

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

**2015 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 2015***

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:*

### **Coordination of Non-Profit Community Transportation**

*Primary Accomplishments:*

- In 2014, 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 has 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.
- The directory of specialized transportation services that was developed in 2014 for the MPO planning area continues to be available on the Sioux Falls MPO's website at <http://siouxfallsmo.org/resources/community-transportation-directory/>. It has also been posted on the HelpLine Center's website and Minnehaha County's website. A limited number of printed copies are still available and continue to be distributed by request.
- The volunteer driver recruitment and training program developed in 2014, Drive To Help, began operations in 2015. A new position was 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 then work with Project CAR and Active Generations' Workers On Wheels, which are existing volunteer driver programs, to increase the number of rides provided. The Drive To Help staff will also manage a travel training program and buddy system to assist people in riding the Sioux Area Metro fixed route system. SECOG contributed partial funding for for Drive To Help. The remainder of the funding for the first year of operation was provided by Avera, City of Sioux Falls, Sanford, and United Way. At the time this report was written, 10 new volunteers have been added to the volunteer driver pool through Drive To Help.

Since the development of the Sioux Falls City Council's Transit Task Force Report in 2014, which supports the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan, the Sioux Area Metro (SAM) Ridership Committee has been developed and is meeting regularly to develop methods to encourage ridership on the fixed route system through various travel training methods. In

addition, work has continued with various non-profits in the community to increase efficiencies in paratransit public transportation.

*Coordinated Plan Goals Addressed:*

### **Travel Training**

#### **Coordination of Paratransit Public Transportation**

*Primary Accomplishments:*

- The (SAM) Ridership Committee is currently in the process of updating its travel training video and developing additional travel training outreach activities.
- The City of Sioux Falls executed an agreement with LifeScape to assist in funding an additional driver to enable LifeScape to provide transportation for more of its own clients on its own vehicles. As a result, LifeScape is able to transport an additional 17 clients.
- The City of Sioux Falls executed an agreement with Active Generations to assist its Daybreak clients in utilizing Project CAR's transportation services.
- LifeScape staff has completed travel training and are working to educate its clients to ride the fixed-route transit system.
- LifeScape continues to monitor its transportation needs and makes adjustments in staffing and trip times to increase efficiencies.
- After a successful pilot project, the City of Sioux Falls has partnered with Augustana University to provide free fixed-route rides to its faculty and students at a reduced rate paid by Augustana University.

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:*

### **Coordination of Non-Profit Community Transportation**

#### **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:* Work has continued on implementation of the plan to bring in a non-profit provider of paratransit services for the area outside of the ¾ mile service area required to be serviced by Sioux Area Metro, the City of Sioux Falls' transit system. River Cities Public Transit dba Coordinated Community Transportation System, will 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. The City of Sioux Falls has also committed to participate in the project to help keep the client portion of the fare minimal. The pilot project was originally planned to begin in 2015, but has been delayed pending FTA approval of the Section 5310 funds.
- *Hartford Transit Committee:* Hartford Area Transit began operations in 2015. It provides service within the City and also provides service to Sioux Falls for medical appointments, etc. This project was funded with a combination of locally raised and FTA funds. Additional information on Hartford Area Transit can be found at <http://www.hartfordsd.us/>.

### ***Unsuccessful Goals in 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 and 2015 were spent on planning and laying the groundwork for achieving many of the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan. Although timelines for some activities have been extended due to unforeseen circumstances, progress is being made. Therefore, none of the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan are considered unsuccessful.

### ***New Goals for 2016***

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 and 2015 were spent on planning and laying the groundwork for achieving many of the goals identified in the Coordinated Plan and timelines for some activities have been extended. Therefore, no new goals or priorities have been identified for 2016.

### ***2016 Goal Timeframes***

Some of the activities that have been worked on over the last year and are planned to be implemented in 2016:

- The full allocation of the FY 2015 FTA Section 5310 funds is expected to be authorized in late 2015. Therefore, the next competitive application process is anticipated for early 2016, pending federal authorization.

- Funding to continue operations for Drive To Help in 2016 will be sought in late 2015 and early 2016.
- The Coordinated Community Transportation Systems pilot project for DakotAbilities and LifeScape work trips has been delayed and is now planned to begin in Spring 2016.
- Additional travel training program updates, including the implementation of a buddy system, for Sioux Area Metro fixed route system is planned to begin in late 2015 to early 2016.
- The City of Sioux Falls is anticipated to formalize an agreement for Project CAR to begin providing specified paratransit trips 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 continuing to work together to provide service outside the City's required  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile paratransit service area for agency work trips.
- The City of Sioux Falls and LifeScape are continuing to work together to reduce LifeScape's 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.
- SECOG is operating Drive To Help, with the assistance of Project CAR, Active Generations Workers On Wheels, and Sioux Area Metro. Drive To Help is 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 and Active Generations to increase the number of ambulatory paratransit rides provided by Project CAR for Active Generations' Day Break Adult Day Services.
- Project CAR has provided an increased number of rides for health appointments, especially for those located outside of the Sioux Area Metro service area.