553,006</b>	<b>\$ 11,006,326</b>	<b>\$ 9,539,371</b>	<b>\$ 9,813,534</b>	<b>\$ 12,409,824</b>	<b>\$ 14,218,550</b>	<b>\$ 10,226,795</b>	<b>\$ 14,145,121</b>	<b>\$ 13,639,100</b>	<b>\$ 11,487,231</b>	<b>\$ 13,865,595</b>	<b>\$ 13,770,534</b>